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March 20th, 2024

Town of Grand Lake & Community Development - Planning Department
Subject: Preliminary – Leatherwood Master Plan Concept – Spirit Lake Condos, LLC & MA Studios

Dear Residents, Stakeholders, and Community Members,

We are delighted to share with you an exciting vision for the future of downtown Grand Lake. As our community continues to grow and evolve, it's essential that we shape our environment to meet the needs and aspirations of all who call this place home. With that in mind, allow us to introduce you to a transformative mixed-use development project that promises to enhance our downtown area and foster a stronger sense of connection and vibrancy.

At the heart of this vision lies a commitment to revitalizing the connection between Grand Avenue and Grand Lake, breathing new life into our urban core while preserving the unique charm and character that defines our community. The proposed development seeks to create an energetic & active pedestrian plaza, serving as a welcoming gathering space for residents and visitors alike. Picture a bustling hub of activity, where families can stroll, friends can meet, and neighbors can come together to enjoy the beauty of our surroundings.

Central to our plans is the extension of the beach frontage on Grand Lake, offering expanded opportunities for recreation and relaxation along the water's edge. This enhancement not only celebrates the natural context of RMNP, Grand Lake, etc, but also ensures that our community continues to thrive as a destination for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers.

Furthermore, we are excited to unveil plans to reimagine the existing boathouse/marina, transforming it into a dynamic amenity space that is accessible and welcoming to all. Our proposal includes the expectation that the town re-locates the existing marina & boathouse - by reworking this area, the town will help us create a multifunctional space that not only caters to the needs of boating enthusiasts but also offers a myriad of recreational opportunities for the general public to enjoy.

Central to our approach is a holistic consideration of the long-term growth and sustainability of our community. Through thoughtful urban planning and design, we seek to strike a harmonious balance between economic development, environmental stewardship, and social equity, ensuring that our downtown remains a vibrant and inclusive hub for generations to come.

Beyond physical enhancements, our vision for downtown Grand Lake encompasses a comprehensive plan for sustainable growth and development. We are committed to creating spaces that are not only beautiful and functional but also environmentally responsible, ensuring that future generations & visitors can continue to enjoy all that our community has to offer.

But perhaps most importantly, this development is about people – about creating spaces that bring us together, foster a sense of belonging, and celebrate the unique spirit of Grand Lake. We invite you to join us on this journey as we work together to shape a brighter future for our community.

In the coming weeks and months, we look forward to engaging with you, our valued stakeholders, to gather feedback, answer questions, and refine our plans. Your input is crucial to the success of this project, and we are committed to ensuring that all voices are heard and considered every step of the way. A few questions/items that are of particular note at this stage:

1. ***Parking concerns:*** *We currently have 300' feet of frontage on Lake Avenue which equates to 30 parking spaces. We have 150' of frontage on Grand Avenue with equates to 15 spaces. The 100' of frontage on Garfield Street equates to 10 parking spaces, for a total of 55 spaces provided. We intend to receive credit for all potential on-street parking spaces, and will provide accessible spaces as needed per Grand Lake's code requirements. Preliminary parking count provided on conceptual site plan attached – off street parking layouts and counts are to be determined – with our existing parking spaces, we expect to provide ample parking for the project's future commercial requirements.*

2. ***Existing conditions intended to remain:*** *There is currently limited commercial use on the upper level of the event center (not street level) and currently no commercial uses or spaces on Lake Avenue for the Event Center or Lakehouse buildings. We, therefore, do not intend to provide any commercial uses in those buildings – we are re-using and renovating these buildings, and intend to keep their current uses as multi-unit residential buildings. We feel that it is not appropriate to provide commercial space in these existing buildings because of expected congestion/traffic for pedestrian access/etc. The use of these buildings for multi-unit residential will mitigate traffic/access issues along the newly pedestrian Lake Ave, and will increase potential for the existing snack bar to receive welcome pedestrian traffic from the east.*

3. ***Phase breakdown:*** *at this conceptual stage, our phases are inter-related & may be completed concurrently. Please reference the attached concept plans for detail:*
 - a. Overall site re-grading & plaza landscaping, incl. alley re-grade, remove buildings
 - b. 'Event center' (multi-family residential, restoration/addition)
 - c. 'Lakehouse' (multi-family residential, restoration/addition) - (no existing commercial)
 - d. 'Treehouse' (multi-family residential, restoration/addition) - (no existing commercial)
 - e. Retail kiosk off Grand Ave (new construction)
 - f. Clean up site 825 w/ historic building - open space counts towards new project
 - g. Building #2 (mixed-use, new construction)
 - h. Building #1 (mixed-use, new construction)
 - i. Building #3 (mixed-use, new construction)
 - j. Landscape/outdoor public plaza scope and boardwalk extension to & along Lake Ave
 - k. Private dock extension and lakefront
 - l. Relocate marina building
 - m. Extend beachscape and lake-side boardwalk(s)
 - n. Resurface/reconfigure lake avenue for pedestrian-only use
 - o. Private boat docks/slips

(Phases J and beyond are to be coordinated/collaborated with the town of GL.)

4. **Conditions:** All undeveloped and under-construction sites will be fenced. Safe walkways will be maintained throughout construction for the general public to retain their current pedestrian access routes (including but not limited to sidewalks along Grand, Garfield, Lake, etc).
5. **Boat Docks:** Per the conceptual illustrated plan, we intend to include “Private” boat docks for our new building residents on the lake near our new public plaza/reconfigured public open space at the lake’s edge.
6. **Open Space:** The owner and developer intend to transfer ‘air rights’ to allow the site at 825 Lake Ave to count towards our project’s open space requirements. The site at 825 Lake Avenue would be permanently dedicated as public open space (perhaps a dog park, an open recreational area, a multi-functional & public outdoor space).
7. **Scale of development:** Overall building heights are intended to be 35’ maximum from the center point of the “Existing alley max height and Lake Avenue for the Tree House remodel and Event Center. Beyond height compliance, the design is intended to relate and comingle with the current scale of Grand Lake development (pedestrian boardwalk presence with roof coverage at a single-story height, upper floors set-back to provide terraced massing that does not over-power neighboring lots and overall frontages, views, shadows, etc.
8. **Alley Re-Grade:** The alley will be re-graded and will have a dead-end located adjacent to the existing ‘Treehouse’ building (see concept plans) to accommodate our intended re-grading strategy. This will not affect any existing alley conditions on the existing buildings to remain, and is not intended to cause changes to any neighboring properties – intent is to open up the public plaza to create an activated view-corridor from Grand Avenue down to the lake’s edge. The alley currently rises about 10’ above Grand Avenue, so the existing grading will cause a hinderance to our public plaza & lake-connection concept on which the master plan is founded.
9. **Affordable housing:** Portions may be supplied off site as required by the town of Grand Lake, if possible.

Together, let's build a Downtown Grand Lake that we can all be proud of – a place where memories are made, connections are forged, and the spirit of community thrives. On the following page you'll find our master plan team's contact information, currently containing the following members:



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Thank you all for your support and partnership. MA will be happy to walk through the design and discuss anything that comes up. Looking forward to speaking soon!

Best,

Gabe Bellowe
Architect, MA Studios

CC J. Scott Munn
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