

The other side of the story...

Must the Show Go On?

It was learned at press time that the proposed concert for South Park was called off due to scheduling issues with the band. Still, the reasoning behind the decision to allow the event in the first place is questionable.

Noise, traffic and massive crowds were headed to South Park after our county commissioners approved what could have been the biggest event to ever be held in Jackson Hole.

A concert promoter proposed bringing 20,000 Grateful Dead fans to hear the new band, Dead & Co. on August 18-19. It would have been a good weekend to be out of town.

At the peak of tourist season, when traffic is at its worst, do we really want an extra 20,000 visitors?

This approval was another important vote made with only 3 commissioners present. And it was another decision made in defiance of staff recommendation, which was to deny the event.

Our county administrator said it would create a nuisance that could not be mitigated. But the three electeds said it was something to be endured by the few for the benefit of the many.

Apparently the 'many' our electeds had in mind were the visitors, the concert goers, not the residents of Jackson Hole they represent.

It was a selfish choice, an over-the-top decision favoring the endless promotion of a Jackson Hole that is already over-promoted.

There was a key line in the last Comp Plan, "We are a community first and a resort second." Is that still the case? Apparently not.

This mega-event was to take place along South Park Loop in the rural zone, under a special clause allowing a property owner to hold up to three special events a year.

Modest sized events like weddings and family reunions were envisioned for these rural zone carve outs. But our current commissioners have much grander designs, and they will have to live with the fallout.

Unfortunately, all of us might have to live through their bold experiment in the future. Staff understood the risks, our electeds didn't. We need to be more careful when we vote.

Apparently no consideration was given for the rural ambiance of the neighborhood. Heaven only knows how 20,000 people would be expected to access a venue off a two-lane country road.

But some were probably pleased by the approval. The "One-Voice," the Chamber, our electeds, and local media usually agree: Growth is good. Sales tax collection is apparently their #1 priority.

Most residents want a livable Jackson Hole; that's their #1. Ask yourself, do our electeds represent the people or rule over them?

It's hard to see this approval as anything but a character-changing initiative by our electeds. Approving an event for 20,000 using a regulation intended for a gathering of 200 is an insult to local residents. Hopefully, community-minded individuals will take note and run for office.

If voters aren't fed up already, they soon will be. Local political shenanigans can't go on forever.

*Do we really want an
extra 20,000 visitors?*
