



Council Delegate Thomas Walker Jr. Expresses Opposition to Two Guns Commercial Resort Proposal

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — With local support from 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr. (Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Coalmine Canyon, Cameron), Gunderman Designs and Concepts Incorporated's proposed 247-acre "glamping" resort project near Two Guns, Arizona was denied Wednesday by the Coconino County Board of Supervisors

"As a representative to thousands of Diné constituents in the Western Agency of the Navajo Nation, I am in full opposition to the creation of such a place in my homeland," said Delegate Walker. "It is imperative to mention that there is a history of cultural appropriation and exploitation in the southwestern United States for profit by non-native people that shouldn't be ignored."

As an Indiana-based company, Gunderman's plan included a request for a resort commercial zone change to develop infrastructure including but not limited to 787 lodging units, 395 recreational vehicle sites, a water park, 78 'tipis' and a 13-unit Cliffside hotel along Interstate 40.

Gundermann said he hoped to donate \$5 million of the projected \$350 million in annual revenue to donate to local food banks, homeless shelters and other philanthropic investments on the Navajo Nation.

In a May 11 letter to the Coconino Board of Supervisors, Delegate Walker indicated that the terms were disrespectful and the approval of such would put a strain on the longstanding intergovernmental relationships between the Navajo Nation and the Coconino County.

"The proposed resort project used an all-to-familiar business model that utilizes Native American cultural artifacts, apparel and 'ceremonies' to generate revenue with little input from actual members of the many tribes that still reside in the immediate area," stated Delegate Walker.

Although the resort site is not located on the Navajo Nation, the land lies adjacent to multiple of Delegate Walker's chapters. Additionally, the nearby 'Diablo Canyon' has already been found to contain many Navajo, Apache and Hopi artifacts that have yet to be examined.

Leupp Chapter President Roberta Gorman indicated she grew up near the canyon and her family continues to rely on the area for cultural resources.

"We wanted to see the land preserved for both its historical value and the habitat it continues to provide for animals like eagles, deer and other wildlife," said Leupp Chapter President Roberta Gorman. "Coconino County has yet to hold anyone accountable for cleaning up the trash from the previous landowners of that area [Two Guns]."

In addition to her call for cleanup of previous infrastructure, Gorman suggested the site should have an archeological impact assessment performed before any new developments occur.

According to Gundermann, the resort's features did not mirror any Native American ceremonial objects, but feature large event teepees with names such as 'The Medicine Man,' 'The Chief' and 'The Maiden.'

Groups like the Azeé Bee Nahaghá of Diné Nation (ABNDN) also wrote positional letters of opposition calling Gundermann's themes, "extremely disturbing and dehumanizing" before the final decision was made Wednesday.

The Board of Supervisor's vote on the project was originally intended to occur Dec. 2020 but was stalled over concerns similar to that of Delegate Walker and the ABNDN.

"It is important for us as local leadership to speak for the elders, medicine men and other Navajo citizens who are not invited to the table when these decisions affecting them are made," added Gorman.

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