

Board Members Positions regarding the Tarleton Project

Mike Tarleton

My grandfather always wanted to have a ranch. He married my grandmother whose mother owned the Six Mile Ranch in the Moreno Valley. My grandmother was born on the Ranch and my father was born in Elizabethtown, NM.

My grandfather was an entrepreneur and spent time in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado in various occupations before returning to Taos in 1930. He and my father were approached to purchase the ranch that we are currently developing, Tarleton Ranch. It was actually several parcels of land that had fallen into the hands of the County due to non-payment of taxes. At the time, my father ran his own auto repair shop and my grandfather helped him with the bookkeeping and selling of gas. Ranching was still something that both of them wanted to do and they saw this as their chance to accomplish that end.

They also realized that farming and ranching were not going to make them a lot of money. In fact, it was the thought that the land would someday be worth something that convinced them to give it a try. In 1960, a seventy-four lot subdivision, Del Norte Sub-division, was developed by my father. Later, the northeast corner of the ranch was sold to and developed by the owner of the Taos Country Club.

My parents made some money from land sales, enough to travel and enjoy themselves in the later years of their life. They had a vision that Taos would grow and drive up the value of the ranch land. It is now time for my generation to take charge and do something of value with the land. My family and I are continuing this idea of creating something of quality and value for the local community as well as the surrounding areas.

We have always believed that a village on the north side of town, where people can conveniently buy daily necessities, is badly needed. It would save people in this area valuable energy, time and fuel. There is no other place in Taos Valley that has the location or resources to make this possible. We are right in the middle of a triangle formed by Taos Airport, the Town of Taos and Taos Ski Valley.

In conclusion, we feel we are making a sorely needed contribution to the north side of Taos and the results will enhance the lives of all that live in and around the area. We are trying to do this in a responsible way that adds value to the entire area. We believe that our parents and grandparents would be proud of what we are doing, not only for our generation, but for generations to come.

John Mahoney

Having had some reservations at first, I now fully support Mike Tarleton's plan. He's giving the community an opportunity to weigh-in on his proposals instead of just selling the entire area in question to anyone who has the money.

Kent Kobakoff

I am opposed to the Tarleton Ranch Eco Village. I believe that it is contrary to the vision of the Upper Las Colonias Neighborhood Association and should not proceed. If the scale of the project was smaller and if it weren't as obtrusive, invasive, and incongruous to the area, there would be much less opposition to it. As it is, with its extremely high density, urban/suburban flavor, and commercial orientation, it does not belong in our neighborhood, and it seems as though this view is held by many of this organization's members.

Regarding the project's commercial aspects, there are those who favor the idea of adding conveniences and amenities to our neighborhood. When I decided to purchase property here, it was because I value this area's amazing views, open spaces, and rural nature. These things are much more important to me than having conveniences immediately close by. I would point out that there are indeed already plenty of conveniences within a short drive or bicycle ride from the Tarleton property. This neighborhood is not starving in the areas of dining, lodging, groceries, libations, entertainment, retail, and gourmet coffee.

I consider my community to be the entire greater Taos area and not just the immediate neighborhood of Upper Las Colonias. All of the types of businesses that the project wishes to attract are already represented in this community. Establishing the new businesses that the project wishes to would be redundant, excessive, wasteful, and unnecessary. This community currently has far too many vacant commercial spaces to be considering building new ones in an area that receives far less traffic than the heart of town.

Several of my colleagues on the board have expressed the notion that the project's Planned Unit Development model is favorable to what they perceive would be random, hap-hazard development. Myself, I can't imagine a scenario worse than what is being proposed.

Jeff Tetenbaum

I am in favor of the project. At the October, 2018 ULCNA monthly Board Meeting and at other board meetings over the past year, a number of property owners have expressed their concerns with regard to the project. The board has invited and the developers have attended these same meetings. The developers have listened to the concerns expressed by the members of the community and as a result have made a significant number of substantive changes to the original and subsequent iterations of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) plan. At the October

meeting, it was suggested by a group of owners that every property owner in Upper Las Colonias have a vote on the project. It wasn't clear to me how this vote would be structured, i.e. what was to be voted on. My view is that the only "vote" on this project belongs to the Tarleton family. Assuming the project falls within the zoning and development standards set forth in the neighborhood overlay, there is really nothing to vote on. At the October meeting I offered the following – if there is to be a vote taken on the project, the ballot would be a choice of (1) a planned unit development based on the most recent version of the PUD plan with the possibility of further amendments with water provided by the El Prado Water District or (2) random development with all sorts of possibilities for water wells being drilled on the property and septic fields spread throughout.

As I write this note, 5 other board members have already indicated their support for the project in notes more artfully written and detailed than this one. Nevertheless, even if all of our board members indicate support, I believe it would be appropriate for the board to provide the county planning department with a paper that (1) summarizes the reasons for said support as well as (2) a listing of concerns that have been expressed by members of the board and by other property owners. Of course, it is the county that will ultimately decide whether or not to approve the project plan. The Neighborhood Association's role in these matters is to work with the county to provide advice. It is the county that has the sole responsibility to implement, regulate, monitor and enforce residential and compatible commercial development in compliance with its land use regulations.

Ronald Polichnowski

My position on the Tarleton project needs a lead in. I have had a house in Taos for 22 Years and a house the South Florida for 29 Years. In Florida PUDs are a dime a dozen and well controlled with evolving zoning changes over the years. In Florida they seem to have learn from the evils of the past. The PUD zoning has evolved from a Tarleton scenario to one of beauty. For example, the Tarleton project to work in today's era would require maybe 2,500 acres. Why? Because developers are now required to include very large areas of green space, untouched preserve areas that were in place before the project started, controlled flood plains, many walking and biking paths, and relaxing areas that include benches and chairs. They are able to accomplish this even with "zero" lot lines in the residential areas. This environment creates a "happy" place for residents, visitors and neighbors. Something that the entire community can enjoy. The Tarleton project, in my opinion will never accomplish the same results unless the density is decreased. I am opposed to the project as it exists today but would not opposed it, if the plan was properly designed and was a better fit for the community.

Eugenia Hauber

I am the past president of the ULCNA, a current Board member, and a resident of this neighborhood for 20 years. I support the proposed Tarleton Ranch Eco-Village. My reasons are

as follows:- I feel very very strongly that planned development is infinitely better than unplanned and haphazard development. A PUD is a set standard that will be followed for however long it takes to complete the development covered by the PUD. The alternative is to sell that acreage off randomly, two acres at a time. This could easily result in highway 150 looking like Cerillos Road or Paseo del Pueblo Sur south of Smith's all the way to Ranchos. I don't want this, I don't think anyone in our neighborhood wants this. Planned development is in the best interests of the neighborhood.

- The water will be supplied by El Prado Water & Sanitation. It will not come from our neighborhood, and it should not affect our water tables. Two new deep wells are being drilled by the Rio Grande, and there should be sufficient water for the Eco-Village. The alternative is to have piecemeal development, all with newly dug wells. Now that will affect our groundwater! Additionally, if new commercial wells are dug there is every possibility that all our wells will end up capped, and we all will be forced to sign onto El Prado Water.

- The planned tertiary waste water system will conserve water and be ecologically beneficial. It will allow for the agricultural development with little to no additional water being needed. I think orchards, gardens & greenhouses are a great idea, especially with recycled water.

- The development will be accessed using only one more entry, which again is an insurance policy against Cerillos Road del Norte.

- I understand that almost all of us in our hearts would love to keep the Tarleton property the way it is. But that isn't legally possible. Commercial property owners have the legal right to develop, but not without standards and restrictions where necessary. I think the Tarleton Ranch Eco-Village presents a good compromise.

- I like the fact that it will be diverse in both the type of housing, the cost of the housing, and the amenities it will offer the neighborhood, and will provide services to the neighborhood that are currently lacking.

But that being said, I do have suggested changes that I think would be beneficial:

- Developments fail. I think a performance bond should be mandated.

- I think that buyers & developers of both commercial & residential lots should be held to pre-determined ecological and environmental standards.

- Clustering is the essence of a PUD, but I question whether 450 new housing units is too much, and would affect the rural nature of the neighborhood. I also worry that many of these will end up on airb&b. Communities are now restricting short-term rentals in order to encourage full-time occupancy.

The Planning Department, the Planning Commission and the County Commissioners will be the ultimate arbiters of the Tarleton Village Eco-Ranch. The ULCNA Board, the project developers, the adjoining neighbors & the entire neighborhood, and indeed all of Taos County will have many chances to weigh in and suggest changes, fine-tuning, tweaking or total denial.

I support the Tarleton Village Eco-Ranch, and I have total confidence that the outstanding staff of the Taos County Planning Department will look carefully at each and every aspect of the proposed PUD and make recommendations accordingly.

Jim Turner

I've spent a year listening to the pros and cons of the Tarleton Ranch Eco-Village (TREV). I've watched it evolve. After weighing all this information, I favor it. Others, of course, come to a different conclusion.

In my view our "neighbors" include all citizens of the Taos area. Not everyone will agree. But I believe we have a responsibility to all of them, not only folks in Upper Las Colonias. I also believe that if the county prospers, we will, too, in rising property values. All this affects my thinking.

My thinking starts from two premises. First, the Tarleton family has an unquestioned right, legally and morally, to develop their property; and they will do so. Second, commercial development will inevitably continue along the Ski Valley Road, as the population north of town grows. The question then becomes, how will the Tarletons manage this future?

TREV seems to me a responsible approach. These highlights impress me, in no particular order:

- The commercial properties are concentrated in a village center, with residential properties buffering TREV from existing housing
- TREV brings welcome amenities to Upper Las Colonias, such as a grocery store and a fire station
- TREV's stress on cluster housing preserves some 230 acres of open space, with a walking trail newly open to all of us
- TREV's water management—both the pipeline to El Prado and the water-treatment system—avoids stressing our fragile aquifer
- TREV's mix of housing includes both larger houses and smaller houses, condos, and apartments. Taos and TSV badly need more affordable housing if the area's economy is to grow
- The developers have a sensible plan for managing traffic, routing it through a new entrance to TREV between Gavilan and Cielo

TREV, I conclude, will revitalize Upper Las Colonias and help to grow the economy of Taos County. I'm not a realtor, but our neighbor Diane Enright is a very experienced one, and she believes that TREV will increase property values in the area. (See her long letter on the ULCNA web site).

The worries expressed about TREV often concern properties that border it. Anyone can understand this. The developers have proved flexible in meeting these worries—for instance, moving the water-treatment plant, rerouting the entrance to Gavilan, adjusting height limits in affected areas. Maybe more tweaks are needed. The history of TREV up to now inspires confidence that the developers will adapt to reasonable concerns.

For what it's worth, for almost twenty years my wife and I have lived less than a hundred yards behind a busy restaurant (now Medley) and next-door to multi-family housing (the Quail Ridge condos). We have experienced no problems.

The alternative to TREV offered by some neighbors is more of what we have now. That is, continued proliferation of one-acre lots occupied by relatively expensive homes, each with well and septic. For the last fifty years—with a lot of variation year by year—snowpack in northern New Mexico has trended steadily downward, while temperatures have risen. Climate models forecast this trend to continue. Under these conditions, our local aquifer cannot continue to supply more and more houses indefinitely. Moreover, this sort of development does little to grow the local economy.

Reasonable people can disagree about all of the above. These are my conclusions from the evidence I've absorbed. TREV is a very long-term development. I'll be dead before it nears completion. So I'm thinking more about our children than about me.

Kurt Edelbrock

The Upper Las Colonias Neighborhood Association (ULCNA) Board members have been asked to present their personal point of view about the proposed Tarleton Ranch Eco-Village. I am constantly aware of my position and responsibilities as a Board member. Thus, my views need to be in the best interest of the whole neighborhood, not only my personal interests.

My first and foremost concern is the aquifer that supplies our homes. This issue has been the number one issue on members' minds in every meeting.

- The Planned Unit Development (PUD) will draw water from a source that is least likely to affect our wells and has been studied and litigated by the State and County.
- The PUD process will insure that few wells, if any, will be drilled.
- The PUD will mandate that water will come from a single outside source, such as, El Prado Water & Sewer.

The second major issue also refers to water... Wastewater!

- The PUD will require all facilities, businesses, and homes be connected to a central wastewater treatment plant.
- Not only will this reduce the potential pollution from septic systems, it will also help replenish the aquifer.
- This system will be under the scrutiny and monitoring of the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED).
- The developers have heard our concerns about the location of the treatment plant and have moved it to a more appropriate site.

While assisting to document the history of the work done by all ULCNA Boards, it became clear that the 2000-2002 Board aggressively tried to disseminate as much information as possible and sought the input of all members of the community, as the current Board has been doing. Due to their efforts, the Tarleton property already has specific zoning “Rights and Restrictions”. “Rights” because the rules the ULCNA Board recommended to the County were put into place and became law in the early 2000s.

Growth is inevitable! Whether you believe in global warming or not, I believe we have a responsibility to be the best stewards of this earth that we can be, including our own little spot. This Eco-Village gives our community the opportunity to be a part of responsible guardianship.

In conclusion, with all the current input received by the Board, I would vote to recommend this project to the County Planning Department and possibly include a list of neighborhood concerns. I believe in the interest of the ULCNA future, this planned project is a far better option than any helter-skelter, piecemeal use of the land which could include 500 wells and septic systems.

I would like to quote Robert M. Fitch, one long time, Upper Las Colonias resident: “Firstly, I support long range planning and believe we have here the possibility of a good plan.”

Fitch continues: “We must assure the quality is at least as good as what we have already.” (November 7, 2017)

CJ Johnson

The Upper Los Colonias Neighborhood Associations is being asked by the county to give a letter of “support” or “no support” for consideration during the county’s review process of the changes pending for the Tarleton properties. This project has elected to define this future development as a PUD.

Definition of a PUD: A planned urban development is a type of building development and also a regulatory process. As a building development, it is a designed grouping of both varied and compatible land uses, such as housing, recreation, commercial centers, and industrial parks, all within one contained development or subdivision. [Wikipedia](#)

Why I support the Tarleton Ranch Planned Urban Development:

I believe by giving a “Support” document to the county, we are being responsible stewards to our neighborhood. I believe that to be true because a PUD gives all ULCNA members the opportunity to affect the overall design and impact of land use changes to this private property under development.

A “no support” document, should the county use that as a reason to reject this PUD application of private property, would then present us (ULCNA members) with a never-ending process of reviews and critiques of every single lot or acreage that will be purchased and developed separately.

With the application of this Planned Urban Development to the county of Taos, we have the ability to influence the overall design with the current land owners and their representatives. Without a PUD, we will end up needing to work with each and every developer for each and every parcel which is sold.

I have found the sponsors of this PUD to be quite aware and sensitive to the neighborhood concerns, much more than I would imagine other large conglomerates who want to develop their property would be. As Jeff stated, the reality of the future of these 450 acres under concern is: 1) a PUD, 2) random development.