

By Sarah Cavacini scavacini@palatkadailynews.com June 25, 2020 Publication: Palatka Daily News (FL) Page: A1 Word Count: 540

HOLLISTER – Horses trotted in the Florida sun and chickens clucked while the owner of Trails End Outdoors smiled about new possibilities.

A larger RV campsite is rolling into the business after the Putnam County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the expansion of the site.

Owner Keith Valentine said his business will be able to house 18 RVs, 10 primitive campsites and three Airbnb sites.

“We’re just out here for family activities and for people to come and enjoy the ranch life and understand what that’s all about,” Keith Valentine said.

He and his wife, Joycelyn Valentine, have taken care of the property. Families can spend the weekend riding horses, fishing and relaxing in the rustic outdoors of Putnam County.

They already have a family from Miami coming this weekend to spend time there, and Keith Valentine said it’s because of his wife that everything will be prepared and cozy for them.

“We’re excited. It’s our first family to come to our Airbnb,” Joycelyn Valentine said.

The owners have spent two years trying to get the campsite approved and Keith Valentine said he’s glad he can finally move forward.

Keith Valentine said he is even fixing up the 340-acre area for weddings to be performed.

Although commissioners unanimously approved the matter, some of the Valentine’s neighbors were not happy with the RV expansion.

One neighbor, David Adkisson, made a 21-slide presentation during Tuesday’s meeting to express his disapproval.

He said there would be too much traffic and crime rates would increase if the expansion was allowed.

“I’m looking at it from my family,” he said. “We don’t know who these people are that are coming in here. No background checks. They could be sexual offenders from other areas.”

Adkisson said he understands commissioners are looking at the property monetarily, but none of them live there and they would not have to deal with the change.

He also said the road would not be big enough to handle the large campers and RVs traveling to Trails End.

“We choose this area for all the things Mr. Valentine is now wanting to sell as a novelty to strangers,” Adkisson said. “The seclusion and country lifestyle we all know and love will be put on display and offered up like a souvenir. We’ll be prostituting the familiar area and small-town feel that we sought when deciding where to raise our families.”

Despite his arguments, the board agreed to allow the expansion and said they didn’t find any problems with Trails End growing.

“I don’t see this being a problem,” Commissioner Buddy Goddard said. “I think what you’re going to see is people who came here to enjoy this lifestyle.”

The Valentines said they want people to see what the area has to offer and enjoy the serenity of the Hollister countryside.

“(People) to come out and see the beauty of the country. It’s peaceful. It’s quiet,” Joycelyn Valentine said. “It’s our little piece of heaven out here.”

Palatka Daily News (FL)

Date: June 25, 2020

Page: A1

Copyright © 2020 Palatka Daily News, Community Newspapers, Inc. All Rights Reserved.