

Open Letter: Rob Ford

10/23/2013

As we celebrate Vail's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and heap praise, well deserved in my mind, upon our founding fathers, I am saddened by the lack of respect displayed by today's leadership for the finer points of this history lesson. While vision, foresight and hard work were the pillars for our historic success, respect for property values, solid zoning and the low density European village model certainly played a large part in this great success story. A solid understanding of how important these issues have been and remain to be to Vail's success seems to be lacking today.

Our founding fathers designed our villages to be an equal mix of residential and business interests. This was done to give our town the warm residential feel we have come to appreciate. However, today our town council is all about business. They not only subsidize business over residential, they have gone into business for themselves. Crossing this line and going into business on their own has brought us to the confrontation on the golf course. Sadly the council is determined to jam a special events business operation funded with tax dollars into the middle of one of our highest value neighborhoods at the expense of the residential neighbors. In this relentless drive to become a business, the council has gone so far as to move the 18<sup>th</sup> golf course green and violate their own parking requirements. This has resulted in a law suit by the owners of property along the 18<sup>th</sup> fairway. How sad. With 85% of the property within the town of Vail now owned by individuals who are unable to vote in Vail because of residency requirements, these owners are being forced into law suits to protect their values. Such a town backed threat to property rights is not very healthy for long term property values. This lawsuit must be settled and the town of Vail must make a stand to protect property values not destroy them. They must abide by their own building ordinances just as you and I do.

Nowhere in the mission statement or governing provisions for town hall or the Vail Recreation Board are there any provisions for them to go into business for themselves especially at the expense of our residential community.

With the revitalization of our village cores over the past few years, the Vail voters correctly stepped back and allowed the town ample leeway to see these necessary projects through to completion.

However, in an effort to save what community we have left in Vail, we must stand up for the defense of our property rights and fight to preserve and enhance our community in Vail. The quality of life for our residents and owners must be protected and these town hall tax funded business ventures at the expense of all else must be stopped. These business forays of the town have cost you the taxpayer a fortune over the years. The ill-fated conference center is a prime example. You the voter should demand an accounting and an end to this waste and

abuse. Let's get the town back on track. We must get back to the delicate balance between the residential and commercial interests our founding fathers had envisioned and which has been so successful over the years.

Vail has established itself as one of the premier resorts in North America today. Its success is assured. We the voters must now reengage to manage this success. I hope you will agree with me that making a stand for protecting covenants, protecting open space, and demanding town hall rebalance their priorities to include at least on an equal basis the rights and desires of their residential voters and residential property owners is a stand the Vail Voter must make at this time.

Rob Ford