

Re: “Cottage House” Town zoning changes discussion

Below are the comments Becky Tillson, Alliance Community Planning Associate, verbally presented at the May 4, 2011, Jackson Planning Commission meeting.

Becky Tillson, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. Thanks for the opportunity to comment tonight.

First of all we appreciate the idea of meeting community goals within existing development potential. However, **we have to acknowledge that these districts encompass significant portions of Town. The Comp Plan Character Districts are scheduled to be on the table for discussion *this summer*, and again we’d like to request that these changes be postponed and instead be included as a part of the Character District conversations, and be informed by them.**

If you decide to move ahead, I’d like to just make two main points regarding the affordability of the new units, in the short and long terms, and the possibility of deed restricting the units.

First, we have to acknowledge that the population that these new units will serve is not the same as the population that many of the rentals in the zones we are discussing are currently serving. The willingness to plan for where the displaced populations will live is a vital component of this conversation. With the goal of Town as Heart as a major focus in our new Comp Plan (which is with the electeds now) we’ll need to continue to strive to house our local workforce close to the workplace, in Town. We need to ensure that any changes to these zoning districts will result in *more* of the workforce being housed locally, not less.

One key way to achieve this is to include a deed restriction in the language for this amendment. Deed restriction language can take a variety of forms, but overall, maintaining a balance of ownership and rental opportunities – which is what the current character achieves – will be paramount.

Second, it has been proven time and again that smaller units are not always more affordable, particularly not in the long run, in desirable resort communities such as ours, and also, that redevelopment tends to increase rents. To rely merely on the size of the unit, without a deed restriction, to control the cost is not necessarily reasonable.

Thanks for your attention to this issue and for all of your work.