

Jeff
Alexander

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Burnt Fork Estates

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Jeff Alexander. I am originally from Butte, Montana, have resided in the Bitterroot Valley since 1981. To say that I have witnessed a lot of the change in the valley in the last 40 years would be an understatement. I believe I am uniquely qualified to share some thoughts on the development of Burnt Fork Estates.

I am a Realtor with EXIT Realty Bitterroot Valley and was involved in the sales process for this transaction. The principals, my clients, were aware that this subdivision had already been approved by the Town of Stevensville over 15 years ago. They also knew that the approval had expired and that they would have to re-apply for preliminary plat approval from the Town of Stevensville. The developers have invested considerable time and expense to get to this point in the process.

From my perspective the days of dividing large parcels of land into 1- and 2-acres tracts are limited in this valley. Any builder will tell you we are running out of buildable lots in the Bitterroot Valley.

I am also on the board of Ravalli County Habitat for Humanity. Our organization is really struggling to locate affordable lots to build on. Currently we have one home under construction and only one lot remains. Our goal is to build two homes a year, without affordable lots to build on this goal will be difficult to achieve.

The influx of people continues to grow. How are we going to responsibly meet this demand? This request before the Town of Stevensville goes a long way towards reaching that goal. Mitigating impacts to water, sewer, traffic, and fire are all included. It increases the tax base for the Town of Stevensville with the increasing revenues phased through the year 2030. This tax base increase will help move the Town of Stevensville forward. Inclusion of Multi Family lots addresses the density issue by providing more affordable, livable space with a lower impact on City Services.

This request before you tonight to rezone 16 lots from R2 (Multi Family) to C2 (Light Commercial) will meet the need for a new Fire Station on donated land. The Fire Station in this location will also benefit all the residents in the area to help with their home insurance premiums.

The additional 16 Light Commercial lots enhance what Stevensville embodies. It will give the Town of Stevensville more opportunity and a larger base to promote business growth in the town.

The 2016 Growth Policy outlines the need to diversify the Town of Stevensville's tax-based revenue. Based on that report only a quarter of the property tax revenue comes from commercial, whereas two-thirds of the property tax revenue currently comes from residential. Approving this rezoning request goes a long way towards diversifying the Town of Stevensville; tax base.

The plat layout for the C2 lots are located on the corner of Middle Burnt Fork and Logan Lane, focused strictly as a business center. Proposed business will see the benefits to be involved in a well laid out business center.

Main Street Stevensville is vibrant and healthy, and I do not see the 16 lots of Burnt Fork Estates as competition, but rather a complement to what exists. They do not take away the inherent charm of Main Street Stevensville, but gives the Town of Stevensville more opportunity to promote the town to encourage business into the community.

In closing, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has created an environment for people to work remotely. We have seen the beginning of that influx. Families are looking for more room to grow their families and businesses. This development, Burnt Fork Estates, and request for rezoning, meets that need head on by providing a well thought out design that promotes pent-up single-family demand for housing, multifamily and light commercial availability.

Thank you for your time.