

# **Ascend at Longbow Highpoint**

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## **Synopsis**

### **Situation**

After a neighborhood meeting was held online on September 15, 2021 and a second neighborhood meeting was held in person on November 10, 2021, residents living near the proposed project, Ascend at Longbow Highpoint, are expressing opposition to the development for a variety of stated and implied reasons.

I've had numerous telephone conversations with Reese Anderson who is legal counsel to the owner and developer at Longbow. He has given me the history and additional background on the project and what's been planned by the development team to date. He has also provided me his perspective on conversations between the development team and neighbors of the project.

I had a recent, lengthy telephone conversation and several email exchanges with one neighborhood representative and I offered to come meet with him and any others who cared to talk. Although he said that he and others had anticipated meeting with me at some point, he stated that they would consider my meeting offer after meeting among themselves to consider it. Shortly thereafter, I received an email saying that they were asking for a 'formal' request from the City to meet with me and I should expect to hear from a City representative. Subsequently they did indeed receive that request from the City and I was copied on that request. I met with a group of seven or eight residents one afternoon at one neighbor's house. They were candid in their assessment of the proposed development. The group indicated that although they felt that their views reflected a majority of neighborhood residents, they were not presuming to formally represent their neighbors.

Additionally, I recently met with Bob McNichols, property owner, to discuss his interests and position on this proposal.

### **Assessment**

The property owner and developer believe they have more than satisfied city guidelines and believe the current proposal will not pose an unreasonable addition for area residents, particularly compared to other possible intensive uses that are already zoned for this parcel.

Area opponents that have attended City of Mesa public meetings, met with City of Mesa Councilmember Luna, responded to a petition currently circulating, or met with me are opposed to this development for several stated reasons:

- Apartment buildings will be too high and allow renters to see into their backyards

- Apartments will negatively affect current property value
- New lighting and noise will intrude on their current quality of life
- Development will introduce, “undesirable people”
- Additional traffic will create unsafe conditions
- Parking will overflow into their neighborhood
- Opponents feel the City does not listen to their concerns or enforce current light and noise ordinances

Many opponents state or imply that they’ve been historically mistreated by the City because of perceived promises broken before and during construction of the Loop 202 freeway, as well as changes in local traffic control that they believe has increased cut through traffic in their neighborhood. Residents say they have been disregarded by the City and believe they have no voice in decisions made by the City.

Opponents are upset about the nature of recent development for reasons stated and implied. Some people say they wanted a Trader Joe’s store nearby but got a Sprouts, some people wanted a movie theater but complain about the impacts of the one that was built, some wanted restaurants but are upset about the type of restaurants that have opened and the resulting noise. Opponents are upset about increases in noise and the intrusion of lighting from the development.

They believe they will lose the safe, secure character of their established neighborhood. They see more losses than gains for themselves from this development.

One representative resident says that neighbors believe that their Mesa government has not dealt with them fairly or transparently and believe that this zoning change is an attempt to ‘sneak’ something through ‘under their noses’.

The Longbow neighborhood is a well-established upper middle-class community of residents who have enjoyed living near the edge of development and open space but are now facing the intrusion of growth.