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DEVELOPING

FEATURED

Residents reserved during community meeting

By Vicky Dorvee Editorial@LHVC.com Jan 31, 2019 Updated Jan 31, 2019



Boulder County Land Use planner Denise Grimm (far left) and interested 3rd Avenue residents and 2nd Avenue business owners listen to the presentation by Boulder County Land Use at Niwot High School Jan. 24.

Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Boulder County hosts discussion of proposed NRDC regulations

Residents of Niwot's 3rd Avenue were unusually quiet during the community meeting with Boulder County Land Use Department staff at Niwot High School on Jan. 24. The first pass at the Niwot Rural Community District I (NRCD) proposed changes to the Land Use Code had been emailed to interested parties on Jan. 18, which meant that specific proposed code updates had been digested to some degree prior to the meeting.

NRCD code provisions are of interest to the residents of 3rd Avenue because their homes abut the commercial area on 2nd Avenue that is in flux. Issues foremost on all parties' minds are use of the alley separating the residential and commercial zones, allowed uses of NRCD properties, setbacks, height restrictions, percentage of lot coverage, parking requirements and the architectural design of structures.

While the intent of the meeting was for county staff to explain the proposed code changes, to answer questions and to solicit input from all stakeholders, the lack of feedback from residents during the meeting was remarkable, especially compared to earlier meetings.

It may have been that residents felt more comfortable submitting their opinions on the provided comment sheets, through the county's website or directly to staff following the meeting. During the meeting, business owners and developers were more active participants.

Earlier in the week resident Jim Kalinski had written on behalf of his neighbors on 3rd Avenue. Kalinski proposed current revisions."

In the letter, Kalinski stated dissatisfaction with structures covered by structures, the lack of codifying how structures may be used, permitting newly developed structures the ability to have zero setback on the alley, allowing residential units versus commercial uses, and



Boulder County Land Use Director Dale Case stated the alley is not being addressed in the code as it doesn't fall under the regulatory process, because it will need to be funded and discussed separately in light of safety issues.

Satir DeMarco, a 3rd Avenue resident, said, "We did go through this and they did work a plan and the plan was no alley access." DeMarco was referencing an alley study done in 1996, which stated the alley access should not be allowed for commercial uses.

"You want everything," DeMarco said to commercial property owners and developers. "If you want it to look like Gunbarrel...that to me does not look appealing. It looks like I'm on the beltway in New York, every inch is filled. And how long are those businesses going to stay?"

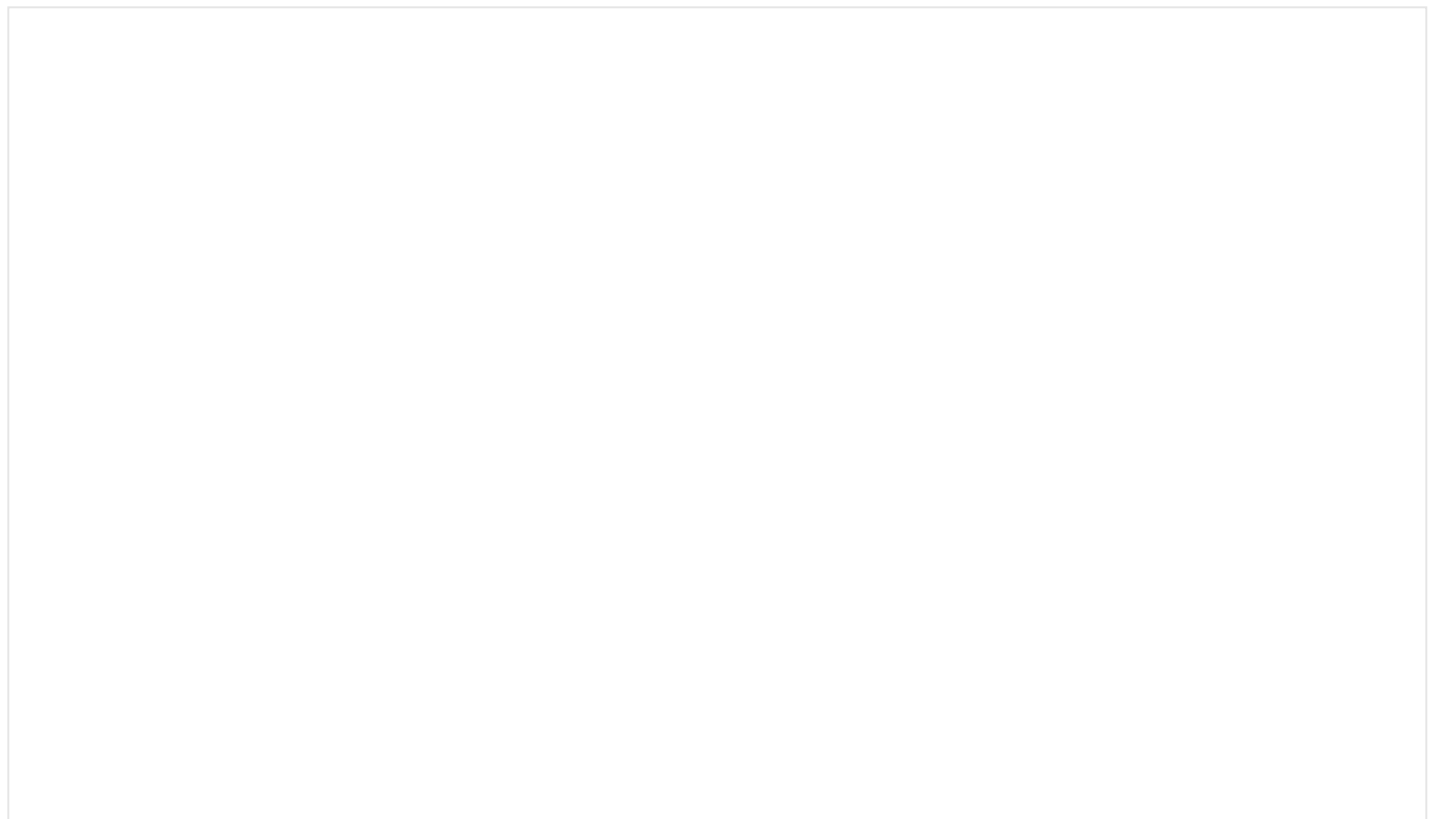
Elaine Erb, a 30-year Niwot resident, expressed support for developers to have larger buildings than the proposed code would allow on the block of 2nd Avenue between Franklin Street and Niwot Road.

“It’s useless space at the moment,” Erb said of the lots where Lefty’s Pizza is and where an empty dental office building sits. “It’s in part of town and town should feel like town. One of the reasons I’ve stayed here is that we walk to the bank, the post office, the grocery store. So I look at those as areas that are totally ripe for redevelopment and you’re making it extra prohibitive.”

Von’s Colorado Concepts, owned by Bob Von Eschen, is proposing a mixed use development on those two lots.

Bruce Rabeler, a 2nd Avenue Niwot business owner and 3rd Avenue resident said following the meeting, “The alley has always been the big issue for the neighbors and the setback is the second issue. I would like to see some clarification about those setbacks, because I think they’ve got a lot of ways to address that concern. I don’t think 3rd Avenue really has a strong opinion about lot coverage. My suggestion is I think you could try to make the 3rd Avenue folks happy with the setbacks and there could be a lot more density. “

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