

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Special Meeting of the Estes Valley Planning Commission

April 17, 2008, 1:30 p.m.

Board Room, Estes Park Town Hall

Commission: Chair Ike Eisenlauer; Commissioners Wendell Amos, Bruce Grant, Betty Hull, Joyce Kitchen, Doug Klink, and John Tucker

Attending: Chair Eisenlauer; Commissioners Amos, Hull, Kitchen, Klink, and Tucker

Also Attending: Director Joseph, Planner Chilcott, Town Attorney White, Town Board Liaison Homeier, Public Works Director Zurn, and Recording Secretary Roederer

Absent: Commissioner Grant, Planner Shirk

The following minutes reflect the order of the agenda and not necessarily the chronological sequence of the meeting.

Chair Eisenlauer called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Farrell/Town Resident stated the three-minute time limit for public comment does not allow time for the public to provide positive comments.

Sandy Osterman/Town Resident expressed concern regarding a comment made by Commissioner Amos at the April 15, 2008 planning commission meeting to wit: people in attendance at planning commission meetings are neighboring property owners to proposed developments, not the general public. She stated she and her husband attend meetings to learn and to be active citizens in the community. Commissioner Amos stated most people attend due to concern over a particular project, not just to learn about the process; his remark was not intended to be derogatory. Commissioner Klink noted that until recently most planning commission meetings were very poorly attended. He is happy to see the number of people in attendance.

2. REZONING, PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION PLAT, and PRELIMINARY P.U.D. 08-01, ELKHORN LODGE REDEVELOPMENT/BIG BEAR ESTATES SUBDIVISION, Four Metes and Bounds Parcels (parcel identification numbers 35261-00-001, 35261-05-046, 35261-06-001, 35252-53-018, Portion of 35261-06-001) and Outlot A, Sallee Resubdivision, currently known as the Elkhorn Lodge property, including 600 West Elkhorn Avenue, Zahourek Conservatory, LLC/Owner, Rock Castle Development Co./Applicant

Planner Chilcott stated this is a continuation of the review begun Tuesday, April 15, 2008 of a proposed rezoning, preliminary subdivision plat, and preliminary PUD 08-01 for the Elkhorn Lodge property. Today's meeting will focus on proposed development on the lower portion of the property (approximately 20 acres), which would include a commercial core—"Elkhorn Village," renovation of the Elkhorn Lodge and addition of a wing to the lodge, and the bypass road alignment and connection to Elkhorn Avenue. These 20 acres are well suited to development to serve as a western anchor for the downtown area. Staff is supportive of the development concept for this area and of the proposed renovation of the lodge.

Elkhorn Village is envisioned as a pedestrian-scale commercial development along a proposed interior road, Elkhorn Village Lane. The development proposal presents an opportunity for the Town to review and approve design guidelines for the commercial core and the entire 63 acres, which will guide how the property develops in the future and will provide a level of architectural and design review not found with the vast majority of development in Estes Park. Planning staff recommends the applicant provide a strong vision for this pedestrian-scale commercial core. The proposed development of this area avoids large-scale retail or "big box" type development, which corresponds with guidelines

found in Estes Valley Comprehensive Plan chapter 6. Review of this portion of the proposal includes the riverwalk, streetscapes, and parks. Staff recommends the applicant consider how public spaces can be designed to reinforce a connection to downtown and increase the viability of commercial areas. The applicant does propose restoration of Fall River in this area.

Planner Chilcott provided a brief overview of proposed lots and their uses:

- Lot E – approximately three acres; would include the Elkhorn Lodge, a new wing addition, courtyard space, and retail/commercial space.
- Lot B-3 – a small, triangular-shaped lot, approximately 0.7 acre; difficult to develop unless it is developed in conjunction with proposed Lot E. Shared parking is envisioned between Lot B-3 and Lot E; this would require shared-access easements and shared-parking agreements.
- Lot C – adjacent to Fall River. The applicant envisions 20 accommodations units on the west side and a retail/commercial building on the east, with parking between. Staff supports this transition to accommodations use; nightly stays should be limited to 30 days or fewer; use should not be for multi-family development. Additional work is needed on the concept plan for this lot because proposed parking in this area would be the focus for those looking west down Elkhorn Village Lane toward Old Man Mountain, particularly if the parking pad is converted to a parking structure in the future.
- Lot D – envisioned for commercial/restaurant use.
- Outlots F and G – to be dedicated to the Town; includes restoration of Fall River riparian habitat.
- Lot F-1 – a key lot in the development of this property; a strong vision for use of this lot to reinforce the connection to downtown should be presented; development should be pedestrian-scale.
- Lot F-2 – contains the Elkhorn Lodge coach house, which is listed on the national historic register and will be retained; proposed for single-family residential development.
- Lot F-3 – contains a cabin (church), which will be retained; commercial development is also proposed.
- Lot F-4 – currently contains a number of old cabins; the applicant contemplates additional multi-family development on this lot. However, the 14.5% driveway slope exceeds the maximum slope allowed. Staff is not supportive of the envisioned multi-family development with the current driveway alignment.
- If bypass road alignment with James Street is decided upon, changes to the overall concept plan would be required.

Draft design guidelines for the property have been submitted by the applicant and are available for review on the Town website. Additional work is needed on the design guidelines. Staff recommends that the concept plan for the lower 20 acres of the property be completed in conjunction with determining the bypass road alignment, planning for river and wetland habitat restoration, review of the shared-parking study, and historic preservation planning. The timing of this process can be addressed with any vote to approve the preliminary PUD, should the Planning Commission choose to recommend approval.

Information in the utility plans submitted by the applicant for April Planning Commission review did not fully address the adequate public facilities required. This information has been refined with a revised submittal, which was routed April 14, 2008 to affected agencies for review and comment.

The applicant proposes a public trailhead to be located on adjacent town-owned property accessed off Old Ranger Drive. It has not yet been determined whether this proposed location is feasible in terms of the slope of the property and the number of vehicles that could park there. The number of parking spaces needed has not yet been determined. Fall River runs through the property; proposed Lots C and D and Outlots F and G, as well as a portion of Elkhorn Avenue near Far View Drive, lie within the 100-year floodplain. The applicant proposes to revise the location of the floodplain, which would be subject to FEMA and Town Board review and approval. Review of the proposed floodplain revision

would ensure that the flood hazard is not increased on adjacent properties and may result in reducing the flood hazard on some properties. An old sewer main (and subsequent water main) that crosses Fall River above grade near Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums created a waterfall, backed up the river and changed its configuration, and increased the land within the floodplain. Review of this proposal includes returning the river to its natural condition, making it less likely to flood in the future. If the sewer and water mains are relocated, the waterfall would be affected. Elkhorn Plaza Condominium unit owners have expressed concern about potential loss of the waterfall, which muffles traffic noise from Elkhorn Avenue, provides a soothing environment, and creates fishing pools. Staff believes the benefits of returning the river to its natural state, restoration of fish habitat along the entire stretch of river through the applicant's property, and removing properties from the floodplain are compelling reasons to remove or lower the waterfall. If the waterfall is lowered, care would be taken to ensure the maximum amount of buffering of road noise is retained as is possible, thus minimizing impact to the adjacent property owners.

The applicant proposes two open-space outlots adjacent to Fall River, Outlots C and D, and restoration of wetlands. Final determination of the bypass road alignment may impact existing wetlands. Staff recommends that approval of the submitted applications be conditioned on replacement of all wetlands that are removed with a one-for-one replacement of jurisdictional wetlands either on-site or immediately adjacent to the site. A wetlands study determined that lower-quality wetlands found on proposed Lot F-1 were created by raising Elkhorn Avenue, which causes water to collect there. The wetlands on Lot F-1 are not connected to Fall River and are therefore not under federal jurisdiction.

The applicant submitted a Wildlife Habitat Evaluation and Impact Analysis. Staff recommends requiring compliance with the recommendations in this analysis, including, but not limited to, preparation of a restoration plan for the river and wetland/riparian habitat. In accordance with this plan, no use or minimal use of riprap should be proposed for bank stabilization. Portions of the riverbank have been degraded by horses stabled in this area.

The lower 20 acres of the property has very different topography and site conditions than the upper 40 acres; it is generally open with few trees. The only steeply sloped, treed area is proposed Lot F-4, which the applicant shows as 3.785 acres with 2.426 acres set aside as private open space. There are some significant spruce trees on the lower 20 acres that the applicant is working to preserve. Staff is supportive of the proposed limits of disturbance.

The Elkhorn Lodge property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district in the 1970s. The applicant proposes to renovate and preserve the main lodge building and construct a new hotel wing and has stated that the coach house and cabin (church) on Lot F-2 will remain. The ranch house is in the location of the bypass road if alignment with Far View Drive is chosen and is proposed to be removed, as are the bunkhouses. Staff recommends that compliance with comments received from Estes Park Museum Director Betty Kilsdonk be a condition of approval; these comments address historic documentation of the buildings. The applicant has hired the firm City Visions to prepare the historical assessment. Staff recommends the overall design of development on the lower 20 acres be reviewed to ensure the existing lodge and the pedestrian-scale development complement one another. Removal of any existing buildings should be addressed in the annexation agreement or development agreement between the applicant and the Town.

The applicant proposes to remove all horses from the site with the redevelopment and does not plan to keep horses on the site. Staff recommends this be a condition of approval.

Staff recommends that permitted uses for each proposed lot be clearly established. The single-family residential portion of the development should be limited to single-family use only. The type of retail or commercial development proposed on each lot on the lower portion of the site should be itemized. The PUD should clearly define which zoning district regulations apply on each lot.

Staff has received a number of comments from neighboring property owners regarding concerns about lighting impacts. Staff recommends that a lighting study be required with each future development plan application to ensure that offsite lighting impacts are minimized.

Until the final alignment of the bypass road with West Elkhorn Avenue is determined by decision of the Town Board, the applicant proposes to use the current driveway entrance to the Elkhorn Lodge as the northern terminus of the road. Once the permanent bypass road has been constructed, this temporary access could be converted to a less intense use. Consideration should be given to converting this section of road to pedestrian and/or shuttle bus use at that time.

Bypass road alignment with Far View Drive is the option preferred by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Town staff. This would impact property owners on Far View Drive, as well as Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums, who would then have roads on three sides of their property.

If bypass road alignment with James Street is chosen, the Old Ranger Drive connection to W. Elkhorn Avenue would be removed and Old Ranger Drive traffic would be routed through the applicant's property. It is also possible that James Street access to W. Elkhorn Avenue would be closed. In that circumstance, upgrades to the W. Elkhorn Avenue/Wonderview Avenue intersection may be made.

Staff will need to look closely at the overall functionality of the bypass road to ensure it functions as needed to move traffic from Highway 34 (Wonderview Avenue) to Highway 36 (Moraine Avenue) and is a good design for the proposed development. There will be impacts to neighboring property owners regardless of where the bypass road is constructed; consideration should be given to mitigation of impacts to affected property owners. If no bypass road is constructed, that choice would have impacts on the community as well.

Director Zurn stated the determination regarding whether to complete the bypass road connection from W. Elkhorn Avenue to Wonderview Avenue will be made in the future. At this time, consideration must be given to providing a workable alignment for this possible future connection. He reiterated that CDOT has discussed the need to remove the Old Ranger Drive connection to Elkhorn Avenue if the James Street alignment for the bypass road is chosen. The proposed bypass road is one solution to future traffic congestion in the community. Director Zurn once again reviewed traffic projections and possible road improvements (bypass road, Riverside Drive improvements), as outlined in the minutes from April 15, 2008.

Discussion followed between the Commissioners and staff, summarized as follows:

- Use of the current driveway into Elkhorn Lodge as a temporary bypass road terminus would provide time for a decision to be made regarding the final road alignment while allowing the applicant to construct the early phases of the proposed development.
- The configuration of the mixed-use portion of the development cannot be determined until the primary vehicular access to the bypass road is determined.
- Far View Drive is considered the optimum location for bypass road alignment by those who have a traffic engineering background and make projections about future traffic needs; however, Far View Drive is not currently designed for the traffic volume or truck traffic that may eventually use it.
- The use of James Street as a connection to Wonderview Avenue would require a significant and costly overpass structure. Far View Drive or Filbey Court would provide better access to Wonderview Avenue.
- It is important to consider off-site impacts of the development and bypass road and to mitigate those impacts to the extent feasible.
- The proposed off-site trailhead parking is immediately adjacent to a large parking area within the proposed development. The applicant's parking study indicates more parking is needed than is currently proposed. It may make more sense for the trailhead parking to be located on-site; this should be reviewed further.

- The applicant proposes a trail connection through the town-owned property to the future riverwalk connection/sidewalk.
- It is unclear to what extent the public may have an historic, prescriptive right of horse use on trails on the property; all trail use would be non-motorized.
- A connection from the parking area contemplated between proposed Lot B-2 and Lot C to the trailhead parking on the town-owned lot would provide an ingress/egress point in the event of flood or fire; it is likely that a connection will be maintained there. Traffic would not be encouraged to use this connection.
- Old Man Mountain Lane (currently unpaved right-of-way) adjacent to proposed Lot B-1 (proposed for attainable housing development) is not currently contemplated to provide formal access to Lot B-1. Options include using this right-of-way to provide access to Lot B-1, vacating the right-of-way, or retaining an access easement in the current location of the right-of-way.

Applicant Presentation:

Frank Theis/CMS Planning & Development Co. representing Rock Castle Development Co. stated the applicant is requesting approval of the plat. The rezoning is necessary because the PUD (which requires the underlying zoning to be commercial) allows additional density on the upper 40 acres and proposed Lot B-1. Each lot on the lower portion of the property will be subject to complete development plan review in the future. The PUD will designate the uses and the maximum allowable development on individual lots; the concept plan was developed to convey this information. Design guidelines will set the bar for the level and quality of future development on the property.

Location of the bypass road constrains development potential on the property. The most direct road connection would have entailed removal of the Elkhorn Lodge. The applicant has routed the proposed bypass road as far from the lodge as possible while still accommodating the Far View Drive alignment preferred by the Town's Public Works Department and CDOT; this requires removal of historic cabins. The applicant plans to construct a basic road from Elm Road through the property, exiting at the current Elkhorn Lodge driveway location, which is opposed by the current landowner and owners of the adjacent Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums. The applicant requests that limited traffic be allowed until a permanent connection to Elkhorn Avenue is made and suggests not making the connection through to Elm Road until that time. In terms of commercial development of the core area, the most advantageous location for the intersection of the bypass road with Elkhorn Avenue would be midway between Old Ranger Drive and James Street. The applicant proposes right-of-way to accommodate three possible road alignments (James Street, Far View Drive, or Filbey Court), with unused right-of-way for either the James Street alignment or the Far View Drive alignment to be vacated following a decision by the Town Board on the final road alignment. The applicant requests this decision be made by the time the final plat is considered by the Town Board.

Mr. Theis stated the proposed density and uses are consistent with surrounding properties, noting the lodge property has always been zoned for commercial use and provides a commercial anchor to the downtown area. He argued that the large parcels to the east are anomalies. Residential use is proposed on lots adjacent to Elkhorn Club Estates as a buffer. Planner Chilcott clarified that these lots are proposed for commercial use. Mr. Theis stated the applicant proposes accommodations use in order to achieve the desired density on these lots.

The applicant is willing to provide a significant buffer on Lot B-1 (proposed for attainable housing) via a platted building envelope to lessen impact to the neighboring property owners. Mr. Theis stated the applicant is sympathetic to the concerns of Elkhorn Plaza Condominium owners regarding road impacts and is willing to do whatever it takes to help buffer them. The applicant is committed to river restoration on the property and will restore the north bank that is within the current Elkhorn Avenue right-of-way.

The Commissioners proceeded with questions for Mr. Theis; his responses are summarized as follows:

- The applicant is open to what will be developed on proposed Lot F-1; plans currently show 5,000 square feet of retail and a parking area on this lot.

- Platted open space on proposed Lot B-1 could not be changed by a future owner such as the Housing Authority.
- The applicant plans 20 rooms/suites in the Elkhorn Lodge with an additional 55 rooms in the new wing addition and intends to retain management of the lodge.
- The concept plan for the core commercial area was designed to provide workable lots and density regardless of the final alignment of the bypass road; however, the applicant will need a determination of the road alignment by the time construction of the new wing addition to the lodge begins.
- Open space is proposed in front of the Elkhorn Lodge. The applicant is trying to preserve the biggest trees along the proposed bypass road near the lodge. Few trees are proposed for removal on the lower portion of the property. The applicant will have a wildfire mitigation plan prepared by professional foresters.
- The Environmental Site Assessment was prepared by Celine LeBeau of Van Horn Engineering, the applicant's engineering/surveying firm. Ms. LeBeau is well-qualified to prepare the assessment; she has a degree in biology, is trained as a wildlife biologist, and has 10 years of field experience, including work for Rocky Mountain National Park.
- The primary concern expressed by Colorado Division of Wildlife Officer Rick Spowart was loss of potential elk harvest if the property is developed.

Celine LeBeau/Van Horn Engineering and Surveying addressed the Commissioners and provided her professional qualifications. Mule deer and elk move from Deer Ridge to Fall River through the applicant's property, but it is not a major migration corridor. Her report recommends providing wildlife corridors and limiting or prohibiting fencing; the proposed wildlife corridors are sufficient. Alteration of habitat or environment effects what is living there; the effects can be positive (such as the proposed river restoration) or negative. Wildlife officials are trying to manage elk and deer populations; the proposed development will affect them but will not adversely affect their populations.

Chair Eisenlauer called a recess at 3:25 p.m.; the meeting reconvened at 3:32 p.m.

Public Comment:

Linda Farrell/Adjoining Property Owner requested the project not move forward until all neighborhood rights are addressed. Requested waterfall impact study with documentation of sound levels and rock formations. Requested James Street alignment for bypass road intersection with Elkhorn Avenue or other location not aligned with Far View Drive. Expressed concern about proposed shuttle bus stop across from Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums, RVs, traffic, exhaust fumes. Stated there will be too many impacts on Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums. Requested green belt buffer of 200 feet or more for adjoining properties. Commercial uses should be limited to prohibit manufacturing or industrial uses, including brew pubs, coffee roasting, or uses that would affect noise levels or air quality. Requested light study. Stated the applicant's property is an extension of Old Man Mountain and Rocky Mountain National Park; urged Commissioners to ensure quality of life.

Ms. Farrell also addressed the Commissioners at the end of the public comment period, expressing appreciation for the willingness of Mr. Theis and Rock Castle Development Co. to work with neighbors and come up with creative solutions. She stated planning staff have been willing to meet with concerned citizens on short notice, and Mr. Zahourek has been an excellent neighbor.

James Tawney/Town Resident stated the Commissioners will see more and more companies (such as the applicant's engineering firm) that will provide employees with a broad range of expertise. Questioned why a bypass road is needed in the proposed location. Stated the bypass road is over-magnified. Encouraged the Commissioners to get the developer through the process as soon as possible.

Wayne Newsom/Neighboring Property Owner stated he strongly supports the proposed bypass road and is in favor of the "western" alignment, which would route the bypass in front of the existing barns rather than past Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums. The road should not run through the commercial part of the proposed development. Use of the "western" alignment would allow vehicles to disperse in five different directions rather than funneling

all traffic up Far View Drive. Required improvements to Far View Drive would be very costly; signage could be used to direct drivers who may wish to avoid the downtown area. The proposed development would be a nice addition to the town.

John Spahnle/Adjoining Property Owner expressed concern about development of proposed Lot B-1, which could severely impact his property; requested minimum of 120-foot buffer. Also concerned about public trail proposed adjacent to his property, trailhead parking, and horse use of the trail. Objected to bypass road alignment with James Street, which would require closure of Old Ranger Drive at W. Elkhorn Avenue and would impact Elkhorn Club Estates subdivision. Requested Old Man Mountain Lane right-of-way be vacated; does not want this used as an entrance to Lot B-1; expressed concern that Old Man Mountain Lane could be used as a cut-through from the bypass to Old Ranger Drive.

Diane Collinet/Adjoining Property Owner echoed Mr. Spahnle's concerns regarding Old Man Mountain Lane and requested the right-of-way be vacated.

Vee O'Farrell/Neighboring Property Owner also requested vacation of Old Man Mountain Lane right-of-way. Expressed concern about potential impacts of use of this right-of-way, as well as noise and dust from heavy equipment during construction of the proposed development. Neighborhood quiet and serenity will be lost; home values may decline; wildlife will be impacted by parking, people, and condominium development. Requested consideration of neighboring property owners.

Kathleen Murray/Adjoining Property Owner expressed concern about impacts of the proposed development, including the proposed bypass road that may be 17 feet from her front door. Reiterated Mr. O'Farrell's concerns regarding impacts of construction, heavy equipment, dirt, noise, dust over a long period of time. Impacts of the bypass road would be permanent. Requested the bypass road intersection with Elkhorn Avenue be located on the western portion of the property.

Kristin Edgar/Attorney with Caplan & Earnest, LLC addressed the Commissioners on behalf of the Chamberlain, Cravens, and Arcidiacono families/Adjoining Property Owners and on behalf of the clients of Attorney Eli Feldman (the Corley and Hurley families/Adjoining Property Owners). Expressed concern that the historic significance of the property has not been addressed. The letter submitted by the applicant from City Visions is not an historic analysis; it calls for additional investigation, which should be completed prior to approval of a PUD for the property. Requested the Commissioners take time to consider the surroundings of the area and whether the proposal is consistent with the Estes Valley Development Code and Estes Valley Comprehensive Plan. The project is very complex and would add 60 acres of development to the town, which is almost the size of Estes Park's existing commercial core. Encouraged the Commissioners to consider impacts of the proposed development to future generations.

Ken Schwarz/Local Resident stated Mr. Koehler (applicant) is an ethical developer. Elk don't have any problem getting around existing development. Opposition to the proposed development is based on fear; encouraged those with concerns to speak directly to Koehler.

Keith Keenan/Trout Unlimited stated he has served on the state board of directors for Trout Unlimited and was past president of the local chapter. Expressed his support for the proposed development, which presents the opportunity to turn a stretch of Fall River into a premier trout stream (a benefit to the community).

Sandy Osterman/Town Resident expressed concern about the applicant's Environmental Impact Assessment. Elk movement has been impacted by development near her. Elk and deer habitat would be destroyed by the applicant's proposed development. Tourists come to see wildlife; loss of habitat and wildlife visibility will have a negative economic impact.

Verd Bailey/Adjoining Property Owner stated elk spend a lot of time on proposed Lot F-1; expressed concern about the wetland on this lot. The town is made up of people, not infrastructure; consideration should be given to the development's effects on people. Encouraged bypass road alignment with James Street; expressed concern about alignment with Far View Drive, which would route traffic past Elkhorn Plaza

Condominiums and result in removal of wetlands along Fall River in this location. Use of the current driveway for the Elkhorn Lodge as a temporary bypass road terminus would also impact them; this use may continue for many years given construction timeframes. The bypass road would be a collector road, which means the temporary road would carry the same traffic volumes. The Estes Valley Development Code has specific requirements for construction of collector roads, and Section 7.12.H requires demonstration of no significant adverse impact on existing transportation levels of service ... within one-quarter mile of the site or that any such adverse impact has been mitigated to the maximum extent feasible. If future bypass road traffic is routed up Far View Drive, these requirements could prove very costly. Expressed concern that the applicant's traffic impact analysis did not include effects of pedestrian traffic, including riverwalk connection and lighting for pedestrians.

Judy Ayres/Adjoining Property Owner stated if the bypass road runs past her condominium, her quality of life will suffer greatly; urged consideration of impacts to current and future neighboring property owners. Use of Far View Drive as an extension of the proposed bypass road will not work unless properties along Far View are purchased. Requested bypass road not be located adjacent to her property and requested "green space" (buffers) as proposed for other neighboring properties.

Jerry Zahourek/Elkhorn Lodge Property Owner stated the "western" alignment for the bypass road is the only one that should be considered. Visitors to the lodge drive past the existing driveway without ever seeing it. The western alignment will allow people driving by to see the commercial development and lodging opportunities.

Dave Mechem/Neighboring Property Owner stated he is fully in support of the project; it will be good for the town and will provide jobs. Elk and deer will find their way through/amongst buildings just fine.

Chair Eisenlauer closed the meeting to public comment at 4:26 p.m.

Frank Theis provided concluding remarks, summarized as follows. The Town Board will make the final decision on the proposed bypass road alignment; the applicant has provided several options. There will be opportunity for Planning Commission review of every development plan for the property in the future. All historic buildings will be carefully documented. None that are listed as historically significant are proposed for removal in the first phase of the project. The applicant hopes to move some of the buildings rather than tear them down. Offered to set up an open workshop with experts who prepared the various analyses and studies to answer any questions the Commissioners may have. Stated habitat improvements along Fall River will benefit the elk as well as the fish. Requested a speedy decision on the proposal.

Planning Commission Comments:

Commissioner Tucker—Acknowledged applicant's repeated requests to expedite review of the proposal; is willing to proceed as quickly as possible while still arriving at a sound decision. The fundamental concept for the development is good; the town will benefit. Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums are located next to an existing commercial-zoned property; expressed sympathy for possible impacts to the condominiums. Stated in order to receive his support, the bypass road intersection with Elkhorn Avenue would need to be located on the western portion of the property. Stated he thinks the wildlife will be okay. Was originally opposed to proposed density on upper 40 acres; now recognizes some increase in density is necessary. Concerned about traffic impacts at Elkhorn Avenue intersection and particularly at Moraine Avenue intersection in the summer. Expressed need for thorough evaluation of potential traffic impacts at these locations prior to moving forward with the development. Stated he is not happy with Lot B-1 as currently proposed. Large buffers should be mandatory for Old Ranger Drive properties and the Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums. Expressed concern that more weight may be given to historic buildings than to impacts on neighboring property owners; would support removal of Elkhorn Lodge over negative impacts to neighbors. Stated the proposed commercial core will be good for the community. Requested the applicant fix proposed Lot B-1, move the bypass road away from Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums, and solve the traffic problems. He encouraged

staff to involve the Planning Commission from the beginning. Stated he is wrestling with the issue of the waterfall behind Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums because the dam is manmade. If the river must be lowered, he would like future input from the condominium unit owners regarding which is worst—having the bypass road closer or removing the dam.

Commissioner Amos—Stated he would defer providing complete comments until he is ready to vote on the proposal. He is not influenced by the proposed bypass road and will look at the proposed single-family residential area on the upper 40 acres as if it were a “stand-alone” development. Any developer of this upper portion of the property would be required to provide access via Elm Road as well as any required roads internal to the development.

Commissioner Eisenlauer—Stated a bypass road from Elm Road to Elkhorn Avenue has been discussed for as long as he’s been a resident (16 years). He expressed support for the proposed bypass road and preference for the “western” alignment at Elkhorn Avenue. He stated consideration should be given to use of a roundabout rather than a traffic signal at this intersection. Expressed his agreement with many of Commissioner Tucker’s comments, but not all of them. Stated the elk will go where they want to; the development will not be a problem to them.

Commissioner Klink—Stated he is unconvinced that the numbers provided in the applicant’s traffic study have any validity. He noted there is a “hell of a push” at the Town level to make the bypass road happen. The Planning Commission does not make the decision; it is the recommending body. Given the assumption that the bypass road will be constructed, he has made peace with the proposed density on the upper 40 acres. Stated the bypass road should not be opened until final connection is made at both ends of the road, including installation of traffic signals. Alignment of the bypass road/Elkhorn Avenue intersection should be on the western portion of the lower acreage to be fair to adjoining property owners. Expressed concern about proposed Lot B-1; requested the units proposed for that lot be placed elsewhere on the property or that development of the lot otherwise mitigate impacts to neighboring property owners in Elkhorn Club Estates.

Commissioner Kitchen—Expressed appreciation for members of the public who missed work to attend the meeting. Stated the concept plan is good, but the proposed trailhead needs work and real buffers should be provided for Elkhorn Plaza Condominiums. The single-family homes proposed for the upper portion of the property should please those who are opposed to condominium development. The proposed mixed use reflects our society and current conditions. The Colorado Department of Transportation has the ultimate say in the road alignment. Stated she is pleased the Elkhorn Lodge will remain.

Commissioner Hull—Stated she does not have too much problem with the proposed development on the lower 20 acres; expressed hope that the applicant will work with Elkhorn Plaza Condominium owners. Stated her concerns with the proposed density of the single-family residential lots. Three goals were stated at the joint meeting held early this year between the Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioners, and Town Board, one of which was to lessen density. Also noted she has concerns about proposed Lot B-1. Stated this is the largest development proposal that has come before the Planning Commission; it will be the Commission’s legacy and she takes the proposal very seriously.

Commissioner Klink asked if the applicant would agree to a continuance to the May Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Theis stated “Yes.”

It was moved and seconded (Hull/Klink) to continue the request for Rezoning, and the Preliminary Subdivision Plat and Preliminary P.U.D. 08-01 for Elkhorn Lodge Redevelopment/Big Bear Estates Subdivision, to the May 20, 2008 Estes Valley Planning Commission meeting, and the motion passed unanimously with one absent.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Estes Valley Planning Commission – Special Meeting
April 17, 2008

10

Chair Eisenlauer adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Ike Eisenlauer, Chair

Julie Roederer, Recording Secretary