



ERNIE AND KAREN STRAUCH
148 CATHEDRAL LANE
SEDONA, AZ 86336
ERNIESTRAUCH@MAC.COM
KARENSTRAUCH1@MAC.COM
(928) 282-6666

January 7, 2019

Ms. Tammy DeWitt
Yavapai County, Planning Department
Development Services,
10 S. 6th. Street, Cottonwood, AZ 86326

Re: El Rojo Grande Ranch Development Proposal - Supplemental Letter (New Topics)

Dear Ms. DeWitt, Commissioners and Supervisors,

I write to express concern over a strange process issue concerning citizen engagement and participation when a development proposal is under consideration. A "Catch 22" circle of "passing the responsibility" ensues, which essentially blocks meaningful public input into the most significant of issues. True, one can comment on the less significant issues, but... here's an example of what happens:

A developer submits a Conceptual Plan for a zoning related matter. We have been told that matters relating to traffic, water supply and waste disposal are not really considered at the county level, as state agencies (ADOT, ADWR and ADEQ respectively) have the responsibility to determine if the developer is in compliance with state laws and regulations. Once the state agency issues their finding, the matter appears to be settled.

So, it would seem incumbent upon a citizen with vast knowledge of the particular situation to contact the state agency. When doing so, the state agency in all cases declares that since this is only a Conceptual Plan (with minimum detail) that does not even have zoning approval, they will not spend time, money and effort into researching and rendering any specific agency approval UNTIL THE ZONING REQUEST IS GRANTED.

Of course, once the re-zoning request is granted, one moves into final drawings that only need to comply with county land use and building codes for Permits to be granted. There does not appear to be public input into the Permit process, nor, in truth should their be. Permitting needs to be a legal process, not a political one.

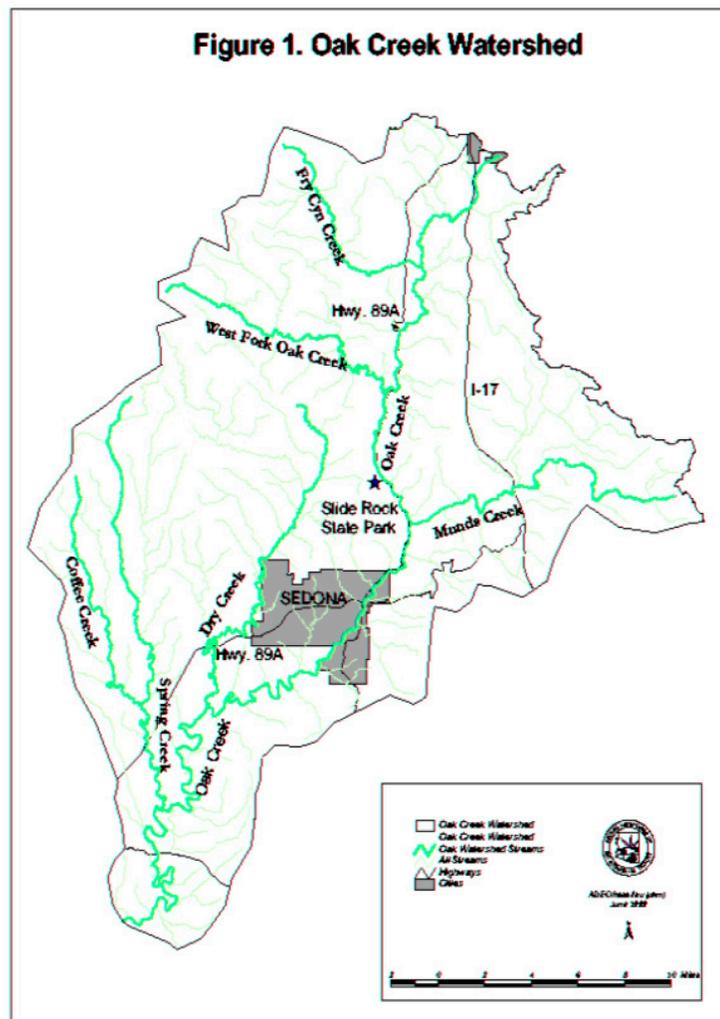
The entire process relies on an assumption that the State of Arizona Departments are all-knowing, progressive with the science behind all current policies, and have funding sufficient to carry them out. None of these statements are true, therefore the public MUST be given the opportunity to challenge such things as the science behind the certification of a 100 year water supply, or the certainty that wastewater injected ostensibly below an aquifer will never percolate upward.

Finally, I have 5 years experience working directly with ADOT on the SR 179 project (2000-2006) as a member of the "Scoping Committee", the "Consultant Selection Committee" and finally a 3-year member of the 7-Agency, 14 member "Executive Team". I can assure you that a comprehensive study of crashes on 179 always grouped the crashes at the site of a traffic signal (i.e., Jacks Canyon and Bell Rock Blvd). ADOT's original plan was to leave the (then current) 4 signals and add 3 more. The result of increasing from 2-4 lanes, increasing speeds from 35-50

(increasing road noise, requiring sound walls, and consuming more fuel), plus the addition of choke and crash points (decreasing safety and increasing serious injury) had the final net effect of saving 23 seconds on an average trip from Forest Service HQ to the "Y" - ADOT statistic. The point...just because ADOT engineering says the fastest way between 2 points is a straight, fast line (23 seconds?), does not mean that they have even considered the impacts on a community. We, the people, **MUST RELY upon our local officials** to place a "context" into an otherwise cold, Maricopa, formula. ADOT and FHWA now designate this as "**Context Sensitive Solutions**".

I plead with you to **give credence to those who raise concerns** about both traffic congestion (from experience) and traffic safety (from statistical data). Also those who raise concerns about water supply (has Cottonwood ever imposed water use restrictions?) due to long-standing draught conditions that may get significantly worse with continuing Climate Change? And, those who raise issues regarding wastewater disposal because ADEQ itself proclaims a limitation on resources. Are you totally OK with the following, helpless official statement?

“Oak Creek's status as a Unique Water requires a comprehensive water quality and hydrologic monitoring program. During the course of developing this TMDL, several deficiencies have been observed in the available data. Stakeholders should work together with ADEQ to fill the data gaps and develop a comprehensive understanding of the watershed. The following suggestions for monitoring are intended to help develop a plan to fill the existing data gaps. Unfortunately, ADEQ does not have the resources to conduct this type of monitoring by itself and suggests that local groups research the possibility of using grants to pay for such monitoring.” **ADEQ Oak Creek Watershed Analysis, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), Page 3.**



Please understand that "Dry Creek" is NOT a dry wash! It is a "seasonal stream" that is considered by ADEQ as a tributary to Oak Creek. If ADEQ does not have the resources to study the effects, then the citizens of YAVAPAI COUNTY must **rely upon you** to listen and reasonably consider our well considered concerns - especially from local residents who have experienced and recorded the significant impact from floodwaters of "Dry Creek".

Question: Will Yavapai County continue to rely on opinions generated by Arizona Departments headed by political appointees, and staffed by career employee residents of Maricopa County?

I will end this letter with a paragraph quoted from the Verde Valley Regional Land Use Plan, Section II, page 3:

Ownership/Development Patterns

*“Above all, it should be remembered that **no landowner** -- whether the property is located in an incorporated municipality or in an unincorporated area of the County -- **is automatically entitled to rezoning**. First, the proposed use must be consistent with the adopted city or county General Plan. **Second, the applicant must show that the suggested development benefits the community and does not overburden the infrastructure**. Also, the project should be demonstrated to be in accord with the principles of this Regional Plan.”*

We respectfully request that you deny the request for a Zone Change to a Planned Area Development, based upon an **excessive burdening of infrastructure** to residents of Yavapai County, both living closest "upstream" (Sedona - impacted by traffic), and those living "downstream", (Cottonwood and Camp Verde - impacted by water use and wastewater pollution).

Sincerely,

Ernie and Karen Strauch

148 Cathedral Lane

Sedona, AZ 86336

928-282-6666