

*The other side of the story...*

## Neighborhoods Matter

In groups, folks naturally look out for each other. If the group is your neighbors, ignoring them can lead to problems. Forcing unwanted change on the neighborhood will definitely ruffle feathers.

Save Historic Jackson Hole supported the Raptor Center years ago, and when they recently asked us to weigh in again on their behalf, we did. They do good work. But we should have looked deeper.

When you're in a historic building, on a historic site, in a small town that values its historic identity, you can't just ignore that. You need to care about your neighbors, just as you want others to care about you.

Caring is a two way street. Before the Raptor Center invested so much time soliciting support for their expansion, they should have talked more with their neighbors. They should have reached out and probed local sensitivities, and searched for common ground.

Since that wasn't done, it's turned into a big community brouhaha. Lines are drawn; people are forced to take sides. If you talk things out you can often reach a 'win-win' solution. Now the Valley is in a 'win-lose' wrestling match.

Without rehashing all the details: The intent of the donors and the underlying agreements don't support the Raptor Center's proposal. No matter how good the Raptor Center's people are and how wonderful their work is, we all must live by our agreements. There is more that could be done to preserve this historic site.

The Raptor Center is special, but it's dangerous to get so wrapped up in your 'specialness' that you forget others. The others may feel just as special. They may indeed be just as special.

The 'specialness' pitfall infects our electeds too. Town is rezoning Districts 3 to 6 without much regard for the folks who live there.

Town electeds feel compelled to follow a 'special' line in a 'special' Comp Plan: 'House 65% of workers locally'. It's a bogus requirement from a Plan voters never had a chance to vote on. It's not the people's Plan.

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*Caring is a two-way street  
in every neighborhood*

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Town now tells local homeowners, the zoning rules in your neighborhood will change: What would you like to see? And they offer up several 'big-growth' options in a questionnaire.

What if a community likes their neighborhood the way it is? Maybe they don't want to change the density. That's not an option. They're not being asked if they want their neighborhood to change. They're being told that it will change.

Town electeds are bullying voters into dense zoning that will destroy some neighborhoods. They're acting like rulers, not representatives.

Our electeds hire consultants that create overly complex surveys, that aren't scientific, and deliver conclusions the voters don't like. They're manipulating the voters.

Politicians were elected to serve, not to manipulate and dictate.

Groupthink is pervasive in local government. It's why the electeds felt comfortable approving the Housing Action Plan, knowing it's not the will of the voters. The electeds are 'special' so it was ok. Their group-think is a tyranny of conformity.

When everybody thinks the same, somebody's not thinking. Differences are natural; it's called diversity. Groupthink is unhealthy. 'Collusion against the voters' is wrong.