



ESTES PARK

# Trail Gazette

Estes Park's local newspaper since 1921

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

75 CENTS

FACEBOOK.COM/EPTRAIL

TWITTER.COM/EPTRAILGAZETTE

Volume 53, Issue 11

[eptrail.com](http://eptrail.com)

## PEAK VIEW

# Heated meeting about Peak View rezoning drew 60

By Patti Brown

[pbrown@prairiemountainmedia.com](mailto:pbrown@prairiemountainmedia.com)

The temperature outside as in the mid-teens Monday evening but the temperature in the Hondius Room at the Estes Valley Library was hot as more than 60 area residents confronted developer Frank Theis over his plans to put more than two-dozen homes on 7.62 acres along Peak View Drive.

Theis stood and then sat at the front of the room answering questions and hearing commentary about the land which he wants to have rezoned from E-1 to R-1 to accommodate a denser building plan.

Attendees pressed Theis on why he has not yet filed the for-

mal paperwork to request the rezoning and what his timeline plan is so they would better understand the window of time they would have to lobby the town administrators and council members to reject the rezoning request.

"I don't have a dog in this fight. I don't live in the neighborhood," said John Meissner, who then admonished Theis to place a formal notice in the paper about his intention to request rezoning. "Get an ad in the paper and make this official. This is the second time you have not done it. So show us that you are responsible," scolded Meissner.

"I'm serious, I'm just a bit older, okay," said Theis in an effort to make a joke about why he

HEATED » PAGE 4



A heated exchange between Estes residents and developer Frank Theis took place at the Hondius Room at the Estes Valley Library Monday night over Theis' plans to have property along Peak View Drive rezoned.

**Don't delay,  
sign our Petition today!  
[PreserveEstes@gmail.com](mailto:PreserveEstes@gmail.com)**



## Preserve Estes Park Concerned Citizens Group



<https://www.PreserveEstes.org>

## Heated

FROM PAGE 1

had not officially given notice for his request to rezone the property.

One man standing in the back of the room asked Theis if he was aware that a community petition had more than 300 signatures against his proposal to date. Theis said he was aware of the opposition but intended to pursue the rezoning and then the development of the property.

At several moments during the meeting, people got angry and at two different times, two women dramatically walked out of the room. One woman who had been recording the meeting on her cell phone threw a note pad and called Theis a liar. He reprimanded the crowd and told people to

behave nicely.

Several questions were raised about definitions of affordable and workforce housing and whether the homes that would be built on the property and whether or not these homes would fit the rubrics for workforce housing.

Theis told the attendees that he wanted to undersell the lots by as much as \$50,000 each below market value in an effort to make the properties affordable for people with incomes of \$100,000. His statement was met with chorles of incredulity.

One member of the audience asserted that no developer would walk away from \$50,000 on the table for every lot being proposed if the lots themselves were worth \$150,000.

Theis persisted that he was willing to do that. He said he would even be open

to a restrictive covenant on the properties so they would only be available to people who met the workforce criteria.

Scott Moulton, director of the Estes Park Housing authority was at the meeting and he provided answers to several questions people raised. Currently, a worker has to be employed in an Estes area business for 30-hours a week to qualify for designated workforce housing.

Moulton also responded to questions about the newly released 2023 Housing Strategic Plan and Needs Assessment.

Jed Eide questioned the findings of the 95-page study conducted by Root Policy Research which calculated that an additional 2,720 units of housing would be needed by 2030 to adequately meet the housing needs of the community.

Moulton affirmed that the information in the report accurately represents both the problem and the number of housing units needed.

A realtor sitting at the front of the room questioned that the price of the lots, plus the approximate cost of \$300 per square foot to build today would price homes at close to \$600,000, a price point out of range of the Estes Park workforce.

Theis suggested that affordability was dependent not just on the price of a home but on what a buyer could put down and how

much "help" they might be able to get, but he did not clarify who he expected to provide help.

Several people asked Theis questions about transparency and the closeness of his relationship with city staff and elected officials. He denied that he had been given insider information about the Peak View property when it was listed for sale, or that he has special access to town officials for influence.

Jeff Woerber, a senior planner with the Town of Estes Park's Community Development Department attended the meeting and provided some answers to general questions about process and procedures regarding rezoning. Woerber gave out the email address for the town planning department, [planning@estes.org](mailto:planning@estes.org) and said his department had received many emails on the rezoning matter.

Theis expects that he will file the necessary papers to request that the land on Peak View Drive be rezoned within the next few days and that there will be some additional meetings and public hearings before he receives approval by May.

Preserve Estes Park, a citizen group opposing his plan has organized a petition and email drive to protest the rezoning. Information about their meetings can be found at [www.preserveestes.org](http://www.preserveestes.org)