



Alexander Mulhall <alexandermulhall@townoflakecity.co>

Food trucks

The Humphreys <[REDACTED]>
To: alexandermulhall@townoflakecity.co

Thu, Jun 30, 2022 at 11:41 PM

Dear Mr Mulhall,

Apparently I missed the memo that there was going to be a meeting regarding the issue of food trucks in Lake City, and therefore I wasn't able to share my opinions on the matter, either in person or in email form. This may be because I'm one of the people who own and operate one of those "brick and mortar" stores everyone is so worried about, and I've been pretty busy with summer operations. I am one of the owners of San Juan Soda Company, and though I wouldn't claim to speak for my partners, I think I can adequately articulate my own opinions on the subject. I've also had the opportunity to read the points of concern shared by other people on the subject, and I'll try to address some of those as well.

Firstly, let me say that I am 100% in favor of food trucks being allowed to operate in Lake City. Once the fair-minded and forward-thinking people here have agreed on that, we can move forward with deciding how to implement that decision in an equitable way. Having said that, I'll try to convey my reasons. I've been living full-time in Lake City since 2003. I've participated in the family retail business off and on, and I now am lucky enough to be one of the owners, though my primary income has always been in the field of construction. As a younger working person, who has spent the last 18 years trying to work and raise a family in Lake City, I can say definitively that this town is not designed to be a place where people like me can succeed.

Though this town relies on young people to wait tables, work in kitchens, clean cabins, run registers, etc, it's actually shaped and dominated by the preferences of those who have already largely benefitted from opportunities and careers found in other places. Some of the people crying loudest about the unfairness of allowing food trucks, are those who were able to take advantage of the few opportunities that once existed in this town, back before the boom, and are now refusing to allow anyone else to have a chance. It's not unfair to local businesses to allow food trucks; it's unfair to the local people who want to start a business but have no other options, if we don't.

I am aware of several young families who are interested in trying their hand at food service. The town absolutely needs more dining options. What choices exist for anyone who is young and trying to start a business here? Of the dozen or so locations which have at one time been suitable for food service businesses, approximately 7 are already occupied. The remaining 5-6 are either no longer equipped, not in use, or not for sale. Even if they were for sale, the rise in prices over the last several years would make them essentially out of reach for any of these young entrepreneurs. How many

25-45 year olds with kids do you know who could put together \$100k for a down payment, plus the thousands more that would be required to get that location up to standards? This is more than many of the current business owners spent on their properties in the first place. Aside from that, this town has begun to be dominated by cash buyers, so that anything that does appear on the market is almost instantly snatched up.

Some critics have complained that "gypsies" will arrive here from out of town and steal business away from the locals. I, for one, tend to reject the "slippery slope" arguments that always come into these conversations. Nobody who supports enabling freedom and competition in this town, by allowing food trucks, is suggesting that it should be open-season, with no rules, standards, inspections, or fees. However, I think it's patently ridiculous to expect a person with a small, temporary location to pay thousands of dollars per year in property taxes, just to be "fair" to permanent locations. We pay property taxes and water bills, etc, not as an unfair burden, but because those are the costs of the physical assets we have that food trucks don't. I also find it somewhat amusing and hypocritical that people would object to the "trashy look" and "noisy generators" of food trucks, given that so many of these individuals have convinced themselves that this town's entire economy will collapse if the muddy, junky, loud OHV's that crowd the streets were suddenly never to return, but that's a different debate all together, and not the subject of this letter.

It's disappointing, though perhaps not surprising, that so many people here are so adamantly opposed to allowing this freedom of opportunity to take root in this town. What happened to belief in the free market? Did you know that the city of Los Angeles, CA recently voted to allow people to open restaurants in their backyards and garages? Are we so afraid of trying new things that we're going to be less free than LA? I own a shop that sells ice cream. It's entirely possible that someone will want to open an ice cream truck. That's fine. I'm not afraid of that, and nobody else fortunate enough to have a permanent location should be either. Most of them have had a pretty good head start, and if an eatery with indoor seating, a bathroom, liquor license, a reputation, and wait staff can lose out to a mobile kitchen, they probably shouldn't be in business at all, and definitely shouldn't be artificially protected from competition. There are some really great restaurants in this tourist town, but there's also far too much stagnation in an industry that should be thriving, and it will be good for some of our more complacent, established businesses to feel a little pressure from these young, optimistic dreamers who just want a chance to try.

Thank you for allowing me to chime in on the subject. I would encourage the leadership of this town not to be swayed by those who resist growth and change as detracting from their experience of this "quaint" little town. At one time, everyone here got their water from the river and had a shed out back with a hole in the floor for a bathroom. While that may have been exceptionally quaint, I'm glad we now live in a town with indoor plumbing, electricity, and internet. Those who came before us may not have enjoyed those amenities, but would they have kept us from having them, in the interest of "fairness?"

Sincerely,
Dan Humphreys



Alexander Mulhall <alexandermulhall@townoflakecity.co>

Food Truck opinion

2 messages

Lorie Stewart <[REDACTED]>
To: Alexander Mulhall <alexandermulhall@townoflakecity.co>

Fri, Jul 1, 2022 at 12:28 AM

Town of Lake City Board of Trustees:

I love the concept of food trucks. They typically provide a variety of food fare, speed of service, and reasonable cost. They would be a great complement to the restaurants and other options for meals in Lake City. Competition is good.

However, (1) they should not be permitted to park willy-nilly wherever a landowner lets them, (2) they should be subject to food safety inspection, (3) they should pay a fee to the town for the privilege of operating (a permit fee and a monthly parking fee), (4) they should provide their own bear-proof trash containers and trash pickup, and (5) they should be subject to "grounds" inspection, ie they need to keep the area around the truck neat and free of trash. They would also be subject to sales tax as any other business in the Town.

I would love to see the Town of Lake City purchase the property across the street from the Library and specify it for Food Trucks. "Parking spaces" would be delineated. It should be the responsibility of the Town to keep the "lots" mowed. "Only so many spaces; only so many food trucks", therefore self-limiting. The Town would not get overrun by food trucks.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Sincerely,

Lorie Stewart, Full-time resident

828 Pine Street

Alexander Mulhall <alexandermulhall@townoflakecity.co>
To: Lorie Stewart <billorie@centurylink.net>

Fri, Jul 1, 2022 at 8:11 AM

Received.

[Quoted text hidden]

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Alexander Mulhall
Town Clerk/Municipal Court Clerk
Town of Lake City