Kane Creek project leaves some residents in lurch

By Carter Pape

November 8, 2021

The Kane Creek project has left some residents in Moab feeling uncertain about their future. The development, which seeks to transform the former Moab Potash property into a modern town, has raised concerns among some tenants who fear being displaced without adequate support.

Dani Arnold, a partner with Kane Creek Preservation and Development, LLC, said they have a responsibility to help tenants find new housing. "We are very interested in investing in this community," he said. "But we also want to be fair to our tenants." Arnold and Craig Weston, another partner, said they want to respect the desires of tenants who want to live nontraditional lives.

The trailer where officers found the man appeared untouched months later. Laying on the floor was a newspaper showing the man's death on their watch, and they want to help tenants find better housing situations if that is what they want.

Hooper Mewborn, who is 62, said the primary thing he is experiencing amid this change is "mourning the loss of the Old West." Of the families who have lived at Kane Creek for decades, Mewborn said he is one of the last. "I'm an old guy," he said. "I don't want to leave." Mewborn said he paid Charlie Nelson, the previous owner of the Kane Creek properties, $100 per month to rent out the cave, which has no running water, no connection to a sewer or septic system, and no heating or cooling.

Marlow Mewborn and his dog stand in front of the cave where he lives along Kane Creek. Marlow is a writer and binds books. He said he would likely end up camping "in some quasi-legal place" not far from the cave. Mewborn said he would likely end up camping "in some quasi-legal place" not far from the cave.

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In one instance, Arnold said a tenant had urgently needed better conditions, and the company helped to connect them to a rental assistance program. "They're in a better situation," Arnold said.

In another instance, a tenant had requested leave and packets of information about rental assistance and securing new housing. "It's tough," he said. "But we want to be fair." Arnold said there are three tenants remaining on site, and the company does not yet have agreements in place with them.

However, not all tenants said they have received this treatment. John Schofield still lives in a hogan on Kane Creek and had been given a one-time opportunity to set up a "research and innovation hub" equipped with shared working spaces and water on the premises. Schofield said rent had been set at the same it was before, but rental assistance "was not part of the agreement." Schofield said he had been given a one-time opportunity to set up a "research and innovation hub" equipped with shared working spaces and water on the premises.

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