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Subject: Plea for fuller discussions, integrating more input and taking fewer votes

Sent: Sun 7/21/2013 11:39 PM

Note to Central West Steering Committee

From the July 9 minutes, I note that we took many votes about the building height, density and
land use for the many individual properties south of Estes. You will recall I had raised a concern
before the discussion began that the results would not be useful without benefit of traffic data,
steep slopes or stormwater management input. This lot by lot consideration at this stage does not
promote sound and integrated planning. My question about this approach led to an important
discussion about how to proceed which was not recorded in the minutes. In the end we agreed to
proceed with the agenda as written and to evaluate how this approach had worked; we did so
briefly at the end of the meeting without settling on how we would do things in the future. I am
frustrated we are not taking the broad approach to land use planning that a small area plan
requires.

One way to hold a conceptual discussion would be to put Whit Rummel's draft plan on a future
agenda. It takes a more integrated approach to planning. We could encourage Lucy to come up
with some schematic ideas for the area south of Estes that would also lead to this kind of
conceptual discussion with the people planning to develop the property.

A second comment. What's interesting to me is that our committee has become quite practiced
in making motions, discussing and voting. Nothing wrong with a committee voting in an
ordinary meeting where the subject has been thoroughly studied as the Town Council does, after
a suitable period of discussion. However, the Council process provides the opportunity for public

input before each vote, whether by public comment on each agenda item or by means of a public hearing devoted to one topic. Last meeting we voted our uninformed opinions without hearing from the public. In addition, we seem to forget our steering committee's charge requires us to integrate the public input we've heard at workshops and meetings into our decision-making. The votes don't reflect at all what we have heard. For example, we have never discussed the public input, e.g. the rationale behind the decisions made in the Citizens Concept Map.

Last October the Council set up a community-driven process which emphasized the accordion model of seeking input from various interests as the committee did its work. In January our committee spent a good deal of time setting up our decision-making process. We agreed to aim for consensus where we could, and vote when necessary with a 2/3 majority carrying the day. Yet on July 9th we voted for tall buildings in several motions without having walked the property or public input that could have informed our decisions. These votes we took are not only premature, and uninformed by data and public input, but the votes at this stage discourage dialogue and compromise among ourselves.

As a Committee, we need to take the time to seek common ground with each other. The reason I raise this issue now is because this last voting exercise demonstrates that there is likely to be a 2/3 majority for a plan with unpopular zoning changes.

Is the Steering Committee prepared to take to the Council a plan that is unsupported by a significant minority of the steering committee, as well as a great number of community members?
It's far preferable, I think, for us to work harder and develop a plan that contains a community consensus.

Thanks for listening!

--Julie