

June 13, 2024

To Lyons Mayor Hollie Rogin, Board of Trustees, and Town Staff,

Thank you for your time and for considering my concerns regarding the proposed changes to River Bend. I agree with all other aspects of the applicant's proposal except for outside amplified music.

As I'm sure you are already aware, the rock walls around River Bend ricochet even the slightest noise to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. I understand the applicant's argument to even the playing field with other venues, but in order to make things even you would need to start with an even physical location. River Bend's physical location is unique from all other venues so it requires unique zoning, which was already figured out and shouldn't change.

What kind of precedent are you setting if you change zoning that was already approved by a previous town board only because a new owner comes along who wants to make more money? And what kind of precedent are you setting if you allow a change that has already been proven to violate the current town noise ordinance?

When a kid comes to a parent and asks to do something just because everyone else is doing it, but the parent knows it's against the rules and also disruptive to a lot of people, should the parent just allow it anyway? Should the parent bend the rules around so that it's okay for the kid to do what he wants? You, like a good parent, have the power to change Lyons for the better and to listen to the residents who want to keep their homes as a peaceful refuge that's not blasted by annoying wedding music and DJs. If you want to even the playing field, please start by doing the right thing at River Bend and then working your way to the other venues.

I want local businesses to succeed and the local economy to thrive, but I'm not convinced that River Bend can only be successful with outside music amplification. Where's the unbiased proof that weddings, retreats and events can't be fully booked unless there is outside amplification?

If you do not sympathize with River Bend's human neighbors, perhaps you will show concern for its wild neighbors. Our property is sandwiched downstream between River Bend and the park. Many wild animals (bears, mountain lions, deer, foxes, raptors, etc) use our property as a peaceful corridor to access the river before retreating back up Indian Lookout Mountain. Do you really think they won't be disturbed by uncontrolled obnoxious music? Also, did you know that the only years the eagles did not nest in the park were 2014-15, when River Bend last had outside amplified music?

The wild beauty of the river and cliffs is why people want to get married or have retreats at River Bend. This natural habitat is part of the draw of this unique location, so it doesn't seem right that a Wildlife Habitat Assessment was prepared by the applicant's friend that has a narrow-minded focus. It uses technicalities to state that River Bend is surrounded by a highway and

development, when anyone who stands there and looks around knows that there is much more than that to this location. On the other hand, the Lyons Ecology Advisory Board carefully proposed a much more accurate report that takes in the full picture of this delicate ecosystem. When you are discussing a property that is in a wild riparian corridor, doesn't it make sense to look at the bigger picture? Which document do you think you should give more weight to?

Many concerned residents have signed a petition not wanting outside amplified music at River Bend (see your packet). However, in an attempt to come to a middle ground with the applicant, a group of neighbors has written up a list of compromises that we can live with (also in your packet). There's an easy solution here to keep everyone happy: keep the amplified music inside an enclosed, sound-proof building, and don't allow it until that building is built. Research and action also needs to focus on any other methods that would be useful in channeling music towards the audience and away from the cliffs, such as the direction any speakers are aiming.

Finally, I would like to clarify something to anyone who calls my husband and I hypocritical because of our relationship with the Lyons Den. Yes, we formally were one of the partners who were joint owners of that physical building as landlords. However, we did not own, control, or manage the restaurants that rented that space. In fact, we didn't agree with their outside amplification and the problems it caused for neighbors, and we were pushing for an enforceable noise ordinance at that time too. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Clara Thomas  
601 Indian Lookout Road