

Dear Mayor Hanks, City Council Members, and Planning Commission Members,

I am writing in regard to Mike Derby's proposed 80-unit condo/hotel on Canyon Lake that will also include a winery, banquet facility, additional restaurant, and 250-space parking lot. This proposed expansion of the existing Chophouse has many residents concerned.

As you may know, there is only one entrance/exit to Chapel Valley. In case of fire, flooding, or other emergency, there is a strong possibility of traffic congestion at this entrance. Not only will the Chapel Valley residents have difficulty leaving the Valley, but emergency personnel will also have difficulty entering the Valley. This Valley has been evacuated in the past because of fire, and a recent flood approximately 10 years ago closed the bridge when the road was several feet under water. Mr. Derby's planned expansion would greatly aggravate an already dangerous situation.

It is the current policy of the City of Rapid City not to allow any additional houses to be built in Chapel Valley because it is considered to be at its maximum capacity. In fact, recently a proposal to add two more houses on currently undeveloped home sites in the Valley was rejected by the City due to the 40-unit rule. Mr. Derby's condo/hotel may not be considered housing, but it violates the intent of the law which is to protect the current 450 homes and their occupants in the event of an emergency.

Another concern is the fact that this project is located at the most well-used lake and park in the City. The lake front does not belong to Mike Derby; it is provided by the taxpayers. We pay for this lake and should have access to all of it. Currently, the portion of the lake in front of the Chophouse is seldom used by residents who are unsure of its ownership. The entire lakefront should be open for use by the citizens and not marketed by Mr. Derby as his resort on the lake.

This proposed resort would be located in the floodplain. This property is a few feet above Rapid Creek and has flooded many times in the recent past. The argument has been that it is okay to build structures in the floodplain as long as no one spends the night in any of them. Of course people will be spending the night at the condo/hotel. Also, flash floods can occur during the day and it is debris, not water that does most of the damage.

Another concern is the noise factor. By virtue of the fact that Chapel Valley is indeed a valley, sound is greatly amplified and is carried long distances. With the possibility of many hundreds of people occupying Mr. Derby's facility at any one time, this is a great concern to the residents of Chapel Valley as well as citizens using the park and the residents of the homes located above and around the lake. This would be a concern at all times of the year, but would intensify during the weeks of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

Many homeowners have settled in Chapel Valley because of the quality of life that is offered here. Chapel Valley is one of the best neighborhoods in Rapid City, home to a large number of teachers and leaders in our community. It is a beautiful place to live and raise children. It is a shame that one developer is attempting to ruin our quality of life for his own gain. For these reasons I am opposed to Mr. Derby's project and would appreciate your serious consideration of his plan when it is presented.

Sincerely,

Deborah A Bjelland

AUG 15 2008

Rapid City Growth
Management Department