

October 16, 2008

Teton County BOCC  
89 North Main Street  
Driggs, Idaho 83422

RE: The unanimous denial of Ridgeline Ranch PUD.

Dear Commissioners,

Valley Advocates for Responsible Development (VARD) supports the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) to unanimously recommend denial of this PUD application because it is simply not harmonious with the surrounding environment. In addition, the record reveals that throughout this process, the concerns of P&Z and the surrounding community have simply not been addressed.

**I. The design of Ridgeline Ranch is not harmonious with the surrounding environment.**

Ridgeline Ranch has an overall average density of 32/100 with 66.8% open space. The lot sizes range from cabin lots that include just a building envelope up to 1.58 acres. The lodge size takes up 2.91 acres. Here are the statistics from the surrounding developments, which illustrate just how inharmonious Ridgeline really is:

- River Rim Ranch PUD surrounds Ridgeline Ranch to the north, south, and east. It has an overall average density of 12/100 with over 60% open space. The lots sizes range from cabins to 10+ acres. There are 132 lots that are over 5 acres in size. There are 70 lots over 7.5 acres in size. River Rim does not use these large lots in calculating its percentage of open space; thus all of these large lots are providing additional open space above and beyond the 60% designated open space.
- Nearby to the north is Jay Lazy H Ranch PUD with an overall average density of 14.9/100 and over 79% open space. The lot sizes range from 0.23 acres to 160 acres. There are 5 lots totaling 797 acres, and an additional 5,058 acres have been set aside as open space. The large lots have not been used in calculating the percentage of open space; thus all of the large lots are providing additional open space above and beyond the 79% designated open space.
- Nearby to the south is Big Game View Ranch, a traditional subdivision with 13 lots ranging from 20 to 39.8 acres. It should also be noted that this subdivision was engineered back in October of 1981.
- Nearby to the northwest is Bridlecrest PUD, with an overall average density of 18/100 and 78% open space. The lot sizes range from 0/25 to 20 acres. There are 68 lots that are over 5 acres in size. There are 30 lots that are over 15 acres in size.

- Not quite as nearby to the west is Canyon Creek Ranch PUD, with an overall average density of 15/100 and 67% open space. The lot sizes range from 0.1 to 17.8 acres. There are 80 lots over 4.2 acres in size. The large lots have not been used in calculating the percentage of open space; thus all of the large lots are providing additional open space above and beyond the 67% designated open space.

## **II. Throughout this process, the P&Z concerns have not been adequately addressed.**

This project had 82 units at concept and with community water and potential central sewer. The overall density was 29 units/100 acres. The majority of the lots were located in the high priority habitat as identified by their consultant, Intermountain Aquatics. At the August 28, 2007 concept hearing, the neighbors expressed concern with high densities, water, connectivity, and traffic. The P&Z expressed many concerns with this project as well.<sup>1</sup> The commission voted to approve this PUD on the condition that the developer reduce his number of lots, get rid of roads, and negotiate for connectivity with the surrounding developments.

Despite the commission's density concerns, the project came back at the June 10, 2008 preliminary hearing with an *increased* number of units (89 units) and a lodge. Moreover, approximately 40 of these 90 lots still remain in the wildlife conflict areas. The developer pulled some of the lots away from River Rim, but the record does not indicate any other effort to coordinate connectivity. The record also reveals that the same members of the public testified that their concerns had still not been addressed. The commission requested a (1) fiscal impact study, (2) an open space management plan, (3) a road cost sharing agreement be submitted for River Rim, (4) meet with the county engineer to resolve his outstanding issues, (5) and ensure that the building sites on lots 5-8 will not interfere with Mr. Hansen's views.<sup>2</sup>

The (very abbreviated) Open Space Management Plan was turned in to Teton County two weeks after the hearing on June 24, 2008. The Fiscal Impact Analysis was completed three days

---

<sup>1</sup> See Teton County Planning & Zoning Minutes, August 28, 2007:

The commissioners were concerned about clustering with a string of lots going on for ½ mile. They feel that it is not fair to use un-buildable land for your open space. It is unethical. There is not adequate open space between this development and River Rim . . . They hope the developer will reduce density and get rid of some of the roads. The County Commissioners have given the P&Z commission the right to be more stringent for developments to be in conformance with the comprehensive plan. They hope the developer will negotiate for connectivity to cooperation with surrounding developments for roads and trails.

<sup>2</sup> See Teton County Planning & Zoning Minutes, June 10, 2008.

later on June 27, 2008. Approval from Eastern Idaho Public Health was (and is still) pending. There was no meeting with the county engineer to address his May 28, 2008 comments. There was no meeting with River Rim Ranch to discuss a cost sharing agreement, and River Rim is not a party to the provisions in Ridgeline's development agreement. There was no meeting with Mr. Hansen to discuss preserving his views.

At the August 12, 2008 hearing, the same members of the public testified once again that their concerns had simply not been addressed. The commissioners all agreed that their earlier concerns had not been addressed by the applicant. Then, the commission determined that Ridgeline Ranch was simply not harmonious with the surrounding environment and lacked a meaningful, effective open space management plan. As a compromise, the commission offered to recommend 56 units, which is a slightly higher ratio than neighboring River Rim. Instead of taking this compromise, the applicant requested a recommendation of denial instead. The commissioners unanimously recommended denial of this application.<sup>3</sup>

### **III. Conclusion.**

We at VARD support the P&Z recommendation for denial, since the developer is unwilling to reduce the number of lots in his development. We also believe that this project is large enough, and located in such a rural area, that it must be held to the same standards and rigorous scrutiny as other north end developments. It is the fair and consistent approach to ensuring developments that benefits the entire community.

Sincerely,

Anna Trentadue

---

<sup>3</sup> See Teton County Planning & Zoning Minutes, August 12, 2008, pages 9-12.