

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Letters to Vail

December 29, 2022

Vail Council will hear the Evergreen Hotel appeal on the 3rd of January.



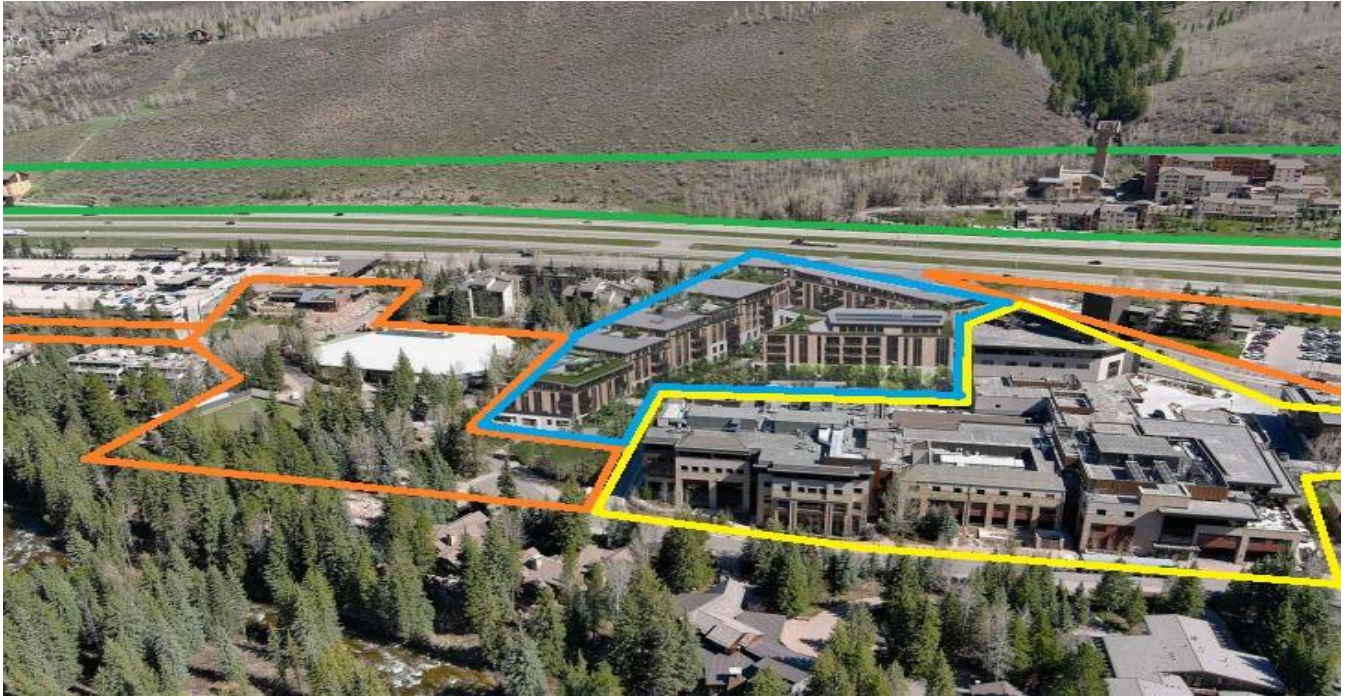
View of proposed Evergreen Building from South Frontage Road. Hospital parking structure with helipad on the left.

On January 3rd, the Town Council will hear an appeal of the PEC approval for the re-development of the Evergreen Lodge. The PEC approval was the culmination of a several-year project for the Lodge's re-development. The new property will be known as "The Evergreen." It is one part of what could be a major re-development of the entire center of Vail, including a new Civic Center, new municipal offices and an employee housing development on the north side of I-70. Details of the Evergreen follow, but it is important to realize that all together these projects could change the face of the Town and usher in another multi-million dollar building renaissance.

Momentum is already building in that direction. The Vail Health campus has just gone through a major re-development. Part of the West Middle Creek property on the north side of I-70 is in the completion process of being rezoned. The rezoning is to make possible employee housing and early child care on another portion of Middle Creek open space land on which affordable housing already exists on portions of the center and eastern end of the site.

A change in the master plan is a precursor to a zoning change. The rezoning will proceed once the amendment of master plan and conditional uses are agreed upon. And the Town has issued an RFP to begin the process of

creating a Town Civic Center. The Vail Cultural Alliance Group, a conglomerate of Vail's various cultural arts groups, has presented plans for a performing arts venue and museum. Further, the Town's sustainability study, Steward Vail, is about to be rolled out which will call for the creation of a multi-purpose community, civic and cultural center. The Evergreen will be a keystone feature of these projects. Collectively, these projects form the Vail Center.



Central Town of Vail. Proposed Civic Center and municipal buildings in orange; The Evergreen in blue; Vail Health Campus in yellow; Location of possible new employee housing in green.



The proposed Evergreen is central to Vail Health Campus and TOV HUB sites.

The Evergreen has had a long and somewhat checkered history. The current building was one of the last big buildings of Lionshead. When it was planned and built in the 1970s, it had a prominent role in a major Vail downsizing when densities overall were reduced by 30%. From inception its design was fraught with controversy because of its height, sterile appearance and lack of amenities. It was one of the last high-rise structures to be allowed before more restrictive height limitations were adopted by the TOV. Negotiations for its construction with the Town of Vail resulted in a 30% reduction in the number of dwelling and accommodation units allowed to be built on the site and for standard hotel services and facilities to be included in the development. A low-rise portion was built that included standard hotel operational facilities and amenities.

It opened during the recession that was triggered by the mid-1970s OPEC oil embargo and that hobbled its early years of operation. What, at the time, was a fringe location also limited its financial potential. To correct these shortcomings, the TOV put the Vail Civic Center proposal into practice with the development of the Dobson Arena and Vail Public Library. In 2006, there was a proposal to redevelop the hotel property which led to the approval of a structure that reflected Vail's alpine architecture, but that project never went forward.

Now new owners, the Solaris Group, have proposed another plan for re-development of the property. It proposes the complete demolition of the existing Evergreen Lodge, to be replaced with a new multi-family residential dwelling building with accommodation units.



Evergreen Hotel from West Meadow Drive.

The plans for the new building have undergone multiple PEC reviews. That is because its construction will require a Conditional Use Permit, setback and site coverage variances and deviation from the Architectural Design Guidelines of the Lionshead Redevelopment Master Plan. In the process of the reviews, there have been changes

from the original design but there is still controversy about the proposal. And that is what has sparked the appeal of the PEC approval.

The appeal is being brought by the Vail International Condominium Owners Association, ([See attached – Vail International appeal](#)) which borders the Evergreen property on the west. Its appeal raises a number of issues, ranging from the roof plan for the new building (a combination of flat and sloped roofs) to its non-alpine architecture, to the building’s mass and size, to its lack of amenities, to residential and traffic safety concerns of the building’s proximity to the hospital helipad.

The PEC approved the project by a 4 – 3 vote. Proponents of the project cite the buildings step down design and an architecture that blends mountain aesthetic with traditional alpine design. The design is employee housing and parking compliant, and the developers intend to seek LEED certification. Opponents cite the issues raised in the International HOA appeal and that this should be addressed as part of the overall town center re-development, not piece-meal. On the latter point, some say that the Council should either refer the project back to the PEC or delay approval to allow studying integration of the project with the Town civic center plan. Neighborhood concerns also include traffic and compatibility issues.

If these are issues that concern you, VHA urges that you attend the Town Council meeting on January 3rd and make your views known. It is through that process that the Council will know the concerns of the community.

VHA provides clear and concise discussions of matters affecting the Vail community in the belief that an informed citizenry will be an engaged citizenry. We intend to promote more citizen involvement and community discussions of issues facing the Town. If these are issues that concern you, please make your views known to [town officials](#). Public discussion of current issues by concerned citizens creates an environment to further community initiatives. We heartily encourage your input in shaping the road ahead.

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

Contact:

vailhomeownersassoc@gmail.com

Post Office Box 238 Vail, Colorado 81658

Telephone: (970) 331-2099 Email: vha@vail.net Website: www.vailhomeowners.com

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