

October 21, 2019

Great Falls, Montana Neighborhood Council No. 5 Resolution 2019-001:

City government should formally evaluate the Big Sky Cheese plant/ Madison Park slaughterhouse proposal.

Whereas: The Neighborhood Councils were established to provide advisory input on all areas of government to the City Commission, City staff, City Boards and Commissions, and other government entities that affect their neighborhood.

Whereas: A Madison Food Park adjacent to our neighborhoods has been proposed that could profoundly and adversely affect our neighborhoods and the city.

Whereas: The original Madison proposal was for a slaughterhouse that would have employed as many as 3,000 workers, processing about 1,800 head of cattle, 9,200 hogs and 135,000 chickens daily while using an estimated 3.5 million gallons of water daily from the Madison Aquifer for operations.

Whereas: The original proposal has been amended to a Big Sky Cheese processing plant that has now been conditionally approved by the County Zoning Board. Many of the conditions are to regulate infrastructure and potential environmental damage to air and water quality.

Whereas: Big Sky Cheese has appealed nine of the 17 conditions.

Whereas: The county zoning change to permit the cheese factory opens the door to the reinstatement of a large slaughterhouse proposal in the future.

Whereas: Although the permit process is under the legal jurisdiction of the county, should the slaughterhouse come to pass, the city of Great Falls will be adversely affected in the following areas: infrastructure, traffic, housing, schools, emergency; medical and social services, crime, the environment, lowered property values, and a damaging image for the community.

Whereas: Studies show the average annual income declines and welfare rolls swell in large slaughterhouse communities.

Whereas: The 2014 Cascade County Growth Policy requires the county and cities to coordinate and cooperate on their growth policies. The growth policy is basically the long range vision for the next five years.


Whereas: The city commission and its staff have been silent on these issues.

Therefore: We the members of Neighborhood Council No. 5 ask that the commission and its staff publicly evaluate the impacts of a Friesen Cheese Plant and potential Food Park slaughterhouse, representing what appear to be their potential adverse impacts. While this is a county decision, we believe the majority of the impacts will be borne by city residents who may have to absorb crowded schools and roads, lowered property valuations, increased crime, stressed social and medical services, and threats to our water and air quality. It could also harm our community's reputation and damage its quality of life. We ask that each of these issues be evaluated by the city and those findings be shared in full with the community.

Adopted by Neighborhood Council No. 5 on Oct. 21, 2019.


Signed:


Eric Ray, chairman


Tom Kotynski, vice chairman


Marcia Anderson, secretary

Terry Albrecht, council member


Pat Bolton, council member

