

In response to your recent editorial ("Borough patience misplaced," Jan. 31), which expressed bewilderment at the borough's "misplaced" patience, I offer the following perspective.

The Greater Palmer and Wasilla chambers of commerce, in a joint resolution, along with the Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau, recently offered their support for the Homestead Resort Project. The primary reason was the potential economic development opportunity presented by this type of resort. In more specific terms, our reasoning was as follows:

1) The 320-acre parcel in question, which the borough owns, is currently providing numerous recreational opportunities to outdoor enthusiasts. Some of these uses may continue, even if the land becomes part of the resort development. However, this acreage presently provides zero income and direct benefit to most residents of the borough. That would change if the land were placed under contract or sold to the developer.

2) The plan presented to the chambers indicated the developer had initiated and was pursuing negotiations for design of the resort by Jack Nicklaus, arguably the leader in that industry. The golf resorts designed by Mr. Nicklaus are considered world-class and draw golf enthusiasts from around the world. For a facility of this caliber to come on line in concert with existing golf facilities in the Valley, would offer unparalleled tourism marketing opportunities.

3) The sketches and photos of the proposed Homestead Resort facilities lent further credibility to a development which would compliment the natural beauty surrounding that end of our Valley.

4) The employment opportunities, both during

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and after construction, for Alaskans, were another key factor which influenced our decision.

5) Finally, the desire and ability to make the resort a year-round facility, open to the public, fits well with our need to market the Valley as a tourist destination 12 months out of the year.

It must be noted that the borough and all of us interested in seeing controlled, environmentally sound development in the Valley have learned some hard lessons from the Hatcher Pass fiasco. I encourage and applaud the idea of leasing (with an option to buy) the land in question. This, combined with other performance criteria, could guard us against a developer with either a hidden agenda or lacking the financial ability to provide the proposed development.

(Which gets me to my final two comments.)

To Mr. (John) Duffy: Please don't write the Homestead Resort and Mr. Trygstad off yet.

To Mr. (Victor) Trygstad: Please get your act together! If you don't have the required investors to bring this project to the Valley, we have to move on. There are a lot of concerned citizens, business owners, and their elected representatives who are working very hard to find suitable economic development opportunities for the Mat-Su Valley.

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