



Eagle River Station review laundry list features traffic, schools, jobs

Hearing schedule now on hiatus until Feb. 1

JANUARY, 11 2012

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Tuesday night Eagle Town Board members reviewed a laundry list of Eagle River Station issues ranging from sewer capacity to school impacts with talk of employment projections thrown in the mix.

The centerpiece of this week's discussion was Eagle's adequate public facilities ordinance – a set of rules designed to give the town an opportunity to examine potential developments' impacts on certain services. The review included discussions of traffic, schools, emergency services and water and wastewater capacity. As a prelude to the adequate public facilities discussion, Town Planner Tom Boni presented information about ERS employment estimates and population impacts.

Eagle River Station is a project proposed by Trinity RED Development of Kansas City, Mo., on the eastern end of town south of Interstate 70 and north of U.S. Highway 6. The 88-acre property would include 582,000 square feet of commercial space and 250 rental units in the first phase. The second phase calls for up to 150,000 square feet of commercial space and another 300 rental units. Back in 2009, the town board approved a plan for the development but in a municipal election in January 2010, voters rejected the proposal. RED Development has since retooled the proposal and resubmitted it to the town last May. This fall, members of the Eagle Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the revised ERS plan.

Boni said at full build out of both phases of the development, the town estimates ERS would bring in excess of 1,700 jobs and 1,200 employees. ERS consultant planner Tom Braun said the developer believes about 500 employees will be needed for the first phase of the project.

With that many jobs in play, Eagle Town Board member Scott Turnipseed asked if the residential portion of the plan was adequate. "It is probably short-sighted not to look at some aspect of an affordable housing component," he said.

However, because the units are proposed as rentals, not for-sale units, the town's Local Employee Resident Program – which governs deed restricted for sale housing– doesn't apply.

Terry O'Leary, who has signed on to partner with RED to build the rental units at ERS said the proposal calls for residential space above retail space with rents ranging from \$800 to \$1,900 per month. "This offers another housing options that I don't think is available in the valley," said O'Leary. He also noted that after the national mortgage crisis hit in 2008, rental units are in higher demand throughout the country.

Traffic

ERS traffic consultant Ales Ariniello presented data compiled during the initial application which shows failing grades for service levels by 2015 on Eby Creek Road if the east Eagle Interstate 70 interchange proposed as part of the development is not constructed.

Ariniello said ERS's proposed expansion of the Eby Creek Road roundabout to two lanes and its continuation of Chambers Road to the development would also benefit traffic circulation in town. And, he added, the connection between the east Eagle I-70 interchange and U.S. Highway 6 would improve traffic flow.

"The new I-70 interchange is key to the development," he said.

Schools

According to Boni, Eagle County Schools has indicated there is capacity at both Eagle Valley Elementary School and Eagle Valley Middle School, the two buildings that would be impacted with new population from ERS.

Boni said the development estimates it will bring in approximately 90 additional students and the school district has indicated it will request cash in lieu of a land dedication from ERS.

Water and Sewer

Eagle Town Engineer Tom Gosiorowski said extensive studies have been conducted concerning ERS impact on town utilities. In response, Eagle will require a new water storage tank as part of the development along with up-sized water lines on Chambers

Avenue and through the ERS property. The town currently has sewer treatment capacity for the development, but will require up-sized collection lines extending from the property to the west.

Emergency Services

"We feel this project is going to be an advantage to fire protection in the area," said Greater Eagle Fire Marshal Tom Wagenlander.

He cited the increased property taxes, water system improvements and potential communications system improvements that would happen with ERS.

On hiatus

Two citizens offered public comment during Tuesday's meeting. Brandi Resa questioned whether the traffic study and housing plan reflected the most current data available and if they were adequate to address impacts for ERS. Eagle Mayor Ed Woodland noted that she brought up 22 individual issues during her comment and suggested that Resa forward the questions in writing so town staff could respond.

Brush Creek resident Rosie Shearwood noted that the scope of the project is simply too large and the urban planning model doesn't fit in Eagle.

At the conclusion of Tuesday's meeting, the town board opted to cancel a planned ERS hearing slated for Monday, Jan. 16. The board won't resume ERS discussions until Wednesday, Feb. 1 session when financial issues will be the focus.

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