

**June 30, 2022**

- **Snowmass Town Park Special Review Application RFVHC Responses to Planning Questions/Comments 06/21/2022**

Of the 7 revisions listed here, not many of them reflect points in the RFVHC Safety Report and the liability issues set forth. These are our opinions:

- **1. Screen fence** – The RFVHC said not to use the screened fence because of a liability issue. The contestants and rodeo personnel both tall and shorts people need to see into the parking lot where their family and horses are tied. This is in the 5.25 RFVHC Revised Safety Report.(RSR)
- **2. Overall rodeo configuration:** We see the new maps of the rodeo configuration and what is not addressed in the overall layout are safe rodeo practices. When you built the rodeo arena it can be used every day by different equestrian groups. “Build it, and they will come”. We can offer advise on how to do the layout differently, same costs – better outcome. We’d also like to ask the Town for more investment money. To say “no one wins” is a terrible idea. Th
- **3. Rodeo Emergency Access** – We see this as a decision with emergency groups and the rodeo, but that fencing and gates and curbing and access must be designed to establish this entry into the arena. It needs to be on the contestant side, and not near the spectators. A permanent parking place for the Ambulance is necessary, as is an entry point for a horse ambulance. This critical addition to the rodeo arena has been overlooked. In addition, the rodeo parking lot needs to provide contestant car parking and spots for rodeo employee parking (52) which was discussed in the 5.25 RFVHC Rodeo Safety Report (RSR)
- **4. Landscape Buffer** –The contestants, spectators and the RFVHC is asking for a simple redesign that will replace the parking lot from the first look. By fixing the spectator / contestant layout we can achieve the Western Heritage vision we imagine.
- **5. Parking Lot surface material** – The answer by Town Council that there can be NO permeability of parking lots, is because they say the parking lot must “look finished”. Until the RFVHC sees that the loading and unloading of horses and the riders for the rodeo and trail rides has been addressed with a permeable surface unloading area, we won’t be satisfied that TOSV has done what they can to keep our horses and rodeo and recreational trail riders safe. This is a small request, but an important one and was discussed in the 5.25 RFVHC Rodeo Safety Report (RSR)
- **6. Flex Lawn** At the 6/15/22 Planning Commissioners meeting this extra space that might be “given” to the rodeo was referred by the designers as “an extra 10 feet”. We left the first meeting thinking this extra space could be our “warm-up area”. Now, after two meetings where we have heard specifically that “warm-up area” will NOT BE GIVEN to the rodeo because the Rodeo Board did not ask for it. The fact is that in the past 48 years, the land around the rodeo arena was available to ride on, to circulate, to warm up on. The Rodeo Board over the years never expected that the dirt parking lot and nearby land would go away. Now it has and is being replaced by the asphalt parking lot. That is why it was never discussed as a needed item.

*Here is an excellent description by horsewoman Jec Ballou: First, let’s clarify the distinction between loosening up and warming up. These are two different activities; you need to do both before your workout or competition. The overall goal of warming up is to increase oxygen delivery and blood circulation to the horse’s skeletal muscles to prevent early accumulation of metabolic wastes such as lactic acid in the tissues. In addition to causing early fatigue, lactic acid buildup also prohibits the horse from benefiting from the workout because it changes the muscles’ pH levels, which controls their ability to contract and relax. To counter this, and to receive the benefit*

*of exercising the muscles, you want to stimulate enough oxygen and blood flow to the horse's muscles to peak them for performance.*

*Studies have shown that it can take several minutes of slow movement for joint fluids to circulate fully for horses that live in mostly confined accommodations. There is not yet oxygen, blood flow, and fuel necessary to support the contraction-relaxation cycle that muscle fibers function with; asking muscles to engage immediately when the horse comes from his stall before these elements circulate would be essentially like choking them. In a resting state, only 15 percent of circulating blood is delivered to the horse's muscles, traveling instead to his organs and digestive system. During exercise, however, up to 85 percent of his blood circulates to his muscles. One of the goals of loosening up is to allow this shift to happen.*

*Once you have things moving inside the horse's body, it is time to begin the brisk activity of warming up. Here you want to begin asking the horse to stretch into contact but not be in a collected frame. **Cold and un-fueled muscle fibers, tendons, and ligaments are susceptible to over-stretching injuries.** Also, if there is tension in an antagonistic muscle group, suppling movements will cause inefficient use of the horse's body and contribute to side-dominance. It is best, physiologically, to spend the first five minutes of this phase with active forward movement in either trot or canter. Which gait you choose depends on each individual horse. Some are more balanced in the trot, others prefer to canter. The key here is to maintain an active gait with the goal of stimulating the skeletal muscles enough to force blood flow to them. This does not happen at a leisurely pace.*

*After 5 to 10 minutes of active movement, the skeletal muscles are warm enough to begin suppling exercises. These can include various sized circles, leg-yielding, turns. As this phase of warming up continues, progressively increase intensity of muscle output and suppling by using smaller circles and more difficult lateral movements. Be sure to make things more strenuous progressively. As you proceed from this stage, your warmup exercises should lead you directly into your planned workout for the day. This is to say that your warmup should flow seamlessly into your schooling session; **you should not take a break after your warm up.** At this point, the horse's muscles are able to contract more powerfully, which enhances the quality of his performance and ensures a better training or competitive session.*

The owner of the property, represented by Clint, says the fact that the Rodeo Board did not want or ask for an equine warm up area is a falsehood. It is an oversight and that needs to be fixed. The RFBVC asks the Planning Commission to require the rodeo to allow warm-up for the rodeo or any other equine event the use of the Flex Field in an area that is at least 60 ft wide and 150 Ft. long. A pathway access to the Flex Fields from the contestant area needs to be mapped, and this pathway must be roped off and safe from spectators. It will be the same pathway that takes the Guides and Outfitters and all the trail riders to the Upper North Mesa Trail.

**The use of the Flex Lawn for rodeo warm-up** would be a great and welcome addition but the plan needs to say this weekly rodeo use and the area needs to be available for special events when horses are involved. The backside of the lights over the grandstand lights will lite that riding area and provide a perfect place for shows like the Lipizzaner's to warm-up.

- **7. Lighting** – From our research, 70-foot-tall light standards are over kill. The RFBVC asks the lighting contractor to supply research that such tall standards are necessary. There also needs to be simple lighting near the water spigots, the parking lots, and anywhere there is activity for nighttime events. Planning now for the future makes sense.

Here are some MISSING ITEMS / safety items that are referred to in our 5.25.22 Report, and other issues came from the discussions that Marty Schulberger and Andy Worlines had at the site visit last week. The RFVHC feels strongly that if any of these items were left out of the plans by the Rodeo Board, this is oversight, not an agreement that rodeo contestants don't need them. We have also included a few additional items to consider.

1. The 4 bucking chutes are decades old and need REPLACEMENT. 4- 6 new chutes have been requested by the Rodeo Board but are not on the list for replacement
2. No seating/bleachers area for contestants nor their families
3. No milling around space/area for contestants before entering the arena while holding their horses.
4. No porta pottie area planned for in contestant area
5. No furnishings/outdoor seating area for grandparents watching children attend the rodeo special events and not one permanent bathroom is being built.
6. Where do the contestants change their clothes, in the wet and small porta potties?
7. The only handicap parking spots for the rodeo on these maps appear to be in the contestants truck/trailer parking lot and the wheelchair access from this area is not clear. Handicap parking is needed in the truck/trailer parking lot for handicapped rodeo family members, and it is also needed in the parking lot near the main entrance.
8. No maps include where the entry and exit for the rodeo arena tractors, water trucks and drags have been considered. There is no entry designated for the horse ambulance.
9. There are no water spigots near truck/horse trailer parking lot. These should be lite. No electrical boxes are seen near the truck/trailer parking lot. From spring to the end of fall that rodeo grounds could be bustling. Why is is not being designed for use?

- **ANOTHER IMPORTANT POINT** Priefert, who builds rodeo panels, was given the opportunity to come in and bid out a design. Because this is an important town, a gateway facility Priefert in their planning located their product around 2/3 of the rodeo arena circumference and placed their rodeo panels around it. As many as possibly could fit. This design decision must never have been questioned once by the Connect One Group, and had any one of you all asked a rodeo member, they would have seen that this design was and is unnecessary and has complicated the outcome. That's where we are at now.
- The one issue that is not being discussed is parking inside the Rodeo arena. This arena has been used in the past but parking is in dirt and mud. Paving inside the arena is problematic because prior to June you will have to move 50 dump trucks of dirt in and out to provide enough dirt for the footing. In the horse industry we do this for the rodeo and the horse shows at Madison Square Garden. It is difficult at best. The Garden owns the pile of dirt, and stores it in New Jersey.
- *TEN YEARS AGO THIS ARTICLE WAS IN THE ASPEN TIMES: "People love the simplicity and the honesty of the Western way of life. If you can take an evening and come with your family to enjoy it without having any worries — it's just simple, and people enjoy that," I see this rodeo continuing to get bigger and stronger every year. It has potential for unlimited growth. And particularly when the community and town rally behind us — it can be spectacular."*

- **RFVHC President Karin Reid Offield said during the public comment at the 6.15 meeting** that the arena is 46,000 square feet, it's now proposed as 53,873 sf which incl. pens chutes etc and "I am still curious how much of the square footage is for the spectators". **In the new documents**, they propose 31,243 sf – the bleachers are 6400 sf; food tent is 4000 sf; the bar tent is 1600 sf; the Bounce House is 400 sf+, leaving the spectators in this area 18,843 sf. to mill about. And we have all the missing items in the above list.

Generally, for a loose crowd — one in which each person is about an arm's length away from their nearest neighbor — requires **10 square feet per person**. A more tightly packed crowd fills closer to five square feet per person} At 18,843 SF now of space, not including tents and bleachers – that is about 8.5 SF pp.

So to conclude, it's not the amount of space in inches or feet around each human being that comes to the Snowmass rodeo – it's the nature of the venue – Is it comfortable to attend the rodeo? – Can we build a rodeo grounds that will stand the test of time and allow the valley cowboys and cowgirls to take part in Western Heritage Events for another 50 years - and will the build out of the Rodeo Grounds be safe for horse and cowboy athletes? Allowing the entry to be different from Vail, allowing the entry lands to be pastoral, full of horses and trail rides is a mighty goal. The RFVHC asks the Planning Commissioners to help the citizens – help the entry – save the lands for future generations. Snowmass is amazing in the winter, we see this amenity built correctly as the summertime crown jewel. A place for people to attend events, built correctly from the start. A place to admire when you drive in. The current plan shields our Western Heritage from view.

You have to see the big picture here. Has all the homework been done that is required to build a world class simple rodeo grounds in the Snowmass Valley?

**We conclude by saying the current plan being presented for Planning Commission Approval; or Approval with conditions; or a Denial is a plan with a ski lift that only goes up half of the mountain. We'd like to help fix it. A larger budget will help. Our citizens can help. The Ski Company can help.**

**We do not believe we can recommend a plan where “no one wins” which is what is being said by the owner (Clint), and the designer about the current plan.**

**Thank you all for your time and for listening. Karin Reid Offield**

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