August 28, 2020

To: Boulder Town Planning Commission, Boulder Town Council, Mayor and the Good People of Boulder

Honorable Boulder Planning Commission Members;

Honorable Boulder Town Council Members;

Honorable Mayor Steve Cox,

As a property owner directly south of the proposed high-density clustered-home subdivision, I am writing to express my concerns and voice my opposition to the developer’s application request to rezone the property from Greenbelt Multiple Use to High Density Residential. The proposed development is not compatible with the General Plan and is in conflict with the Vision Statement of the General Plan.

Reasons for my concerns:

1. Chapter 5. (5-1) The Vision Statement of the General Plan states: “The primary objectives of the community are (1) to preserve the ranching, small scale agricultural, wilderness lifestyle of the place in keeping with the rural/frontier spirit of Boulder, (2) to protect open space, clean air, clean water, dark skies, and quiet country style atmosphere that currently exists.”

* A high-density clustered-home subdivision, bordered by wetlands, on what is now productive pasture, and adding 12 new building sites with septic systems, is not compatible with the Vision Statement.
* If developers are able to buy property, amend the General Plan and change zoning, the result will be less ranching, fewer pastures and open spaces and the rural/frontier spirit of Boulder will be lost forever.
* Clean air: The heavy equipment alone needed for a project of this size and the possible years of ongoing construction will certainly have an impact on air quality. In addition, increased traffic (cars, trucks, ATVs) will affect the air we breathe.
* Clean water: 12 new septic systems (in a cluster) on sensitive land, bordered by wetlands, with an irrigation ditch (which runs through my back yard on the way to Lower Boulder) is a recipe for disaster. In addition, we are concerned about the impact 12 clustered septic systems will have on our well.
* Dark skies: In the developer’s Land Use Application/Rezone from GMU to HDR, it states, “Any street lighting that is required will meet Dark Sky intent and there will be a covenant for the housing that requires Dark Sky fixtures for any exterior lighting.” With a high-density clustered-home subdivision in the middle of a pasture with no topographical features to buffer surrounding homes, light pollution in inevitable.
* Quiet country style atmosphere that currently exists: A high-density clustered-home subdivision does not promote a quiet atmosphere.

1. Chapter 5. (5-2) General Community Goals: “The following list expresses the primary goals of the citizens of Boulder:” 1) To preserve Boulder’s rural agricultural atmosphere and cultural resources. 2) To preserve farming, ranching and the conservation of open lands to support

agricultural endeavors. 3) To preserve natural beauty, open space, clean air and water and quiet atmosphere. 4) To keep agricultural fields open, watered and productive…”

* The proposed high-density clustered-home subdivision is not compatible with “General Community Goals.”

1. Chapter 7. (7.5) High Density Residential: “It should be buffered from the Highway and other development by pinyon and juniper cover or other topographical features.”

* In the developer’s Land Use Application, it states: “We believe the application to rezone this highly visible and accessible parcel of land is in compliance with the intent of the general plan…” Obviously, developing on a highly visible parcel of land does not comply with the General Plan.

1. Other Concerns and Comments:

* We were aware the property for the proposed subdivision was under contract and would most likely be developed. We naively assumed, it would fall under Low Density Residential with the 5 acre minimum requirement (which we do not oppose). When we learned of the developer’s plan to have the property rezoned to High Density Residential (a day prior to the Planning Commission Zoom Meeting), we became concerned and emailed the Planning Commission a list of some of our concerns/questions. We were told our questions were premature. We were taken aback when we received an email from the developer, who had been forwarded our email by the Planning Commission Clerk.
* Posting several solicited letters of support for the proposal an hour before the Planning Commission Zoom Meeting and then stating most people are in favor of the proposal was misleading. For many people in town, the meeting was the first time they had heard the proposal. Unfortunately, the property owner and developer did not feel the need to speak with adjacent property owners who would be most impacted by this project. This seems very “shady” (other words come to mind, but they would not be appropriate for this letter). Also, a couple of the letters of support raise real concerns of conflicts of interest.
* The issue of affordable housing is not unique to Boulder. In the Planning Commission Meeting, the developer stated lots in the proposed subdivision would sell for between $40.000 and $120.000. Really? I would like to see more detail on how the developer arrived at these figures. In the proposal, the developer states: “our intention is to involve as many local purchasers as possible.” There is no guarantee a single lot will go to a local resident. My home was used as an example of what can be done (it used to be a double wide, but I have made it my home). Even a small home like mine with porches, decks and landscaping will cost approximately $200.000 cash, as there are no traditional bank mortgages for manufactured homes. In both the Concept Subdivision Application and the Land Use Application, the developer appears to be long on salesmanship and short on details.
* What consideration has been given to the impact a high-density clustered-home subdivision, bordering wetlands will have on wildlife and bird habitat?
* What consideration has been given to the increased traffic and the impact it will have on our already busy roads?
* If this request to rezone is approved and the developer is able to proceed with the planned high-density clustered-home subdivision, a precedent will be set. Developers will buy land, offer similar proposals and the Boulder we now know will be gone. It is worth mentioning, a week after the August 13th Planning Commission Meeting, I received a cash offer from an LLC in Aurora, Colorado to purchase part of our property (Of course, our family has no intention of selling to a developer to see the land and the town we love dramatically changed). This is how it starts, and there is no going back.

My family has had property in Boulder pretty much since the beginning (I am the fourth generation.) My home is on the same spot of ground as my childhood home. My parents are buried here. I have always told people this is my happy place and spent as much time here as possible (for years in an old single wide trailer). In March, Boulder became my primary residence. I have seen a lot of change in Boulder over the years, some good and some bad. I have seen people come and people go, but looking back, those who truly wanted to be here have always found a way. I have tried hard not to involve myself in town politics, but when I learned of the proposed high-density clustered-home subdivision in the middle of town, I knew I could no longer sit on the sidelines. Allowing developers to ignore the Vision Statement of the General Plan and amend (rewrite) The General Plan to change Boulder to what they want it to be, or to a make a little more money, is wrong!

Respectfully,

Rod Peterson

Peterson Boulder Ranch LP