



PO Box 1544
Hood River, OR
97031
www.hrvrc.org

President

Polly Wood
541-490-5443

Vice President

Heather Staten
541-490-5225

Board Members

Ron Cohen

Peter Cornelison

Margo Earley

Scott Franke

Judie Hanel

Jeff Hunter

Nick Kraemer

Larry Martin

Mike McCarthy

Administrative Assistant

Kristyn Fix

Eric Walker
Senior Planner
Hood River County

July 11, 2014

Comments on amended DeeTour application

Re: Apollo Land Holdings application for Commercial Land use permit #13-0216 to construct an amphitheater for outdoor music concerts, festivals, weddings and other commercial events.

Dear Mr. Walker:

Since providing our initial comments (dated February 3, 2014), the proposal has been significantly reduced in scale. The concert pavilion has been reduced from 8,589 square feet to 2,250 square feet and most importantly, the parking areas have been dramatically reduced by eliminating the parking lots on the west side of the Hood River (a reduction from 2,500 to 437 parking spaces).

These changes go a long way towards alleviating many community concerns about the impact of the project on the quality of life for those living in the immediate area or along the traffic corridor.

While we are heartened by the reductions in scale, it is still a large project with a range of possible negative impacts on the surrounding area. We encourage the county to carefully review the project for compliance with the criteria of Site Design Standards Section 31.60:

“At the time of new development, or change of use, the applicant shall demonstrate:

A. Site access will not cause dangerous intersections or traffic congestion. They will have adequate visibility for motorists and pedestrians and will be kept at the minimum needed for safe ingress and egress. Roadway capacity, speed limits and number of turning movements shall all be considered.

B. The storm drainage or natural drainage system will handle the increased runoff created by the new development.”

Traffic

We continue to have concerns about the impacts of the development on traffic. The reduction in parking lot size likely causes a similar reduction in traffic but only if parking is truly limited to the proposed 437-space parking lot. The County should make clear that the area previously proposed for 2,500 parking spaces on the west side of the river is not available for lawn or overflow parking. The Operations Plan calls for use of buses and the train to get customers to and from the site. We generally encourage the use of mass transit but it is unclear from the application materials how many customers will be arriving via mass transit and the total capacity for the site.

Appendix III states that the 4.8-acre site could physically accommodate 13,940 people. It also states that occupancies over 6,000 require a safety review by the Fire Marshall. How many people are proposed for the venue at one time? Our suggestion is to limit capacity to 2,000 people (a full parking lot of about 1,500 people plus another 500 people arriving on the train or buses).

The DKS May 30, 2014 Traffic Memorandum understates existing traffic at the site. Their traffic count was conducted on December 14 and 15, 2013, dates that are not a good proxy for summer traffic. Whatever “winter recreation peaking” there is on Hwy 281, it is a fraction of summer peaking and doesn’t account for traffic to Lost Lake which is closed in the winter. We understand that ODOT will be submitting comments on the proposal. We request the opportunity to comment further based on the content of agency letters.

Noise and Light

The applicant’s May 18, 2014 Operations Plan states their events will end at 11 pm but the county needs more specifics. Does that mean the music will stop at 11 pm? All the customers will be gone by 11 pm? Between 10 pm and 7 am, the County’s Noise Ordinance becomes much more restrictive with a threshold of just “plainly audible” from neighboring residences enough to trigger a violation.

The lighting plan calls for very powerful mobile light towers capable of illuminating 7 acres. The lighting should be downcast or shielded as much as possible to minimize impacts to neighbors. More information about the lighting plan is needed.

Stormwater

There is no detail on how storm water will be managed on the parking lot. Although the parking lot is planned for an area with existing concrete, the *quality*, if not the quantity, of the storm water run-off will be impacted by using the area for parking 437 cars. Runoff from parking lots contains oil, grease, metals, coolants and other toxins. Storm water runoff is responsible for nearly 50% of pollution in our nations rivers. This is a particularly pristine stretch of the Hood River, home to native runs of Endangered Species Act listed salmon and steelhead. Additionally, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs operates a fish hatchery south of the project on Red Hill Drive. The fish from their hatchery program migrate past the concert site. Until a more detailed storm water plan is submitted, it is impossible to review whether the proposal meets the site design standards of the code.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the project,

Polly Wood, President
Heather Staten, Executive Director