

Proposed Avon medical offices clear hurdle

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AVON — A development plan to bring medical offices to town is one step closer to becoming a reality after receiving approval from planning commissioners.

On Tuesday, the Avon Planning & Zoning Commission heard testimony from neighbors of the project and professionals at Nexcore Group, a medical office developer out of Denver. Nexcore had a team of architects and planners on hand to answer questions about their development plan, which would bring a 49,000-square-foot medical center to Buck Creek parcel 1A, located on Nottingham, Buck Creek and Swift Gulch roads on the north side of town. Central to the favorable review of their plan was testimony from traffic engineer Charles Buck of Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, who performed a traffic study of the area.

Buck showed the commission his total traffic projected volumes if the Nottingham Road area were to be built to capacity, including the possibility of a joint police and fire station built on the Buck Creek parcel adjacent to 1A.

“Total site trip generation, including fire and police, is about 1,870 trips per day,” he said, adding that other uses of the land could result in higher numbers.

The traffic projections were acceptable to the commissioners, who were near unanimous in their support of the project.

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“To me, any medical facility in Avon is almost as important as police and fire,” said commissioner Phil Struve. “With police and fire they come to me, with medical I come to you, and we need something close. I’ve heard that from my neighbors.”

CONCERNS RECORDED

However, concerns were voiced by those in favor of the project. Struve said he doesn’t want stoppages on Nottingham Road during construction, he doesn’t want highly reflective glass on the building and he doesn’t want unnecessary light pollution spilling out of the parking garage. Commissioner Lindsay Hardy was concerned about visitors getting confused about which of the building’s lots they should park in.

“I do worry about those people visiting Avon for the first time or having broken a leg on the mountain per chance and going to get it fixed,” she said. “I don’t know what’s going to be in this building, but I’m just thinking about those people trying to enter the building.”

In the end, Tab Bonity voiced the lone dissenting vote on the issue, with the building’s flat-roof design being his major point of contention.

“I’d like to see the applicant study some sloped roofs on this building,” he said.

LOCALS’ LEFT

Also speaking out in favor of the project were members of the community, including Markian Feduschak of Walking Mountains Science Center, located near the Buck Creek site, and Jay Peterson with Buck Creek Associates, the seller who is making the deal possible.

Nearby resident Becky Kaiser asked if there will be traffic lights erected as a result of this development. Town Manager Virginia Egger said the Mountain Star neighborhood, whose residents could see increased wait times to turn left onto Nottingham Road when leaving their neighborhood via Buck Creek Drive, had voiced an opinion on the development.

“Comments from Mountain Star recommended, ‘Let’s build it and see what happens.’ The town does have adequate right of way at Buck Creek for a signal, if needed, so that people could make that left-hand turn,” Egger said.

Kaiser also asked if there was a survey performed to determine if the building was needed.

“Prior to this coming out ... I had people asking me ‘Why don’t we have a medical facility, why don’t we have an area for offices, why is our urgent care so tiny?’” Hardy said in response.

Todd Varney with Nexcore Group said they had verified the demand before working on their development plan and the building will be 75 percent pre-leased when they break ground.

To that end, Nexcore Group has repeatedly expressed a need to get started as soon as possible, targeting June as their goal. Tuesday's favorable decision from the planning commission — in effect, a recommendation that the Town Council approve the project — will help make that possible.

"I can't believe what they have done in a very short period of time," Peterson said of Nexcore Group. "They have condensed eight, nine, 10 months of work into about two."