



# City of Boulder Housing & Human Services

March 6, 2019

Dear Ponderosa community,

I wanted to write a letter to go along with the newsletter this month. At the last RLC meeting there were many people there with good questions that we were able to answer. However, many people in the community were not there and I wanted to reach out to the whole community so everyone could hear some of these responses.

- 1) *Who in the community is this project at Ponderosa intended to serve?* The Ponderosa community was first established over sixty years ago. Many families and households have benefited from this community and many more will be served now and in the future. This project, like all affordable projects in the city is meant to serve families and individuals needing affordable housing for generations to come. As a result, we are designing and implementing this project with a lot of input from you, but also from the needs of our overall Boulder community and the future residents to live here for the next 200 years. As a result, this project will be in-line with principles of affordability, sustainability and community spaces that benefit the residents for years to come.
- 2) *When will we receive in writing from the city that we can stay in our mobile homes?* This has been given in writing several times. Just to name a few, the city council resolution that described a commitment to non-displacement of residents. Another is the Resident Guide where this is clearly defined. A more recent document is the Annexation Application made to the city on page 22. The point is that we have on multiple times stated at meetings and in writing that residents can stay in their mobile homes. The only possible exception, as we have also stated, is that there could be a small number of homes which may need to be moved within the property based on things like site drainage, detention of storm water or for infrastructure reasons. However, we will make all efforts to minimize or eliminate this. This letter stands as another document of the city's commitment for people to be able to stay in their homes.
- 3) *Why has the site plan changed from its original design that we saw?* The site plan has evolved in its design as we receive feedback from engineers in the city related to requirements for street design, site drainage, landscaping requirements, solar shading, fire and safety, and transportation requirements. We have to balance all these inputs with those that we have heard from the community. I can certainly understand the challenges with many of the changes that a new site plan design brings. The site plan is a document that balances all of these inputs as well as that of future families that will live in this community.
- 4) *Why are there so many duplexes on the site and why can't we all have a single-family home?* Over the past year we discussed different housing options. In fact, I was looking back at our first community meeting that presented first draft housing concepts, and duplexes were

included with single family detached housing. Each of the design workshops have discussed a variety of housing types and I looked at pictures yesterday of site designs from our community design workshop last year and both RLC members and community members were in the pictures, showing duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes in their site plans. The challenge has also been that the mobile homes in Ponderosa are currently too close together and that replacing them with homes, requires duplexes to be formed to allow for greater separation between buildings to create more useful open space. The new site plan will actually have more open space, which will include both private and public open space. The additional five units that are being introduced are being placed in areas of the site that currently do not have housing.

- 5) *When will we receive more information from Habitat as far as what the qualifications are?* Habitat will be presenting the financing requirements and options in later April or May. This will become more defined as progress is made on home designs. There will be options for homeownership as well as options for rent or rent to buy, based on the needs of various households. However, some people may not want to move into a Habitat home and wish to instead stay in their mobile home. It is also very important to realize that a Habitat home is a real commitment. Families wanting a Habitat home must be committed to homeownership, to working many hours to help build their home and stay committed to making affordable house payments. Habitat will be having education sessions on the financing approaches in a couple months.

Lastly, I mentioned in the meeting, our purpose on all projects in the city, including Ponderosa, is to use land wisely to be able to assist low income families that need housing in our community. While we work for the Ponderosa community, more importantly we work for the whole community of Boulder. We are tasked by the leadership of our city to provide housing by developing safe, healthy, energy efficient and well-designed communities for all our residents in need.

I hope that you will continue to ask these difficult questions, but I also hope that you will continue to engage in this process and discover the new site and imagine yourself in these places of green path ways, sidewalks lined in trees, a kitchen that looks out to a private garden, park areas along the creek and community spaces in your common house.

I would be happy to meet with you separately if further discussion would be helpful. Please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,

**Kurt Firnhaber**  
**Director of Housing and Human Services**