



Stair-Stepped Design of Middle Creek Affordable Housing Project – Vail, Colorado

Letters to Vail

Vail Public Housing and Open Space Town Council Election Issues: Part Two: Community Housing Policy: October 4, 2023

Candidates for a seat on the Vail Town Council and those desiring to hold the position of Mayor and authority are invited to submit their qualifications and positions on the following issues to the Vail Homeowners Association for publication.

Does the Town of Vail community housing policy adequately address issues of design, diversity, equality and inclusion? If not, why, and what corrective actions should be taken?

From the earliest days, Vail relied upon market forces to benignly provide for the housing of locally working residents. At the time, large tracts of private land ripe for housing and commercial development lay west of Vail. Thus, worker housing was to an extent literally kicked down the road for nearly five decades. The ample supply of housing opportunity to the west of Dowd Junction is now lost to a succession of development booms.

Today expectations are forming for another speculative development boom. This time it is different, the depletion of available land up and down the Interstate 70 corridor is defining the limits to growth in the starkest of terms.

Inflated real estate prices combined with mortgage rates at a 20-year high are leaving the working middle-class out of the housing equation, either as renters or homebuyers. The combination of these factors influences the demand for worker housing. Relying on punitive corrective measures causes the community's pain threshold to become hyper-sensitive. The TOV has several workforce housing solutions in the works but, without businesses stepping up and helping solve the housing problem whether or not the TOV plans will be effective raises many questions.

Growth is being driven by bringing more and more business into the valley. The growth of employed-at-home workers is taking over housing once occupied by workers employed by local businesses. The TOV's inventory

of workforce housing is not entirely effective because it often accommodates workers who are employed elsewhere in Eagle County or are retired and able bodied. If this policy was reversed it is estimated there would be ample housing for businesses operating within the Town of Vail and on the mountain.

Filling jobs vacancies is not the sole purpose of community housing. The allure of Vail's mystique, attracts would be workers and transient residents who arrive without a clue of what it takes to survive locally. More frequently there are those who arrive with a sense of entitlement, that their irregular work ethic does not merit. It becomes a harsh reality for people whose expectations exceed their survival skills. Survival pressures can lead to despondency, mental illness and worse.

Vail is not the best place for a retired worker to grow old gracefully. Due to personal finances or health reasons, some seniors become isolated and trapped in their homes. Family members are held hostage to the availability of caregivers and responsiveness of supporting services. Services are needed to help relocate the infirmed and distressed. Similar circumstances confront the parents of adolescents which also appear as afterthoughts for services compared to budgets for other community economic programs.

The statistics collected by institutions involved with elder and child care predict an unsettling vision. Sharing of resources needed to keep pace with demand is putting a strain on the budgets of service agencies and institutions. Privately run child and elder care facilities are increasingly in need of subsidies. Raising taxes is a knee-jerk response and, in the long run is rarely in the best interest of the local population, no matter if they are renters, property, or small business owners.

VHA provides clear and concise discussions of matters affecting the Vail community in the belief that an informed citizenry will be an engaged citizenry. Our intent is to promote more citizen involvement and community discussions of issues facing the Town. If these are issues that concerns you, please make your views known to candidates and [town officials](#). By joining with VHA, as a member, paid-subscriber or reader, you can add your voice to sustain what is good about our community and to shine a spotlight on important issues. See back editions of VHA communications on the Association's website.

To receive VHA letters and reports as a Reader, Paid-Subscriber or Member.

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