

Targhee up for review

*By Cara Froedje, Jackson Hole News
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Grand Targhee Resort owner Geordie Gillett will sit down with county commissioners this week to work through a series of conditions attached to the resort's expansion proposal.

The Teton County Board of Commissioners will meet with Gillett at 9 a.m. on Tuesday in its chambers, at 200 S. Willow St.

It will be the first meeting since Gillett modified his proposal in October, when he reduced the number of lodging units from 592 to 525.

Commissioners are not expected to take a final vote on the application Tuesday. Rather, they are expected to work through conditions attached to the application and vote each one up or down. Then, the board is expected to put those final conditions out for public review before reconvening for a final hearing, most likely in January.

The Gillett family wants to expand the resort from 96 to 525 lodging units by rezoning 120 acres at the base of Fred's Mountain from rural to resort.

The plan has 26 conditions attached.

The conditions would limit the resort to 450 lodging units and allow 120,000 square feet of commercial space.

Of those 450 units, no more than 10 percent could be single-family homes and 10 percent could be cabins or town homes. The balance would be short-term rentals. Commissioners also asked that the resort be built in four equal phases.

The conditions would require the resort to place a conservation easement on the property and give that easement to a land trust. The easement and deed restriction establish a fixed boundary to the 120 acres and prevent physical expansion of the resort or additional access to or through the resort from any adjacent or nearby private land.

A month after commissioners drew up those conditions, Gillett presented an alternative plan that would rely more heavily on day skiers by reducing his proposed units to 525 single-family homes, cabins, town homes, and condo and condo-hotel rooms.

Commission Chairman Andy Schwartz said the board also will consider Gillett's alternative.

Gillett has called his alternative plan a compromise that will provide a balance between overnight guests and day users. With fewer rental accommodations, there won't be as many overnight guests.

The resort also is asking for 175,000 square feet of commercial space, which is 55,000 square feet more than commissioners said they would like. Another major change includes preserving 500 acres of high-priority land or lands.

The land would be preserved within 50 miles of the resort in Teton County, Idaho, or Teton County, Wyo.