

LOT 111

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IDAHO PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

33588 North Kelso Drive
Spirit Lake, Idaho 83869

October 30, 2013

Idaho Public Utilities Commission
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0074

RE: CASE NO. SPL-W-13-01 ORDER NO. 32904

In reviewing your order, I was overwhelmed to read that after twenty-five years of ambient neglect by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission, and Kootenai County Commissioners to see that the Enforced Spirit Lake East Plat, which avoided Public Review as a Planned Unit Development, lacks a basic fire protection plan. An item that should have been considered by the Kootenai County Commissioner's in their approval of the Plat in August 1978, shortly before new zoning regulations would become effective.

Whether this lack of review was a matter of concern regarding the Developers failure to comply with Veterans Administration's Circular 34 in 1976 is a matter of conjecture. The Veterans' Administrations routinely disapproved loan applications in the Plat until this authority was transferred to the Denver Center with the subsequent degradation of the Boise Office. It took the influence of two Senators and our present Governor, then a Congressional Representative, to obtain even the courtesy of an acknowledgment from Director Smith. At that time all VA records relating to the Spirit Lake East Plat were lost or destroyed. VA Loan approval commenced in the Spring of 2001 without explanation.

Although the Developer designated the Spokane Circle a picnic area and provided for the storage of fire trucks. Said firehouse to be owned by the Spirit Lake Fire Protection District and the area containing the firehouse to be deeded to the SLFPD, with a provision the remainder of the Circle be developed into a park. This action was never accomplished and the Deeded area was returned to the SLEHOAINC in 2003.

In late 1994, I was asked by the Corporation's President to research the possibility of adapting the water system to incorporate some degree of fire protection. I contacted David Levno at Hanson Industries in January 1995 to discuss the matter. Mr. Levno was the architect of the system. He informed me there was a six inch connection at the Well House, which would accept a fire hose connection. In order to provide some degree of area compatibility he suggested a more likely approach would be a conversion of the fifteen, 2 inch blow offs to accept the fire responders equipment. One blow off is located in the Treeport Plat. The standpipes are generally located at the ends of the roads around the development perimeter as indicated on the map he provided.

There was a possibility the blow off pipes could be protected and modified to accommodate and support a fire hose connection. My experience with the City of Spokane as Materials/Project Engineer indicated that though possible it was unlikely to be adequate, would require considerable physical protection and would require further checking with the Spirit Lake Fire Protection District. The water lines in the Plat vary from 2" to 10" with the major runs occurring in the 4, 6 and 8 inch, approximating 119,000 feet. All lines appear to be bedded with native materials rather than specified bedding.

Mr. Levno explained the water system had been designed to supply water for "Residential" purposes only and no provision had been made for delivery in a fire prevention system. In my experience, having been involved in Plat review at the municipal as well as State level, I failed to see that as an acceptable basis for approval, even in Idaho. Mr. Levno explained that fire prevention was addressed by a plan to develop the Spokane Circle into a "Fire Station" at which a fire truck and other fire fighting equipment would be made stored. In retrospect this never happened, the project was abandoned by the SLFPD.

I asked if the possibility of providing at least one standard fire hydrant in each of the Circles had ever been considered. He responded that the prospect of adding hydrants to the present system whether stand pipes or hydrants would present two problems. Fire protection systems generally require the double loop system to insure supply at any given hydrant. The system doesn't provide for alternative routing and the cost of installing the additional lines was prohibitive. The second problem was providing adequate pressure, Mr Levno explained the

present system was unable to provide a sufficient supply of water to meet present day fire codes, (fill in the blanks). We agreed there was an additional problem, the inability to maintain free access in all weather conditions. Winter conditions and snow removal preclude the reading of even the installed residential meters, approximately five months of the year.

Mr Levno outlined several alternatives available to SLEHOAINC for providing their own protection as well as the possibility of the purchase of an available 25,000 gallon tank. He indicated the Company had upgraded one of the pumps to the 6 inch pipe, previously mentioned. Many of these provisions had been discussed and discarded by the Board.

I contacted Chief Hoffman, Spirit Lake Fire Department on two occasions to confirm the capabilities of the Department in responding to fires in the Plat. Chief Hoffman was very cooperative and positive about the Departments capabilities. There were two Class A Pumper Trucks with 1000 gallon capacity and two 1500 Gallon Tanker Trucks available, however these were split between Spirit Lake and the Blanchard Fire Station. The estimated response time from Spirit Lake was 5 to 10 minutes depending upon the location in the Plat. I felt this was overly optimistic based on my own experience.

Chief Hoffman expressed several concerns and provisions of assistance which were relevant to my inquiry, actions to be taken, materials on fire prevention relative to the fact that the Plat had been the victim of a large area fire in the 1970' s prior to its acquisition and development by the Hanson Corporation, and access to materials to be provided to the Homeowners' Association. These items which are important, but are not germane to this letter, can possibly be obtained from our Corporate records. It should be noted that one of the Chief's primary concerns was the need to maintain GREEN SPACE surrounding the residence. Our discussion focused primarily on individual structure fires. In the event of a forest fire the Department's goal would be to safeguard those structures most threatened and where there was a reasonable chance of success without jeopardizing lives and equipment. The secondary objective would be to clarify routes for evacuation in the event of a failure to contain the fire. One of his first actions would be to contact the various other County, State and Federal fire fighting authorities.

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As a postscript, it should be noted that the residence on Lot 31, Coeur d'Alene Drive, responded to by the Department, burned to the ground in the Winter, with a considerable amount of snow on the ground. The fire originated on the back porch. The residence was located approximately 1200 feet from the Well Site, Lot 20-1. The Tanker had to return to 10th Avenue in Spirit Lake to replenish, a distance of approximately one and a half miles.

I am interested in learning what guidelines your "engineering staff" may have provided the Spirit Lake East Water Company in the undertaking of such a daunting mission and look forward to your April deadline.



Robert A. Costigan
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Cc: Spirit Lake East Water Company
Spirit Lake East Homeowners' Association Inc.
Kootenai County Commissioners