

# **Big Elk Meadows Board of Directors & Long-Term Planning Committee (LTPC) Complete Comments from the March 2022 Member Survey April 2022**

## **General Comments on The Long-Term Planning Survey**

We truly appreciate the great response from the community. We had 112 responses out of 166 members! This number represents about 67% of the community which is a great response. It is interesting to note that even though this survey does not represent all of our Members, we have been watching the results coming in on line and since we received 20 responses none of the responses have varied by more than 5% in either direction. The assumption here is, if we got the final 54 Members to respond, the final results may not be too much different. As you look at the results for each response you will see some questions that do not have 110 Responses. That may be because some members may not have chosen to answer a question or skipped a section by mistake.

We got some great comments and you can tell Members spent time coming up with valid and thoughtful questions. We have provided all the comments collected by our members in each category. In some cases, with a long response and multiple themes to a question we may have split it up to better respond to a specific point. We did not respond to every question or comment but typically, under each category you will find some questions or comments that are similar. You will see the LTPC comments in Bold under these questions.

Members also provided questions and comments that were out of the scope of the survey which the LTPC has not responded to, as we are not the Board. We will provide a copy of this Word survey summary to the Board.

We are aware this is a lot of information, but we wanted to ensure all who participated, that your comments were heard.

### **Key Themes**

This is the third survey conducted by the LTPC over the last two years and it is important to summarize some key themes we have seen.

In reviewing all the responses, it is clear there is a wide diversity in what members want and see as a vision for Big Elk Meadows. Some like the rugged, back-country feel and would not like to see any changes except for minimal expenditures required to maintain the status quo. Some feel that we have just finished a long flood recovery process and that we should now focus on maintaining what we now have. And then there are some that would like to see improvements to our overall infrastructure and recreational amenities that would preserve and improve the value of our community, which in turn could help raise the values of all individual homes within the Meadows.

These differing visions make the job of the LTPC and Board of Directors difficult at best in trying to keep the Memberships expectations fulfilled. With this in mind, we have tried our best to address some of the issues that you have brought to us through this survey. We are hopeful that with your continued help and support, we will be able to find a good path for our community.

At the end you will see comments that were more general in nature as well as a letter from Bill Tolle. We have added some comments where appropriate.

## Long Term Planning Revenue Ideas

**1. Allow 36 Acre Lot in Boulder County to be designated an open space area on which no residential building can be built in perpetuity for a potential income of \$35,000**

- 81% Yes
- 19% No

**Update to Survey received by Boulder County on 4/1/22 as presented in Town Hall Meeting 4/2/22 that may affect this option.**

- There were two key conditions to get TDC credits.
  - Eligible Building Lot of 36 acres
  - Does it have Legal Access
- My initial conversations with the Boulder County planner suggested we had both of these conditions. The planner we were working with saw access roads and we had 36 acres.
- In December we submitted as an application with a \$100 fee to verify, if this was true and have Boulder County how many credits we qualified for.
- In mid-March we found out our application was hung up as the check was lost.
- On March 22 Boulder County got a replacement check and started the process.
- **On April 1 we learned that there was a potential issue with this in that Boulder County will authorize this process, if the roads to access the lot are public roads. Since BEM Roads are private, the determination most probably will be that this option is not possible.**
- This option is probably off the table but if anything changes, we will let you know.

**2. Allow BEM to sell BEM land behind some member homes that would allow for expansion of their lots and provide revenue to BEM.**

- 84% Yes
- 16% No

**3. This question asked Members who own lots that could be expanded, if they would be interested in spending the money to expand their lot. The Not Eligible response are from Members that live in Boulder County, interior meadows lots or have land behind their homes that are not eligible to expand lots.**

- 54% Not Eligible
- 28% No
- 18% Yes

**LTPC Comment:** The yes response represents 20 members, who if all of them moved forward with purchasing BEM land behind their homes, might exceed the \$190K revenue amount that was forecasted, if only 10 Members moved forward as modeled in the survey question.

#### 4. Plat and sell one to three lots of BEMA land for construction of 2-3 new homes.

- 82% Yes
- 18% No

#### 5. Feedback and potential locations

- 71% Both Aspen Drive and Meadow Lake Drive locations are okay
- 14% Don't like either location
- 10% End of Aspen
- 5% Meadow Lake Drive

#### Comments on Long Term Planning Revenue Ideas:

##### Pro Comments

- These are great ideas that bring in revenue without impacting the character of BEM.
- In general, I am not in favor of selling off assets but these are good solutions.

##### Con Comments

- Completely unnecessary. We can bring our expenditures down considerably.

##### Answers to Comments or Questions

- I would vote to expand personal lots if the prices better reflected the going rate for land in the area or if the numbers were shown for each space. Is there a list that states how much each resident would have to pay to buy the BEMA land behind their home? - **Yes, this idea was reviewed with a couple of realtors and we have determined that the price for the lot would be based on the sq footage a Member wanted to buy and the type of land behind their lot. Below is a summary of what we presented at the 3-5-22 Town Hall Meeting:**

**Lot expansions would sell for an average of \$30K. Many of our lots are ½ Acres and the numbers below suggest extending their lot up to another ½ acres based on the following parameters:**

**\$.69 Cost per SF for ½ Acre would equal \$15,000 for rocky or vertical Land**

**\$1.38 Cost per SF for ½ Acre would equal \$30,000 for mix of rocky/vertical and buildable land**

**\$2.07 Cost per SF for ½ Acre would equal \$45,000 for more level land.**

**A second living area would be allowed on a single lot, only garages, sheds, single home expansion and septic systems per Larimer County and BEM HOA Architectural Rules.**

- All good ideas, but costs to proceed still seem vague. - **We could not put all of the info we had in the presentation but we have costs for everything outlined. You will see these costs in the Appendix to the April 2 Town Hall Presentation.**
- Instead of developing new lots, suggest having an annual fundraiser. There may be several members willing to donate a \$1000 per year. – **This may bring in some money but nothing like**

**the amounts these three options provide. If they are voted down, this could be something that may be considered.**

- If the options above are not approved by the membership, we should determine the amount of a special assessment to cover the expenses. – **We could but based on the survey, there is not a strong appetite nor ability for many Members to pay for a special assessment unless the item was absolutely such as an unexpected issue with the water system that our reserves could not address.**
- I voted 'no' on the first option regarding the 36-acre lot because I would think that we could sell the 36-acre lot for substantially more money and restrict the size and place of building on it. This was not addressed in the meeting and if I understood why this option has been rejected, I may be willing to change my vote. – **We cannot sell this plot as it includes key infrastructure including Sunset Lake, Dam and wetlands between Sunset Lake and the west end of Rainbow Lake. It provides a critical buffer on both sides of the Little Thompson which helps protect water quality.**
- What happened to the proposal to split lots next to the maintenance shed?? Why not split these lots also and push members to help pay for chip seal for the whole (or most of) subdivision? Allow roads to form their own plan/consortium to chip seal the street they live on?? Example: Split the costs of chip sealing Cedar drive. Split the road down the middle. If there are home owners on each side of the road, they split the cost of chip seal in front of their home/lot. Areas where there is only a home/lot on one side of the road and the other side is BEM common land, take the additional \$\$\$ from the sale of the lots by the maintenance shed and use that \$\$\$ to pay for the half of the road where there is not a home, i.e., common land. **GO BIG OR GO HOME!!! The lots next to the maintenance shed are rocky and would be difficult to provide a septic system so were not identified as potential buildable lots. Based on LPTC feedback most members were most concerned about the entry road due to bumps and dust. On the interior roads bumps are not as big an issue but dust may be in some areas. Some of the entry road ideas would provide ways to spray those roads to cut dust. The Board could address this idea but a community wide solution for addressing interior roadways would be preferable to individual members acting on their own.**
- Expansion of existing properties, and selling lots 1-3 on Meadow Lake and Aspen, however in fairness to Members directly adjacent to proposed lots should have first right of refusal on purchase since they will be the Members impacted by change. – **This is an interesting idea that has not been addressed before and will be brought to the Board's attention. We believe that if this idea was to move forward, that the lots would first be offered to BEM Members via a lottery type system and that the price would be discounted to offset the cost of relator fees**
- OK with the TDC option as long as there are NO restrictions on the property except that no dwelling unit can be built. Also, would there be any cost to this proposal for BEM? – **Perhaps a small amount for attorney fees and taxes. Estimates of cost are in the Appendix Below.**
- I would think they may require a Land Survey. OK with lot expansion idea. Seems like the cost for the survey corrections should be borne by those who want the lot expansion. – **Yes, that was the thought.**
- If there are boundary problems, seems like they would have to be settled before any lot expansion and not as each lot is expanded. Cost for boundary survey and plat adjustment could cost much more. – **In April LTPC members will be sitting down with Larimer County to review this process and see if there are any current survey issues.**

- To buy the credits at end of Hemlock--Do we have to buy 5 credits to protect the land? Or could we do just 2? – **The 36-acre lot gets us a minimum of 5 credits and possibly as many as 8. We will be meeting with Boulder County to clarify this. We do not buy credits they are given to us by the county for not building a home on it.**
- OK with the TDC option as long as there are NO restrictions on the property except that no dwelling unit can be built. – **Correct** Also, would there be any cost to this proposal for BEM? I would think they may require a Land Survey – **We don't think so but will check in our next meeting with Boulder County.**
- Selling the lots on Meadow Lake Dr.--You would be building in a "chimney" that if there was a fire in that area the flames will go straight up that chimney and prevent anyone from escaping our valley. It is a hazard and that is why no homes have been put there. – **Part of the reason this was not built on before is the old entry road came down in this area. There are similar situations like this in BEM from a fire perspective.**

#### Out of Scope Comments

- Please audit the books and look at reducing the amount paid in salaries.
- Reduce hours and benefits of office staff member who limits office hours to members.
- Reduce staff hours and excessive benefit costs provided to staff
- We need an outside, third party, audit first!
- Do not want large homes in Boulder County.
- Reduce the number of employees. BEM is not a town. The need for full time office support, for example, needs to be examined carefully.
- Raise assessments to market value

### Entry Road Questions

#### 6. Is the current condition of the entry road an issue for you?

- 64% Yes
- 36% No

#### 7. Please rate your interest in upgrading it to smooth out bumps and reduce dust, 5 is highly interested 0 is Not interested?

- 5 Rating 34%
- 4 Rating 21%
- 3 Rating 22%
- 2 Rating 6%
- 1 Rating 9%
- 0 Rating 8%

#### 8. Please let us know your biggest area of concern

- 67% Bumps/Washboards
- 15% I don't mind the current condition of the entry road
- 12% Dust
- 5% Mud after rain/snow
- 1% Other put comments in the section below

**9. If upgrading the road did not involve a special assessment, and could be paid for with some combination of the revenue generation options, would you be in favor of this upgrade?**

- 83% Yes
- 17% No

**LTPC Comment:** Even though only 65% of the members think the entry road is a problem for them based on the question above, 84% of the members would be in favor of this upgrade, if they didn't have to pay for it.

**10. If the revenue generation ideas brought in some but not all the money required to upgrade the entry road, is there a dollar amount you feel you would pay in a one-time special assessment in order to get this done? Please pick the amount you feel most comfortable with:**

- 30% \$500. (This equates to 33 Members)
- 30% \$250 (This equates to 33 Members)
- 25% Nothing
- 15% \$100 (This equates to 17 Members)

**(LTPC Comment:** Based on the survey we understand that some Members don't want to pay for the entry road or may have limited financial resources even if they wanted to. However, 75% of the members said they would be willing to pay something for this. This section shows that if we don't get the full amount for the entry road, that some Members feel this is a big enough issue they may be willing to help subsidize \$26,450 of the cost via a special one-time donation.)

**Comments on Entry Road:**

Pro Comments

- Very important.
- I think this is a great idea.
- In favor of Chip Seal
- Not sure why we need to pick a primary area of concern as they are all good reasons for upgrading the road. Not sure where the 1.8 mile ends but would suggest we upgrade the road all the way to the office.
- We should keep all options on the table and not be afraid to propose a special assessment if 67% of members do not agree on the very well-researched and viable alternatives.
- We appreciate your time and energy on this.

Con Comments

- I'm concerned that change in climate will bring about more 100-year floods. I don't mind the condition of the road and consider it a minor inconvenience for getting into rural area homesite. However, I do want to make sure it doesn't deteriorate from its current state.
- Amenities would be higher priority
- As much as I dislike the bumps, etc., we made the choice to live here knowing that the roads were dusty. We live in the mountains!

- See comments on Speed below

#### Comments on Speed

- The nicer we make the road the faster people drive and the more accidents we have.
- Speed
- People have issue with a better road allowing faster speed.
- If there was better observation of the speed limit enforced this would not be an issue.
- It's a safety issue, too. Hard to stop even at 20 mph.
- Speed bumps.
- People drive too fast already. Better road equals faster driving, and that's the worst outcome.
- It's a dirt road you live in the mountains. Slow down- **Speed is an issue on CR47 as it is on our entry road. If we upgrade the road some Members may elect to drive faster on the entry road. We may need to look at ways to reduce speed such as speed bumps or develop a campaign to ask Members to slow down.**

#### Maintenance Comments

- I am ultimately interested in saving maintenance and machinery costs due to constant work being required on road.
- The thing that would move me is seeing how much we could save by reducing maintenance and I didn't see that in the prestation. or maybe I missed it? – **This is a good point. If we seal the road, we will not need to use the road grader on the road except for every few years potentially extending its life. If we chip sealed the road and did not do dust control on our interior roads, we could sell our water truck. Both options save a lot of staff time grading the road.**
- The entry road MUST be fixed but in such a manner that it can be maintained after it is fixed. – **The LTPC plan looked at a 40-year cost to maintain the sealed or chip seal road and that would be in the budget.**
- Back 10 years ago or more, a motion was made to always have \$10,000.00 in the budget so the manager had money to bring in "road base" yearly therefore maintaining the roads. I know what the flood did, but?? – **BEM has a road base budget and is spending between \$7 to \$8K a year on Road Base. About \$5K of that gets put on the entry road.**
- We would like to see the cost analysis of the following 1. Maintenance of the existing and 2. Improvement options. – **As stated above about \$5K a year is spent on the entry road. Sealing and Chip sealing the road are best but there are interim steps the LTPC has provided the Board which include, on one time pull to pay for more road base for the entry road to add about 1" to the road, buying a low cost roller for the grader that will compact the base and should make is smoother for a while.**

#### Comments On Improving the Entry Road from the Y

- Are you proposing repairs to the entry road from the Johnny Park-BEM "Y" to start of BEM property @ private/ no hunting sign, east of "needs to be reinstalled" gate @ sand shed/dumpster? Why would BEM improve USFS/Larimer County Road? - **Yes, we are proposing from the Y to Mirror Lake if there are enough funds. If not, we could do something less. It is .8 of a mile from the Y on Forest Service Land to our lot line. We did ask the Forest Service to contribute but they said they will only do this if the road leads to a location that can be accessed by the public.**



- Current condition of the road keeps traffic speed down. Upgrading the entire road to being of similar condition to County Road 47 will not have a potential deterrence effect on casual people traveling along CR 47 to see just where it leads. In other words, people who have who have no idea where they are.
- If the whole road gets paved, I would want the gate put back up to keep people out. I think the dirt road at the fork for Johnny Park with the private property sign keeps out a lot of people who can't imagine a whole neighborhood and lakes down that road. I think more people will wander down to our neighborhood if it is paved-it Will look more inviting.
- Do not chip seal the first section to the horseshoe, then chip seal thereafter. That way when the yokels who come down Cr47, they will not see a paved road and want to drive on our road. - **To address this, it would make sense to put better signage at the Y as the road leads to private property and then when the gate is back up, we won't have so many people coming into the Meadows. Upgrading the road could not be done for at least 2 years until we got the revenue in and by that time the entry gate should be back up.**

### Comments On Interior Roads

- As for road conditions and drainage, I would much rather focus on the terrible drainage conditions on Hickory which have not been properly addressed. – **Upgrades to the drainage could be done with leftover funds if BEM Members approve the revenue ideas.**
- What about improving the interior roads instead? **In the survey in April 21 the entry road rated higher by the members. On the interior roads the speed limit of 10 mph is much slower than the entry road. Dust is the biggest issue. One of the things we would like to test is spraying a solution on the interior roads that will cut the dust but it will not last as long as the entry road which would be sealed. Paying to seal all roads is costly and at this point, is beyond the budget we have identified.**

### Charging a Toll

- Charge a toll on the residents and designate the revenue toward repairing and improving the road. This would be a per use issue. The majority of the road to use is the responsibility of the majority of the users.
- I'm part time so we don't use the road that often. I understand that the full timers are a concern for them as it would be for me as well if I lived there full time, but we do not. So, the road is tolerable for as little as we use it to BEM. Utilize a wheel tax for the full timers to generate money for road maintenance. This would be no different than the part timers who pay for water maintenance year-round, but only have water consumption during the open season and in which their cabins are closed for the winter. – **Not sure how we could charge a toll this road is for everyone's benefit in case of emergency, deliveries and other items. It is a shared requirement by all. A part timer who buys in BEM understands they have to provide a % of the costs for a shared water system and roads.**

### Chip Seal Comments

- I question how long the options really could last. There is a small portion of chip seal left as you get to the top of the “shelf road” — the long straight part up from the Y. They have to have cracks treated every year from what I've seen elsewhere. – **The section you are talking about was done with recycled asphalt over 20 years ago as a test by the Board. An example of a chip seal road is Larimer CR – 47 which outside of being carried away by the flood in some places has held up very well or many years.**



- As mentioned in the presentation, Drainage is the biggest issue with the road. I think another option that should be presented is to initially resolve and upgrade the drainage with properly designed and located culvert system along with improved roadside ditches. This still remains a big issue within the Meadows also. – **Before we would improve the road, we would fix the drainage. One of our Members, Pat Sorenson, is a Civil Engineer and has done a preliminary study of where culverts would go. This was in the budget presented for the sealed and chip seal road.**

#### Other Ideas to Fix the Road

- A couple of weekends, of work days, involving BEM equipment and personnel, a plan to rip the rock from road. Using loader with ripper, larger rocks, moved to side by machine, smaller rocks moved by volunteers. BEM grader and dump truck can haul topping and crown road in areas.
- The bumps in the road are mainly large rocks that would need to be blasted off the road.
- Knock off tops only of big/high rocks above surface of road with road grader's rip teeth [on back of grader], bulldozer, explosives, or? + add road base only to areas prone to develop washboard. – **These were interesting ideas not previously discussed. In the past we have used the Grader ripper and Track Loader to try to get boulders out of the road but it only gets boulder that are up to 2' around. Most of the rocks are much bigger. Blasting is very expensive and best suited for putting in drainage or water lines. Another option is to use a jack hammer attachment on an excavator but this is a long process. We ran this idea by a of road building expert and they he this would not produce the best results. If you do this, we will lower the crown on our roads and make drainage worse and then you will have an endless supply of rocks coming up over time and after more grading. They felt the best idea would be to raise the road with road base by 4-6" seal it and which will provide a much better surface and drainage.**

#### Other Comments

- Please do not ask for a special assessment with inflation at 40-year high levels and the impact of the pandemic still hitting many. – **We hear you and we have done everything possible to try to do this at a cost neutral basis for our Members.**
- If equipment is not capable of being used for maintenance and upkeep, I'd suggest selling it and applying to road project monies. Rental of equipment is much more economical, than maintaining old equipment. – **The Board is looking to do that now there are three pieces of equipment that may be sold.**
- Please stop using whatever equipment makes the grooves between Johnny Park and BEM. – **Not sure what this means?**
- Also understand that the person using the grader needs an education on running such a machine. If the fancy stuff was put on the road, most of the road base would be removed by the grader within two years. We did patches of road base from ground asphalt and those didn't last 2 years. Because it was done in patches made it hard for the grader so everything got torn up easily. – **The proposal to upgrade the entry road by sealing it with a Polymeric material means would only have to grade it every 2-4 years depending on how long the sealing material works or if we chip sealed the road, we would not have to grade it at all.**

#### Out of Scope Comments

- A trained road maintenance worker could easily keep our road in top shape.

- Hate to pay for anything when I hardly ever see our employees ever working on the road as it is. Who knows how it could actually be if our employees actually learned how to properly use our equipment and not create most of the washboards due to human error.
- We need an audit of our finances first!
- Staff do a great job with what they have to work with.
- I am concerned about bumps, dust and mud and don't believe I should be requested to prioritize between the three. (This is a comment about survey design, not substance.)
- 500 x 164 is \$82,000 which is not going to go very far at all, why not ask for higher?
- The washboards are created by our employees. It's operator error. I'd pay additional funds to have someone who did the road maintenance correctly. Until then, I'm not interested in donating more funds to BEM when there has been no audit of our books. We do not have employees that care about the Meadows. The current Board has spent money unconscionably with zero regard to the homeowners.
- I think it is important to have an experienced and qualified grader operator for road maintenance. Many years ago, we hired such a person to use our grader to maintain our road on a 4-to-6-week schedule. It made all the difference when he was able to keep the road base on the road and out of the ditches or sides of the road. Look at all the material on the sides now that could be used on the road. There is an art and a skill to use the grader in the right way. I don't think that Paul and Dustin have that skill level.
- We pay maintenance staff to maintain the roads. The staff should work harder/better. Period. If the staff would do their job the road would be constantly kept graded and repaired.

## Tennis Court Questions

### 11. How much might you donate via Friends of Big Elk to Resurface the West Tennis Court?

- 34% No Donation
- 30% \$100. (This is 33 members totaling \$3,300)
- 23% \$250. (This is 26 members totaling \$6,500)
- 9% \$500. (This is 10 members totaling \$5,000)
- 2% \$1,000 (This is 2 members totaling \$2,000)
- 2% \$3,000 (This is 2 members totaling \$3,000)

**LTPC Comment:** Even though the cost to upgrade the court is \$38K it seems based on this survey that if we get formal pledges from Members to pay \$19.8K (53%) of the cost, that the remaining \$18.2K cost might be picked up by BEM out of our reserves.

### 12. What should we do East Tennis Court?

- 49% Remove and return to Meadow
- 30% Cut off Posts and fencing and leave as is
- 21% Other, Comments Below

### Comments on Tennis Courts:

#### Pro Comments

- Yes, this is an important amenity!

- I think that a crumbling wreck of a tennis court will diminish the whole feel of the Meadows area - and the neighborhood. It will send the message of a deteriorating neighborhood. Thank you so very much for your work on this!
- I do not know what pickle ball is, but many people play tennis.
- I think this is an important project. The court is one of the first things those potential buyers see when they come into the Meadows. First impressions are very important and I think our property values depend on it.
- Thank you so very much for your work on this!
- I use the tennis court more than the pool. Are you looking at the pool as a way to reduce expenses?
- Would love to have a functioning tennis court.
- We would give \$3,000 towards a new tennis court.
- Thanks for all of your hard work on this-we appreciate it!

### Con Comments

- I simply don't believe the "majority" of our members have interest in the courts. The ones who actually want to play can easily play somewhere else! Tennis courts don't raise value in Big Elk, it's the peace and privacy that contributes to home values in Big Elk. Definitely NOT more homes and people!!!!!! Hiking, Fishing, Privacy, and exclusivity are what make Big Elk special.
- Don't care. Don't use it and don't want to pay for it.
- A complete waste to build outdoor tennis courts in our climactic zone.
- The Road is more important at this time.
- You live in the mountains this is not a country club.
- Refurbishment of the west court should be paid for by sales of the lots in the previous section. Those who want to play tennis or pickle ball, should have to buy a badge, as fishermen do, to help finance the ongoing maintenance of the court. – **There are a number of comments about having the people that want to use it pay for it. Based on the survey results if Members donated what they suggested they might that is 50% of the cost. The rest coming from BEM reserves will preserve this amenity so that when other members go to sell their homes it will more overall appeal for a new buyer.**

### Comments on One or Two Courts

- A couple of thoughts. If the decision is made to remove and return to meadow, make sure and do it right so it looks first class and could be used for other recreational activities such as croquet, playing catch on a smooth playing surface for rolling ground balls, etc. If the decision is made to cut off the posts and leave it as is, consider moving the volley ball court from its mostly unused location (returning it to grass) and doing minimal caulking and painting so it is an actual volleyball court.
- Find a way to resurface both courts over a three-to-five-year period. Having both courts function is part of our recreational facilities and our recreational facilities impact our property values.  
Resurface both courts!
- Fix both courts
- Don't cut off the posts just leave it like it is.

- Leave the fencing up for now and leave as is. Keeping as is will be a good reminder to refinish the second court. I would like to see both courts refinished.
- Leave the east court as is. When west court is being used or there is a large group, people still use the east court for serving practice or other activities.
- I recommend we fix both courts. Big Elk should not go backwards in its accommodations in general. HOA should budget for maintenance of resources. The useable lifespan of an asset is well defined. Why doesn't the Board have expiration and replacement costs built into our fees? If upgrading the entrance road saves maintenance costs in the long run then it falls as an investment. If it costs us more to maintain the higher quality of surface in the long run then this is an improvement that should not take place because we can't support our current infrastructure as it is.
- Every time we visit BEM, no one is playing tennis. So, one court should suffice the playing demand. – **A number of people have mentioned that the condition of the west court including the fencing makes them not want to play. We think usage will increase after the upgrade.**
- With the BEM equipment, the removal of one court should have a minimum cost.
- The east court would be an eye-sore if we just left it as it is.
- Leave as is so we wouldn't have to replace fencing and the resurfacing would have a base. Don't cut off posts and don't remove fencing. That is if we were possibly going to add a court in the future.
- Another possibility would be to remove the current court and then groom the ground to create a dirt court. These are a common type of court and may be an option to consider

**If you consider the condition of the East Court compared to the West Court, the surface is in much worse shape. We went to two different companies to get bids to resurface them. One said both courts were too far gone and would not provide a bid and the second said they would only bid the West Court. Given this, if BEM wanted to put in a second court the extra cost would be a minimum of \$76K for an asphalt court or \$105 for a cement court in addition to the \$35K to fix the West Court. Given the response from the Members and the actual usage it is not viable to rebuild the second court at this time; however, we do appreciate Members' concerns that by removing one court it is easy for the community to forget we have historically had two. We would urge the Board to consider a long-term solution for rebuilding the East Court over the next 5-10 years assuming usage picks up on one court. At this time, we have two options for addressing the dilapidated appearance of the East Court: 1. return the court to meadow or 2. cut off the post and leave the base as is. The Board will have to make the final decision based on Member feedback. We researched dirt courts and nobody does these here.**

#### Comments on what to do with the East Court

- Bocci ball court would be fun.
- Construct Bocci Ball and/or Shuffle Board courts over east court
- Make it into a basketball court.
- More interested in a pickle ball court than tennis court
- Dedicated pickle ball on east court
- The east court would be an eye-sore if we just left it as it is.
- Leave east court alone; posts, fences, etc. Fix both courts

- put in a shuffle board court or two
- Leave as is. No need to cut of posts.
- Wildflowers would be very nice in its place.
- I would also like a basketball hoop put in at the new tennis/pickle ball court.
- The east court should be left as is and refurbished as badge funds allow.
- Spend the \$35k on something that benefits all, instead of a select few. Turn East court into multi-use area- shuffleboard, bocci ball, croquet.
- For the east court, I prefer to play outdoor racquetball that requires 3 concrete walls and would easily fit in the east tennis court space. This would open up new exercise opportunities in BEM and appeal to a wider group.

**Please read the answer to the question above first. The East Court has so many heaves and ruts it is not a playable surface. We had a suggestion from a third party that the surface could become hard surface and fenced so that a community garden could be put on top but many thought that was not a popular idea. So many of the ideas above just don't work in this location like shuffle ball, basketball. Regarding Bocci Ball the better place may be someplace next to the horseshoe area. Typically, Volley ball is done on the ground or sand so that is not a good use unless the court is removed. The West Tennis Court will be lined for two pickleball courts so if no one was playing tennis you could have two parties playing pickleball. Perhaps we could line the tennis court for shuffleboard on one end.**

#### Comments to do with the Maintenance of the Courts

- The maintenance staff has equipment, we do not need to hire outside contractor to do ALL of the work, our highly paid staff can do the majority of the work. Part of the reason for the poor condition is the constant 'lack of maintenance'
- Tennis courts should be a part of our budget on an annual basis. They have always been a part of our community and to eliminate or neglect the regular maintenance and upkeep on them is a travesty.
- There are members, that have knowledge of maintaining and operating equipment.
- Just do regular maintenance. Remove weeds and fill the cracks. Deferred maintenance is the primary issue with tennis courts failing
- Current amenities should be maintained and in usable condition. This should be a planned expense and never go away because we did not maintain for a period of time. Funds should go to maintaining prior to improving.

**The last time the court was resurfaced was in 2004 which was paid via a special assessment. Normally a court is resurfaced every 8-10 years and we are well past that. 90% of new courts are built with a concrete base. Ours is Asphalt and it will get cracks no matter what we do. There have been some attempts to patch the cracks but we have not used the right products. We now know what products to use and will do that in the future. There has been no specific budget to maintain the tennis court or resurface it every 10 years. Based on our work, the LTPC has provided the Board with amounts to budget for both and we know which products should be used to patch the court when it gets cracks, which it will in the future.**

### Other Comments on the Courts

- Get better bids, the courts (WE NEED TWO) should not cost 35K. - **We spent over a man month researching all the options and got over 12 bids for various different options including plastic covered courts. We were as surprised as you regarding the cost but that is what it will take to resurface one court and put in new fencing. One company refused to surface the west court another company gave us what I believe is a competitive quote for the surfacing. We also got a couple quotes to replace the fencing. If the BEM Board decides to move forward, they will see, if more bids can be received. It is envisioned, if the Board approved, BEM employees could take out the east court.**
- We had concrete courts for a long time and they were just fine – **The courts we have are and asphalt based and as such are prone to cracking as they have and will continue to do. Only post tension concrete courts should not crack outside of hairline cracks and will last for many more years.**
- I think that the Board should develop a financial plan designed just for recreational activities such as the tennis courts, pool, and the park with the shelter. It would be like the \$10000.00 that needs to be put back into the budget for the roads. – **The BEM Board Finance committee is working on a longer-term budget for all of these shared amenities.**

### Out of Scope Comments

- We need an audit first from an outside, third party, of our finances!
- I believe the community would be more willing to pay for a special assessment for these improvements if we had a genuine audit, rather than the excuses upon excuses as to why we don't have one. Audits are recommended every three years, yet here we are with zero completed audits. It's unfortunate for the community because, of course we want improvements. We just have no faith that we are being given accurate accounting information.
- Same goes for stocking of fish in our lakes. We budget less than in many years past and with the cost of fish going up, we end up with much less fish per pound. This amount needs to be adjusted per inflationary trends. I have been coming to BEM since 1978 and have been a member since 1988. Get in line with maintaining our fishing stocking with where it was 30 years ago. i.e. 8,000 worth of fish in 1980 does not equate to 8,000 worth of fish TODAY!!
- Another note, there is a lawn mower at the equipment shop, it has been in the winter weather. Surely room could have been made, in the equipment shop, for equipment that is affected by weather.

### **Bill Tolle Submitted the following Letter to the Membership (LTPC Comments in Blue)**

These comments are in response to Presentation and Survey issued on March 5, 2022 and delivered by Curt Loomis on that date. I would first like to thank Curt and other members of the Long-Term Planning Committee for all the effort put into providing this report. It demonstrates a strong desire to keep everyone happy and provides some new and innovative options. Unfortunately, it only addresses a few of the long-term issues confronting Big Elk Meadows. Nonetheless, I would endorse elements of the specific recommendations contained in the report with the following comments to be given further consideration by the Committee and Board.



**1. Selling BEM Common land by Replating areas at the lower end of Aspen Drive and to the south of Meadow Lake Drive to generate and sell 1 to 3 new Lots.** Actually, this was part of a plan developed about three years ago - but never presented to the Community. This recommendation should be implemented by retaining a Professional Surveyor/Engineer to work with BEM and the County. It seems logical to actually do this work and even consider expanding this Engineering effort to identify and replat as many new Lots as practical at these locations. (There was some excellent early work done by Bill and the LTPC on this but based on the survey last year, few members wanted many lots platted at this time, so we never presented the plan to plat 30-40 lots to the Membership as we did not feel this would get a 67% vote from all members which would have been required to proceed. Even platting up to 8 lots as suggested in last year's survey was a hard sell, however the idea of only platting 1-3 at this time, in the current locations, seems palatable based on the new survey results above. Bill is right, if we have major expenses in the future like needing to put in a water treatment plant, which is discussed below, selling many more lots would be the best way to pay for it, assuming Members would not want to pay a very large Special Assessment.)

**2. Selling BEM Common Land directly behind existing lots to the current Owner/Members under a Larimer County procedure called "Amended Platting Process."** Based on the drawing provided in the Presentation there would be about 84 current Owner/Members eligible to take advantage of this program - restrictions would be imposed prior to sale and recorded in the property title. Little is reported on what the restrictions would be and it is suggested maybe 10 Owner/Members would take advantage of the offer generating \$185,000. If all of the 84 current Owner/Members participated it would generate \$1,554,000. Issues would include getting Surveys done, administration of title work and controlling subsequent uses of the property. We need to think through and establish BEM Controls before taking this on. (The LTPC has thought through a number of controls which would be presented as part of the ballot questions, if this makes it to the ballot.)

**3. Agreeing through a Boulder County arrangement called the "Transferable Development Credit (TDC) program** to place approximately 36 acres of BEM Common Land under a non-developable condition that would be controlled by the County. Initial reaction - we need to see specifics of the program and should not include the area covered by and below Sunset Lake under any such agreement - it could give Boulder County a level of control we might later regret. Apparently, this opportunity has been discussed with Boulder County but according to the "Website" explaining the program - "You must have a legal building lot with legal access, and you must agree to keep your property vacant or restrict the residential square footage on the property to 2,000 square feet or less." Is the 36 acres a legal building lot? Does the Sunset Reservoir Area and the Wetlands Area below the dam actually qualify as Legal Building Lots? It appears from Maps included in the Presentation that if those areas are included - then Boulder County is bending their Rules. Be careful. (The LTPC has had 3 conversations with Boulder County and they have told us our lot is a legal building lot with legal access. Sunset Lake, Dam and wetlands are included in this 36-acre lot. The only thing we give up if we elect to do this program, is we or any future land owner of this lot, cannot build a habitable home on the 36 acres for perpetuity. We will be meeting with them one more time to check again.)

It should be noted that the generation of funds by these means is intended to be used to (1) build a better "entry road," (2) a new "tennis court," and (3) pay down debt - all needed and ranked high in our previous Survey.



For the record - I served on the LTPC for about six years and dropped off about a year ago when it became obvious that our previous efforts were being abandoned or at least radically modified. I am (or was) a registered Professional Engineer who worked for the Denver Water Department for 25 years; including 6 years as Director of Engineering & Construction and retiring as Deputy Manager of the Department. One of my early assignments was to coordinate our Staff and the outside firm of Black and Veatch Engineering through studies and preparation of a "Comprehensive Plan - 1962 to 2010 - for Expansion of the Collection, Treatment and Delivery Systems." That plan was pretty well followed and still serves the Denver Metropolitan area. It would be nice if BEM had a similar plan. So be assured that I have significant experience - and let me continue with some observations and suggestions.

- You should carefully study the three Funding recommendations - modify as necessary - and, implement if appropriate. Yea - positive movement for BEM.
- You might want to reconsider the "Reducing Debt" recommendation Depending on how this debt is structured, it would probably be to BEM's advantage to retain current debt because of pending inflation and raising interest rates. It should be apparent that we have some other pressing capital improvement obligations not addressed by this report.
- For example, a major opportunity not discussed in this report is a "Water Supply Planning Study" for the Little Thompson. A draft memo that was prepared about two months ago covering this subject and is attached for your review. Basically, BEM can probably get Colorado State funding to do such a study that would answer the question - "what to do with our Canyon Lake Conditional Storage Decree." Pat Sorenson and Mike Applegate are key to this effort. Hopefully there would be little, if any, initial funding required from BEM. Do it.
- The Committee and Board should revert to some of the previous thoughts about expanding Lots within our Common Land holding to generate Capital Improvement and Operating funds. Early platting for BEM included 207 Lots. Currently we have 164 cabins/dwelling units with maybe 7 to 10 of the existing vacant Lots are buildable but currently not planned "for sale." We could reasonably add 30 to 40 lots within our common land that are close to existing utility services - and most would not distract current visual amenities. Ballpark - we would be adding \$6 to \$10 Million to capital funds and \$95,000 to \$125,000 per year to our operating budget. More important - YOU could set back a plan for a 1st Class Mountain Community - rather than spending Board meetings discussing what the minutes did or didn't cover. Attached is a drawing of a proposed "BEM Highlands Sub-division" that we could reduce the size and double the number of lots to be added. A number of good sites exist.
- You might also want to consider our need to improve and update water treatment plant (approx. 30 years old) and more important we need to do a professional job inspecting and improving the individual septic systems in the community. When drought conditions hit, we will be more dependent on our Surface Water/Mirror Lake supply and Sanitation **is even more important.**

(The LTPC has identified the two biggest potential, got to have, long-term costs to BEM Members are replacement of the water treatment plant and the potential for State or County officials requiring us to put in a water treatment plant. Regarding the water treatment plant, we just checked with the company that is maintaining it and even though it is at its original End of Life time, they believe it has 20 plus years before the filtration system needs to be replaced and the BEM Finance Committee is working to plan for this as part of the capital reserve, however due to the large cost and no guarantees as to when it fails, there could be a request for a Special Assessment if it did not last that long. Because of this the LTPC has suggested that any left-over funds from the 3 revenue producing ideas are not used to pay down debt but put into our capital reserves.

Regarding the water treatment plant this would be very expensive for BEM residents. Currently residents are required to provide proof every four years that their septic system is working effectively. So far, we are not seeing evidence of leakage of effluents into the lakes but as Bill suggests, it would be prudent in the future to do a more detailed inspection of tanks so that the potential contamination in our lakes never gets to the level where we would be required to put in a water treatment plant.)

- Actually, there was some pretty good ideas included in those previous planning efforts. Such as moving all operations up to the Gate area - building residences for operations personnel up there so everything is back together. Formalizing and building a nice BIG ELK MEADOWS entry gate, etc., etc.
- We even talked about replacing our 60-year-old swimming pool and adding a really nice Community Center with public toilets. Now that's a unique idea.

SO for a quick CONCLUSION - Curt and the Committee have put together a program that hopefully will sell - Thanks. Review it - modify as necessary - but go ahead and implement - GET SOMETHING DONE. We have roughly 500 acres of common land to work with and sufficient water rights are available - quit the fighting and get something Positive done for the BEM Community.

Respectfully submitted,  
s/William A. Tolle

## Attachment 1

### DRAFT EMAIL - WATER SUPPLY STUDY February 2022

All,

You all are probably getting tired of my continuous preaching the SERMON of Water. But it's an important issue and storage projects generally take years and a special circumstance to get accomplished Last week I received my copy of the "Pipeline" (a Denver Water Department Newsletter) that included the attached article about expanding Gross Dam and Reservoir to store 113,000 Acre Feet - 3x current capacity. Over 30 years in the making. Please read it and think in terms of our Canyon Dam conditional storage rights.

As most of you know, Big Elk Meadow owns an adjudicated Conditional Storage Right for 300 Acre Feet in Canyon Dam which would be located below Meadow Lake. It's somewhat questionable whether **BEM** would ever be able to afford to build such a structure on our own. But, opportunities may exist for us to cooperate with other downstream users to build a larger joint use facility. Think of it in terms of this scenario:

Our government is in the middle of a gigantic political "Brain Fart." So when the Country returns to reality they will need to grab the "life raft" of more debt spending and political logic will gravitate toward 'Infrastructure' including major dollars for Transportation and WATER to solve unemployment. **BEM** - being the

intelligent community we are - should be ready with a meaningful water project that improves and protects our water operations - "Canyon Dam on Steroids."  
So - - you ask- how does that happen?

1. Between Meadow Lake and where the South Fork returns to parallel CR47 is about two (2) miles of river where we should be able to identify a dam site that will store between five to ten thousand Acre Feet of water. The land in that area is largely owned by the government (Fed and State) and water storage would cause little (if any) environmental damage. On the other hand, whatever amount of storage that could be developed would obviously benefit **BEM** and other downstream users.
2. The State of Colorado currently funds a Water Plan Grant (WPG) program providing for:
  - **Water Storage & Supply** - includes development of additional storage, artificial recharge into aquifers, and dredging existing reservoirs to restore the reservoirs' full decreed storage capacity for multi-beneficial projects and projects identified in basin implementation plans to address the water supply and demand gap.
  - **Water Sharing Agreements** - includes projects that meet defined water needs while mitigating impacts associated with traditional water transfers.
3. It seems practical for the **BEM** Board to assign one of our existing Committee's or to create a new Committee with the specific charge to seek funding from the Water Plan Grant program to study the South Fork or the Little Thompson that would consider building a dam below Meadow Lake that would incorporate **BEM** Canyon Lake Conditional Right of 300AF and any current or future decrees held by downstream users.
4. **BEM** is fortunate to have recently added a new Owner- Member (Pat Sorenson) who is a Registered Profession Civil Engineer with special expertise in Water Management. Pat also has direct association with other experienced and key water planning engineers knowledgeable in the state planning procedure who can advise and support this effort. Clearly - Pat is hereby identified as the key BEM internal expert to direct this effort.

Please consider - by reading the attached article about Gross Dam - that it takes years of special effort to accomplish "water storage" projects. Second - political timing might be such that major government funding for water storage projects will become available in the near future. Third - The State of Colorado currently has Grant funding available for planning water storage projects. And Forth - **BEM** has standing with existing rights, experience and future need to justify our application and ability to manage such a study and project.

Respectfully, Bill



# Gross expansion is a go after federal, state and local reviews finalized

Project to raise dam will improve water reliability for more than 1.5 million people while benefiting the environment.

BY JAY ADAMS AND TODD HARTMAN

After nearly 20 years of preparations, the expansion of Gross Reservoir in Boulder County is moving ahead.

In early November, we took the final step necessary to proceed with the project after striking an agreement with Boulder County to take additional actions to offset impacts of the project.

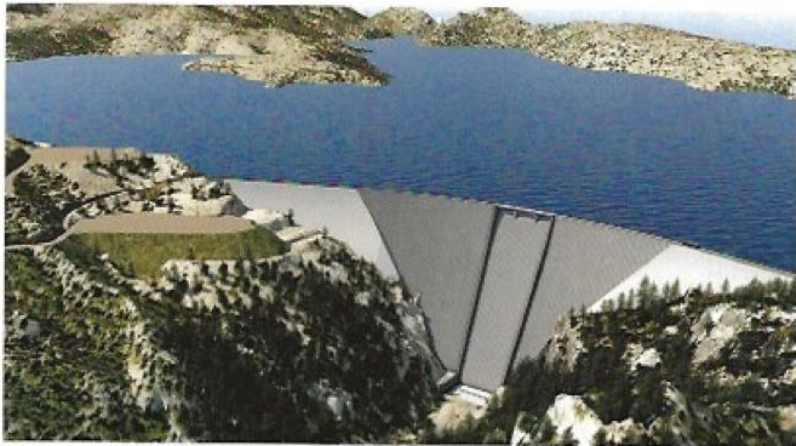
The accord with Boulder County means we can proceed with the long-awaited project that will raise the dam, triple the reservoir capacity and mean far more water security for 1.5 million people in an era of more intense droughts, heavier rain events and earlier snowmelt — all driven by climate change.

"In the two decades we have spent preparing for the project, we have been driven by a singular value: the need to do this expansion the right way, by involving the community, by upholding the highest environmental standards and by protecting and managing the water and landscapes that define Colorado," CEO/Manager Jim Lochhead said.

"Boulder County and its residents share these perspectives, and we look forward to continuing to work with them as the project moves ahead."

Gross Dam was built in the 1950s and named after Dwight D. Gross, a former chief engineer at Denver Water. It was built to store water from the West Slope that travels through the Moffat Tunnel, as well as water from South Boulder Creek.

"The original engineers designed the dam so that it could be raised twice, if needed," said Jeff Martin, Gross Reservoir project manager. "Based on our water supply projections and current system



Expanding Gross Reservoir requires raising the dam 131 feet by placing new concrete on the existing structure. This will increase the reservoir's storage capacity to 119,000 acre-feet of water, making Gross Reservoir the second largest in Denver Water's system. Image credit: Denver Water.

shortfalls, that need is here."

We began the permitting process to raise the dam in 2003 and received approvals from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment in 2016 and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2017.

The plan cleared its final federal hurdle on July 16, 2020, when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission gave its approval for the project and ordered us to proceed with design and construction.

The project has earned support from major environmental groups, business interests, water users on both sides of the Continental Divide and elected officials on both sides of the aisle, including the state's last five governors.

Expanding Gross Reservoir is a major part of our long-term, multipronged

approach to deliver safe, reliable water to more than 1.5 million people today and those who will call the Front Range home in the future. That approach includes increasing water efficiency, recycling water and responsibly sourcing new storage.

"In the end, this project won't be judged by whether we raised the dam, but rather how we went about expanding the reservoir," Lochhead said. "We will continue to seek community input and look forward to working with Boulder County as the project moves ahead." **B**



Scan this QR code with your phone to read more about Gross Reservoir and watch a video to see why the reservoir is an important project to balance our system and secure our future water supply.