



Raring to go

City Council approval puts One Steamboat Place on fast track

By Mike Lawrence (Contact)

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — Jim Wells prepared a presentation for Tuesday night's City Council meeting, but he never got past the first slide.

The Steamboat Springs City Council approved the community housing plan for One Steamboat Place with a 5-0 vote that came before Wells even had time to dim the Centennial Hall lights to show his PowerPoint presentation. Wells is project director for the 80-condominium, resort-style development planned for a 4-acre site immediately adjacent to the Steamboat Ski Area's gondola building and Après Ski Way. The city approval process for the development had stalled because of City Council rejections of proposed housing plans in August and October, but Tuesday's approval kicked One Steamboat Place into high gear.

"We're ready to file a final development plan in early March," Wells said, adding that construction of the project will begin this spring.

Wells said his employer, Carbondale-based developers Timbers Resorts, is contracting with Haselden Construction of Centennial for construction of One Steamboat Place. The project is expected to take 24 to 30 months to complete.

"We hope to be completed by fall of 2009," Wells said before correcting himself.

"We will be done by then — there's no hope about it."

City Council members Karen Post and Loui Antonucci were absent Tuesday, but the remaining five members gave quick approval to a housing plan Councilman Towny Anderson said completely meets city housing requirements.

"This complies with every technical section of the city's (inclusionary zoning) ordinance," Anderson said. "I'm not sure there's much for us to discuss."

Timbers' previous two housing proposals asked the city to accept payments in lieu of providing affordable units within One Steamboat Place. The new proposal allows Timbers to build 18 affordable units at nearby Wildhorse Meadows as part of a joint venture with Wildhorse developers Resort Ventures West. Eighteen affordable units exceed the city's housing requirement for One Steamboat Place.

"I hope my colleagues agree that this proposal establishes a satisfactory threshold for community housing plans," Anderson said. "We should ask this of every applicant from here on out."

Councilman Ken Brenner noted that when combined with the 80 affordable units already approved at Wildhorse, the 18 units for One Steamboat Place will create 98 housing units on a parcel adjacent to The Tennis Center at Steamboat Springs.

"This is one of the most dense projects we have in town," Brenner said.

Before rejecting earlier housing proposals, some council members expressed a need for affordable units on-site at One Steamboat Place to ensure diversity and year-round residency at the ski base.

But Anderson noted Tuesday the city's current inclusionary zoning ordinance allows developers to meet affordable housing requirements with units off-site, provided the units are within city limits.

The approval ends months of meetings and revisions for Wells and Timbers Resorts.

"I think it was a good process," Wells said. "City Council was very clear on what they wanted, and they never really wavered. It was very fair."

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