



Re: River Bend Application

May 10, 2024

To: Members of the Planning & Community Development Commission; Lyons Board of Trustees, Town of Lyons Administration and Planning;

The Lyons Area Chamber of Commerce would like to **express support for the proposed enhancements to the River Bend venue** as spearheaded by Chris and Sarah Legh. In addition to representing the goals of the Chamber, their vision to transform River Bend into a premier year-round destination **clearly aligns with the Lyons Comprehensive Plan** adopted in January of 2023. Specifically, **“To create a healthy, year-round economy, Lyons must find ways to leverage existing resources to help local businesses, attract more visitors during the winter and spring, and expand opportunities for primary employers.”** (Page 33, Lyons Comprehensive Plan.)

Chris and Sarah Legh have showcased unwavering dedication to this endeavor, meticulously crafting plans to revitalize the venue, including the creation of a spectacular new event center. This transformation **not only promises to elevate Lyons' allure as a destination** but also stands poised to **attract much-needed visitors, particularly during our quieter winter months**. With projections estimating approximately 20,000+ annual visitors to River Bend, this initiative has the potential to catalyze substantial growth within our local economy.

Chris and Sarah have also been proactive in cultivating connections within the Lyons business community, ensuring that local enterprises (restaurants, florists, coffee shops, caterers, gift shops and art galleries, themuseum, yoga, pilates and massage, etc.) **stand to gain significantly from the heightened visitor traffic drawn to River Bend**. Collaboration and mutual support among businesses are fundamental drivers of economic prosperity and several business owners have expressed their desire to do just this. As Chamber leadership, we celebrate this spirit of collaboration and partnership.



We urge the Planning & Community Development Commission and the Board of Trustees to seriously consider and endorse these four proposed changes to the regulations that currently govern the property:

1. Increase the approved event center square footage from 4,000 sq ft to 6,000 sq ft.
2. Extend camping allowances beyond the current three-week limit.
3. Expand lodging capacity with the addition of ten tiny homes.
4. Grant permission for amplified music.

While we understand that approving amplified music may initially be challenged by neighbors, events that utilize amplified music will occur primarily on Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings. This is very similar to the nationally-recognized neighboring venue, Planet Bluegrass.

River Bend is the only venue in town that is currently prohibited from hosting amplified music - rectifying this inconsistency would promote equity and fairness within our business community. **The unique sound ordinance currently imposed on River Bend has pushed significant revenue outside of Lyons.** Permitting amplified music at River Bend will reverse the current loss of wedding clients to venues that reside beyond the greater Lyons area.

In addition, it is **essential to highlight that this project will impose minimal burdens on the town** in terms of parking, infrastructure, or finances and promises to **bolster the town's coffers through increased sales and lodging tax revenue all year long.**

In conclusion, we firmly believe that endorsement of Chris and Sarah Legh's proposed enhancements to River Bend support the goals of the **Lyons Comprehensive Plan**. Not only will it enhance our town's allure as a destination for weddings and year-round corporate events, but will also **stimulate economic activity and foster collaboration within our business community for all twelve months of the year.**

Perhaps it is said best by referring to **page 76 of the Lyons Comprehensive Plan** ("**Destination Entertainment - Characteristics.**")

Supports destination tourism as an important sector of the Lyons economy. These areas are intended to provide for a variety of entertainment activities, including concerts and cultural performances, indoor and outdoor wedding venues, and related ancillary uses such as the sale of food and beverages, and lodging.

Note that **the only two examples listed** are "**Planet Bluegrass, WeeCasa Resort.**"



The adjustments proposed are sensible improvements that would greatly benefit River Bend and our entire community. We implore the Planning & Community Development Commission and Board of Trustees to greenlight these changes.

With Gratitude,

Kristin Frances, Executive Director | Lyons Chamber of Commerce
Andrea Montoya | Board of Directors, Lyons Chamber of Commerce
Asa Firestone | Board of Directors, Lyons Chamber of Commerce
Bronwyn Muldoon | Board of Directors, Lyons Chamber of Commerce
Erin Foudy | Board of Directors, Lyons Chamber of Commerce
Kathleen Baer | Board of Directors, Lyons Chamber of Commerce
Sandra Haber | Board of Directors, Lyons Chamber of Commerce
Neil Sullivan | Board of Directors, Lyons Chamber of Commerce

Lyons business owners and residents who have provided their names in support:

Paul Dreyer, **Lyons Resident and Chair of the Lyons Economic Vitality Commission**
Craig Ferguson, **Planet Bluegrass**
Phillippa Clark, **Moxie Mercantile**
Dave Chase, **Redstone Cyclery**
Tony Miller, **Wildcat Mountaineering**
Chrystal & David DeCoster, **Western Stars Gallery**
Julie Hamilton, **Scope Accounting Solutions**
Allison Bozeman, **Bird Dog Partners**
Matthew Pearce, **Lumber Liquors**
Dan Siddall, **Gateway Realty**
Martina Mason, **Wild Grace Pilates**
Elizabeth Simmons, **Lyons Resident**
Danielle Zeillmann, **Lyons Resident**
Jennifer Rookey, **Lyons Resident**
Arn Hayden, **Lyons Resident**
Pamela Good, **Lyons Resident**