

RIDGWAY TOWN COUNCIL and PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF JOINT WORKSHOP MEETING

AUGUST 6, 2019

The Town Council and Planning Commission convened for a joint workshop at 6:05 p.m. in the Ridgway Community Center at 201 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado. In attendance Councilors Austin, Cheek, Hunter, Meyer, Mayor Pro Tem Johnson and Mayor Clark. Councilor Lakin was absent. Present from the Planning Commission Chairperson Canright and Commissioners Emilson, Falk, Nelson. Commissioner Liske was absent.

Town Clerk's Notice of Joint Workshop dated July 24, 2019 to receive a presentation and provide comments on the development plan for the Ridgway Light Industrial Park.

Developer Ben Jackson asked the Council to consider "amending the light industrial land use code", "to consider on a case by case basis mixed use" as a conditional use. He explained the vacant property within the Ridgway Light Industrial Park was not developed for industrial uses "due to the recession". The proposed development of Roundhouse Townhomes on the industrial zones property would be a five to ten year phased project. He noted "we're finding businesses are looking for a turn key product", and "we're looking to build that" and "also asking about employee housing so that's why that component is in there". "The sewer and water lines are in", "we own the land", "so will help with affordability". He noted a number of businesses outside the area have been "expressing interest in commercial with flex space above".

Chris Hawkins with Alpine Planning presented a project overview for the "Roundhouse Lofts and Townhomes with community housing and service/commercial and light industrial". The project consists of 106 units on 6.3 acres with 40 live work situations and 66 townhome units conceptually 950 sq feet, 20 of which would be deed restricted, 46,360 sq feet of service, commercial and light industrial uses below live-work units. Design "inspiration" is from other "mountain communities", he displayed a concept of building layouts with two story buildings. Mr. Hawkins explained housing "would be for households who earn 80% to 120% AMI", "initial rental or sale to employees working in Town or County", deed restricted to prohibit short term rentals and require owner occupancy he noted. Commercial uses would be approximately 4,636 square feet per building and 1,159 per unit "of flex space ability".

Mr. Hawkins presented areas in which the developers visualize compliance with the Town's Master Plan. Proposed infrastructure included Laura Street being two and partial one way, sidewalk along Laura Street to Otto, the developer would "strive to provide sidewalk along Laura to Fredrick" and the project is located near utility infrastructure easements. Housing area will be "multi-family pods" with "some on street parking" and parking off the alley. He noted the Town could condemn the land to the west of the development for property needed to increase the street size to accommodate two way traffic.

Mr. Hawkins requested the Council allow housing as a conditional use in the I-1 zone and amend the zoning regulations to allow multi-family housing as a conditional use.

Mr. Hawkins answered questions from the Council and Commission. On a question from Council he stated the units would be "townhouse type units to be rented and then sold down the road, twenty years or so". Mr. Jackson noted the units would be "changed to condos" and

“to sell is mostly market driven”, but “we would for a minimum of seven years keep them as rental units”.

SPEAKING FROM THE AUDIENCE:

Tim Geese resident of River Park Subdivision stated he is “extremely concerned” about the proposal and stated he purchased his home “knowing about industrial” but “residences will change” the reason he purchased a home in the subdivision. He stated “this is one of the biggest proposals that Ridgway has had”, “I am really concerned with what I see”, “I hope you really listen to the voices of the residents of River Park” during planning discussions.

Rick Vojta resident of River Park Subdivision stated he is “concerned with services in light industrial being pushed closer” to the subdivision” and the “intensity of commercial use next to residential” “that could create hazards”.

Tom Heffernan resident of River Park Subdivision stated he agreed “with Rick” and expressed concerns with new businesses “mentioned, such as the stone company” “not being compatible with residential” and stated an “industrial commercial area concerns me”.

Taylor Chase supported the affordable housing component of the plan.

Tammy Tuttle stated “as an employer” “affordable housing is necessary for us” to provide employee housing. “85% of my staff comes from Montrose” and the “biggest reason I can’t get employees is because of housing” opportunities in Town.

Kelly Day resident of River Park Subdivision stated she would like to “see a better transition zone between residential and industrial” and noted “there needs to be serious pedestrian connectivity”. She also expressed concerns with traffic flow, and noted the projected number of potential vehicles in the housing area is “underestimated”.

Tom McKenney stated “conceptually I like the idea” and that he would like to “see some diversity” in design of the buildings.

Mayor Clark noted the developers are asking the Council to consider a code amendment to allow residential housing as conditional use in the I-1 zone. There was discussion by the Council. It was agreed to direct staff to review the request to amend the code.

Floyd Day noted “traffic concerns from the River Park development” and suggested an “end date” or “sunset” to deed restriction as an “incentive to upgrade homes”.

The Town Manager presented items which should be considered: does the Town want to lose land zoned for light industry, a review should be conducted of the commercial and industrial base since the property is currently platted and if relocated there would not be existing infrastructure and it would be more costly to develop and create an industrial zoning base in the future; consideration of Laura Street being a one-way street, as the community has stated in the Master Plan that connectivity to and from the downtown is a high priority; pursuing condemnation is not a popular action by governmental entities and carries with it significant effort and costs; the proposed housing would create a significant population change for the Town and its infrastructure, and these impacts should be assessed. She noted there are not resources to provide this type of assessment by staff, and would require retaining an

outside consulting firm. Manager Coates reported the developer has noted a limited demand for the industrial parcels, yet staff has received numerous requests for industrial land and companies have chosen to look out of the area since the area has not been final platted, individual industrial properties could not be conveyed. Other items to consider are: how feasible is an industrial structure with low ceilings and residences located above, feedback from existing light industrial business owners is there is a need for buildings with higher ceilings and more on the ground storage; the sewer lagoons will need to be mitigated to allow residential use in the area and the Town has stated that development must pay its own way, so the cost would need to be borne by the developer; the map depicting locations of the I1 and I2 zones are not correct, if residential is allowed there are additional properties which could be included; the process and proposal to add residential uses within industrial zoning will need to be evaluated as to impacts on existing properties and setbacks to other areas; there are other restrictions in the light industrial zone which could be less impactful than residential and there would likely be more changes than just adding residential uses.

Planner Coburn noted some policies in the master plan may not support the proposed development such as over concentration, character, balancing mixed uses, creating compatible development and compatibility between uses. She further noted deed restricting rental units may not be legal unless public monies are part of the project; 80% AMI to 120% AMI requires residents to earn \$59-79K annually to qualify, which may not assist with employee housing. She stated there are currently about 550 housing units in Town, the proposal would create over a 20% increase and place demands on infrastructure; staff has recently received a development proposal and the applicant had a "hard time fitting everything on to the property" such as storm water, trash enclosures, snow storage areas, utilities and green spaces, and noted without ample room these additions to the proposed project may become expensive; as shown the proposal does not include the required amount of parking spaces.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Kraft, MMC
Town Clerk