



Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
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August 26, 2010

Teton County Planning Commission, Teton Board of County Commissioners, Paula Stevens, Alex Norton, County Planning Department
Re: Proposed change to Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Resort Master Plan to lift dog prohibition in the affordable units
Submitted via email

Dear Teton County Planning Commission and Teton Board of County Commissioners,

On behalf of the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the proposed change to the Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Resort Master Plan. We support upholding the original, clear intentions of the Master Plan to not allow dogs in the year-round affordable housing units.

While we are supportive of dogs in the Jackson Hole community, there are several reasons for our support of the existing dog prohibition in this Master Plan. First, the dog prohibition was put in place by the Vail Resorts Development Company (on behalf of the owner) to help mitigate the impacts of those homes that were built in the sensitive area south of Spring Gulch Road. The applicant (Vail) proposed a shifting of the Natural Resources Overlay (NRO) in 2002 to accommodate this project site, and even after some debate as to the validity of the findings of the 2002 Environmental Assessment that allowed that shift, it was permitted. At the time that the NRO boundary was moved, the Alliance opposed the 22 affordable units *at this site* because of their expected impacts on wildlife. To mitigate those impacts, the development was approved *with the explicit condition* that dogs were to be prohibited on the site. Recently, the homes were built and home sales began in early 2010; the impacts have been inflicted and will continue to exist as long as the homes are there. *Therefore it is important to not back off on the mitigation efforts, now or in the future; this case cannot set a precedent for unwinding critical mitigations.*

Second, the impacts of dogs on wildlife are well documented, as are the cumulative effects of numerous smaller disturbances on wildlife. The purpose of mitigation efforts is to lessen the impacts (direct and indirect) of developments, including higher density ones, acknowledging that while impacts are sometimes inevitable, it is possible to minimize them. We simply cannot ignore the fact that these homes were built in a sensitive area and that dogs will and do have an impact on the wildlife there.

Additionally, amendments to the Land Development Regulations, which this application is, are intended to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In many ways, the application at hand is not. For example, it does not work to protect our wildlife resources in sensitive areas. It does not recognize the cumulative impacts of human (and dog) – wildlife interactions on valuable wildlife species. Rather than furthering the natural resource protection goals of the Comprehensive Plan, this

application attempts to backpedal on already agreed-upon mitigation efforts.

Anyone buying a piece of property, whether it is market or affordable, must contend with certain tradeoffs and conditions based on the details of that particular property. Is the home too far from work to bike? Is there a road easement next door? Is there a shared parking lot down the street? Is there a back yard, an HOA or speed limits in the development? Are dogs allowed? In this case, the development was approved with the condition that dogs would be prohibited, to protect wildlife while allowing for additional density, which facilitated the affordability of the units.

Affordable housing in our community is and will continue to be a critical component of our community character. Moving forward, we need to continue to think of creative ways to house our workforce and other community members in homes that both augment the quality of life of the residents and respect overarching community priorities.

In summary, *as a community, continuing to sacrifice wildlife and natural resources in a piecemeal and uncoordinated way is not a responsible way to plan.* The community made a decision about the affordable units at the Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Resort years ago when the Resort Master Plan was written, and now we have to abide by it. We ask that you require owners of the new affordable units to comply with the existing Master Plan and uphold the prohibition on dogs in the affordable development, south of Spring Gulch Road.

Several community members have compiled a comprehensive chronicle of this issue, and we encourage you to consider all of the details held therein. Thank you for your attention to our comments and for your hard work on this issue.

Sincerely,



Kristy Bruner
Community Planning Director



Becky Tillson
Community Planning Associate