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## **Why I and others oppose David Hall's NewVistas plans in Vermont and Utah**

As an MBA professor at Brigham Young University for four decades, I spent thousands of hours with students evaluating potential new business start-ups and innovative entrepreneurial plans. Recently, having spent months learning about the NewVistas Foundation on the web, talking with neighbors, meeting with David Hall himself, his associates, and others, I have come to the conclusion that this dream is not really viable. In fact, I argue, it's not so much a dream as it is a nightmare.

While Mr. Hall says he has spent much of his life on this project, I would argue that it may have been more achievable and acceptable if he had engaged more participants from the beginning. While one may disagree with some of his ideas, it's the process he uses that becomes the fatal step in trying to undermine people in Vermont and in our Pleasant View area of Provo, Utah.

The place where I live has been a family community for me since 1976 as a young BYU professor. My wife, Kaye (who grew up in this "village"), and I raised 10 children in this sweet little neighborhood, all with the support and examples of good, decent human values. The saying "It takes a village to raise a child" is a perfect description of the experiences we have had with neighbors, the sense of trust and we-ness, of serving one another, caring for the sick, watching each other's homes when people were traveling, mentoring neighborhood youth, and in some cases, continuing on to the next generation as the original owners pass away and their children take over. I'm sure for many in the beautiful little towns in Vermont, places I have enjoyed visiting over the years, the feeling is similar to mine.

However, to now have someone with money and power enter our area and gradually buy up homes, offering distorted purchase power to grab residences, is troubling. It shakes the peace and violates the sense of continuity and mutual care for one another. We don't want a big business and high-tech takeover. If Hall's ideas are so wonderful and revolutionary for Utah, there are uninhabited places out west by Utah Lake, or in the Salt Lake County desert or paralleling the Salt Flats where people would like to live, unencumbered by city life. In Pleasant View, we enjoy our Rocky Mountain views, hiking in nearby canyons, our easy access to the benefits of Brigham Young University with its art, concerts and sports. In Vermont surely there are similar options that may be threatened by Mr. Hall.

As I think about NewVistas disrupting our "village," better suggestions come to mind if he still wants to build in Utah. Why not establish NewVistas in one of the hard-scrabble towns needing new investment? Some place such as La Verkin, Utah, where in 2001 they sought to ban the United Nations, or the nearby town of Virgin, which officially required its citizens to own at least one firearm in every home. They need outside capital and apparently want to live unitedly against "outside threats." I think NewVistas needs to exit Pleasant View, also

the industrial site in southeast Provo, as well as the sweet little communities in rural Vermont.

I've written two books and a dozen or so academic articles on Joseph Smith's vision of Zion, so as a Mormon academic I can declare that Hall's plan is a far cry from the original. Both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young articulated a mix of community systems, none of which parallel very much the NewVistas plan. Hall's system is corporatist, while Joseph's was more communal. Hall wants to establish a top-down power structure, whereas Joseph envisioned a bottom-up community of common consent. Hall seeks to control. Joseph sought to liberate. The early Zion plat consisted of large family yards and agriculture. In contrast, Hall plans for tiny urban apartments of 200 square feet in a bare, boring apartment. No wonder the Mormon Church felt the need to publicly disassociate itself from Hall's pipe dreams in August. His ideals are definitely not Mormon.

Last week, I spent several hours at Hall's industrial hub of south Provo where he labors to design and build various futuristic technologies, many of which he imagines being used in his "utopia." We debated his plans a bit. He also gave me a tour of the premises. Admittedly, some products were interesting. But they are far from scalable today.

So after considerable reflection, I declare more strongly than ever my opposition to the David Hall Kingdom. I add my voice to Vermonters and others concerned about Hall's future power plays. Instead of NewVistas, yes, I say, "Hall, no!"

Dr. Warner Woodworth is professor emeritus at the Marriott School, Brigham Young University, where he taught and did research around the globe on intentional and utopian communities, along with Mormon history, among other specialties. He lives in Pleasant View, a neighborhood being gradually bought up by David Hall and his NewVistas Foundation.

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Testimony of Michael Sacca, resident of Tunbridge  
and President of the Board, Alliance for Vermont Communities  
March 28, 2018

Good morning Chair Deen and Members of the Natural Resources Committee.

My name is Michael Sacca and I come before you today as a resident of Tunbridge, as former chair of the Tunbridge Planning Commission, as present commissioner on the Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission and as president of the board of the Alliance of Vermont Communities. I come here to share with you why I consider it my duty to speak out about protecting our natural and cultural resources.

While not a professional planner, I do have some experience with town and regional plans. I can safely say that nowhere in any plan have the residents expressed any interest in having anything even remotely as invasive and out of scale as the NewVistas Development in their towns or their region. Quite the contrary.

Vermont planners and politicians had the insight long ago to realize the value of Vermont's natural resources and planned accordingly to maintain them. I believe the NewVistas project flies in the face of sound natural resource management. In addition, the project is blind to respecting the cultural resources and traditions of our state. There is a deep and vital connection between the natural resource base of our communities and the lives of people who live there. The hills, woods and fields have meaning because they provide livelihoods and places to recreate, places to raise families. In essence, our working landscape defines who and what we are. In contrast, I believe NewVistas Foundation is looking at our hills as simply a chunk of real estate, devoid of the people and wildlife that call these communities home.

On the personal side, our two sons, in their twenties, have chosen to stay in Vermont. They both work with their hands and both have a connection with the working landscape. One is an arborist and the other a furniture maker, and both are, at this moment boiling sap from a modest sugaring

operation. They feel fortunate to live and work here. I want to be sure their children and generations after them have similar opportunities. Vermonters have the privilege of a strong relationship to the land; as gardeners, foresters, writers, farmers, hunters, poets, artists, landowners, politicians or a hundred variations within these broad headings. It defines who we are.

The NewVistas Foundation says that the project is 50, 75 or even 100 years into the future and not to worry about it since we'll all be dead. Well, that doesn't sit well with the people of these communities and with people across the state of Vermont that oppose this project and others like it. And it is not a reason to sit back and allow something to unfold and develop that is clearly against the will of its residents that live here. We have a responsibility to speak out now against this ill-conceived plan that has no place in the vision of how Vermonters want to see their communities. We, the people of this state, are and must be the voice for future generations as past generations have been for us. We are dedicated to sustainably caring for Vermont and respectfully request you, members of the Natural Resources Committee, to join us as responsible stewards of this land and our culture.

Michael Sacca

168 Monarch Hill Road

Tunbridge