

# julie formby

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## SPEAKERS

Doug - KGAB, Michelle, Julie Formby, Speaker 1

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Doug - KGAB 00:05

Am, 650 K, G, A, B, Cheyenne orchard Valley. You're listening to the weekend in Wyoming program. Our big topic today is going to be the proposed County Land Use Plan. I should explain that's on the Laramie County Commission agenda for their meeting this week. And this first segment here, I have Julie Formby. She's a county resident who has some concerns about this and thinks that a lot of people haven't been informed on it, or don't really know about it. We're going to give Justin Arnold, the county planner, the time to present his views at 1205, so we absolutely give everybody a fair shake here. I also should mention that we'll be opening the phones, but before we do that, Julie, just tell us a little bit about what your concerns are and why you think this is maybe something we need to slow down on.



Julie Formby 00:52

Well, there's a group of us that are very concerned that the word has not gotten out to the number of county residents that that need to know about this. These changes are going to be affecting every homeowner with their property use rights, with the intrusion of the county in your private business, in your home, and as we've been out in the community speaking with people, only about 1% of people know what's happening, and we think that this is a pretty big deal for only 1% of residents to know. Now I'm not being accusatory toward the county. They've done a put forth, a very good faith effort with informing people and letting people know what's what's happening. But you know, as as you and I have been visiting Doug, people have lives. They don't have time to constantly be watching what is the government doing, and what does it mean to



Doug - KGAB 01:57

me, this is also a complex subject. It's not easy to just sit down in 20 minutes and say, Oh, that's what it's about. There's a lot to it exactly,

J Julie Formby 02:04

exactly. So we've been speaking with realtors, developers, common residents, business owners. And there's a few things that I'd like to share about the feedback that we've received. And also we've done some public record requests. And in those public record requests, we wanted to find out what is the public sentiment on these land use regulation changes. So the county has a public comment form where people can fill out you know whether they're in favor or against this and any concerns that they have. And then people are also able to send emails to their county officials. And there were only, like there were only 264 comments that were made on the on the website. And out of those 264 comments, that's representing about point 7% of all the parcels within Laramie County, there was an it was a 99% as opposed to these changes or have serious concerns about it. So out of 264 comments, 260 were opposed, and four were in favor. People who were in favor of their neighbors junk being a nuisance or a safety issue or having more regulations for fireworks, etc. The rest of the people voiced concerns about property rights and land use, stating specifically that they chose a rural property so that they could have the freedom to use their property as they see fit, as God has, you know, given property owners. Now we're not saying that there should be no regulations. We still believe in health safety and the common, you know, general welfare of people, but we believe that some of what the county is doing, is proposing to do, is a grave overreach, and I'll get into that in a minute. So the other comments that we've received is, people don't want a county HOA. This is part of the way that the planning department has promoted. This is this is like an HOA for the county? Well, there's people who live rurally who specifically say, I moved out of the city because I don't want an HOA. I don't want people telling me what to do. So this is not a benefit for people. A huge concern is the new the newly proposed regulation, which is to have to have a permit for a home occupation. So in the July 1 meeting, there was a specific comment, I believe it was July 1. It may have been the 15th. I think it was the 15th in the July 15 county commissioners meeting, there was a specific question asked by Commissioner Heath to Justin Arnold, is it true that Mary Kay doTERRA distributors will now. Have to have a home occupation permit. Justin said, Yes, this is a big concern for us in having a contract with the county, getting a permit, which the county wants to promote that as a benefit, because it's it's free, you don't have to pay for it. Our view is you're giving up your freedom for free, and what's going to be done with that information later down the line? Are we going to be charged for those permits, etc? But also, what people don't realize is this is a contract with the county. You're agreeing to how much square footage you're going to be using within your house for your home occupation. You're agreeing to how many employees that you'll have in your home, how many people can visit at a time, etc, etc, and it opened you to inspection by the county, for them to come in and verify that you're actually doing this. Now, these regulations have been, you know, these new regulations have been positioned, I guess, as a deregulation, but having the county come into your home to inspect a home business, a home occupation that's not a deregulation, and people are very up in arms and concerned about this and don't want the county in their homes. There's other regulations or other permits that have already existed, like for RVs and being able to stay in an RV like when you're building a house, that kind of thing. It hasn't been permitted for people to live in RVs beyond when you're building a home, and now they're they're making that supposedly less regulated, but we think it should just go away altogether if you want to live in your RV while you build a house. Why do you have to get permission from the nanny state to do that? You should be able to do what you want with your own property. Again, it's an intrusion. So we're not saying that the new regulations in this respect are more stringent. They're actually less stringent, but they should be completely removed, in our opinion, another piece of permitting that they're giving is, you know, you can have people come stay in an RV on your property, but after a certain number of days, then you

have to get a permit for that. You can only get one permit per year. It's limited to 14 days. So say your in laws are coming to visit in January, and they stay for two weeks, and then six months later, when your permits expired, your your own parents want to come stay. And you don't have a spare bedroom or whatever, and they would rather have the privacy they they can't stay in that RV if you infringe upon this or violate it. It's up to \$750 per day per violation fine. We think that this is excessive. People should be able to do what they want. Now, we're not saying you can have a campground on your property or anything like that. But you know, this is just getting too much business or too much government into people's business, in our opinion,

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Doug - KGAB 08:01

okay, and by the way, we will take calls here. In fact, are you ready to open it up for calls now, or would you rather wait?

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Julie Formby 08:10

Let me make a few other points, if you don't mind, that I think would be interesting to people. So this came to our attention. There was a memo that was sent from the planning department to the county commissioners before the 715 meeting that showed all of the changes that were being made to the currently proposed regulations before they went to vote it in. And by the way, this has been up for vote twice, and they've postponed twice. The Commission, yes, they're planning to vote it in this Tuesday, August 5, at 330 in the commissioner's boardroom at the county courthouse. We encourage people to come and give public comment. But anyhow, this memo that went out between the planning department and the commissioners had some of the the updates, and we're concerned about one particular update that says that the county plans to exonerate telecommutation, telecommunication towers, from having to consider the effects of radio frequency emissions. This is interesting to us, because if the county's mandate is to be concerned about the health safety and general welfare of the county, then why can't they take this into the consideration of the health safety and general welfare of the community? There's so many studies out there that prove that there's negative health effects on radio frequencies. And is there some kind of funding that's motivating this? Maybe we should public request that public record request that too, and find out where's the funding coming from that's pushing this through. And speaking with developers and realtors, they're very concerned about the extra costs that are going to be required with the new permitting and the fees currently fortify. Five times. Currently, developer costs are, you know, I don't know how to say it. The county costs for development are four to five times the cost of what the developer would normally pay. So additional fees and longer wait lines, longer wait times for appeals through the county commissioners are in the new regulations. So it's going to take 55 to 70 days to appeal a decision which is going to hold up economic development being able to finish these developments. And developers are super concerned about it, as I mentioned earlier. People buy specifically in the county for the zoning and having less regulation. And this is probably going to affect New Home Buyers, which is a big consent big concern for all of the realtors, and they feel like this is a bait and switch to change zoning when people purposefully choose the zone that they want to live in and then have it change after they make a purpose purchase. We've been told that 30% of the sales coming in for realtors are from Colorado. It's

people wanting to escape higher regulations and some of the specific comments that were listed on the county website in the public comment form, over and over, people said, this is Wyoming not Colorado, or this is Wyoming not California. We don't want to go there. So, so

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Doug - KGAB 11:30

basically, what you're saying, if I can summarize here, if I'm understanding you correctly, your big concern is you feel that this interferes with people's lives and that it's an infringement on your freedom? Would that be a fair statement, exactly,

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Julie Formby 11:42

and that people don't know about it? So, like I said, I feel that the county has made a good faith effort in getting the word out. The statute is that they need to give public notice in the newspaper, which is great, but how many people read the newspaper today? And you have to have a subscription to do that. You know, people are more social media oriented, so it's good that the county has advertised on social media, but they've also done, you know, town halls, open houses, Justin has been on the radio. So you're not saying they haven't tried to inform people, not at all. But if my neighbor wants to change his zone, then a letter is sent by the county to all of his neighbors within three to 500 feet right. There's also signs that are posted in the neighborhood. And this is a comment that I brought up to the commissioners, and said, I think this should at least be done for the residents of the county, because if less than 1% know about this happening, then you can't make a good faith decision about the lives of 44,123, you know parcels within the county. So we feel like you know, the developing department has talked about how they've saved so much money on using an in house person to write the new regulations. Justin Arnold, yes, we'll have at noon, yes. And so if you save money, then let's spend some money on making sure that people know what's happening to their property. They need to be informed. This is the biggest investment that most people make in their lives, and it's changing, and they need to know about it.

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Doug - KGAB 13:21

Okay, at this point I will open the phone, 6326500, if you have any comments or questions on the county land use plan, I know this affects a lot of people's lives. Again, it's going before the county commission on Tuesday, Tuesday afternoon, at 330 and repeating one more time, I will have Justin Arnold on at 1205, to he's a county planner, to give his view of the situation. Julie, one thing I know Justin has told me that I think is pertinent. He feels like this is actually loosening regulations compared to what we have now. Do you agree with

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Julie Formby 13:51

that in some aspects? Yes. You know, as I was noting, there's more usage that people can have for an RV but having to have a permit for a home occupation, which allows the county to come in and inspect your home, I think, is an overreach. So that's a further regulation.

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Doug - KGAB 14:10

Julie, they consider it on Tuesday afternoon, and I don't know if they'll make a final decision yet or how that will work. But what would you like the county to do, throw it out and start over, or take the current plan that's being proposed and tweak it, or what would you like to see done?

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Julie Formby 14:24

Well, as we've spoken with developers, there's definitely a need for some more granularity on the regulations for development, but I feel like they need to walk back the difficulty that it's that that's going to be imposed upon developers for getting decisions made, for appeals and such. You know, that's definitely going to impact economic growth. I think, completely throw out the home occupation permit. I think that is so Orwellian to have the government coming into your home inspecting and of course, they say that they won't do that. They also. Say that they're not going to enforce, you know, these regulations and but at the same time, they say the reason that we are writing these new regulations is we can't enforce the current ones, so we want to be able to enforce, but we're not going to enforce like it's it's very confusing to try to get a straight answer, and some of the concerns that have been expressed by people as well, maybe you're not intending to enforce them, and maybe you're not going to be Orwellian. But what about the next people? This is how it's written. So the people are very concerned about, you know, being on top of it and making sure that it's written in a way that, you know, continues to protect the freedoms of people.

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Doug - KGAB 15:39

Looks like we have a caller. Good morning. Caller, you're on the air.

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Michelle 15:43

Hi. This is Michelle. I just want to throw out that there's over a million people in the United States that live in their RVs full time, permanently in Wyoming. You can do that. But part of the reason, I mean, some people are doing it because they're traveling, but more than the people who just want to travel all over are people who do it out of necessity, because they can't afford a half a million dollar home, and so to say that they can't be in their RV for more than 14 days, someone can't be in it, or only when they're building a house, is absolutely absurd and not just. And I have not heard anything about these change in regulations or anything, and I agree you said something about if somebody wanted to change the zoning, they had to notify everybody within three or 400 feet? Well, in the count in the country, that doesn't mean anything. That could be nobody, yeah, exactly areas. You know, in other areas, it's within like, 10 miles in rural areas and so

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Julie Formby 16:54

great point



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Michelle 16:57

that's really ridiculous. It's the point of living out in the country is that you don't have neighbors sitting on top of you, everybody telling you what to do. So right? I'm, I am totally with you. I think, I think everything that you've said that they want to do is ridiculous. And even the even the trying to regulate home businesses, yeah, you know, what about, what about contractors? You didn't mention that half the contractors need acreage to live on, and they have, you know, employees there picking up equipment and stuff all the

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Julie Formby 17:29

time, right? And there's all kinds of regulations about equipment storage and vehicle storage and all kinds of stuff, just backing up a little bit. As far as if people want to live permanently in an RV. There are provisions for campgrounds, but there's sanitation issues, like you would have to put in, you know, a sewer. So that is permissible. What I was discussing before with family was, you know, temporary use permits for having people come stay in an RV on your property, if you had out of town visitors, they're wanting to limit

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Michelle 18:06

that campgrounds, camp like public campgrounds, like Forest Service and stuff, limit you to 30 days. And people in Wyoming, Cheyenne wants to limit people to 14 days on their private land,

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Julie Formby 18:18

but that's just for temporary. Yes, yeah. Michelle,

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Michelle 18:22

permanent. What I'm saying is people do it out of necessity. Yes, they can. In Wyoming, there are regulations, but not you know, just because you're building a house, yeah, it's a great point. People can't afford to do that. We travel in our RV and we hardly ever can stay in a campground because they're always full, because nobody follows that 30 day rule.

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Doug - KGAB 18:48

Michelle, I do appreciate the call.

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Michelle 18:52

People have been already placing their campers and RVs out in the forest service campgrounds in



**D** Doug - KGAB 19:00

Presley. I appreciate the call. Michelle, Julie, any further comment on any of that?

**J** Julie Formby 19:04

No, not really. I did want

**D** Doug - KGAB 19:07

to ask about one thing, because when I was originally contacted about this program, the gentleman who called me, who's not you, but someone with your group, said he was concerned about annexation. We chatted about that a little bit. You're not directly worried about being annexed, but you still have some concerns. Could you explain that?

**J** Julie Formby 19:23

Yes? So there was a big argument about whether or not the urban designation on the some of the new zones within the county were potentially streamlining county properties to be annexed into the city. We're not sure about that. There's been an emphatic denial that there's any urban designation. But when you look in the regulations, there's urban residential, low density, urban residential, medium density and urban residential high density. Now that doesn't mean that your city property because your zone. Own that way, but it the concern is that it certainly is going to make it streamlined in order to be annexed in. And we've been, you know, clear in telling people that annexation is based on state statute, if you are like a pocket that's 75% surrounded by city land, then you can be annexed in by the city. It's not really anything that the county has control over. And so it's important that people realize that that's like a completely separate issue. And if you talk to the county commissioners about it, they can't help you. If you talk to the planning department, they can't help you. But our concern is, you know, with the designations, is there like an inner local cooperation going on to try to streamline certain properties being annexed into the city, and people don't want that who live in the county. They choose there for a purpose.

**D** Doug - KGAB 20:49

We do have a caller, and caller, I'm going to have to ask you to keep it extremely short. We're almost out of time, but go ahead. Hello, hello. Yeah, you're on. We'll have to keep it short, but go ahead.

**S** Speaker 1 21:04

Okay, yeah, I just wanted to respond to that real quickly, but perhaps a view of the other side. Your guest had mentioned that there was a lot of confusion. And I attended a meeting that several private citizens put on a few months ago, and I when I got there, there were quite a few people there. I thought it was kind of odd that the county wasn't invited and they put out a letter that had turned out to be a bunch of misinformation with respect to the new regulations

and that sort of thing, I think, has been contributing to some of the problems. The other thing I would like to say, and again, you mentioned that a lot of people were moving in from Colorado. I've lived here my entire life. And one of the things as I watched one of the commission meetings regarding this, I believe it was commissioner Thompson mentioned that, you know, the county is walking a fine line. They don't want to interfere with people's rights to use their property, but they want to maintain the integrity of the county. And I totally agree with that.

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Doug - KGAB 22:14

Okay, I am going to have to cut that Colin short, because we're almost out of time. Julie, I did want to give you a real brief chance for any last thoughts, and we have less than a minute left, so I have to be

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Julie Formby 22:24

sure, yes, we're in favor of having regulations and standards. We're just not in favor of having excessive overreach. And yes, there was a letter that went out, and there was a rebuttal done by the county and a lot of the arguments were semantic. For instance, all properties are going to be rezoned. It's not all properties, it's only residential. And

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Doug - KGAB 22:53

we could talk more about this. Unfortunately, we are about out of time. Thank you for a very informative visit again. This is coming up on the commission agenda on Tuesday. Also we have Justin Arnold Kern, a county planner, in at 1205 to discuss the same topic. Julie, thank you for coming in today. We appreciate it. Thank you for having me. Am, 650 K, G, A, B, Cheyenne orchard Valley. You're listening to the weekend in Wyoming program. And again, we'll hit this again at 1205 with county planner. Justin Arnold, stay tuned. You