

Dear Westfir City Council:

I am writing in for my public comments for the special session being held on Monday, November 22, regarding the two development applications under review. I am writing in strong favor of their approval.

My husband and I were part-time residents of Oakridge for seven years, and made the full time relocation this past year. We had been trying to plan for how to make our livelihood in Oakridge, when there were already few job opportunities or options. We have believed in these neighboring communities to the point of investing everything we had, and then some, to make the transition; which included creating our own business The Middle Fork Bistro. Therefore, we have a vested interest in the community and in wanting to encourage other entrepreneurs who are willing to also invest here. We know this is an incredibly special place, with a lot to offer those who call it home, and with people who are deeply committed to caring for these communities. We also know that the Westfir/Oakridge communities have struggled ever since the single economic sector (logging) changed significantly; people lost their jobs, many left the area, and the towns were left without a healthy tax base. You are being presented with fantastic proposals to help ensure the current residents, and future generations, have more favorable outcomes.

I am sure that every participant in this special session has the same common goals: to strengthen the economy, provide better quality of life, and to build on the local assets. According to the EPA.gov article, "Smart Growth in Small Towns and Rural Communities," having smart growth strategies, such as what is being proposed tonight, "can help rural communities achieve their goals for growth and development while maintaining their distinctive rural character." The article highlights smart growth strategies as being those that: "encourage growth where businesses can thrive in already established areas and where families live close by. And by encouraging growth that protects the landscape, while providing recreation and attractions that bring investments into the local economy." When these strategies are implemented, and where opportunities for enhancing areas that already exist are given a chance to advance, it adds incentive for others to invest in the community as well.

The applicants proposing these developments are also the right people to incorporate these smart growth strategies. They have the momentum and focus to invest and create big enough opportunities for change, which will lead to opportunities for others to be able to build on their success. They are also community-minded and devoted to maintaining the character and distinctive community assets already here.

The business plans being presented, build upon existing assets, will strengthen the community, and will build long-term value. This is a huge opportunity for Westfir, and one in which will give the area another shot at what was once lost, but can be reclaimed. Please vote "yes" for our communities' futures.

Respectfully,  
Lindsay Compton