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**Whatcom County Planning Department**  
Mr. Andrew Hicks, Shoreline Admin  
5280 Northwest Dr.  
Ferndale, WA 98226

**WHATCOM COUNTY  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**DEC 28 2017**

**RECEIVED**

**Re: Lake Whatcom Wildwood Resort - Variance Criteria as set forth in WCC 23.60.030**

Dear Mr. Hicks;

As you know, over the last 10 years, there has been a lot of study, reports and data collected on the remaking of Wildwood resort. The lake and neighboring properties have been improved significantly by the work that has been completed. As we wrap up and finalize this large project we apply for this Variance and CUP to make yet some improvements to the marina and site that were not anticipated at the time we originally planned and laid out the project.

Eight years ago, a group of individuals who enjoyed camping on Lake Whatcom had opportunity to purchase the aging and Wildwood Resort. They formed a group Lake Whatcom Resort Partnership. The purpose was to bring Wildwood resort into a better state by upgrading all its aging infrastructure, Sewer Water and Storm water management. This would be accomplished financially thru the sale of 83 fully serviced park model sites.

The infrastructure has been fully built out but due to slow sales 20- 24 patio canopies on Lots that are not yet sold were not completed under the original CUP there are an additional 13 lots that are sold where the owners have not yet elected to install a covered deck. Of the remaining unfinished 12 lots namely 9,11,12,13,14,44,45,56,65,67,68,81 and are in the critical area or shoreline buffer so a new permit is being applied for. See two sheets titled Wildwood resort Lot details

**So why has the group also applied for an expansion to the marina with this application?**

1: The existing marina and docks were utilized and modified to moor only 36 boats for 90 owners of the wildwood home owner association, these quickly sold out to the early buyers. There are more owners that wish to enjoy boating on the lake and our present marina presently cannot accommodate their boats. So, an expansion proposal has been submitted. Showing 28 new boat slips proposed with dock extensions into deeper water and 12 sail boat or jet ski mooring attached to the existing docks located in the shallow waters of the marina that is not accessible to motor boats. See Plan submitted. The proposal still will not give all residents an individual mooring spot. To trim back on our marina expansion request we will be offering only joint ownership and boat sharing option for the new proposed mooring spots. We cannot offer that option on the existing mooring as that they have been sold to residents and are no longer in developer control. Joint ownership/boat sharing falls in line with our best management practices at wildwood and least impact to the lake.

What would happen if this request were denied? Residents and guest would continue to bring their boats and anchor them randomly in the lake and pull them on shore typical of what boaters do they come to the lake.

Why is this a problem? Wildwood Resort has undergone extensive impact studies and was downsized and completely rebuilt from its infrastructure to restoration and enhancement of the entire shoreline. People who

buy at wildwood enjoy boating and swimming but have invested in wildwood because of its transformation from a run amuck broken-down camp site to a model of how environmental study and transformation come together, a place people can come to enjoy the lake but embrace the common vision to protect the lake and abide by the high standards we have in place to protect the lake. The marina is highly monitored by the resident manager and discerning owners. They know what they bought in to and why the high lake protection standards are in place. Nothing goes unnoticed or unattended at wildwood. There is nothing random or out of place. The marina is no exception, it gives residents and guest lake and boating access without damaging shoreline. Boats are in one area off the shore, boaters always are walking by to see that things are right and tight with their boat and the neighbor. The marina holds ski boats only from middle May to middle September. No 24-hour day mooring is permitted outside the monitored and allowable time.

Would the marina expansion increase boating activity on the lake? Nothing stops people who ever they are from enjoying summer boating on Lake Whatcom. The owners at wildwood can put their boat in the lake whether they have a marina slip or not and they do. We would rather have them moor in the marina where every boat is closely monitored rather than random anchor near shore, tying the boat to a tree or shoreline plantings or pulling their boat up on the shore line.

2: The seasonal creek that flows thru the center of the resort has over the last 10 years deposited a significant gravel bar into the lake which has almost entirely filled in the designated resort swim beach area. It is beginning to sift gravel into the boat launch area (see Plan) and has silted in many of the boat slips closer to shore on docks 3 and 4 making it very difficult for boaters to moor motor boats in shallow water. This pushes the slips out to where adequate lake depth work for boats.

#### **Why are we proposing Jet ski/ sail boat mooring?**

The marina has available shallow water dock space which is presently not being utilized. Why not push out to deeper water for a jet ski or small sail boat? We want to effectively use the existing shallow water space we have and propose this as a mooring opportunity for smaller crafts like jet ski and sailboats to locate in the existing marina, it has less impact on the lake. The jet ski mooring is a typical float attached to the dock or situated near a concrete head wall secured with a pin pile which will allow the float to rise or fall with the lake level. These floats would be on the water thru boating season only from middle of May to the middle of September. These would be individually spaced and not group connected. See the site plan with water depths and locations of floats.

#### **Is dredging and option?**

Ten years ago, wildwood had a swim area, now the creek has deposited gravel and silt into the marina filling the swim area and the inland dock spaces causing us to push the marina out further. Gravel deposits are also beginning to fill in the boat launch area.

Past studies on wildwood concluded that gravel deposits will be part of wildwood for its existence The entire property is an alluvial fan. There is no possible way to determine at what rate the gravel is deposited. In the 10 years since we have monitored the property, the creek deposits maybe 10 yards of gravel into the lake each winter but if there is a snow fall followed by huge rains we have seen one year where approximately 100 yards was flushed thru. There is no way to determine these events.

Wildwood gravel deposits could be very easily removed in September and October when the lake level drops and fully exposes the gravel bar. This has been viewed by fisheries and Whatcom county along with Northwest Ecological and Faber Construction.

Faber Construction originally requested removal of the exposed gravel bar along with some sort of maintenance program to prevent or slow down gravel deposits into the lake.

Faber has retracted its original request for removing the exposed gravel bar in that the County classified it as a dredging project. This is usually an activity carried out underwater where Faber had no intentions of working in

the water. Whatcom County and Fisheries were looking for solutions to stop the flow of gravel and sediment from the seasonal stream. Extensive studies had been made on Wildwood in the past which concluded that wildwood is built on an alluvial fan which has and will continue to grow because the seasonal streams flowing from the mountain. Additionally, under present rules no such dredging work takes place without extensive mitigation. Wildwood partners under the previous permit upgraded and mitigated its entire shoreline in completion of that work. As a result, it became difficult to even locate areas to mitigate other than close off and mitigate the long-enjoyed beach/swim area nearest the creek which for years has been preciousy enjoyed by wildwood residents and guests. As such the creek will continue its seasonal due process and we will adjust to that accordingly.

In conclusion, what seemed like a simple 4-hour gravel bar clean up quickly became a complex and unpopular process including facing public perception and hostility of "dredging in the lake". We included this narrative to clarify our original intent and a few of the factors that led us to retract the (dredging) request.

**What other projects are part of this CUP and permit application?**

All park model lots are have a 12'x 20' deck and canopy and 6'x 8' portable shed that requires a building permit. Approximately 20 lots are not yet sold at Wildwood. The previous permits and CUP has expired Approximately 30 plus lots do not have deck/canopy or have elected not to build one at this point. Of these lots, 15 are inside the shoreline or near setback areas. These were previously permitted lots and had all been mitigated for under the previous permit. The specific lots are 2, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 62, 65, 67, 68, 79, 81, 83. All the lots in wildwood have the infrastructure, rock base, utilities and parking pad in place which was completed under the expired permits. To receive permits for the patio canopies typical for all the sites we were instructed to apply for new CUP. See site plan and patio details submitted. Additionally, every site has a movable 6x8 storage shed that is standard to every site. These structures along with a certified park model occupy each site at wildwood resort. We have a new updated wetland and mitigation report prepared by North West Ecological which is part of this submittal.

**Are there any other request that are part of this application?**

Yes, Shop A by the entrance is a 30x24' with a 17'x 24' car port accessing the basement of the structure that is used to store junk and is in disrepair. No real use or need came up for the structure when we developed the property under the original permits now expired. There is significant history to the building to best capture this in a way that is financially feasible we propose to convert it to a cabin to something very similar to what the property has in cabin G-L next to the rec center. The utilities connection would come from the now park model site 8 which would be moved over to pick up the converted shop building. This does not require additional services nor would it increase the occupant or number of sites since lot 8 park model site would be combined with lot 7 with one service and the lot 7 site would simply become a larger site.

This would likely become added tax for the county in that lot 7 park model site would have more value in that it has now a larger site and the shop building is a fixed building on the recorded parcel.

Every aspect of this request will meet or exceed the quality of work and care that was taken with the original remaking of wildwood resort in maintaining lake shore and water quality measures.

**Variance Criteria.**

1, 2, Wildwood is a unique one of a kind resorts on Lake Whatcom it has a very long History as a logging camp turned in to a resort dating back to 1940. County zoning changes chose to ignore the long-standing use and zone it residential. As such the resort must prove its self against every rule and regulation as a non-conforming entity. This has been a major setback and cost burden to the developing group who cared to save its existence and preserve enough of its history. Being on Lake Whatcom has also given privilege (right or wrong) to every jurisdiction including the City of Bellingham to weigh in on the original development. At the end of the day

Wildwood has undergone a significant transformation that all look to as a success and how it should be done. For all the work and cost it is truly a testament to good research, information and cooperation aimed at functioning mitigation and water quality and preserving nature and habitat.

As unpopular as a resort may be due to density of peoples and the effect it may have on the lake the owners at wildwood do come to enjoy the lake in the summer but we have strict and enforced rules from number of vehicles to allowed parking, banned fireworks. Property can only be used by residents 180 days per year, including limits on water usage. The marina is highly monitored. Wildwood has boaters that respect neighboring property owners. Wildwood owners are often blamed for two boats that speed in the slow wake zone and blast loud music and have little regard for the neighbor, these are owned by property owners south of the fire hall.

The marina expansion is necessary because of two major concerns. A) the alluvial fan/creek is creating more property naturally occurring by depositing gravel and silt in the lake and shoreline. This has caused wildwood to push boats to the outer limits of the existing docks. And the Marina is not large enough to provide adequate moorage for wildwood residents.

B) We want to offer the best option to our boaters that are determined to enjoy boating on the lake in the summer. Do that but abide by the rules we have in place for our residents. We had one of our residents go the county to permit on his own a mooring spot on the wildwood shoreline. We don't want that to happen or have people tie up wherever they please. We wish to have all boats in one area the marina. Not scattered over the shoreline and tied off to whatever might hold the boat in place. The marina allows us to carefully monitor boats for proper maintenance, fueling rules and safety. When boaters work together we maintain oversight and communicate the rules and expectations. Lake Whatcom is a sensitive water body this needs to be protected by all boaters.

3) Will the marina design be compatible with neighboring uses in that it allows property owners to moor their boats on the water for the boating season but it is too small for our property. The wildwood marina is in a slight cove which nicely accommodates the expansion request and minimizes the dock extensions in a way that causes them to stick out too far into the lake. Individual single user docks are permitted for other property owners but wildwoods marina serves 90 of its residents and some guests.

We have limited our dock expansion to stick out no further than the existing pile that now secures the log boom at the entrance of our marina see dock one and the existing log boom. So effectively we are not expanding beyond what we currently have marked as the marina entrance.

The plans show a relocation of the log boom out in front of the swim area. The existing swim area has been reduced to a child wading area due to extensive gravel deposits. This has resulted in swimming outside the log boom which now creates an obstacle for watching or rescuing kids. We want to move the boom out and the floating dock to a depth safe for diving as it once was. See plans.

We have proposed repositioning the two other booms in line with the relocated swim boom. We are confident that with our boat sharing program and utilizing the shallow water space on the dock for smaller sailboats and jet ski we will be able to very effectively train and keep tabs on all our boaters and keep them off our newly restored shoreline.

4) We do not believe that granting wildwood this extension is special privilege; Wildwood's marina is built next to an alluvial fan that is requiring adjustment and a change of plan. We have proposed a dock expansion that gives us the needed space with a joint boat sharing plan and doesn't push out the docks beyond what we had in marina boundary piles. Wildwood resort has been downsized from an original 150 camper sites to 90 seasonal park model pad sites. Greatly reducing impact but more space is needed in the marina. Having changed wildwood from a camp ground to a resort with owners and strict rules and guidelines has brought people who get the sensitivity and bought into environmental protection.

5) public interest varies, some are opposed to any one doing anything after they themselves have established their properties and needs. Other are accommodating. I have seen many neighbors come to visit friends at

wildwood. Wildwood owners are not run amuck transient camper type they are owners who have invested significantly and have clearly bought into what wildwood is and what makes it awesome. They are very protective of everything including being a great neighbor.

6) The public will not be affected in their rights of navigation This cove area has been turned into a no wake zone and its totally embraced and appreciated by the wild wood owners who benefit from this in many ways from noise to shoreline protection. The marina is nestled in a slight cove. Our dock extension proposal does not extend beyond the existing marina entrance pile on dock one which we were determined to stay inside that existing boundary. With our boat sharing plan we have a plan that would give a long-range solution to the existing marina concerns and limitations.

7) We have high regard for the work of North West Ecological and they have done an outstanding job with the previous mitigation work and monitoring. We are privileged to have them work with us on this proposal as well and we have included a report from them as relates to this project and proposal. We have included survey depth on the lake and marina area. There is significant depth in the marina as proposed. Sediment from the creek will not be a concern for the marina as proposed due to depth.

As relates to our inland projects we are applying for permits to install decks on previously approved phase of wildwood lot development all the infrastructure and excavation has been completed so there is no impact to the lake or neighbors. The sales have been slow and the permit was not permitted to be renewed so a new CUP is required to finish the lots in the same manner as all the other lots.

Changing the shop's use to a cabin should not affect any neighbor negatively in that it will be rebuilt in the same location. Those in wildwood are concerned with the building currently being unsafe so rebuilding it will only benefit those concerns. Changing the use will not increase traffic or add residents at wildwood in that lot 8 will be transferred over and the former lot 8 property will be combined with and become lot 7. The cabin will reclaim existing timber and the old wildwood sign as part of its historical components and value. This building and location has a unique location at the entrance of wildwood and we wish to preserve its historic appeal.

I submit this proposal/request on behalf of Wildwood Resort Partnership

Any questions please email; [rick@faberconstruction.com](mailto:rick@faberconstruction.com)

Very Truly Yours;



Rick Faber, Developer Liaison to Wildwood Resort

Faber Construction Corp