



ROARING FORK VALLEY HORSE COUNCIL

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To the TOSV Town Council and Planning Commissioners -

TOSV Town Council met Monday evening July 25th, for the Town Park Regulatory public hearing, ordinance #5-22 – First Reading. They heard from many concerned Village residents and Roaring Fork Valley locals regarding the precious wetlands area within the Town Park and the 47-year-old Snowmass Rodeo.

Town Council gave permission to SWHA, RFVHC & the POSTR groups to meet with Sara Tie of Connect One Design to improve the rodeo layout design. The new design now includes a warmup area for horse athletes and their riders, drinking water access for livestock and competitor's horses in numerous locations, a contestant bleacher for family / friends and two entry gates giving a run-in access for barrel racers with vehicle access for the EMTs, the Leslie Thomas Large Animal Rescue Ambulance and specialty act vehicles.

On the August 1st, Town Council ordinance #5 -22 – Second reading, the new rodeo design was approved. Thankfully, Town Council committed to not disrupting more than a 10th of an acre of wetlands before additional environmental assessment is completed. Town Council is also considering a lower height for rodeo arena lighting. The RFVHC believes that these are all excellent decisions for Snowmass Village.

Two very serious issues are confronting the TOSV Council at this time – Parking & Preserving the Wetlands.

In the current proposed Town Park Plan, the rodeo competitor truck and trailer parking is totally insufficient; NOTE – Competitor Truck & Trailer Parking must be close to the rodeo grounds for access. Spectators can be bussed in but horses and their riders cannot be parked remotely.

Without parking for the estimated 35 to 45 equestrian's rigs that are 25' to 45' in length, the rodeo will be confined in a space that will lead to safety issues. If parking is limited, then the desire for rodeo competitors to attend will be reduced, leading to a less enjoyable spectator experience. Rigs will be parked too close together, inviting problems. Horses could get kicked; adults and children could get injured, because there is no flow of movement for riders and their horses around the trucks and trailers. Town Council needs to continue to support the safety aspect of the Snowmass Rodeo. The parking for rodeo contestants and rodeo crew members has been left out of this plan.

Rodeo Parking Solutions could be as follows:

- 1 – Enlarge Check Point Charlie pull off to take more trucks and trailers.
- 2 – Use Recreation Center Parking on Wednesday nights for rodeo worker's cars and contestant rigs.

3 – Remove the unattractive, sparsely vegetated, wide berm, which is approximately 1000+ feet in width, between Brush Creek Road and the Recreation Center parking area. Use some of the material to build a more narrow, beautifully planted, buffer berm along brush Creek Road, next to a newly leveled and graded parking area. The new parking area has the potential for parking 10 trucks and trailers on rodeo nights and more than 40 car spaces year-round. This new parking lot would be contiguous to the existing Recreation Center parking area.



Existing Town Park unattractive, sparsely vegetated, wide berm, between Brush Creek Road and the Recreation Center parking



The current wide unattractive berm does not screen structures from sight. The unhealthy trees and dry grass gives a poor impression to Town Park visitors.



The pictures above were taken from Highway 82 on 8/6/2022, Carbondale, CO. See the small berm planted to screen Tom Bailey's "Iron Rose Ranch" property from view. This would be a classic welcoming sight for people driving to Snowmass Village past Town Park. Evergreen trees are planted on the front side of the berm with cottonwood trees staggered behind. Red twig dogwood could be added for winter color, and Canadian chokecherry for fall color and to feed the birds. The berm is approximately 15' in width. Water is the key element for trees to establish and thrive.



The map above shows POSTR's option # 3 choice for parking with narrow tree planted berms. This will add space by reducing the wide unattractive berm next to Recreation Center parking. Adding this parking area can provide spaces for 10 trucks and trailers on rodeo nights and will directly benefit and help mitigate the major parking problems for rodeo workers and competitors. A smaller, tree planted berm will screen all parking from view.



Properly screened berm will provide a verdant entry to TOSV at Town Park

- 4 – The proposed retention area South of the septic lift station will supposedly filter and clean water going into the man-made pond at Town Park. This area has previously been used for rodeo truck and trailer parking.



This proposed retention area is higher than the newly planned rodeo contestant parking area and higher than the culvert delivering water from the Village, the Snowmass Golf Course and the Sanitation Department, which currently flows directly into the Town Park Pond. As you can see, it is filled with sludge and all manner of unhealthy elements. The pond's water outlet is also at a higher level than the standing water, which prevents drainage and causes pond stagnation.



It has been suggested that the existing man-made pond is to be cleaned and improved.

Questions:

How will Brush Creek water, entering from the golf course through the culvert, be filtered before it enters the man-made pond?

How will the proposed retention area capture and clean Brush Creek water, if waterflow is below the retention area?

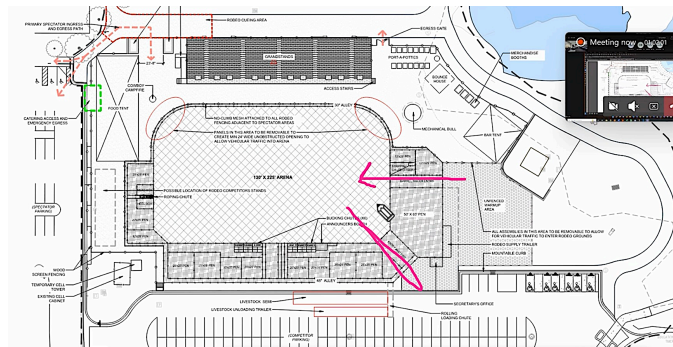
Questions continued –

If the larger man-made pond was originally constructed to act as a filter for water coming from Brush Creek, identified by Roaring Fork Conservancy as an “urban stream”, how will building an additional area for the same purpose benefit Snowmass village?

Will Brush Creek water coming through the culvert and under the bridge need to be pumped up to the retention area at Town Park?

Will the retention area have to be excavated to a lower level in order to take the water?

Will excavation costs for lowering the retention area or pumping water up into the retention area be cost prohibitive?



Above is the new approved plan for the Town Park / Snowmass Rodeo design.

The contestant parking area is insufficient and RFVHC considers this a major safety issue. Equestrian rodeo parking could utilize this higher ground, retention area space and general parking would benefit as well.

5 – Close to the Recreation Center there is a flat area within the Horse Ranch pasture. The Horse Ranch HOA owns this flat portion of the meadow. Municipalities often purchase land from different land owners for the benefit of the community. RFVHC suggests that TOSV acquire this land for the greater good. This level pasture area could be a place for additional equestrian parking for trucks and trailers and additional winter skier parking.



Horse Ranch potential parking.

6 – FACT - The “Black Saddle” parking lot is used for rodeo spectator overflow parking at the ball field, where the “Pair O Dice” carriage company brings them from the Black Saddle area to the rodeo grounds. After the rodeo ends, at dusk most pedestrians must walk along Brush Creek Road and Club House Drive to retrieve their cars. If Soft Ball practice is occurring on Wednesday night, then rodeo overflow parking is even more limited.

7 – Better marketing and streamlining the pick-up schedules for Spectator - off - sight parking at the Brush Creek Intercept Lot, Two Creeks and Hotel shuttles for guests will free up rodeo parking for competitor rigs. Spectators will be dropped off at a new rodeo ticketing area.

Town Park Wetlands –



If you build it they will come! They will come with dogs off leash to jump in the pond. They will come with children to picnic on a man-made beach. They will come in larger numbers, because our Roaring Fork Valley is growing, as Highway 82 traffic is becoming a slow crawl from Aspen to Glenwood, for workers to service the booming pleasure grounds nestled in our mountains.

A wetland is a distinct ecosystem that is flooded by water. If TOSV chooses to disturb their natural wetlands with walking paths, raised board-walks, bridges and a beach at the originally man made pond, then this natural area will turn into a human byway and amusement park.

Many native species will leave. Some species will stay, because they have adapted to humans, but the rare more shy creatures will flee. Ecological resilience is the capacity of an ecosystem to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change, retaining the same function, structure, and identity. Impacts of construction disturbances caused by this Town “Water Park” and the human intrusion that follows, will remove any semblance of a true natural wetland.

Snowmass Creek water is clean and clear. I know, because I owned Moon Run Ranch in Old Snowmass for 47 years. Snowmass Village takes water from Snowmass Creek by right. TOSV prizes this quality water, which is pumped up from the bottom of Snowmass Creek to the Village. The Snowmass Capitol Creek Caucus, of which I was a member, has fought for years to protect stream flows in Snowmass Creek for aquatic life sustainability.

The quality of Brush Creek water has always been poor. The soil combination of shale, clay and low stream flow compromises the quality of this urban stream water. The proximity of the Snowmass Club golf course, Snowmass Water and Sanitation and other urban village sources likely contribute to water runoff of excessive levels of unwanted nutrients. The Town Park “man-made pond” was improved in 2007 to serve as a filter for sediment and as a catchment retention/containment pond that collects sludge, silt and is now clogged by bull rushes. The true wetland, below the pond, is a winding course of small seeps and streams protected by native vegetation and which sustains an abundance of biodiverse life. It also filters the water headed downstream to the Roaring Fork River.

Dogs off leash are a major problem in the wetland area. It has been reported that dogs have been swimming in the man-made pond. Perhaps TOSV should create a “Dog Park” for residents and their animals, which will offset damage done to our natural wetland environment.

It makes sense to clean and establish a healthy pond, leaving native grasses and some bull rushes near the outlet. If Town Council votes not to disrupt the natural wetlands, the wildlife will stay!

Respectfully Submitted,
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Karin Reid Offield – RFVHC President