

ORIGINAL



0000099657

47

Arizona Corporation Commission- Docket No. L-00000F-09-0190-00144 - Case #144 - Vail to Valencia

Public Comment

Dear Chairman Foreman and Members of the Members of the Committee,

My name is J.J. Lamb and I write today to give you some insight into the delicate workings of historic preservation and building community partnerships.

Nearly three years ago, Elizabeth Webb and I began conversations with Cal Baker, another history buff, about the buildings near Kolb Rd. and I-10 located in the Vail to Valencia Project study area in regard to the 2008 Pima County Bond. I have included a letter written by Mr. Baker and a few photographs.

Two years ago, during a meeting to discuss historic preservation with our District 4 Supervisor Ray Carroll, Rita Ranch resident Mary Ann Cleveland, Elizabeth, an owner of an historic property who for privacy reasons shall remain nameless and I discussed various projects in our region and how they could fit into an overall plan. These buildings were discussed then as well.

We believe a Vail pioneer lived in one of the buildings as a boy when it was located in Vail, AZ in the forties.

More than a year ago, I spoke in front of the Line Siting Committee and asked to be added to the company stakeholder list for future projects. We were not. It should have come as no surprise to TEP/UNS Electric or its environmental planning group that the Vail Preservation Society has identified boundaries west to Wilmot Rd. Our boundaries were identified over two years ago in our strategic plan.

We have been working diligently with other companies to create community connections through local history.

I do not have any expectations about these buildings. I write only to point out they are in the project study area. It is also important to note today's idea of community is different than it was previously. Objects and buildings were moved in an interesting concept of recycling. Perceived boundaries were once much more expansive as were the boundaries of our founders' ranches-their "Empires".

Thank you,
Dated this 19th day of June 2009

J.J. Lamb
2954 E Cardenas Dr
Vail, AZ 85641
(520)419-4428

Arizona Corporation Commission

DOCKETED

JUN 22 2009

DOCKETED BY	
-------------	--

Pursuant to AAC R14-3-204
Original and 25 copies of the foregoing are filed with
Docket Control (26 copies)
Arizona Corporation Commission
1200 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-2927

RECEIVED
2009 JUN 22 A 10:45
AZ CORP COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL

Letter written by Calvin Baker, superintendent of the Vail Unified School District to members of the Governing Board & co-directors of the Vail Preservation Society on November 19th 2006 during 2008 Bond discussions about the historical significance of the aging buildings located between Kolb and Rita Rd, south of Interstate-10. This is in the Vail to Valencia study area.

Save Esmond Station

From: **Calvin Baker** (bakerc@vail.k12.az.us)
Sent: Sun 11/19/06 4:23 PM
To: E Webb (rinconvalleyis@hotmail.com)
Jim Coulter (coulterj@vail.k12.az.us); Margaret Burkholder (burkholderm@vail.k12.az.us); Deb King (Debkingvail@aol.com); Anne Gibson (gibsona@mindspring.com); Randy Kinkade (whatrukidn@yahoo.com); John Carruth (carruthj@vail.k12.az.us); Lu Ann Posey (poseyl@vail.k12.az.us); Al Flores (floresa@vail.k12.az.us)

Elizabeth,

I am writing to confirm our recent conversation regarding the importance of saving/restoring Esmond Station.

When the railroad first came through Southern Arizona in the early 1880's, a series of train stations were established along with it. Due to the technology of railroads and the nature of life at that time, one of these stations occurred every 10 to 20 miles along the track. Each station had a foreman's residence. Each station also usually included a depot and housing (either houses or a dormitory) for other railroad workers. Most of the stations had a water tower as well as some kind of warehousing facility.

In the mid-1900's railroad technology and life had changed to the point where these small stations were no longer necessary. In order to decrease assets, and thus property tax liability, the railroad eliminated the buildings from the property they owned. In brief, the stations disappeared.

Esmond Station was the exception. It was abandoned by the railroad in an earlier time period, when the track it was located on was also abandoned. The foreman's house remained, as well as a warehouse structure. The land it is located on became State Trust Land and a local ranching family occupied the foreman's house and made use of some of the other structures.

In addition to its unusual state of preservation, Esmond Station has another important claim to notoriety. In 1903 the worst train wreck in Arizona History occurred just northwest of Esmond Station (specifically the site of the current Fry's parking lot at Rita Road and Houghton Road). Reportedly, the wreck was caused by orders that were mishandled at Esmond Station. Restoration of the Esmond Station was on the 2004 bond list. In fact, the planned restoration of Esmond Station and the plans for an adjacent regional park and railroad bed trail system is one of the primary reasons why the Vail School District chose the current, adjacent site for Empire High School — just south of the Esmond Station. The school itself was given an historical name ("Empire" after the "Empire Ranch" that was active during the same time period Esmond Station was active).

Unfortunately, just prior to the 2004 bond, the foreman's house at Empire caught fire and burned. The fire was most likely set by vandals. With no historic house on site, the project seemingly lost appeal and was taken off the list.

The opportunity still exists, however, to save and restore this historical site. **A number of the distinctively designed foreman's houses do still exist. They are located just south and east of Kolb and I-10.** At least one of these houses could be purchased, moved to the Esmond site and restored. This project should not be delayed any further.

The mud adobe warehouse structure at Esmond Station was likely built in the 1800's. While it is badly damaged, most of it is still standing. The State Land Department did have it fenced in to protect it, but vandals have broken the fence. The wooden roof is ready to suffer the same fate as the foreman's house and much of the adobe is exposed to the weather. All of it is exposed to vandals. The foreman's houses by Kolb & I-10 also appear to be deteriorating rapidly. A fleeting opportunity exists to save and remember this critical part of Arizona History. The site could be part of the regional park, a feature of the trail system and a historical location to be studied by students from Empire and other local schools.

Attached please find the following picture:

1.. Site of the burnt foreman's house at Esmond.

If we do not act soon, the remaining pieces of these historical treasures will be gone forever.

Calvin Baker



Calvin Baker Photo- Burned Foreman House at Esmond Station



Photo taken June 2009 Kolb/I-10
Foreman Houses



This was the section foreman house where we lived. *[in Vail]* It was located on the north side of the north railroad tracks (about where the fiber optic facility is located). You can still see part of the house foundation. The photo is oriented to the west/northwest. You can also see a portion of the Trotter sister's house in the background. The handsome guy on the white donkey is Bill Allen and Billy Joe Henly on the darker donkey. He was a friend from Coolidge staying for a few days. *-Vail Pioneer Max "Bill" Allen*

We believe this is the same house now' located in the vicinity of the proposed project. East of Kolb Rd, West of Rita Rd, South of I-10 -Photo taken June 2009

