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Workforce Housing

2 messages

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To: Darci Carlson <dcarlson@springdale.utah.gov>

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Dear Planning Commissioners -

When I sat on the Planning Commission years ago, we had what I feel is a similar hyperbolic discussion around parking in Springdale. Parking was an overblown emergency that we spent a lot of time on. The result was the creation of ordinances to solve that problem, however the end result was parking lots that then became nightly rentals.

The LaFave Luxury Rentals, The Bit and Spur, and the Feel Love Coffee complex were all once parking lots resulting from hyperbole. When the parking lots were built, they largely sat empty.

Workforce housing feels as though it may be headed for the same result. Of course some workers would like to live in Springdale, but at what cost? Many of the workers I talk with say that they don't want to live up here. They are happy to commute to a beautiful tourist town that provides them great pay and return to their home towns where they have a school system for their children to have friends with throughout high school, family support for daycare arrangements, grocery stores without tourist pricing, night life to meet up with friends, etc

Many of the waiters and busboys in town can bring in anywhere from \$400 to \$800 a night. An annual paycheck that allows them to purchase homes down canyon that are much more affordable. Look, I would love to own a home on the coast of Malibu, but I am not expecting them to make any concessions for me.

Any potential developer who has property would be crazy to build workforce housing and expect any kind of profit, making it highly unlikely for workforce housing to be built on valuable property. In the off chance that someone does decide to build workforce housing, will it turn in to the parking lot scenario of empty units that become nightly rentals?

I also feel that imposing higher density in residential zones that are not protected by HOA's is unfair to those different socio economic households. If it is not good enough for Anasazi Plateau, Canyon Springs, Claret Cup, etc., it should not be forced on anyone else.

As far as deed restrictions go, don't be fooled, they can be changed if both parties agree to do so. They are not iron clad.

If Zion National Park is having problems finding housing for employees, I do not think it is the responsibility of Springdale to solve that problem. In fact, it gives them little incentive to do anything if we continue to make solving their housing issues a priority.

Springdale is a town, not a city. With the amount of housing available through Redhawk, Moenave and the efforts of hoteliers who are providing a multitude of housing opportunities, we are way ahead of the curve. I would bet that no other town of this size has more housing opportunities for employees.

Incentivizing developers with higher density has mostly backfired and goes against the goals and objectives of the general plan as well as the wishes of residents. The fact that you are working on workforce housing with increased density and open space planning strategies simultaneously makes my head want to explode.

Please think carefully about any worst case scenario when considering the changing of ordinances or overlay zones to create a solution to a problem that may not be there, it has backfired on us before.

Regards -
Joe Pitti
