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July 7, 2025  
Revised July 18, 2025

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: Village Drive Townhomes  
Variance Request – Retaining Walls

Dear City of Steamboat Springs Planning Department,

Please accept this letter as a variance request from the City of Steamboat Springs Community Development Code (CDC) for the Village Drive Townhome project. The Village Drive Townhomes project was approved for seven townhomes in 2022. The project is located on the northeast corner of Village Drive and Walton Creek Road. Four Points Surveying and Engineering and Steamboat Springs Architectural, are requesting a variance to the Community Development Code (CDC) standards for the **Section 418 – Retaining Walls**

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 Townhomes site is north of Village Drive which is a pedestrian and transportation corridor for other multi-family projects along the roadway. Based on the surrounding projects and lack of any commercial development area the owners are requesting to eliminate the stairway access for security and practicality. The remainder of the project will continue to meet the approval conditions and CDC standards. **The variance is being proposed as an acceptable alternative per Section 719 D. 3b(iii). The application of other code standards, purposes, or intents will be improved by varying the standard.**

**Variance #1 – Section 418 – Retaining Walls.**

**The purpose of the retaining wall standard state the following.**

1. Minimize the impact of retaining walls on adjacent properties.

**The variance request is to allow for the retaining wall on the east property to be a maximum of 9 feet without being stepped wall segments with a three foot horizontal feet. Currently, the constructed height exceeds the four foot limit of the CDC.**

**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 is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, which consists predominantly of multi-family residences and condominiums. No legally conforming uses of adjacent properties will be injured or*

*adversely affected by the retaining wall located along the east property line. The retaining wall is situated at the rear of the proposed buildings and is not visible when walking or driving north along Village Drive, except at the development entry. It is visible when walking east along the sidewalk on Walton Creek Road. The wall features a ledgerstone finish that is both visually appealing and consistent with the architectural color palette of the buildings currently under construction. As an additional safety measure for the adjacent neighbors, Village Drive Townhomes has reached a verbal agreement with Pine Ridge Townhomes to install a split-rail wood fence along the top of the retaining wall at the east property line. Village Drive Townhomes will purchase and install the fence, while Pine Ridge Townhomes has agreed to assume ownership and long-term maintenance responsibility.*

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-5: Our community will plan and implement land use patterns that support an efficient transportation system and alternative transportation nodes*
  - b. *Policy LU-5.1: Develop appropriate land use densities to support transit*
  - c. *Strategy LU-5.1(b): Coordinate Land Use and Transportation decisions*
  - d. *Policy LU-5.2: New neighborhoods will be well connected by streets, sidewalks, trails, walkways and bicycle lanes.*
  - e. *Policy CD-1.4: Encourage high quality site planning and design*
  - f. *Policy CD-2.2: Create a functional mix of uses in new neighborhoods and development areas*

The Variance application meets either the criteria for unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as applicable, or the criteria for an acceptable alternative. *We are requesting a variance pursuant to **Section 719.D.3.b(ii)** of the Community Development Code, which permits relief when the purpose and intent of a standard cannot be effectively achieved through strict application in a specific circumstance.*

*The approved construction drawings, prepared by Landmark Consultants and approved by the City of Steamboat Springs, included a general note indicating “wall by others.” In August 2023, Geowall Designs provided a complete engineering plan set for a two-tier Redi-Rock retaining wall system, including construction drawings, a design report, and material quantity estimates. Four Points Surveying and Engineering (FPSE) incorporated the Geowall design into the civil construction plan set and completed wall staking in October 2024.*

*The final wall design is wider than the originally proposed layout in order to accommodate the required structural height and tie into existing grades at the adjacent Pine Ridge Townhomes. Although a two-tier system, as initially illustrated in the Landmark plans, was considered, there was insufficient space on-site to safely complete the necessary excavation while maintaining stable cut slopes behind the wall. The constructed Redi-Rock wall includes a 2-foot, 4-inch tier between segments, which effectively reduces the visual mass of the structure. This interior tier will also support planting of flowers and small shrubs, further softening the visual impact.*

*The intent of the code—to minimize the visual impact of retaining structures on adjacent properties—is achieved through the wall’s strategic placement and tiered design. The limited horizontal separation between tiers helps reduce the perceived height and blends the structure into the surrounding topography. The contractor has successfully implemented a sound and context-sensitive solution within a physically constrained construction area.*

In conclusion, we request the City of Steamboat Springs Planning Department approve the variance as outlined herein acceptable for the development plan of the Lot 1, Village Drive Townhomes.

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

Sincerely;

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

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