

To the Editor,

Water presents many muddy issues for the Burnt Fork Estates subdivision proposal. Who pays to upgrade the systems and rectify the problems that will be caused? In a meeting with Council members Devlin and Ludington, this question was raised. Paul Ludington said the developer would have to pay for some of these upgrades.

What is the developer's percentage? Does the developer pay all? 10 %? Half? Town taxpayers need to know. We pay a considerable amount monthly for water now and will far into the future. A new well would cost \$300,000 to \$500,000. A new reservoir would cost in excess of a MILLION. A booster pump will be needed. Even if this cost \$100,000 to \$200,000, who pays?

Water capacity is not adequate. The former Town public works director stated the obvious: Stevi does NOT have water capacity for a new subdivision. Wells have been operating at capacity. Last August, the Town paid \$3,000 additional tax dollars for electricity because the pumps were running continuously. If running non-stop now, how could 220 more homes be connected? If they would be, is this a taxpayer or developer's cost?

Council members and mayor must answer taxpayer's questions raised about the Burnt Fork subdivision proposal. Until they produce answers for their constituents, not the developers, no decisions or votes should be cast. A Town Council meeting is set for March 11. All those who attended the March 4 public hearing (nearly 100 people with 30 speakers opposed and only the realtor who sold the property in favor) attend this meeting and DEMAND answers. The meeting is set for the Stevi library Thursday, March 11 at 7 pm.

The Town Planning and Zoning board conducted ZOOM meetings with many unable to participate. The minutes of these meetings must be approved by the board and provided to the Council prior to decisions/votes. Conditions are part of the language and assumptions that new homes will be able to be hooked up to water. That there will be adequate water. That Town wells will be brought into compliance.

The Burnt Fork property does not have water rights. This is not a modern problem. It has been known for years. The result is that the current Town administration must address and correct this issue.

The Town 2016 Growth Policy talked about the potential to add 255 water connections stating, “This many new connections would bring Stevensville’s water system to capacity, requiring expansion in order to accommodate future annexations.”

Since this policy was adopted, 46 new homes and 4 new businesses have been added in Stevi. Also, 16 units are nearing completion by Ace. 14 lots are in the Burnt Fork proposed commercial zone. The new laundromat uses the equivalent water to 16 homes. Twin Creeks will soon be adding 40 to 50 new homes.

Burnt Fork wants to add 220 more homes.

These totals far exceed 255. If Burnt Fork would be approved, expanded water capacity will be required. Again, who will pay these exorbitant costs?

Three of the town’s water wells have NOT been approved by the Department of Environmental Quality. Why not? They must be approved in advance before even considering the proposal.

Just for the record, Town residents are NOT opposed to progress. They are OPPOSED to the Burnt Fork high-density 220 home subdivision with its 10-plex, 7-plex, 4-plexes, duplexes and commercial zone. Water issues alone are enough to sidetrack consideration at this time.

Jim Kalkofen
Stevensville

