

## MEMORANDUM

August 3, 2020

FROM : Meg Haynes

TO : Cindy Houben, Zachary Hendrix, Ellen Sassano

RE : Pitkin County Growth Management Public Outreach Discussions

I apologize for having to miss the July 30 Pitkin County growth management public outreach meeting discussion, because I was looking forward to making several comments. We had an unexpected Starwood matter that I had to spend the morning immediately addressing. The following are some random points that I would like to make on behalf of Starwood to those participating in this summer's weekly growth management meetings:

- Last week I received this email from Mitch Haas, Haas Land Planning, LLC, and I concur with most of Mitch's sentiments:

"Thanks Meg. I'd love to stay involved but these weekday meetings during the busy summer months just have not been workable at all with my schedule, and I know I'm not alone in that sentiment when it comes to other land use professionals in the area. This has oddly enough been one of the busiest summers I've ever seen, and I just can't fit these meetings into the middle of my workdays.

Further, the one or two "public outreach meetings" I've tuned into seemed pointless to me — I found myself sitting and watching as four people from the County talk to each other with no opportunity for any actual interaction/participation from me. While Cindy's team has invited all of us to put comments into written letters, I just haven't had the patience to do so. I spend all day sitting in front of a computer working and the last thing I feel like doing when I call it a day on the work-front is sitting back down at my computer to compose a letter about more planning issues.

I think the whole house size discussion is completely unnecessary and just a personal agenda of someone's. The character of much of Pitkin County IS large homes...not becoming or changing to, but "is." To deny so is to ignore

the last 20-plus years of reality in certain areas of the County. Moreover, the home size “problem” really is not a problem as there just are not that many of them being built per year and not a single one has yet to be built under the County's new energy code requirements. To call them a problem with regard to the “Climate Action Lens” is ignoring the basic fact that the County's study of large homes included not a single one built under the new energy code. For all we know, a brand new 15,000 square foot home built under the new codes might have far, far less climate impact than does — in the way of just one example — the typical 3,000 square foot house built in 1978. My take: there is no reason whatsoever to make an issue out of house sizes at this time, much less to make any code changes addressing house sizes. At best, this discussion is premature.”

- Prior to the July 30 meeting, Cindy told me that 135 TDRs are still available for use in the County. I would like to advocate strongly on behalf of Starwood for the County's TDR program to remain in effect and for Starwood to continue to be a designated TDR receiver site.
- Starwood is a large subdivision relatively out of the general public's sight and tucked into the mountains above McLain Flats. Starwood has approximately 100 homes and is all but completely built out with primarily remodels of older homes being constructed. The homes are spread out on approximately 3 – 5 acres in an area far less dense than elsewhere in the County, therefore producing less concentrated gas emissions.
- Regarding the ongoing County attention to seemingly reducing house size, a Starwood homeowner recently asked and stated,

“How do they logically blame the larger homes for buildout abuse of the landfill, roads, etc.? I don't see where the County has factored the increase in property tax revenue that will come from all of the buildout they estimate, and the services the County will be able to afford with all of those dollars... and they can't have a vibrant Aspen with Tourism (Lodging) and Full-time residents and Affordable Housing [all of which they seem to value] without the wealth that Aspen attracts from “part time,” high worth individuals investing in or building homes that they

have worked hard to afford. In my opinion, the County can't have it both ways. On the other hand, nearly 50% of GHG reduction comes from Electricity, so simply put, both solar and LEDs, etc. for conservation are the obvious ways to go. Starwood is in a strong position to work on both, and to make a difference to position Starwood in a proactive leadership position and partnership with the County on Net Zero. A recently remodeled Starwood home completed by a previous Starwood HOA Board member ("thought leader") is a prime example for all of the County. Starwood's Board, acting as its architectural committee, can work toward creating procedures for our subdivision's homes above 5,000 square feet to be have Net zero construction, as is required in Boulder."

- Most of you know that the Boulder energy targets are measured with the Home Energy Rating System (HERS), and are based on home size. In Boulder County, people can apply to build larger homes, i.e., larger homes are not banned and go through a process to get permits approved, and the homes must achieve a HERS rating of zero (net zero energy). External energy using systems, such as pools, hot tubs, and snow melting systems, are not included in the HERS rating. The County requires the energy for these items to be offset 100% by renewable energy, either through on-site generation or a community solar subscription. As a TDR receiver site, Starwood's architectural procedures could continue to initiate the County's adopted energy efficiency requirements and become a model for other County HOAs, as well as to partner with entities such as CORE and Holy Cross to proactively initiate further energy efficiency standards for our homes.
- A senior manager who was interviewed at the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) has recommended that homes should focus on high efficiency HVAC, air sealing and temperature controls, which are especially important for homes that are not occupied year-round. Starwood wants to, and is, incorporating the County's adopted energy saving measures. The RMI manager was not aware of studies that could confirm or rebut the claim of larger homes having higher energy intensity, and he agreed that typically the trend is the opposite (i.e., larger homes generally have lower energy

intensity). CORE has received monies from their energy fees on large homes.

- For Starwood to become a leader in implementing low carbon solutions, adopting the ideas set forth by the Land Use and Energy Working Group could assist the County in meeting its GHG reduction goals and bring awareness to the community about necessary changes required to meet these goals. By becoming an early adopter, Starwood could also encourage other HOAs to do the same.
- Starwood's architectural advisor, Mark Noel, made the following comments during last Thursday's meeting:

" It is Starwood's desire to maintain its current status as a TDR receivership site in Pitkin County. The Starwood homes are diverse in their sizes, and Starwood matches the home sizes with their sites and locations. I mirror much of what Mitch Haas had to say regarding energy efficiency goals and new standards. Starwood homeowners greatly financially support the Aspen community's diverse and thriving culture."

- I think that the P&Z recommended keeping the TDR program intact as it currently is; is that correct?"
- In 2019 Starwood property owners paid \$3,309,907.27 to various County governmental entities including but not limited to: the Aspen Ambulance District, Open Space & Trails, Pitkin County Library, Aspen Fire Protection, Aspen Valley Hospital, Roaring Fork Transportation Authority, Colorado Mountain College, Aspen School District and Aspen Historic Parks & Recreation.
- A majority of the Starwood property owners are likely neither Roaring Fork Valley pro-growth or no-growth advocates, but rather they are Pitkin County citizens and residents who respect the value of maintaining a *delicate balance* in addressing our Valley's future growth issues, and preserving Aspen's ECONOMY as the world class tourist destination and skiing resort that it is. The Starwood homeowners, whether they are full-

time or part-time residents, contribute hugely to the health, well-being and cultural SERVICES of our community, such as: the Arts Museum, Music Festival, Ballet, Jazz Aspen, Aspen Valley Hospital, etc., etc., including the hundreds of thousands of dollars that the Starwood families, their friends and guests spend annually in Aspen Ski Co tickets, at local restaurants and hotels.

- We hope that the County managers, the citizens who are participating in this growth management public outreach process and the BOCC will most thoughtfully consider the best options to address growth in our Valley by not restricting the size of houses in areas, particularly Starwood, where larger homes are appropriate as the future homes' construction methods adapt the County's energy efficient and other sensible global saving measures. Hopefully, those of you who make these far reaching decisions will not want to mandate such limiting measures that you turn away the wealthier residents who so importantly contribute to maintaining the delicate balance of citizenry and homeowners that make Aspen and the Roaring Fork the truly unique haven that it is. The current TDR program is working well in Starwood as a designated receiver site to contribute properly to our Valley's future growth.
- THANK YOU to Cindy, Zach and Ellen who are working so diligently on this growth management public outreach process.