

RED touts outreach efforts, residents question need

On an evening where the scheduled topic of discussion was seemingly resolved prior to the start of the meeting, the March 7 Eagle River Station hearing was highlighted by a presentation by RED Development regarding its outreach efforts in other communities and passionate testimony from residents who both oppose and support the plan.

The March 7 meeting was slated to discuss various conditions that the Eagle Town Board would place on the ERS development, but before that topic was even explored, project planner Tom Braun said, "The main point I want to make to you tonight is we are in total agreement with the planning commission and staff conditions."

"There are no issues from our perspective."

With the developer agreeing to comply with the project conditions set by the town, RED Development partner Jeff McMahon said the evening's presentation would center on community outreach efforts the company sponsors in other communities where its shopping centers are located.

"RED has a strong history of give back to the community," said McMahon.

Dave Claflin, vice president of marketing for RED Development, said that company shopping centers host events ranging from Toys for Tots campaigns, to fund-raiser walks for juvenile diabetes to golf tournaments to a rubber duck race.

Claflin said the company has directly giving out more than \$3 million and has assisted in helping various non-profit groups raise additional money.

"We would love the opportunity to show you all e could do for Eagle," he said.

SOME SAY YES, SOME SAY NO

In one of the more spirited public comment sessions during this round of Eagle River Station review, Shawn Colby of Eagle lead the evening.

Colby said small, owner-run businesses in town will suffer if ERS is approved. "The day they break ground is the day that the rest of the businesses in town go down hill," said Colby.

Noting that his family has lived in the area for decades, Colby said Eagle's character changed when Eagle Ranch developed. "Eagle doesn't need to be Mayberry, but it doesn't need to be Westminster, either."

Colby noted that RED has never developed a project in a town as small as Eagle and the plan simply isn't right for this community. "This project will be businesses based somewhere else, in buildings owned by someone from someplace else."

In contrast, Jessica Mossman identified herself as a relatively new resident of Eagle. She said she recently contacted RED representatives directly to ask some frank and direct questions about the proposal and as a result of those conversations she has become a proponent of the plan.

"There can be no argument that the town of Eagle has had to work with a reduced budget over the past few years," said Mossman. "I am able to recognize we need something to stimulate the local economy."

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