

May 24, 2023

Written comments from Kirsten Ewing to the Town of Bluff Planning and Zoning Committee regarding the creation of an ordinance moderating town aviation.

Thank you for taking the time and consideration of the public hearing and for the time you are spending voluntarily to read individual comments being sent in written form.

After visiting with Amer Tumeh and having a tour of his proposed helipad, two things became clear to me. 1. He is willing to talk restrictions regarding frequency of flights, noise interference and the flight path through town. 2. He has the most to lose as a business owner. He will lose business if he has regular flights in and out of his hotel on a frequent basis. This incentivizes him to be sensitive, not only for himself and his guests but to the community at large.

I wish we could encourage all aviation to be out at the airstrip, but at this time it would not be practical from a safety and security standpoint. Not having water, electricity, and fire suppression as well as the fact that it is not currently zoned commercial makes it void as a reasonable option in the short term.

I propose that we create an ordinance that has specific restrictions on frequency of flights on and off private commercial property in town. I also suggest it address specific flight path and noise levels and frequencies to best avoid residential impact.

I would much rather have Mr. Tumeh spearheading this endeavor than some no-named person or business that has no incentive to do it responsibly. Like I said he has a lot to lose should it not be done responsibly.

While this ordinance is being created, I encourage the town to investigate what it would take to rezone the bluff airstrip commercial and get it up to speed to have safe flying standards onsite. Then it can be used for commercial and medical purposes. No doubt this will take planning and money, but I think it worth the effort.

The reality is that we don't own the airspace above our awesome town, and this issue is coming to us as a town whether we like it or not. The question becomes: do we want to be part of the conversation and help create and enforce specific healthy restrictions on the activity that can continue to support a peaceful way of life in Bluff OR do we have random folks flying around from Blanding and Monument Valley all times of the day. I am sure there are many considerations to put into the aviation ordinance, and I hope we can strike a balance between supporting businesses that adds much economic value to our town and preserving the quality of life we all hold so dear here in Bluff.

