



ELK CREEK FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

11993 Blackfoot Road P.O. Box 607 Conifer, CO 80433

October 28, 2020

Jefferson County Planning and Zoning
100 Jefferson County Parkway
Suite 3550
Golden, Colorado 80419-3550

RE: 20-111200RZ- CONIFER COMMONS REZONING 2ND REFERRAL

To Whom It May Concern,

The Elk Creek Fire Protection District has reviewed the 2nd submittal for rezoning and has the following comments:

1. This property is located within the Elk Creek Fire Protection District.
2. The fire district is a 72 year-old rural, mostly volunteer fire district, that strives to provide services in accordance with national standards for rural volunteer fire departments.
3. The fire district currently services this property in accordance with the current zoning use, which is agricultural, one dwelling unit per 10 acres.
4. The proposed rezoning would change the use to a higher density use.
5. The fire district would be "UNABLE TO PROTECT" the proposed development because the fire district lacks the funding mechanism, infrastructure, staffing, operational resources and specialized firefighting apparatus to service the proposed higher density rezoning use.
6. The fire district would recommend that the rezoning be denied at this time to allow further study of all the impacts of the proposed rezoning.
7. The fire district would recommend that Jefferson County work with fire district's in the County to start the process to authorize fire districts to impose an impact fee on new development in accordance Colorado House Bill 16-1088, passed in 2016.
8. The fire district would recommend that Jefferson County review data from the recent catastrophic wildland fires in California, Oregon and Colorado to determine if current zoning and use standards for proposed new development in wildfire hazard areas need to be revised to prevent catastrophic wildland fires in Jefferson County. Data we've reviewed shows that current California standards (which are similar to current County standards) allowed entire communities to be destroyed, even though they were protected by large municipal fire departments.
9. The fire district would recommend that Jefferson County review their practice of deleting section R313 from the *International Residential Code*, which requires automatic fire sprinkler systems in new single-family residential occupancies. Jefferson County has deleted requirement from every code adoption since 2009. The fire district believes that residential fire sprinklers are life-saving systems that help protect our citizens and firefighters, especially in rural areas that lack fire hydrants and have longer response times.
10. It's our understanding that the developer has removed the proposed commercial occupancies from the development.
11. It's our understanding that the developer has offered to install fire sprinklers in all of the proposed residential buildings. While we appreciate the offer to install residential fire sprinklers, we want to remind everyone that residential fire sprinklers have been required by the International Codes for over 10 years. The fire sprinkler requirement is deleted at the local level by Jefferson County. We would like to recommend that Jefferson County stop deleting the residential fire sprinkler requirement from the code.



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12. The development team, at the recommendation of Elk Creek Fire Protection District, engaged a third-party fire protection consultant to evaluate the existing resources of the Fire Department and the increased needs to serve the proposed development. The Elk Creek Fire Protection District provided the requested data to the consultant. A draft version of the of the study was provided to Elk Creek Fire Protection District on October 23, 2020. In summary, the consultant recommendations relating to increased needs to serve the proposed development are:
 - a. *The most advantageous contribution, by the developer, to the Elk Creek Fire Protection District, which will benefit the entire fire district including the proposed development, would be a three year contribution for three career firefighter/EMTs; using the FEMA SAFER grant criteria. In addition, the cost of enrollment into an EMT-B class as a one-time contribution.*
 - b. *The governing body of the Elk Creek Fire Protection District might consider replacing the next new engine with a quint. A quint, (or quintuple combination pumper) serves the dual purpose of an engine and a ladder truck. The name quint is derived from the Latin prefix quinque, meaning five (5), and refers to the five (5) functions that a quint provides: pump, water tank, fire hose, aerial device, and ground ladders.*
 - c. *The fire department should create an alarm card which automatically notifies an area fire department that has aerial apparatus to respond automatically on any fire alarm originating from one of the two Multi-family building.*
13. Elk Creek Fire District has the following response to the recommendation for the developer to make a partial three year contribution for three additional career firefighters/EMT's for the Fire District:
 - a. The FEMA SAFER Grant program is a competitive process with no guarantee of grant funding.
 - b. There is no funding mechanism in place for the fire district to fund the firefighter positions after the three year grant funding runs out.
14. Elk Creek Fire District has the following response to the recommendation for the fire district to consider replacing the next new engine with a quint.
 - a. There is no funding mechanism in place for the fire district to fund the additional cost of a quint to serve one development.
 - b. Existing fire stations are at capacity and were not designed to accommodate larger aerial apparatus.
 - c. Aerial apparatus requires additional staffing resources, which the fire district doesn't have.
15. Elk Creek Fire District has the following response to the recommendation for the fire department to create an alarm card which automatically notifies an area fire department that has aerial apparatus to respond automatically on any fire alarm originating from on or the two Multi-family buildings:
 - a. The closest aerial ladder truck is located at Evergreen Fire District St. #1, which is 14.5 miles away. The driving time in good weather is 29 minutes. The response time including dispatch, volunteer firefighter turnout and drive time would be a minimum 45 minutes. This long response time would limit the effectiveness of the aerial apparatus.
 - b. The Evergreen Fire Protection District would need to agree to providing automatic aerial apparatus support for every alarm at this proposed development.
 - c. Are the Evergreen property owners willing to fund aerial apparatus support for a development in a neighboring fire district ?
16. The development team in their response to Jefferson County stated: *"Increase in required operating capacity for fire district will be generated by public private funding partnership. Debt service for increasing capacity will be paid by user fees from or mill levy from project (structure of user fee has not yet been fully determined) so the development is paying for the increased fire protection capacity. Developer is engaging a study to determine upgrade costs. No Current Conifer homeowners will have to pay for this upgrade"*.



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17. Elk Creek Fire District has the following response to the developers proposed public private funding partnership:
 - a. The funding for the increase in required operating capacity for the fire district needs to be determined before rezoning is approved. The developer needs to provide the details showing that user fees and mill levy from the project would pay for the increased fire protection capacity so no current Conifer (or Evergreen) homeowners will have to pay for this upgrade.
18. Before rezoning is approved the fire protection water supply needs to be evaluated to insure it meets the International Fire Code requirements for the largest proposed building. According to our records the water district fire pump is rated to provide a maximum of 2,000 gpm, The water supply tank is 500,000 gallons. However, at this time the capacity of the water tank storage has been reduced to address the purity of the water. The current information on the proposed multi-family building is that it would be 268' x 66' x 4 stories = 70,752 sq. ft. The International Fire Code fire flow requirements for this size of a Type V-A building would be 2,325 gpm (4,750 gpm minus a 50% reduction for sprinklers). Since the fire pump is rated to provide a maximum of 2,000 gpm, it appears the existing fire protection water supply is not adequate. For a fire flow of 2,000 gpm the size of a Type V-A building would be limited to 52,500 sq. ft. Or, the building could be built larger using more fire resistive construction and/or limiting the height to 3 stories. In addition, the International Fire Code requirements for water supply would be 240,000 gallons (2,000 gpm x 120 minutes) of fire protection water required to be maintained in the tank. The water district would need to evaluate if it could maintain water quality for a minimum of 240,000 gallons in the tank.

In summary, this submittal hasn't addressed many of the fire district's concerns that were stated in previous correspondence. Now that we have more detailed information regarding the proposed buildings there are additional concerns regarding the apparent lack of fire protection water supply. These issues need to be addressed before rezoning is approved.

We look forward to working with you and the developer to address these issues before approval is considered.

Sincerely,

Jacob N. Ware

Jacob N. Ware
Fire Chief
Elk Creek Fire Protection District