Abby Scott <ascott@grandcountyutah.net>

[Planning] Comment on 3 HDHO Appeals - Sandstone, Peak View and Murphy Flats

1 message

Liz Thomas <moablizard72@gmail.com> Sun, May 2, 2021 at 3:32 PM
To: planning@grandcountyutah.net

Dear Grand County Planning Staff and Hearing Officer,

I'm am writing in support of **preserving the clear intent expressed in the approved Grand County High Density Housing Overlay (HDHO) Ordinances. I urge the Hearing Officer to reject the three appeals of the GC HDHO ordinance filed by developers of the Sandstone Cottages, Peak View and Murphy Flats HDHO developments. The HDHO ordinance, in order to stay true to the intent and language of the ordinance itself, must continue to be applied as drafted by the Grand County Planning Commission and as approved by the Grand County Commission, which clearly and specifically prohibits the sale of more than 20% of HDHO units and lots to non-local workforce households.**

I attended many, if not all, of the Planning Commission and County Commission public hearings and meetings in which the HDHO was discussed. There were many lively and in-depth discussion about how to structure the HDHO; many residents were opposed to the HDHO in their neighborhoods due to the **significant increase in density allowed**, and were also concerned that some of the units **would be available to non-local workers**. **The increased density allowed by the HDHO ordinances was a big issue of contention for residents.**

Eventually there was general agreement among commissioners, council members, staff and residents that our local workforce housing options were inadequate and that the County should incentivize developers to build housing for local workforce households to purchase by allowing increased density with **80% of the units available only to local workforce households**, 20% unrestricted as to purchaser. Since purchase of 80% of HDHO units was restricted to local workforce households, officials and staff agreed there was no need for sales price caps or income qualifications as the HDHO sales market would be guided by local workforce wages. It was also clear that HDHO developers would be allowed to retain ownership and rent units to qualified local workforce members, if developers chose to do so. The program was clearly intended and eventually approved in order to help local employees get into the local housing market in the community in which they worked.

Three developers who were granted HDHO permits have since decided they should be able to sell all of the HDHO units to non-local, non-workforce investors, who could be absentee landlords to local workers. **This change would eviscerate the purpose of the HDHO program!** The HDHO program would immediately become a huge non-workforce real estate investment opportunity and scam. **It would ceases to function as a program to help local-workforce residents buy homes in the community where they work.**

If these developers do NOT want to comply with the HDHO requirements they previously agreed to, they can forfeit their HDHO approvals. **But allowing HDHO developers to retain the HDHO higher density bonus <u>and</u> waiving the 80/20 requirement of local workforce/unrestricted purchaser is the polar opposite of the HDHO ordinance that residents and officials of Grand County discussed for months and months and which was ultimately approved.** If these HDHO developers mis-judged the demand for their units, or merely want to make more money per unit sold, they are not obligated to build the HDHO units. They can forfeit the HDHO higher density bonus and develop their properties consistent with the densities allowed in the Grand County Land Use Code, and sell to the highest bidde**r.**

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,
Liz Thomas
Grand County resident