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May 7, 2020

Friends of Grant Creek,

* The most critical issue facing Grant Creek remains Ken Ault's proposal to seek rezoning to allow many more apartment buildings and some townhouses and condos at 2920 Expo Parkway. We await his proposal, but have prepared a position statement reflecting the approach we will take when considering it. The full text is at the end of this email.
* Our Wildfire Risk Task Force has done a tremendous job of taking the first steps to prepare a community wildfire plan (including an evacuation plan) for Grant Creek. Plan on attending the Grant Creek Neighborhood Council's Virtual General Membership Meeting at 7 p.m. May 25 to learn more.
* We are awaiting a reply to our letter to Jeremy Keene, director of public works for the city of Missoula, requesting a detailed traffic study of the area affected by the proposed development at 2920 Expo Parkway.
* This summer, the Clark Fork Coalition and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks will be preparing a baseline assessment of the condition of Grant Creek from the Lolo National Forest to the creek's mouth. Investigators will be requesting permission to access the stream on private properties as well as public.
* RT Cox, who drafted the letter requesting the traffic study, has been elected president of the board of Friends of Grant Creek. Welcome, RT.

Thanks to Wendell Beardsley and Kevin Davis, who served as president and chairman of the board for the past year.  
  
We will be seeking additional board members at a general meeting to be announced later this spring or early summer.

Here's the position statement developed by the board regarding the  
proposed rezoning and development at 2920 Expo Parkway:

**Statement of Friends of Grant Creek Regarding 2920 Expo Parkway**

In March of this year, during the approval process of a development similar in size to the buildable area of the two parcels comprising 2920 Expo Parkway, Mayor John Engen was quoted in the Missoulian as saying: “In the end, I think we'll end up with a neighborhood where people not only can live but want to live. I would like all Missoulians to be proud of where they live, comfortable where they live, feel that their housing is of a quality that reflects the dignity of what they deserve.”

The Friends of Grant Creek (FOGC) have that same goal, not only for themselves, but for

the potential residents of the housing to be built at 2920 Expo Parkway. To that end FOGC favors the existing zoning for 2920 Expo Parkway because:

1. it will provide a mix of housing, including up to 150 single-family homes on individual lots, that is compatible with existing neighborhoods;

2. it provides opportunities for much needed home ownership;

3. the development of the north parcel as zoned will require planning and subdivision review which should result in a better-quality planned neighborhood for the residents and adjacent residents and businesses;

4. the allowed units (200-300 apartments on the south lot and 150 homes on the north lot) would almost double the existing number of housing units in Grant Creek, would stretch capacity of existing roadways and more than meet the Grant Creek neighborhoods’ share of needed housing in the community; and,

5. most importantly, the allowed units, along with the other already approved and permitted residential and commercial units, will already significantly increase traffic, including congestion affecting evacuation in the case of wildfire in the Grant Creek area. See Wildfire Statement as adopted by the FOGC Board on April 26, 2021 (the “Wildfire Statement”).

The FOGC could possibly support a development proposal that provides for a

different mix of housing if:

1. the rezoning application is accompanied by subdivision review or similar process that results in adequate public improvements and amenities identified in a recordable agreement that is binding and enforceable by the City, residents and neighbors;

2. there is opportunity for home ownership in the housing mix;

3. the number of total units does not contribute to poor traffic circulation and safety issues for residents, school buses, utility and emergency vehicles as determined by an updated traffic study;

4. there would not be final approval until an updated traffic study (taking into consideration traffic from both ski season and summer traffic) shows that existing and proposed roadways can safely handle the amount of additional traffic to be generated by proposed rezoning;

5. there is adequate recreation and open space and dog walking areas;

6. adequate consideration is made for needs and concerns of Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation;

7. the total number of allowed units along with the already approved and permitted

residential and commercial units (e.g., motels) do not significantly increase dangers posed for evacuation in the case of wildfire in the Grant Creek area as described in the Wildfire Statement;

8. the developer and property owners waive the right to protest the creation of special

improvement districts for traffic and roadway improvements; and

9. impact fees assessed against the developer are adequate to cover the development’s share of traffic and other infrastructure improvements and they are actually dedicated for that purpose.

FOGC invited KJA Development, LLC, to present its proposal to the membership of FOGC. The FOGC Board has subsequently offered comments, suggestions and requests with respect to the proposed rezoning and the related Development Agreement and will continue to do so before the Development Agreement is submitted to the City, if provided the opportunity, or after the Agreement is submitted if necessary.

The FOGC cannot and will not abrogate the right of individual property owners within the community to protest any proposed rezoning, nor can it guarantee that members of FOGC or the Board will not object to a proposed rezoning, if the concerns of the FOGC or individuals are not addressed.