

May 17, 2018

Jackson Town Council

RE: Snow King scenarios – impacts on our Town character and natural resources

Dear Mayor Muldoon and Town Councilors:

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Snow King Stakeholder Group scenarios, and would like to share our observations from your two well-attended public meetings and the stakeholder group meetings. First: thank you for your commitment to community engagement through hosting public meetings and the stakeholder group. We believe it is critical for our community to have input into such a large proposal that could significantly change our Town's look and feel.

Both the stakeholders' work and the robust community dialogue at two public meetings make it clear that our community wants Snow King to succeed, welcomes some of Snow King's ideas, and finds other proposals very controversial.

Throughout the public meetings, there was a clear sense that our community wants Snow King to succeed – we want the lifts to keep spinning, and for our kids to be able to learn how to ski. Residents and stakeholders had broad interest in a "mountain sports center" that can serve as a community asset with a great new facility for the Ski & Snowboard Club as well as a climbing gym and additional ice sheet. In addition, there were high levels of support for building more parking, workforce housing, and holding the Snow King Resort Master Association (SKRMA) to its obligations in the 2000 Resort Master Plan.

It was also clear that a number of Snow King's ideas raised red flags for large numbers of residents and many stakeholders, especially:

Fair deals for public land and access: Snow King wants to land a new gondola on Phil Baux Park, and this did not play well with large numbers of community members who showed up. Additionally, Snow King started charging locals for uphill access this season, even though the Town leases almost 30 acres to Snow King for only \$100 a month. We see a pattern of Snow King taking public land and not returning a fair exchange.

- ➔ If we give part of our ballpark to Snow King, we should receive *fair market value* in return, reflecting the current public use of the park. Not just new grass to replace the parking lot, but *significant* compensation of money or nearby land – potentially to build the mountain sports center, parking, and workforce housing.
- ➔ Please renegotiate all existing leases for a fair market price, understanding that the new developments will make Snow King a successful profit-making venture. (Or, negotiate slightly-subsidized leases in exchange for maintaining free uphill access for locals).

Expansions into wildlife habitat: Snow King wants to expand their operations into important wildlife habitat with new roads and chairlifts outside the current footprint – to the east, west, and on the backside. This was very controversial and provoked very divergent responses from community members. The stakeholder scenarios show a broad range of options

to limit the impact from Snow King's proposal. We have encouraged Snow King to re-think this one, and instead make improvements within their current operating footprint.

- ➔ If Snow King continues to push for expansions, please highlight for the Forest Service that our community values "protecting and preserving our area's ecosystem" as a core value in our Comprehensive Plan – and ask that therefore, the Forest Service not allow new development, roads, or chairlifts outside the existing operating footprint. Instead, encourage Snow King to improve terrain within their existing footprint.

Housing and parking mitigation: Although most of our community shares a keen interest in requiring full parking mitigation, Snow King representatives have suggested that parking for their new developments could just go on nearby neighborhood streets. Snow King has also shown a clear disregard for our community rules around workforce housing, as when they were caught stacking 12 employees in one single-family home last summer.

- ➔ In your role as a Cooperating Agency with the Forest Service, please require that Snow King shares a publicly-vetted and transparent plan to fully mitigate all impacts on parking, traffic, and workforce housing, *before* receiving approval to build any new projects – like a large restaurant and event complex on top of the ridge, new ziplines, and new hotels and condos at the base of the mountain.

Keep the deals we've made: Before our community gives Snow King's investors even more economic benefits through further development on our Town Hill, please hold them accountable to the agreed-upon SKRMA arrangement in the 2000 Resort Masterplan.

- ➔ *Before* Town or the Forest Service approves anything new, Snow King's investors should show that they can hold up their end of deals. They should get together with the other SKRMA property owners and agree on a legally-binding funding structure, dues, and what those dues will go to. They should commit SKRMA dues from their commercial and lodging revenues to some combination of keeping the lifts spinning, building workforce housing, and investing in transit and parking for their new summer traffic, in perpetuity.

We all want Snow King to succeed – and to do so in a way that respects and reflects our community values as our Town Hill, not a private amusement park. We believe the topics we have outlined above most urgently need your consideration and assistance. **Please stand strongly for transparent and fair dealings for our Town and residents in any new agreements with Snow King Mountain Resort.**

Sincerely,

Skye Schell



Executive Director

Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance

cc Teton County Board of County Commissioners

cc Tyler Sinclair, Planning Director

Protecting the wildlife, wild places, and community character of Jackson Hole.

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