

PO Box 810
Saratoga, WY 82331
May 29, 2024

Mayor Davis
Saratoga Town Council
PO 486
Saratoga, WY 82331

Dear Mayor and Town Council:

As you look to select a representative, please consider this letter of interest from me, Ellie Dana.

The Town, the Valley and beyond have been part of my life since my first vacation here in 1996. Vacations turned into 5 month summers after I built a local house in 2001. It became my permanent residence in January 2018.

Since the purpose of the Carbon County Visitor's Council is to "promote local travel and tourism within Carbon County and its municipalities and to receive and expend the revenues from the excise tax on lodging services", my background seems well suited. It is also well suited to represent the interests of the Town and the Town Council, as we have already worked together on one major and complex undertaking..

The story: I've been eating and shopping locally since my first day; my shelves and closets tell part of that story. The many events throughout the years have added to my appreciation and interest in all that happens in the Valley: from pancake breakfasts, to parades, to benefits for the many deserving organizations in the Valley, Chariot Races, Skijoring, Halloween walks, etc. Even before becoming a permanent resident, I rode my horse in parades in Rawlins, Saratoga and Encampment, attended the Fair in Rawlins, and even was one of the players in the skits that used to be part of the Fourth of July event in Saratoga.

While here each year, no restaurant or business or community event got ignored by me, my family and friends. We attended it all, and we were delighted to eat, drink, play and enjoy: Fishing, floating, camping, hiking, 4 wheeling. All have been tried and enjoyed from the top of Old Baldy to the top of Blackhall. Then wildlife viewing throughout the seasons, writing journal entries for each exciting happening! We even came in the winter to try cross country skiing, fires in the fireplace and snowshoeing, plus viewing snowshoe rabbits.

In addition to the fun and the activities that exist for all visitors and tourists, as a permanent resident I looked for opportunities to make a difference:

In 2017, I joined the Airport Board, because I considered the airport a huge asset to this area and wanted to contribute some of my long term aviation knowledge.

Issues that mattered to me for the community were first, implementing landing fees, to relieve the burden of the airport from the citizens of the town, setting pricing that was both reflective of Wyoming fees elsewhere and considerate of local users. The second was using of the roto millings from the runway resurfacing, so they did not sit on Airport property causing drifts, and at the same time they could provide inexpensive paving opportunities throughout the valley. While I was on the Board, both goals were accomplished.

The implementation of the Landfill billing in Saratoga was done by me, resulting in a reduction of fees to the citizens due to more accurate and less expensive processing.

The Chip In For Cancer tournament (which brings visitors to the valley, and provides support for locals who need distant cancer treatment), continues to thrive with me as a lead coordinator.

Starting in 2003 right here, I learned to ride and then competed as a Reiner. I've explored much of Carbon County with my locally purchased horse and trailer, gone to the Fair to compete and even moved cattle, "somewhat" proficiently. Because of this some visitors ask, "where can I ride or ____?" so I have had many chances to direct folks on where and what to enjoy in the Town, Valley and County.

I spoke from the floor at the 2nd STAMP (Saratoga Alternative Transportation Master Plan) public meeting on the issue of walkways. Simply stated I was urging, that any walkways have little or no additional maintenance burden, without a corresponding economic contribution.

And then there is Valley Village Childcare where I am the board chair, was the building project manager and am a fully credentialed volunteer. Childcare is about economic development as much as it is about nurturing and caring for children. Without childcare, there is no staff to provide service to visitors, no staff for our restaurants, our hotels or even our new Critical Access hospital.

The opening position on the Visitors Council Board came to my attention while I was at the Saratoga Town Council to request approval to bring a WWII Warbird to the valley for education and for rides.

No reason other than to provide a unique experience for all. The cost to the Town/Valley is zero, the number of visitors while unknown could be significant, and the promotion is provided by the WASP Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force.

In many ways I have been "promoting local travel and tourism within Carbon County and its municipalities" for 28 years by participating as a visitor and a responsible member of the community. With your support I'd like to formalize that interest.

Regards,
Elle Dana