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April 10, 2024  
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City of Steamboat Springs Planning and Community Development  
137 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Steamboat Springs, CO 80477  
Phone: (970)-871-8207, Fax: (970)-879-8851

RE: Lot A and Lot B, Mountain Office Park Subdivision  
2955 Village Drive, Steamboat Springs  
Village Drive Apartments Development Plan

Dear City of Steamboat Springs Planning Department,

Please accept this letter as a major variance request from the City of Steamboat Springs Community Development Code (CDC) for the Village Drive Apartment project. The Village Drive Apartments is an apartment and work force development project proposed for Lot A and Lot B, Mountain Office Park Subdivision on a 1.28 acre parcel zoned Multi-Family 3 (MF-3). The project consists of 38 proposed apartments of which twelve will be work force units. The project is located on the northwest corner of Village Drive and Walton Creek Road. Four Points Surveying and Engineering, RPGA Design Group, Inc., and Sunscope LLC, are requesting four major variances to the Community Development Code (CDC) standards for the development and one engineering variance to internal private access standards.

As stated in the Community Development Code Section 719 Variance, the CDC sets forth a united regulatory program for development but it is understood that no standard can anticipate all possible circumstances, alternative approaches and unanticipated consequences of its application. The Village Drive Apartment site is a challenging to site to provide a high density work force project, preserve an existing building by remodeling, and meet all of the CDC standards. In order to complete the vision for the Village Drive Apartments, the development team is requesting the following variances from the CDC. **Both variances are being proposed as acceptable alternatives per Section 719 D. 3b(iii). The application of other code standards, purposes, or intents will be improved by varying the standard.**

**1. Variance #1 – Article 6, Subdivision Standards 602 General Standards: Vegetation and Site Grading  
Section 602.G states that trees greater than 24” caliper 75% minimum shall be preserved.**

There are six large blue spruce trees, one birch tree with a 14” diameter, and an aspen tree with a 15” diameter are situated along the eastern boundary of Lot A and Lot B within the Mountain Park Subdivision. Several of these trees have trunks extending over the property line or into the public right-of-way. The blue spruce trees, estimated to be at least forty years old, exhibit varying degrees of health. Compliance with the complete streets requirement, including the installation of eight-foot-wide concrete sidewalks, necessitates the removal of six of these trees. Additionally, two trees located in the greenbelt must be removed due to the positioning of Building I. Along the southern boundary of the project, numerous cottonwood, birch, and aspen trees with diameters from 12” to 18” are present.

Section 719.D – General Criteria for Approval.

1. The Variance will not injure or adversely impact legal conforming uses of adjacent property, or the applicant has accurately assessed the impacts of the proposed Variance and has agreed to mitigate those impacts. *The proposed multi-family development complements the surrounding uses of a multi-family and condominiums in the neighborhood. No legal conforming uses of adjacent property will be injured or adversely impacted due the removal of the existing trees.*
2. The Variance is compatible with the preferred direction and policies outlined in the Community Plan and other applicable adopted plans. *The Steamboat Springs Area Community plan promotes high density development and work force housing. The Village Drive Apartments site is prime spot for redevelopment due to the proximity of the Steamboat Ski Area and transit. The development as proposed is aligned with goals and policies of the Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan as noted in the following goals and policies.*
  - a. *Goal LU-2: Our community supports infill and redevelopment in core areas*
  - b. *Policy LU-2.1: Infill and redevelopment will occur in appropriate locations, as designated by the city*
  - c. *Goal LU-5: Our community will plan and implement land use patterns that support an efficient transportation system and alternative transportation nodes*
  - d. *Policy LU-5.1: Develop appropriate land use densities to support transit*
  - e. *Strategy LU-5.1(b): Coordinate Land Use and Transportation decisions*
  - f. *Policy LU-5.2: New neighborhoods will be well connected by streets, sidewalks, trails, walkways and bicycle lanes.*
  - g. *Policy GM-1.3: Infill development and redevelopment will be promoted in targeted areas*
  - h. *Policy CD-1.4: Encourage high quality site planning and design*
  - i. *Policy CD-2.2: Create a functional mix of uses in new neighborhoods and development areas*
  - j. *Goal CD-4: Our community will maintain and improve the appearance of its corridors and gateways and will continue to have vibrant public space*
  - k. *Policy CD-4.1: Major highways and arterials shall maintain a high quality of design*
  - l. *Goal H-1: Our community will continue to increase its supply of affordable home ownership, rental, and special needs housing units for low, moderate and median-income households*
  - m. *Policy H-1.3: Integrate housing in mixed-use areas*
  - n. *Goal H-3: The Steamboat Springs community will have a mix of housing types and styles that can accommodate the people who work in the community*

*Allowance for the removal of the existing trees will permit the redevelopment of site for the betterment of the community.*

The Variance application meets either the criteria for unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as applicable, or the criteria for an acceptable alternative. *We are seeking variance based on: Section 719 D. 3b(iii). The application of other code standards, purposes, or intents will be improved by varying the standard.*

*Allowing for the removal of trees will enable a housing project that significantly improves the community and provides housing during the current housing crisis.*

*The City of Steamboat Springs Engineering standards mandate complete streets and the extension of sidewalk connections for all new development projects. To provide detached sidewalks and meet these requirements, the development team proposes the removal of seven trees along Village Drive. In addition, three trees will be removed for the construction of Building 1 on the north side of the property, and four trees will be removed for the construction of the westerly building. There is also a possibility of two small-diameter trees on the south line of the property need to be removed for the construction of the trail.*

*The existing trees on the property were established based on a single existing building. The proposed high-density housing project necessitates their removal. Allowing for the removal of these trees will facilitate the site's redevelopment, benefiting the community by providing much-needed housing and improved infrastructure. The community plan supports infill development and redevelopment as proposed on the Mountain Village Apartments and to construct such projects existing trees need to be removed. However, new landscaping will be planted for the apartments that meets the criteria for landscaping as outlined in the Community Development Code.*

*Denying the removal of the trees will limit the site's allowable density. Preserving the existing trees would require avoiding the entire area around the base of the trees due to their large, spreading root systems, which would hinder new*

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*development. Removal of the trees permits the architect to organize the buildings to create an exterior open space surrounding the new development and promotes pedestrian connectivity to new sidewalks. In summary, the removal of these trees is essential for advancing the housing project and achieving community development goals.*

3.

**Variance #2 – Dimensional Standards Section 214.B Multi-Family 3 – MF-3 Other Standards – Floor Area Ratio**

The development of the Village Drive Apartments is requesting a Floor Area Ratio of 57%. The CDC code for MF-3 development has a building intensity for Floor Area Ratio of 50% max. The decision to remodel the existing two story commercial building located in the center of the project is resulting in the new remodeled units are larger than the proposed new building apartments. The remodel of the existing building is creating eight, two bedroom units, with an average size of 1,114 square feet excluding basement area. The average square footage of the new units in Building I and Building II is 837 square feet excluding basement area. The project team calculated the Floor Area Ratio based on the CDC and as shown on the architectural site plan. The calculation includes a 50% reduction in Floor Area Ratio for the proposed twelve work force units within the project. Utilizing the 50% reduction for the work force units and the remaining units the total square footage is 32,101 square feet. Divided over the combined lot area equates to a floor area ratio of 57%; therefore, the variance request is a 7% increase in the floor area ratio.

**Section 719.D – General Criteria for Approval.**

1. The Variance will not injure or adversely impact legal conforming uses of adjacent property, or the applicant has accurately assessed the impacts of the proposed Variance and has agreed to mitigate those impacts. *The proposed additional floor area ratio will not injure or adversely impacted legal conforming uses of the adjacent properties. The surrounding properties consist of the Shadow Run Condominiums to the west (Zoned MF-3), the Boat Townhomes to the south (Zoned MF-1), Village Drive Apartments (Zoned CN-1) across Village Drive on the east. Shadow Run and Boat Townhomes are already built out and will be have limited impacts by the 7% increase in the Floor Area Ratio. The Boat Townhomes and Village Drive Townhomes will experience an additional 1% to the traffic in moving from 50% FAR to 57%. Mitigation is the construction of the perimeter trail, new sidewalks, and preservation of the existing vegetative buffer. All of the mitigation methods are required by the CDC as part of complete streets and connectivity but it is not clear that allowance of 57% floor area ratio can be a measured impact. As noted the Trappeurs Crossing project is less than 200 feet away and does not have any limitations for floor area ratio.*
2. The Variance is compatible with the preferred direction and policies outlined in the Community Plan and other applicable adopted plans. *The variance permits the construction of high density apartments on the site and is aligned with goals and policies of the Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan as noted in the following goals and policies.*
  - a. Goal LU-2: Our community supports infill and redevelopment in core areas
  - b. Policy LU-2.1: Infill and redevelopment will occur in appropriate locations, as designated by the city
  - c. Policy GM-1.3: Infill development and redevelopment will be promoted in targeted areas
  - d. Policy CD-1.4: Encourage high quality site planning and design
  - e. Policy CD-2.2: Create a functional mix of uses in new neighborhoods and development areas
  - f. Goal H-1: Our community will continue to increase its supply of affordable home ownership, rental, and special needs housing units for low, moderate and median-income households
  - g. Policy H-1.3: Integrate housing in mixed-use areas
  - h. Goal H-3: The Steamboat Springs community will have a mix of housing types and styles that can accommodate the people who work in the community

- i. The Variance application meets either the criteria for unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as applicable, or the criteria for an acceptable alternative. *We are seeking variance based on: Section 719 D. 3b(iii). The application of other code standards, purposes, or intents will be improved by varying the floor area ratio standard. The purpose of the Multiple-Family zone districts is intended to provide areas for multiple-family residential uses and development, including townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and other attached residential forms, as well as limited nonresidential uses that are complementary to and compatible with a multiple-family residential neighborhood. The neighborhood around the Village Drive Apartments is high density and the project is less than ½ mile from the Steamboat Ski Resort, very accessible by pedestrians. Housing and properties on the north side of Walton Creek Road are zoned Resort Residential – One (RR-1). RR-1 zoning has no maximum to Floor area ratio. The allowance for the 7% additional FAR will be minor transition towards the RR-1 Zone and permit additional multi-family units on the site. The purpose of the multi-family residential building design standards is to “Ensure the scale and massing of development is complementary to the surrounding built and natural context by reflecting the scale and proportions of adjacent structures and the predominant topography and natural features” The FAR variance will create massing on the south side of Walton Creek Road that complementary to the Timbers Development to the north and the five story Shadow Run condominiums to the west. The higher density proposed in the FAR variance improves on meeting the Steamboat Springs community plan goal “ H-1: Our community will continue to increase its supply of affordable home ownership, rental, and special needs housing units for low, moderate and median-income households”. It is understood this project is only proposing 30% work force housing but the additional units created by the FAR variance provide on additional unit. The increased FAR being requested will also improve the number of people using mass transit which is a community plan goal. The approval for a variance permits an additional housing density on a prime location of transit routes, pedestrian accessibility to the world class Steamboat Resort and housing to be in high density area with little impact to the surrounding properties.*

In conclusion, we request the City of Steamboat Springs Planning Department consider the variances as outlined herein acceptable for the development plan of the Mountain Village Apartments. Four Points Surveying and Engineering and RPGA Architects feel that acceptance of the requested variances will provide a much-needed housing project for the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County residents.

Thank you for your review of the variances and we look forward to continued discussion.

Sincerely;

Walter Magill, P.E.  
Four Points Surveying and Engineering