

# A look to the future needed in the Town of Russell

## *Letter to the editor*

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On March 4, the Town of Russell Planning Commission narrowly passed a motion recommending a zoning change request by CFS, LLC to facilitate the potential project named Shadow Wood Landing, an “exclusive fly-in community” in rural Bayfield County. The 3 -2 vote favoring the re-zone came after a two-hour discussion by local residents. A majority of those who spoke did not favor the re-zone.

The issues centered on jobs, progress, development, community character, and where our society is headed. It is obviously an issue the Bayfield County Zoning Committee needs to consider closely at its upcoming meeting on March 18. They need to discuss and understand the effects of their decision and not just ram the re-zone through.

Some people argue that Shadow Wood is good as it represents progress and would create jobs. Usually these jobs are mostly low-wage, part time non-family supporting. There would be some initial construction jobs but typically, those go to imported workers who leave after completion of the work.

Others suggest we need “living communities” where the emphasis is on families, community, schools, and most of all – what is good for the next generation. Our children are what count – not whether seniors and special privilege people have the latest gadgets, fanciest homes, biggest cars and fastest planes. What can we do as elders, adults and people of power to enhance the quality of life for the next seven generations? The bottom line is — what is best for the next seven generations is a living community complete with young, old, farms, small businesses, schools, and programs that support them.

Is focusing on an exclusive fly-in community for the privileged going to turn our slipping economy and cultural integrity around? Or is that type of model causing our community and economic decay?

There is a growing interest and support for farms, family gardens and farmer’s markets. They are doubling and tripling in numbers and support. A greater and greater number of people are realizing the value of strong individuals, families and communities.

Florida, the state that has focused on the money of seniors and people of special privilege has suffered significantly this last year with decaying schools and a loss of population. A model that focuses only on the well-to-do may flourish for a while but in the end, that narcissistic model is doomed to fail. A model that has a chance of working is one that emphasizes and encourages everyone in the community. We need our families to succeed, flourish and be happy, healthy and vibrant — not just survive.

The Town of Russell and Bayfield County are presently dealing with zoning issues that will directly affect our community. I greatly encourage them to take a long view and look to the future — not only at what is good for a few today.

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