

# Ask hard questions of ERS

Regardless if one is married, single or heart-broken, I imagine there are better places to be on Valentine's Day than at Town Hall. But last Tuesday night in Eagle, many showed up to hear more on Eagle River Station 2.0.

The developer presented a fiction-and-fact sheet, while the staff's expert presented more details on the financials, including a base-case scenario and a list of the infrastructure costs by line item.

It fascinates me that the same "fact" can be claimed by both sides. For example, the developer stated it was fact that there are not too many parking spaces because it is at the minimum for national retail standards. However, as a citizen, I would state it is fact that the possibility of 3,660 parking spaces (over 4,000 if you include residential) is too many parking spaces for our small town, given that our 2010 census population was 6,500.

Three residents spoke for the project, touting jobs and revenue. There were several "no" comments, as well, from old and new alike, including a few that do not technically count since they live on the borders of Eagle.

I've always felt the Town Board has been generous with allowing anyone and everyone to speak freely, but on this night, the issue of those in our community not having a real voice came up again. The board is correct; they technically only represent the voters of Eagle, but I wonder if the board has ever researched the costs and benefits (for both sides) of making areas such as Eby Creek and Upper Kaibab an official part of Eagle.

At least one in the room didn't think it would matter what a person's physical address was, as it didn't seem to her that the leadership exhibited at the meeting was representing the citizens well at all.

A non-resident brought up the 2010 Colorado state legislation change regarding "blighted" fields, such as the one for this project, and why the board should consider the issue in more depth. This seemed appropriate, given that the tax-increment-financing structure will hit the pocketbooks of all residents of our county and state, not just those in

Eagle. (A residents' group has calculated the TIF impacts and will present it publicly once it receives the information back from the town).

As someone who has been critical of the process not providing enough details, I was happy to see more financial information presented, although I must have missed the part where it calculated the lost revenue from other parts of town. Regardless of what stores go into ERS 2.0, it is hard to fathom that it won't be pulling at least some revenue from other parts of town.

In researching other communities across the country, many do require an economic impact study to assess the net impact of new shopping districts, as it is clear that all is not new revenue, but instead simply shifted revenue (at a lower tax rate to the general fund in this case).

It is also clear that as the community once again considers whether a project that is 80 percent bigger than

Glenwood Meadows (405,000 square feet) fits our community, each resident will have to decipher what is fact and fiction per their own personal conclusions.

Hopefully in doing so, everyone will check out the three websites with information at [www.townofeagle.org](http://www.townofeagle.org), [www.eagleriversation.com](http://www.eagleriversation.com) and [www.yestoeagle.com](http://www.yestoeagle.com).

Ask for details! Ask hard questions! And ask yourself if you are happy with the leadership and direction of our town. On April 3, there are three trustee seats and the mayor's seat up for grabs, which depending on who is elected, will continue Eagle down the same old big path or set our community in a new direction. If you want to learn more about the current leaders, possible future leaders, or if you just have nothing better to do — come to a meeting or go to [www.allabouteagle.com](http://www.allabouteagle.com).

See ya'll at Town Hall! (Because I haven't missed a meeting yet and I can't start now!)

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