



# EVERGREEN LEGACY FOUNDATION

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The Evergreen Legacy Foundation (ELF) is one of several groups represented at the initial brainstorming session in April of 2024 to explore ideas for how Bergen Meadow might be used. A community center? Early childhood education center? A senior center? More classrooms for Evergreen Fire?

Saving the athletic fields for Evergreen Park & Recreation (EPRD) was of primary importance.

Through the wisdom and foresight of Nancy Judge, president of the Evergreen Chamber of Commerce, we invited two entities to join us – Foothills Regional Housing and Colorado Gives Foundation (COG). I thought at the time, "Why would a foundation want to send a representative?" But the foundation expressed so much enthusiasm and support for where the group was at its second meeting -- and the quality of community leaders around the table -- compared to other groups they'd observed that we were propelled to move forward with added confidence. COG continues to be a powerful force in our process -- and a positive force for good throughout Jefferson County overall.

Foothills Regional Housing admittedly was a bit skeptical of our group. They, for good reason, felt quite comfortable at winning the bid to own the full 13 acres outright. However, they offered a favorable lease to EPRD and extended a welcome to Seniors4Wellness to use their community rooms for programming once the senior housing was built. Cory Vander Veen's respectful determination for EPRD to own land rather than enter into another lease agreement led to Jeffco's Board of Education (BOE) to amend their guidelines to allow the land to be subdivided.

Admittedly some of the group had feelings of "not in my backyard," but together we learned the community will suffer if we don't find a way to create affordable housing to offset the shortage. Living in an area where the cost of housing is 200% higher than the national norm, what would Evergreen be without people to provide the services we need -- teachers, first responders, caregivers, retail workers, etc. Planning for a sustainable community is critical. Providing a way for our seniors to stay in Evergreen is just a start. Some of them will continue to be valuable parts of our workforce. Great aunts and mothers-in-law some of us need to care for can be moved close by as they age but not have to be integrated into our households. "A place for Mom" will take on new meaning.

With encouragement from our County Commissioners, our idea gained momentum. Sending word to the Board of Education that we had a workable plan that could come together quickly, they moved Bergen Meadow up to a position for disposition sooner rather than later.

The initiative and enthusiasm of young families adjacent to the school campus (The Trails HOA) gave unexpected life to propelling multi-generational community support.

While not being a municipality was a drawback initially, Liz Cohen's brilliant idea to draw together our special districts to hopefully create a quasi-municipality caused a variety of community interests to convene. Being unincorporated ended up enabling us to proceed creatively with speed and without the usual constraints that accompany bureaucracy. Those of us who have been part of successful community campaigns saw this as another opportunity to stimulate what Evergreen is known for -- accomplishing great things as a community!

We consider the Bergen Meadow project one with great possibility -- a win:win for Evergreen. This effort is an exercise in building and sustaining community spirit, that uplifting feeling we all need right now. It has demonstrated that collaboration and cooperation can be mighty powerful. ELF is proud to be playing a part as the facilitator.

Linda Kirkpatrick  
Executive Director