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March 15, 2007
Storey County Planning Commission
P.O. Box 526
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Dear Planning Commission Members:

I attended the Cordevista presentation by Blake Smith on Saturday, March 10, 2007, at the Virginia City Highlands Fire Station. The views expressed there have caused me to think deeply about whether we should open the door to development of more open space in Storey County. In talking with my neighbors, I agree that approving the initial zoning change would seriously impact our current way of life – both in the Highlands and in Virginia City. If Cordevista does not succeed, another development soon will. Following are the reasons I'm against the re-zone:

THE HIGHLANDS IMPACT

Several friends of mine own 40 acre parcels in the Highlands They bought large tracts of land there for a reason. They do not seek more amenities, theme parks, shopping, paved roads, and restaurants. Instead, they have spent thousands of dollars on building access roads and mountain top homes. They invest years of work and take many personal risks to complete these roads and to create such homes. In making peace with "last great open space in Northern Nevada" the residents face unacknowledged dangers: wildfires, dry wells, impassable roads, wild animals, communication problems. They don't necessarily want the problems to go away because the existence of the problems insures the continued existence of what they love.

My friends moved to the Highlands because they have a common vision: a private retreat at the end of a long road, at a distance from civilization, and surrounded by open space, wild animals, silence and solitude. If residential subdivisions are allowed to clog the countryside, my friends who have worked and invested their lives and fortunes in this lifestyle will lose everything they've worked for.

The current zoning, which honors the needs of the "40-acre-parcel personalities" should stand. When they invested in the land, they also bought into the vision, and they counted on current zoning to protect that vision. Their work and their vision should be respected. **Let the current zoning stand.**

NO RE-ZONE FOR CORDEVISTA

If the Tahoe Regional Industrial (TRI) park needs housing for their workers, they should consider other options, such as:

- 1) Group new housing subdivisions, including office and commercial space, near the Painted Rock, Lockwood, or currently developed TRI industrial areas, or
- 2) Re-zone other TRI properties, within the 102,000 acres already designated light industrial that could be used for residential and commercial purposes.

Notwithstanding the Highlands issues, it is not wise to target lands for development that are located in the middle of a huge open space. (This kind of development has been illegal in Oregon for years.) Further, since Storey County has locked up 102,000 acres for TRI industrial development, most of which may not be developed for decades, it is wrong to further cut up the area by re-zoning additional lands for Cordevista.

VIRGINIA CITY IMPACT

I believe that if the Storey County Planning Commission votes to recommend zoning changes necessary to facilitate the Cordevista development, we will end up losing the most precious things we love about living here: open space, views, peace and quiet, clean air and abundant water supply.

In Virginia City, we will see a loss of control in every aspect of our lives because the new residents will soon be able to out vote us. Their needs will be different. Their values will be different. They will not understand or value the historical emphasis, or our preference for minimal services, and for maximum quiet and privacy. They will want the new City of Cordevista to offer goods and services which we feel are unnecessary, cluttering our relatively simple lives with overwhelming consumerism.

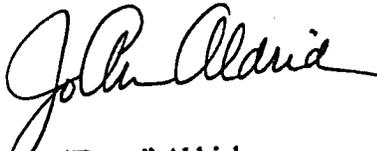
I want Virginia City to look and feel as it always has: a Western mining town from the 1800s, set on the slope of a mountain side, scarred by erosion, pocked with abandoned mines, regularly visited by herds of wild horses and bands of coyotes. A joyful place to play, party, have a smoke, get married, have a drink, read and discuss the news, or just sit and talk. A place to remember the old ways, before the dictates of technology and urban sprawl interfered with our direct connections to people and to the land. The mountain side location, sunny weather, distant mountain views, and historical orientation all contribute to a unique environment.

Once we gamble away our control of this fast-vanishing landscape, we risk becoming like every other little town in America steam-rolled by big business and frisked by carpet-baggers. Because we treasure our own 100-mile views of the great Nevada emptiness, we understand why the Highlanders are upset. We, too, thrive on the crisp-to-fierce high-mountain winds, blowing over the rugged landscape, the silent snows in winter, and the dark nights bejeweled with planets, moon, and stars – and we accept the physical labor it takes to maintain homes that honor those joys.

If Cordevista development goes forward, the naked views which sustain us just by being there – lands that nourish all of us, from the horses, the goats, the young explorers, the hikers, the jeep posses, to the gruff old miners – will soon be gone forever. Once robbed of our dreaming spaces, our vision places, will the frontier spirit and the bones of the old town survive? No . . . I think not. . . because we will no longer have control over our destinies or over the fate of Virginia City.

You, the Storey County Planning Commission, hold our fate in your hands.

Please do the right thing,



JoAnn "Rusty" Aldrich

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