

Potential Topics for Planning Board Hearing

Each speaker has only 2 minutes

Speakers need to sign up before 5:00 pm this Thursday on the Planning Board website

GCA's main goal: Ensure our main topics, issues, and examples that best support our case are covered. Positive, respectful language and demeanor.

Our main ask: GCA advocates denying or tabling the current proposal until Gunbarrel Subcommunity Planning is completed, consistent with the new BVCP Update.

Ideas for sign-up comment topics include:

- Wildlife considerations
 - Preservation Pledge by Celestial for remnant grasslands ecosystem and thriving prairie dog colony – preservation in perpetuity
 - Keystone species supporting many other species
- 15-Minute Neighborhoods, walkable neighborhoods, mixed uses
- Food Desert, inappropriate for affordable housing
- Urban Heat Island effect, inconsistent with City climate goals
- Celestial Seasonings PUD and Annexation conditions ignored: playing fields never built
- The landowners
 - Celestial, a Boulder legend, an excellent corporate citizen, and good neighbor
 - Hain, a billion dollar uninterested absentee corporation most concerned with maximum return on selling the land, zero concern for community, ignored requests to meet or talk
 - Allison most interested in checking boxes and maximizing profits by maximizing units –
 - “bad neighbor virtual lecture” instead of a “good neighbor meeting” in-person with meaningful engagement as defined by City case in point
 - Segregating AH instead of integrating for better, more equitable outcomes to avoid stigma
- Mixed uses, 3% space for mixed use is inadequate; how about 20% at least?
- Missing Middle (we don't need more vacant apartments; we need other forms of housing; cite current vacancy rates)

- Lack of Transit
 - Mobility Hub proposal lacks long-term funding or commitment;
 - It a tested and proven concept in Boulder?
 - Ride shares like Uber and Lyft significantly increase total vehicle miles traveled, traffic and climate impacts
- Who we neighbors are
 - mixed ages, mixed races, real people, taxpayers and voters, city and county residents, renters and owners
 - we are “workforce” people (teachers, nurses, frontline workers, policemen, etc.)
 - stereotyping us neighbors as old and white and rich is insulting and inaccurate
- Comparison of adjacent condos and this proposal
 - density may appear comparable, except for large community park on east side
 - older developments have larger living spaces and lower rental rates
 - older developments have been renovated to provide high quality living space and many more amenities for their residents, beginning with open space, recreational spaces, and adequate parking
- Resilience – BVCP and Boulder Climate Action Plan and Update
 - Should the Boulder Planning Board be encouraging more automobile-dependent communities in 2021?
 - Major new development that doesn’t provide for “net zero” construction in 2021?
 - Do we walk the talk on climate, or mostly talk?
 - New development far easier and cheaper to meet net zero goals/criteria, compared to retrofitting existing housing stock and commercial buildings
- Lack of Representation
 - Are any Planning Board members Gunbarrel residents?
 - Gunbarrel has had one city council member, ever – 50 years since annexation
 - In July 2021, Council Person Nagle spoke out in support of a better planned Gunbarrel and in support of GCA concerns that this is the wrong project in the wrong place at the wrong time
 - Please listen to our only elected representative, especially given the historical and continuing omission of residents from city appointed boards and commissions

- How much more housing does Boulder need right now? Who is telling us these numbers? What about the more than 1000 units being completed this calendar year? What about the 5400 units proposed for East Boulder? What about the Planning Reserve?
- Parking 316 spaces, more than half compact car size, at 2 cars/household in Colorado that's 143 cars with no place to park, overflow expected into neighboring streets that don't have space, what about guests and delivery and service vehicles?
- Traffic, daily car trips for most residents, semi traffic 24X7, congestion already at Spine/Jay and Jay/Diagonal intersections. Mobility hub expected to increase vehicle miles, not reduce traffic
- Trees will be destroyed, against climate and ecosystem vitality goals; new trees do not provide the canopy (shade and transpiration) benefits of mature trees
- Industrial operation as neighbor: trucks, night shifts, traffic, noise, etc.
 - Raises question: is this a proper location for a high density residential development under BVCP – especially considering the lack of amenities or mixed uses?
- BVCP Update Priorities
 - Emphasis on importance of shrinking inventory of industrial zoning
 - Subcommunity Plan and/or separate study needed to compile data on existing parcels, uses, demand, distribution, etc.
 - What happens in East Boulder Subcommunity Plan is relevant to Gunbarrel
 - Gunbarrel Subcommunity Plan priority commitment in Boulder Valley Comp Plan Update (“BVCP”), why it needs to be completed before a final decision on this 10 acre, 230 unit project, and why it matters
 - Lack of public amenities in Gunbarrel, specific examples, importance of amenities in BVCP, examples of how that has affected residents in the past and present
 - North Boulder Subcommunity Plan example and comparison
 - East Boulder Subcommunity Planning (in process, near completion) example and comparison
 - Gunbarrel Community Center Plan example, comparison and relevance: directs higher density residential development in Gunbarrel to village center, where it makes sense, consistent with BVCP
- Examples of better projects in Boulder – that comply with BVCP direction and are responsive to neighborhood character and won community support
 - Holiday Neighborhood, North Broadway

- Shining Mountain Waldorf School, North Broadway
- Silver Saddle Hotel, west Arapaho
- Alpine-Balsam: meaningful community engagement and public participation for redevelopment of a similarly sized parcel, one located in a mixed use neighborhood with Ideal Market and myriad other mixed uses and amenities within a few blocks: a “5 Minute Neighborhood”
- Standard of Review: developer is not entitled to approval of any specific given project, although GCA acknowledges that residential is a use by right and a residential development that meets BVCP guidance and direction as well as complying with locally applicable documents (annexation/PUD/plans) might be entitled to approval, if community has been meaningfully engaged and accommodated
- Public Amenities (commenter could choose 1 or more examples to cover)
 - Rec Center
 - Parks and playgrounds
 - Playing fields
 - Schools, school buildings and schoolyards (buildings and grounds are gathering places that build community; the latter encourage an active, healthy lifestyle)
 - Library
 - Cultural and arts facilities
 - Public pool
 - Senior center
 - Dog park, Frisbee Golf, Public golf course
 - Childcare center (?) Celestial didn't deliver on PUD commitment
 - Other:
 - Common theme: how much driving do existing residents do because all these public amenities are absent from Gunbarrel; how much do residents simply not partake of the benefits of a given amenity; or how much does it cost to compensate by joining a country club or private gym?
- Euphemisms we are seeing in this proposal (we won't bring up all the exaggerations)
 - why we should pay closer attention when we see euphemisms
 - workforce housing = market rate housing (preferential renting to certain kinds of workers?)

- affordable housing = specific classification, not a common sense definition of affordability, which almost everything Gunbarrel already would meet compared to Boulder proper
- mobility hub = ebikes, temporary shuttle service, pull-out for Uber/Lyft
- traffic calming measures = on-street parking
- central park = a grand name for a small open space area
- art space = small workspace and places for art along the sidewalk, a significant first for Gunbarrel
- density numbers not comparable
- distances to Gunbarrel center significantly underestimated

Summary of GCA Comments and Subject Matter :

- Celestial Annexation and PUD Requirements Violated (pending: June 9/10, 2021)
- Takeaways from East Boulder Subcommunity Planning Council Update (May 28, 2021)
- Applicability of Staff Recommendations on BVCP Midterm Requests (March 9, 2021)
- Public and Civic Amenities (and lack thereof in Gunbarrel), the BVCP, and Gunbarrel Subcommunity Planning (March 10, 2021)
 - Gunbarrel lacks most of the amenities that contribute to quality of life in other Boulder subcommunities
 - To remedy the lack of amenities requires land, but developing the 10 acre Hain Celestial site would introduce 600-some new residents to Gunbarrel without any plans for the missing amenities and remove a large parcel from consideration in subcommunity planning for possibly a more important use
- Applicability of Shining Mountain Waldorf School Process and Approval to Spine Road (May 11, 2021)
 - SMWS participated in a community dialogue which resulted in major changes to its initial proposal
 - By listening and by following the BVCP, the Annexation Agreement and the North Boulder Subcommunity Plan – SMWS obtained enthusiastic approval of its proposed development from the Planning Board
 - Compared to the Spine Road proposal, SMWS is far better suited to the neighborhood:
 - A major public benefit component (the school), a far lower proportion of the site to be paved and developed, far fewer units, and units far more compatible with adjacent neighborhoods

Other recent comments and published letters or columns focused on:

- Comprehensive comments on 2020 Proposal (July 2020)
- Concerns regarding the developers' proposal to segregate affordable housing units

- Segregating AH units is contrary to best practices; and creates a stigma for AH residents
- Urban Heat Island effect of the ultra-high density proposal for 23 units/acre with buildings and paving covering most of the property (75%?)
 - Paved parking lots and buildings would occupy the lion's share of the 10-acre site
- GCA also provided feedback to Planning Staff on the one-sided nature of the developers May 12 "Good Neighbor Meeting" which was more of a "bad neighbor lecture" that provided for zero constructive engagement or meaningful dialogue with community members.
 - Staff mailed notice that mapped and referred to an entirely differently property outside Gunbarrel
 - staff failed to catch the error, which likely would not have been corrected but for GCA
 - residents had less than a week notice (___?? Days) for corrected mailing
 - Symbolic of City's approach to Gunbarrel? An afterthought
 - The developer's team did 100% of the talking, were the only participants pictured on the zoom screen, and closed the 6 pm meeting at 6:57 apparently unaware of numerous follow-up questions in the "chat", many remain unanswered
 - Lack of dialogue
 - "What is engagement? Boulder defines engagement as an active, expansive relationship between the city and the community that includes any level of public participation; this typically encourages two-way dialogue." [Engagement 101 \(bouldercolorado.gov\)](https://www.bouldercolorado.gov/engagement-101)

From 5/28/2021 GCA email to Planning Board:

As GCA has emphasized, the proposed site is in a "food desert", would be an automobile-dependent development (notwithstanding the "mobility hub" proposal which lacks any funding commitment beyond a voluntary commitment for the first few years), and is nowhere near satisfying BVCP criteria directing high density developments to "15 minute neighborhoods" with ready access to mixed uses including service and retail businesses.

The proposed Spine Road location offers few if any of the intelligent land use or quality of life features of the thriving Holiday Neighborhood on North Broadway.

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