

## Erin Nelson

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**From:** Erin Nelson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 24, 2023 1:04 PM  
**To:** Office  
**Subject:** FW: Public Comment: Aviation Ordinance

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**From:** Gary Lichtenstein <[gdlqed@yahoo.com](mailto:gdlqed@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 24, 2023 10:50 AM  
**To:** Planning <[planningzoning@townofbluff.org](mailto:planningzoning@townofbluff.org)>  
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**Subject:** Public Comment: Aviation Ordinance

I am Assistant Chief of the Bluff Fire Department. I am not in favor of helicopters routinely flying over residential areas in Bluff, but that has not been proposed. I have seen the proposed flight plans for the current operation; flights would take place over agricultural areas. Hot air balloons pose a greater risk to Bluff residents than the proposed helicopter operation. Nor am I concerned about the potential risks of aviation around Bluff. Greater risks roll through town on a daily basis in the form of tour busses and hazardous materials. Bluff Fire has always faced tragic incidents with too few people and insufficient equipment, but we train as best we can, we are disciplined, and we are hooked into a broad infrastructure that provides support when needed.

From a firefighting perspective, a commercial aviation operation offers a tremendous opportunity for the fire department and the town, because in order for the operation to be safe and successful, our current airport facilities would need to be upgraded to provide for fire suppression, power and lights, hangers for modern equipment, and reliable communication--all of which are fundable through economic development grants, but only if a proposed operation is on the table. Without a need, a grant application is not likely to be competitive.

Residents have expressed concerns about aviation disturbing the peace of the town. The peace that I most care about has already been harmed by a process that has limited genuine dialogue. Instead, the Town of Bluff jumped to lawyers and injunctions. The legal system, which is by nature adversarial, cannot navigate peaceful resolutions. We are cautioned in public forums that this isn't about an individual. But community issues are, at heart, always about individuals. A community process that obviates communication between neighbors operates within a win/lose paradigm. Have we not witnessed the degradation of our quality of life as a town when we operate from that approach? Have we not noticed how those wounds fester, manifesting as other issues years and decades later?

Yes, I want to live in a town that protects its natural beauty. But my quality of life also depends on living in a community in which neighbors can resolve issues without lawyers. The town in which I want to live doesn't have helicopters flying over my house and viewshed, *and* it's a town in which Amer Tumeah can create a business that keeps his son in Bluff while also promoting economic development and much-needed infrastructure.

A committee can be a vehicle that produces such nuanced outcomes, when it includes members with different perspectives who are willing to work together to design creative, effective solutions. Some say, "A committee process takes forever and nothing is accomplished." A committee process takes longer, but a well-run committee with clear objectives and a well-scoped mission can produce actionable recommendations within a reasonable time frame. And if a committee takes three or four months instead of one or two, so what, if the process builds rather than fractures the community? I for one would serve on such a committee.

Gary Lichtenstein, Assistant Chief  
Bluff Fire Department