



May 10, 2006

PRESS RELEASE

Rathdrum Mountain Property Not For Sale

In a letter addressed to Rathdrum Mayor Brian Steele, Mr. Jeff Weimer, President of JD Lumber Company, stated that their 280 acres atop Rathdrum Mountain are not for sale. The letter was sent to the City in response to recent press coverage regarding Councilman Ken Hayes' proposal to have the City consider purchasing the land. The letter also confirmed that the Friends of Rathdrum Mountain would be the first to know if and when JD Lumber decides to sell the property.

Mayor Steele announced receipt of the letter at the City Council meeting on Tuesday, May 9th at the point in the meeting when Councilman Hayes' proposal was to be discussed. It was thought that no further discussion would be required but both Hayes and Friends of Rathdrum Mountain spokesman Jim Ochenkoski made statements regarding the need to prepare for the day when the property may be offered for sale. Councilman Hayes' request that his fellow Councilman provide their support for the possibility of the City's involvement was met with negative responses. The consensus was that there were higher priority projects in town on which any current or even unexpected income could be spent.

Although no action was taken by City Council, the Friends group was encouraged by receipt of the letter. They were fully aware that the land was not currently for sale but this was the first time JD Lumber confirmed in writing that the Friends would be given the first opportunity to purchase the property. They will continue with their plans to make the public aware of the importance of protecting the property from development.

Background

The City of Rathdrum already owns 557 acres on the side of the Mountain. The JD Lumber Company's 280 acres are adjacent to the City's property. JD Lumber has logged their property over the last two years and is pursuing easements from its neighbors in order to sell the land. As a small non-profit group, the Friends do not have the resources to purchase the land outright, nor do they have an interest in managing the property. They have, however, been seeking ways to buy the land with some combination of private funds and public grants.

The Friends of Rathdrum Mountain are dedicated to preserving the Rathdrum Mountain area in its natural state. According to their vision statement, Rathdrum Mountain provides a magnificent backdrop to the City of Rathdrum; they would like it to remain a view shed of trees and not become littered with houses.

Points of Contact:

- Wes DuCharme, President, Friends of Rathdrum Mountain, 687-0588
- Toby Kaplan, Vice President, Friends of Rathdrum Mountain, 687-3267
- Jim Ochenkoski, Secretary, Friends of Rathdrum Mountain, 687-2113
- e-mail: Friends@RathdrumMountain.org
- Web: www.rathdrummountain.org