

Good morning Commissioner -

I am writing today in regards to the proposal to turn Legacy Lodge into deed-restricted apartments for local community members.

With land at a premium in Teton County and a labor shortage that has a direct connection to our housing crisis, this opportunity to use an existing structure, with infrastructure including parking and a connection to our amazing bike path network already in place, is too good to pass up. Please offer your support to this project.

I have heard some residents of Rafter J are concerned that this chance would adversely impact their "community's character." To me, that speaks to a malaise that sickens and will kill our town: NIMBY-ism, or "Not In My Backyard"-ism.

We are all affected by the housing crisis, whether we have lived here for four generations or four months, whether we own several properties or are struggling month to month to make rent. Addressing said crisis with positive and proactive change only improves our collective character, by ensuring a diversity of residents, with the many talents, ideas, professions and passions they possess, can remain here to strengthen and add richness and depth to our community. (That, and plow our roads, teach our children, nurse our suffering, unclog our drains, stock our stores, treat our water, respond to our emergencies, etc...)

Denying folks from different socioeconomic backgrounds the chance to experience housing security because of concerns that they might bring "more noise" or "increased traffic" puts theoretical possibilities ahead of lived realities - which, to me, is unbelievably inhumane. It also shoots us ALL in the foot: at some point, there will come a day when this town is a shell of its old self, unable to regenerate and flourish as its younger, less-affluent members are forced out, existing businesses are forced to close due to lack of staff, and services are cut across the county because demand cannot be met.

There is also no guarantee that the Rafter J neighborhood will, in actuality, suffer because of any new arrivals Legacy Lodge might attract; those individuals stand to be people just like me, who simply want affordable, low-square-footage units to call their own so that we might lessen our crippling anxieties related to housing - and therefore be able to give back more fully to this town that we so dearly love.

We want to be the neighbor that lends you a cup of sugar... but we need a roof under which to store it first.