

Gold Hill Town Meeting
1011 Main Street – Gold Hill
Boulder, CO 80302

Monday, February 27, 2023

Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety

The Board of the Gold Hill Town Meeting would like to communicate the concerns we've heard from members regarding the proposed Gold Hill Mine Conversion Project. The Gold Hill Town Meeting is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and has been communicating local interests in one form or another since the formation of Gold Hill. As a Board, we make no claim that the concerns below are representative of the full membership. The Gold Hill Town Meeting meets every two months and there has been insufficient time to involve the full membership. The concerns we've heard from individual members and would like to communicate are as follows:

First: Members have expressed concern about the potential for failure of critical protective systems, such as the tailings pond and any chemical storage facilities, during extreme weather or fire events. The town of Gold Hill has experienced a number of extreme weather and fire events in recent decades including the Fourmile fire in 2010 and the extreme flooding and rainfall events in 2013. Should the tailings pond breach or any chemicals become mobilized during such an event, the impact on water supplies and the town environment could be severe. Power cuts are also common during such events and could disrupt the functioning of any critical protective equipment at the site. Most residents depend on local wells for their water supply making contamination of surface or groundwater a central concern. Members would like to know what chemicals are likely to be used on the site and the presence of any toxic elements such as arsenic in the tailings pond along with the protective measures to prevent spills.

Second: Any expansion of traffic, particularly heavy trucks, along the roads adjacent to town has been raised as a critical concern by some members. Dust and noise are concerns for many residents. Safety on the roads for residents commuting to work, children on the way to school, and the many recreational bicyclists that have Gold Hill as one of their primary destinations is also a major concern. If truck traffic expands on any of the roads this could represent a major safety hazard and also discourage bicyclists and other visitors.

Third: The residents of Gold Hill value the history of the area and any expansion of activity that could disrupt archaeological evidence is a significant concern to some members. The ridge where the mill currently sits is known to have been used heavily by Native Americans prior to formation of the town. As a result, information and communication regarding any sites of potential archaeological or historical value would be of interest prior to any decision on expansion of the site.

Fourth: Given the relatively limited amount of material available for processing on the site and the large amount of material owned by the operators of the mill in other locations, some members have expressed substantial concerns that approval to process material available "on-

site” could be extended to processing material from around the region. This would result in a much larger operation with potentially greater impacts on town residents.

Fifth: There have been a number of well documented violations and lack of transparency in the past and many people are concerned that regulations and agreements that protect the welfare of the town will not be adhered to. As a result, high levels of transparency and communication as well as legally-binding measures and agreements to protect health & safety and the mountain environment are seen by some members as essential.

Again, it is important to recognize that, as a Board, our role in writing this letter is to communicate the concerns we’ve heard from individual residents. Because the Gold Hill Town Meeting only convenes every two months, the limited time allocated to provide responses is insufficient to obtain input from the full membership.

Marcus Moench
Chair

Daniel Maedke
Vice Chair

Christine Maedke
Treasurer

Elisabeth Caspari
Member at Large

Gretchen Diefenderfer
Secretary