

Karl

Comments to County Commissions re Gardner PUD

Gardner Main Street Revitalization Comments

Mary Jensen, November 4, 2024.

Private Property Rights

People should be able to do what they want with property they purchase—as long as it doesn't interfere with the rights of other property owners, which is the essence of zoning.

I believe the county also has the right to develop their property as long as it doesn't interfere with the rights of other property owners—in this case, residents of Gardner, who are also property owners, and who, at least by virtue of their existing and prior occupation, might like to have a say in what happens. And given that the county government is elected to carry out the voter's business (and presumably wishes), I find it interesting to read about how the County is moving ahead on the Gardner Main Street Revitalization project, without letting any of the Gardner residents know about it.

Transparency

I am concerned that none of the Gardner residents I've talked with know anything about the apparently 20-30 unit housing PUD [mentioned in the County's Multi-Hazard draft document which also has not been advertised] which is being planned by the county, and which was briefly mentioned in the local Newspaper on October 10th as a *revitalization project*. Nothing has been posted on a community bulletin board, and if there is an official publication, like the local newspaper, no one I've talked with has seen any official publication discussing the plan, the contracts, the planners, the time-lines, etc. No community meetings have been called to discuss this new development either—at least that I am aware of.

IS there an official publication which the county regularly uses to inform county residents?

Facebook (the F in FANG—acronym for Facebook, Amazon, Netflix, and Google, which are among the four most Insecure and surveillance/data harvesting websites in the US) should not be considered an official publication by anyone. By the way, the county's own website does not pass the security checks for proton mail, which I use. Proton mail will not connect me to county offices because of the security threats...and so I drive to Walsenburg when I need to conduct business here—30 minutes each way and about \$10 in gas each time.

No one I have talked with has ever seen the county's PUD plan which is apparently under contract for planning with JRA Real Estate company in Fort Garland. How and why were they picked? Are they being paid out of grant funds or other?

--What are the parameters and conditions that the county outlined in their contract with JRA?

--What are the timelines?

--What are the potential impacts on existing residents, in terms of increased demands for water

and sewer?

—What if any potential cost increases for water and sewer service might be passed on to

existing residents? [The county recently updated our sewage system (thank you!), and we have already had increases in our monthly fees to pay for those. Will additional upgrades for new houses/residences/businesses be passed on in-whole or in-part to us or will they be borne by the newcomers for which they will be designed?]

--What, if any relationship, does this plan have with the private grants which have recently been discussed in public meetings at the Gardner Community Center? Are you working with

that group, competing against them, or integrating ideas with them???

I am thankful that with the purchase of the Thorne Ranch, water rights were transferred to the Gardner community. However, as someone with a water right on paper, I have a well that only has water in it during months when there is overflow from my neighbor's irrigation field. Without adequate rain/snow, my well is empty, despite the 5-6 gallon output which was registered when it

was drilled. *The only water right that counts is precipitation. Where is the water for a new development coming from? Will the existing delivery system be upgraded with any additions?*

Also, as the last residence on the community water system, I have completely run out of water on three different occasions, not counting the recent 3 day shutdown, when the line sprung a leak. So I personally am concerned that adding 20-30 additional residences, might leave me high and dry. Is water augmentation part of the planning scenario? What protections will be put into place for those

of us at the other end of the line?

I think it is important to obtain regular community input, I personally think Gardner could use some revitalization, but we residents might want to have a say in how that is done, given that we will be living with the consequences of whatever will be done.

My preference would be to start with revitalizing what's already there. As I drive through the community of about 75 houses, I believe community-wide clean-up would be first on my list. There are numerous empty buildings/houses and fences in very dilapidated condition, a good number of which have been placed on the county's "condemned" list at least once, and some more than that. [Condemnation notices, to my knowledge, have never been enforced.] At least one of the buildings-- a doublewide across from the fire station—appears to actually be falling apart...

Probably second on my list would be to see a new public shower/laundromat, that could be used by both residents and people passing through. If it were located across from the fire station, it could be used by firefighters (a huge need during the Spring Fire), and it could provide one or more part time jobs in terms of opening/closing/janitorial duties to either a resident or even a responsible student from the school, who would appreciate a little extra income, and/or job experience.

Third on my list would be to install sound absorbing material to the existing community center. 78 years and way too many car crashes have taken a hold on my hearing, and I quite honestly

can hear very little of what is said during meetings because of the echos coming off the walls. I know that I am not alone! As a venue for imparting verbal information, the building doesn't work.

There is also a lot of used "stuff" (trash/recyclables) strewn around various properties, including approximately a dozen trash bags that are in the arroyo (a waterway during floods) to the north of the Highway. I can't imagine what's in those bags, but it probably isn't something I'd like flowing into the town wells. Likewise the trash stacked up outside the old post office building on the left as you enter town, could be removed. Dead cars/farm equipment could be sold as metal scrap. One or more county-sponsored, community clean-up days would be welcome.

And last but not least (at least on this initial list), is the already existing problem with traffic through town. Given that I live right on Highway 69, I am well aware that speed limits are ignored. Air brakes are used coming into and in the community, many drivers of sport cars to 16 wheelers use the 25 mph residential speed limit as their personal drag strips. I am quite certain that legal noise limit of 80-90 decibels is regularly exceeded, which just destroys the peace and quiet of country living. Many of us have written letters, and made phone calls to the state highway department, who by and large has turned a deaf ear. There is no way someone going 60-75 miles an hour could stop, if livestock, a dog, a child or even an elderly slow person like me were walking down the roadway.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concerns. I sincerely hope that they are taken seriously and addressed.

Thank you.

Mary Jensen

25883 State Highway 69

Gardner, CO 81040

(719) 746-2233 land line only—no text

healthyaging@proton.me