

livingston78@outlook.com

From: Jerry Jordan <jjordan@mountaincitytn.org>
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2026 6:04 PM
To: Andrew Livingston
Subject: Re: DMRA - Objection 20 RV Sites Pedro Shoun

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Thanks for this information. I will get back with you.

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From: Andrew Livingston <livingston78@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, 14 August 2026 15:26:20
To: Jerry Jordan <jjordan@mountaincitytn.org>
Subject: DMRA - Objection 20 RV Sites Pedro Shoun

Dear Mr. Jordan,

Thank you for your service on the Doe Mountain Recreation Authority Board of Directors. Board service is volunteer or near-volunteer work that asks a great deal of your time and judgment, and it matters — DMRA plays a real and valuable role in this community, and the people willing to steward it well are doing something genuinely important. I don't take that lightly, and I want to start this letter by saying so plainly, because everything that follows is meant as a good-faith appeal to that same board, not an attack on it.

I am writing to formally object to one specific project the board has approved: the construction of 20 RV sites and a bathhouse on DMRA's Pedro Shoun property, funded in part through an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant.

What the board approved, and who was in the room. At its April 7, 2026 meeting, the board voted to commit matching funds for this project. Public minutes show that vote was taken with only 9 of the board's 15 members present — five of them by video conference — and that the board's own chairman was not present that day. I raise this not to suggest anything improper about the vote itself, but because I want to make sure every current board member has the full picture on this project, whether or not you were in the room on April 7. If you were there, I hope this letter fills in context you may not have had at the time. If you weren't, I hope it's useful background before this project goes any further.

My personal stake, and why I'm writing. I am Andrew Livingston, owner of Doe Valley Campground, and the person who sold DMRA the 80 acres this project now sits on. That sale closed in 2024, and I agreed to it with a clear understanding — based on then-Executive Director Charles Ridlehuber's own written assurances to me, and on DMRA's own McGill Associates-prepared master plan — that the land would become a training facility and lodge, not a campground. The adopted master plan's site map places only a "PROPOSED LODGE AND TRAINING CENTER" on that parcel. Nowhere on that map, at the time I sold the land, did RV sites or camping appear. I would not have sold on the same terms, or perhaps at all, had

I know the land would instead be used to build a government-funded campground competing directly with my own.

Some of you may not have had reason to visit that corner of the property, so I want to be specific about the geography: my private campground, Doe Valley Campground, has operated continuously since 2023 and sits directly adjacent to the Pedro Shoun parcel — our property lines share a common boundary. We constructed this campground after several meetings with the DMRA's executive director Shawn Lindsey and Mayor Larry Potter. It was with their urging and mentorship we decided to invest almost \$1,000,00 into a project that shared a property boundary with DMRA. The 20 RV sites DMRA now proposes to build there would sit roughly 50 feet from my fence line, offering the identical product I sell, to the identical pool of visitors, on land I sold in good-faith reliance on being told it would not be used that way.

Why this matters beyond my own bottom line. I don't think this project is legal, I don't think it's right, and I don't think it's within the spirit of DMRA's own mission. DMRA's adopted mission statement commits the Authority to "promote local economic development while conserving and protecting its beauty, woods, water and wildlife." DMRA's enabling statute likewise directs it toward "economic development for the people" through partnerships with "the private sector... and an engaged local community" — not toward becoming the private sector's direct, taxpayer-and-grant-funded competitor. A state-chartered authority building a subsidized RV park next to an existing, taxpaying small business doesn't create new economic activity in this region — it takes revenue and customers away from a family business that is already here, paying taxes, and employing people, and hands that same activity to a tax-exempt entity instead. That is the opposite of the economic development DMRA exists to advance, and it will materially hurt my business.

I want to be clear that this isn't a complaint about competition in general — there is plenty of that already around Doe Mountain, and I welcome it. My concern is narrower and, I believe, more important for the board to understand: **Doe Mountain doesn't need another campground.** What draws visitors, keeps them longer, and grows the whole region's tourism economy is more activities and more reasons to come — not more beds competing for the same, currently under-filled, pool of campers. The math on the ground today makes that point better than I can:

- My own campground, Doe Valley Campground, is running at roughly 60% occupancy as of today.
- A brand-new private campground recently opened directly adjacent to DMRA's own Adventure Center (Doe Mountain Campground)— as of today, it appears to have only about one camper on site. The owners spent hundreds of thousands of dollars if not close to one million dollars to open the new facility.
- R&D Campground, a long-established local business that DMRA itself named in 2019 written testimony to the state legislature as a trail-accessible beneficiary of DMRA's own operations, has seen its bookings decline this year as per a conversation I had with Rita (the "R" in R&D) earlier this month.
- Forge Mountain Campground in town has had several vacancies after their own expansion.

- DMRA's own recently acquired Roan Creek Campground does not appear, from what I've observed driving past it, to be running anywhere close to full either.
- Since 2022 when I started enjoying Mountain City, I have never personally seen single camper at the 5 RV sites directly in front of DMRA's main adventure center on Harbin Hill Rd.

Every one of these properties is chasing the same, currently soft, demand. Adding 20 more subsidized RV sites into that same pool doesn't grow the pie — it just redistributes an already-thin slice, and it does so by taking from an existing local business rather than growing new visitation to the mountain.

Where things stand. I have already raised this objection directly with Larry Potter — Johnson County's Mayor, who chaired this board until stepping down in recent weeks — and with Charles Ridlehuber, DMRA's Executive Director. I want to be equally direct with the full board: I understand that day-to-day direction on this project comes from Charles and his staff, but the decision of record — the vote that approved committing to this project — belongs to this board, not to staff. That's exactly why I'm writing to each of you individually rather than leaving this solely as a conversation with the Executive Director's office. You are the body that can still revisit this before it's built, and I don't think that decision should be made, or left unrevisited, without every current board member having the same information I've laid out here.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with any of you, individually or as a board, to walk through the underlying documents — the master plan, the correspondence, and the occupancy picture I've described above. I have also previously offered DMRA a straightforward alternative to building a new, competing campground: DMRA is welcome to purchase Doe Valley Campground itself, on negotiated terms, rather than build a subsidized competitor beside it. That offer remains open.

Thank you again for your service, and for taking the time to read this. I hope we can find a resolution that serves this community's actual economic interests, without doing so at a family business's expense.

Respectfully,

Andrew Livingston, Member
Doe Valley Campground, LLC

[REDACTED], [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | livingston78@outlook.com