Rec’d from Keith Watts, April 12, 2022

To:  Boulder Planning Commission,

After reading the Fogel-Fuller subdivision application, I have a concern about cross contamination of Boulder Farmstead (BF) domestic water system with unpurified water from the Boulder Irrigation Company (BIC).  I also have concerns about fire protection.

The Fogel/Fuller Subdivision application states:

*Ordnance 152.041 (3) - Fire Protection - All lots new and proposed are within 400 feet of a hydrant however the definition of and requirement for a hydrant are unclear. In 2020 we installed a 3” pressurized water line buried along most of the nearly 2,300 foot long new road with hydrant risers every few hundred feet for general and irrigation use, as well as for fire protection. The hydrants are all fitted with standard 2” fire hose fittings. This line is fed by irrigation water when we have it, and can be fed by culinary water for fire control if needed by rotating a couple valves. We met with Pete Benson in 2020 and he approved our approach for the new house and barn when we obtained building permits. The new lot is on Lower Boulder Road with a fire hydrant nearby so this may not be an issue.*

The Fogel-Fuller Fire Plan (see attached) notes that the BIC system in lower Boulder has a very high pressure (120 psi) that probably exceeds the pressure maintained in the BF water system and could result in backflow and contamination of our domestic water supply by unpurified irrigation water.  I am also concerned that the water well near their existing residence also might be vulnerable, potentially contaminating Boulder’s aquifer.  I don’t know if the existing valves mentioned in the applications and fire plan have adequate backflow preventers or a failsafe valve system that would prevent cross contamination of domestic water supplies by untreated irrigation water.  It would alleviate my concerns if you could examine their water systems and make sure that cross contamination cannot occur.

Regarding the Fire Protection Plan, I don’t think that it is a good idea to set a precedent of allowing the part-time BIC water to be considered adequate for fire protection.  As stated in the application, the irrigation water is only available between April through October.  However, on numerous occasions during the irrigation season, the Lower Boulder irrigation system has been shut down; for repairs or when the irrigation pond runs dry due to the drought (sometimes non-functional for many days).  During the winter and when the irrigation system is not functioning, I am not sure that the 7HP pump system shown on the attached Fire Plan can be relied upon to pump water from the small pond on the lower end of the Fogel-Fuller property.  The stated 80 PSI at  350 GPM flows from emergency pump would drop considerably as the water is pumped uphill; the highest hydrant is 76’ higher than the pond (resulting in a drop of 33 PSI).  If the pump doesn’t work due to lack of electricity or fuel, freezing conditions, or mechanical breakdown, the proposed fire protection system won’t work.  Fire protection is like insurance, it is only good if it can be counted upon to work all the time. What do you think of their proposed Fire Protection Plan?

When we moved to Boulder before the drought, fires were less of a concern.   Slickrock and green pastures surrounding our property seemed like adequate fire breaks.  Recently, several out  of control weed fires have occurred on the Fogel-Fuller property that have been very disturbing.  The first burned down fence posts along our property boundary, another out-of-control fire burned the old llama shed at the east end of their pasture, and a third brush fire torched a pinion pine tree frighteningly close to our property.  A huge night-time bonfire to dispose of wood from Bevin’s collapsed pole barn was also worrying.  On several occasions, we have had to ask our neighbors to please stop burning weeds due to dangerously windy, hot and dry conditions. To their credit, they’ve complied when we’ve asked them to stop during unsafe conditions. With the tumbleweed problem this year, we have spent a lot of time burning tumbleweeds ourselves, safely contained in burn baskets with adequate fire breaks.  It worries us when workers on our neighbor’s property burn weeds in place without any fire breaks.  Given these concerns, we think that having an adequate fire protection system is important for the safety of our neighborhood.

I’d like to hear your thoughts on this.

Respectfully,

Keith Watts

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