

•
•
•
•
•
•
•

Hugh Q Smith
PO Box 155
Seldovia, AK 99663

hugh.hq@gmail.com

Ref: SELDOVIA RECREATIONAL SERVICE AREA

July 11, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to thank you for the time and effort you are putting in on the ordinance establishing the Seldovia Recreational Service Area.

Looking back to the first public meeting with Mayor Carry. I introduced the concept of forming a recreational service area. The question was. How do we keep the doors open on the former Boys & Girls Club building? To me, the only logical solution was to form a service area for the sole purpose of over seeing the utilization of the building.

After the public hearing on July 7, 2011, I asked myself. Did we hear from the vocal minority or the silent majority? My gut feeling is that it was the vocal minority.

Several participants mentioned trails. It is my strong belief that if trails are mentioned in the ordinance, it will guarantee defeat by the voters. I see no need to alter the language of CHAPTER 16.55.090 BOARD – POWERS & DUTIES. As I interpret chapter 16.55.090, outdoor activities are included as long as they are based out of the Seldovia Community Center. Trails are an outdoor activity. Thus, they are included if the board so desires. If chapter 16.55.090 was altered to include the word trails, it would be defeated by the voters.

CHAPTER 16.55.020 makes reference of a mill rate not in excess of 1.0 mill. When the voting property owners calculate what 1.0 mill equates to on their \$100,000 to \$200,000 home, what will their response be? In the public, I am very supportive of the ordinance but come election day, will I vote to increase my tax bill by \$700 to \$1,000?

If the mill rate could be scaled back for the first year, it would be much more palatable for the voters. I realize that there are several fixed cost. One of which is heating which I believe could be substantially reduced with a few modifications.

It would be my recommendation that the first year of operation be subsidized with local fund raising activities or higher user fees.

Again, let me thank you for your time and effort you are putting in on the ordinance.

Sincerely,

Hugh Q Smith

• • • • •

RECEIVED

JUL 12 2011

KPB - Clerks Office

P.O. Box 88
Seldovia, AK
July 8, 2011

Service Area Committee
Kenai Peninsula Borough
144 N. Binkley St.
Soldatna, AK 99669

Dear Assemblymen Haggerty, Smith and Tauriainen

After speaking to the importance of the proposed Seldovia community center at the meeting you convened here last night, I got home and realized that speaking from partially formed and incomplete thoughts probably only evidences a partially formed and incomplete mind. Believing the subject more important than leaving you with only that impression, I thought I would risk the written word as a more reliable vehicle for expressing my belief that this community center is critically important to the people of Seldovia.

I thanked you and your colleagues last night for coming here, and wish to thank you again for doing so. I know that you and all those in your party probably had the opportunity to do a lot more interesting and enjoyable things on a pleasant summer evening in Alaska than come to Seldovia to hear about our proposed community center. I think, however, it was important for you to do so, and your sacrifice is appreciated.

First of all, by coming here you got to see the building itself, so that with only a little imagination you could envision how perfectly this building would serve the purposes proposed for its use. To waste this asset, when the community so badly needs something of this nature for its collective well being and the individual well being of its citizens, would perhaps not be a tragedy, but I think it would certainly constitute a sad failure on the part of all of us to serve the needs of others, as well as ourselves, when that is possible and appropriate.

Secondly, by traveling here you got a sense of what it's like to live in a community that is not on the road system. It isolates us physically and culturally. We have to fly or take a boat to access the majority of cultural and commercial opportunities which you take for granted as only being a couple of miles down the road. We can't drive to a movie or a concert, a pool hall or a string quartet recital, a museum or an adult education course, or all the other things that are generally available to those who live where you do. A lot of people give a lot of their time and effort to bring some of those things here for our benefit, but a physical plant like the one available would greatly facilitate the delivery of those opportunities and make them more available to people of all ages and means.

Traveling to the other side of Kachemak Bay to participate in classes, social events, and other events similar to those that might be held in this community center is generally prohibitive from a number of points of view. It costs too much. As I said at the meeting, it adds a hundred dollars to my vet bill each time I take the dog to Homer. Often it's not possible because of weather to make the journey. It adds hours to any task when one has to cross the bay to complete that task. That same time and expense would be added to any social or educational event I chose to attend across the bay. It's true that those who choose to live here have accepted to a degree the deprivation that obtains in the choice, but the hardship of the choice can be and should be ameliorated where it is reasonably possible.

There is a seasonal isolation here as well. In the summer the woods are full of visitors, guests, family members and tourists who descend upon the town and keep its citizens busy with their seasonal businesses and the company that arrives and needs to be cared for. When the visitors leave, the restaurants close and the weather discourages travel along the roads, it gets dark and a bit lonely and depressing. I spent my first complete winter here last winter at my home located 6 ½ miles out of town on the road to Jakolof Bay. The winter solstice is not a happy event. After I burned a cord of wood, drank a bottle or two of old popskull, and read a yard and a half of books, I found myself trying to make friends with ducks. A community center would, I think, bring the community together in a healthy way and provide social outlets that don't presently exist.

This is a divided community to a great extent – divided along racial, cultural and economic lines. The native community and the non-native community exist side by side rather than together, and the longer I am here, the less and less they cross that divide to share communally. I sense that there is only real animosity in a few individuals in each community, and the rest simply live with it. Like having a goat in your living room, it's not pleasant, but, after awhile, you get used to it. The abraded interface is real, however, and for some, and probably most of us, it is a source of great sadness. A community center that belonged to all, delivered pleasure to all, and brought people from all backgrounds together to share in something worthwhile might make a real difference.

I hope you will use your good will, intelligence and political experience to help make this community center a reality for Seldovia and all its citizens.

Sincerely,



Mark C. Rowland