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Letter to the Editor

Kane Creek/Echo Canyon development update

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Summarize - The Kane Creek/Echo Canyon project is facing challenges, including a legal battle over water rights and inconsistencies between the approved master plan and the recently recorded subdivision. The project's feasibility was based on the developers' initial application, raising concerns about the current layout.

Editor,

Given that many in our community are opposed to the Kane Creek/Echo Canyon project, I think it safe to assume that the Kane Creek developers may prefer to keep us in the dark about how their project is progressing.



Photo caption: A banner reading "Repeal SB258" is unfurled from the balcony during the public hearing focused on the controversial Kane Creek housing project at Star Hall on March 5. File photo

I've been keeping close track, however, and would like to share what I know about the project's current status.

First, and most importantly, their water rights are being challenged in court by Kane Creek Development Watch and Living Rivers. In my opinion, there's a fair chance the developers will lose their water rights. Without water rights it would be difficult to continue with this project.

Second, in early July they recorded with Grand County a new subdivision called Echo Canyon, Phase 1. It's located within the area they've already filled in the floodplain. There are 14 parcels in the subdivision, two of which appear to have been sold already. It's possible this subdivision will never have access to drinking water, or wastewater treatment services if the developers lose their water rights in court.

Third, back on May 1, 2024, the developers submitted a "Request for Feasibility Study" to the Lt. Governor's office. This was essentially their initial application to become a "Preliminary Municipality," essentially the developers' town. This application included a somewhat detailed master plan of the entire proposed project, provided by the developers.

A detailed feasibility study was performed and the project was deemed economically feasible, based almost entirely on information provided by the developers in their initial application. On June 9, the Lt. Governor's office approved the new preliminary municipality of Echo Canyon by signing a Certificate of Incorporation. The recently established and recorded subdivision of Echo Canyon, Phase 1, occupies roughly 11 acres or so of the entire 176 acres of Echo Canyon.

But this 11-acre subdivision has a quite different layout than what's found on the same 11 acres of the master plan provided by the developers to the Lt. Governor's office. Again, it's this plan on which the feasibility study and certification of this preliminary municipality were based.

Shouldn't what they build be consistent with what the Lt. Governor's office approved?

Dave Closser is a member of Kane Creek Development Watch. He writes from Moab.