

MY TURN

Big-box stores in Taos

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The Taos News, 1/26/2012

I am not a permanent resident of Taos. However, I have been especially interested in reading about the discussions and proposals concerning “big box” stores and the proposed and now, at least, temporarily abandoned proposed Family Dollar Store next to the Overland property in El Prado. On the whole, the discourse has been civil, with few exceptions.

The Taos News Nov. 17-23 editorial, “Looking big-box spectre squarely in the eye” and Bob Parker’s op-piece in the same issue, “Big box stores once again raise their lids in Taos” treated the issues in depth and are thought provoking.

In America, there is always tension between protected private property rights and the public rights, including the inherent police powers of the citizens’ representatives. Most of Taos is like no other place in the country and a middle ground solution to the issue of the big-box stores must be the goal of everyone.

My own preference would be to exclude big-box stores. While they sell goods cheaply, they do not have ties to Taos, would abandon Taos in a nano second if not making enough money and frankly, are ugly.

But, reality tells me you can’t exclude them completely.

Taos can make sure that any store footprint fits in as well as possible and doesn’t become an eyesore when ultimately abandoned. Imagine what the present Wal-Mart location will look like if a Wal-Mart Supercenter is ever built in Taos!

Paseo de Pueblo Sur already is seedy in places. Don’t let it get worse for the sake of a few tax dollars and low-wage jobs.

Taos is not only a unique destination for visitors, it is a way of life for its residents.

Preserve its character to the extent reasonably possible, thoughtfully, for now and the future.

Respect the private property rights of those who own property and pay taxes on it ...but not too much or blindly.

Reasonably protect business owners who do have an interest in the well-being of Taos, as they are Taos.

Simply, keep talking civilly about the local issues relating to big-box stores and Taos' home grown businesses and some kind of accommodation can be found.

Patrick Shaw lives in Dallas, Texas.