



# Grand Lake Planning Commission

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 4:30 PM

*The Town of Grand Lake upholds the Six Pillars of Character:  
Citizenship, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness and Caring*

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## AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Conflicts of Interest
4. Work Session 4:30 PM
  - A. WORK SESSION** – Discussion of a proposed Central Business District Overlay Zone and accompanying design regulations intended to reinforce the historic western character of Grand Lake.
5. Unscheduled Citizen Participation  
*This time is reserved for members of the public to make a presentation to the Commission on items or issues that are not scheduled on the agenda. The Commission will not make any decisions on items presented during this time.*
6. Items for Discussion 6:30 PM
  - B. QUASI JUDICIAL** – Sketch Review of a Preliminary Plat for eight lots located at 120 County Road 663, commonly referred to as the Ruger Subdivision.
7. Future Agenda Items
8. Adjourn Meeting

You will not be able to actively participate via the web streaming.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89617216239?pwd=7CYdvqjbXRtKmdqBF2aiKKR5fS3oWq.1>

**You can also dial in using your phone. 719-359-4580**  
**Meeting ID:** 896 1721 6239  
**Access Code:** 367616



## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October 22, 2025  
**TO:** Chairman Shockey and Planning Commissioners  
**FROM:** Emily Weber, Contract Staff - Planning Department  
**SUBJECT:** **WORK SESSION** – Discussion of a proposed Central Business District Overlay Zone and accompanying design regulations intended to reinforce the historic western character of Grand Lake.

### Overview and Analysis

At the direction of the Board of Trustees, staff has prepared draft language for a proposed Central Business District (CBD) Overlay Zone. This overlay is intended to reinforce and clarify existing code language related to the historic western character of Grand Lake. The area identified focuses on the town’s core downtown commercial area.



*Draft Overlay Zone Boundary*

The purpose of the proposed overlay is to provide clear, actionable design guidelines that ensure new development and redevelopment efforts are compatible with Grand Lake’s unique identity, while also supporting development feasibility. In addition, the overlay zone offers a more precise definition of what constitutes “historic western” character in the context of Grand Lake, identifying common architectural elements that contribute to this identity.

Key components of the proposed update include:

- **Color and Material Selection:**  
 The guidelines offer specific direction on primary and accent materials, color palettes, and limitations on the use of metal. This reduces ambiguity for applicants and reinforces the rustic, historic aesthetic of the



town.

- **Ground Level Interest:**  
The update strengthens requirements for consistent street walls and active ground-floor commercial uses. A maximum setback standard ensures that buildings maintain a strong street presence along Grand Avenue.
- **Connectivity:**  
The overlay eliminates open space requirements for mixed-use buildings and mandates covered walkways along street-facing facades. These provisions support a walkable, pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.
- **Parking:**  
Reduced parking requirements are proposed to balance development feasibility with the town’s compact, walkable character. Provisions are included for both commercial and residential uses.
- **Roofline:**  
The guidelines expand on existing code by clarifying preferred roof forms, including parapet and gabled designs, and emphasizing the traditional sawtooth profile found in historic structures.
- **Windows:**  
New language addresses window placement, proportions, and detailing to ensure transparency and visual interest at the pedestrian level, while reinforcing the district’s historic character.

**Planning Commission Discussion and Next Steps**

The Planning Commission is asked to review and discuss the draft language proposed for the Central Business District (CBD) Overlay Zone. At this stage, no formal recommendation is being requested.

Following this discussion, the draft will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees. Based on feedback and recommendations from both bodies, staff will revise the language as needed. A formal resolution will then be brought back to the Planning Commission for consideration and recommendation at a future meeting.

**Attachment**

1. Draft CBD Overlay Zone Language

# Central Business District (CBD) Overlay Zone

## Introduction

This document supplements the design guidelines that appear in the Town of Grand Lake Municipal Code and applies specifically to the Central Business District (CBD) Overlay Zone that is identified in the Official Zoning Map. The intent of the CBD Overlay Zone is to establish standards that protect and enhance the downtown area as a viable commercial district while preserving the historic aesthetic and architectural character of the Town of Grand Lake. These standards shall apply to the following:

- (A) The standards of the CBD Overlay Zone shall apply to all development on parcels within the CBD Overlay Zone.
- (B) Wherever there is a conflict or inconsistency between the CBD Overlay Zone regulations and other regulations of the land development code, the regulations set forth in this section shall control and govern the development and redevelopment within the CBD Overlay Zone.
- (C) Where the CBD Overlay Zone standards are silent, the underlying zone district regulations come into effect.

## Background Policy Related to the CBD Overlay Zone

Code sections that reference “historic western” feel.

- Section 12-7-2 – Purpose and Application. “A historical perspective is extremely important to the Town, therefore it is the intent that new materials and innovations will strengthen and be harmonious with the “historic western” feel of Town....The Town of Grand Lake seeks to preserve the historical, rustic, and unique western small-town character of Grand Lake while also integrating its preservation with new and pioneering creative design.”
- Section 12-7-4 – Design Standards for Structures.
  - (A) “The intent of the color palate selection is to compliment rather than stand out against the Town’s western historic mountain setting.”
  - (B) “Material selection shall take into account the historical perspective of the Town.”
  - (C) (2) (c) (3) (iii) “Reaching a balance between the old and the new is a major goal of the Grand Lake Design Guidelines, particularly retaining the historic sawtooth character while encouraging compatible and respectful new buildings and design.”

# Defining Western Character

This document provides design guidelines that further define the concept of historic western character to guide the design of new infill buildings, additions, and other improvements within the Central Business District (CBD) Overlay Zone. These guidelines build upon the language in the Town Code Design Standards and aim to clarify how historic western character should be interpreted in the context of Grand Lake’s unique identity.

Historic western character is not a specific architectural style, but rather an approach to design rooted in the community’s historical and cultural traditions. It encompasses building forms, materials, and details commonly found in historic structures throughout Grand Lake. The intent is to promote authentic design that reflects the town’s heritage, distinguishing genuine historical influences from imitations.

## Historical Context (from the Comprehensive Plan)

- Prior to settlement in the late 1860s, the area was used by Native American tribes including the Ute, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho for hunting.
- The mining boom of the 1870s brought outfitters to supply nearby mining towns.
- The Grand Lake Townsite was officially platted in 1881.
- By 1900, Grand Lake had become a popular summer destination, attracting over 1,000 seasonal visitors annually.
- The Grand Lake Yacht Club was established in 1902.
- Rocky Mountain National Park was designated in 1915.
- Trail Ridge Road was completed in 1939, solidifying Grand Lake’s role as a gateway community.

## Buildings Listed on the Colorado Historic Register

- Grand Lake Community House (1922): Located in the historic town square, it hosts a variety of public and private events.
- Grand Lake Lodge (1920): Continues to serve visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park and Grand Lake.
- Kauffman House (1892): Originally a hotel for summer tourists, now operates as a museum.
- Smith Eslick Cottage Camp (1915): An early example of a motor court.

## Common Architectural Elements Defining the Character of Grand Lake

- Building Forms:

Simple and functional structures with gabled or pitched roofs. Many feature false fronts with stepped parapets to create a more prominent street presence. Dormers are often used to break up rooflines.

- **Covered Walkways and Porches:**  
Commercial buildings commonly include covered walkways and overhanging roofs that slope toward the right-of-way, enhancing pedestrian comfort and supporting a walkable downtown. Covered porches are a recurring feature in historic buildings.
- **Materials:**  
Natural materials such as wood and log construction is standard, typically in muted tones. Accent colors and occasional white-painted buildings are acceptable if provided in a historical context.
- **Street Orientation**  
Buildings are oriented toward the street, maintaining a consistent street wall and contributing to the town’s cohesive visual identity.
- **Signage**  
Overhanging signs are prevalent, often featuring western-style fonts that reinforce the town’s character.
- **Second-Floor Railings**  
Found on buildings like the Spider House, Grand Lake Lodge, and Nowata Cottage, these add vertical interest and support multi-level design.
- **False Parapets**  
Used to conceal pitched roofs, as seen in Zick’s Grocery and Café, contributing to the traditional western storefront aesthetic.
- **Boardwalk Precedents**  
Covered boardwalks are inspired by buildings such as Pine Cone Inn, Rapids Lodge, Grand Lake Lodge, Kauffman House, and Rustin Inn.

## Applicable Design Guidelines

### 1. Color and Material Selections

Design Intent:

Cultivate a cohesive visual identity throughout the CBD Overlay Zone that reflects the historical and rustic character of Grand Lake as a mountain town. Primary building materials should be authentic, durable, and evoke a western aesthetic. Colors and finishes should be muted and convey high-quality design and detailing.

Design Guideline:

- 1.1 The primary color of a building shall be a neutral earth tone. Muted and warm shades of neutral colors are appropriate. Bright, pastel, or true primary hues are not permitted.
- 1.2 Trim, fascia, and doors are considered accent elements. Accent colors shall be limited to the following:
  - a. Monochromatic (same as the primary color).
  - b. Tonal monochromatic (a lighter or darker shade of the primary color).
  - c. A contrasting color that complements the primary color. Intense colors are discouraged.
- 1.3 Limited accent materials, such as natural stone, may be permitted around the base of the building to enhance the visual interest and reflect the rustic character of Grand Lake.
  - a. Metal materials shall not be used as a primary or accent element within the CBD Overlay Zone.
  - b. Accent materials are limited to 33% of each building façade.
- 1.4 A material sample board must be presented to the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees for review prior to approval of a development application.
- 1.5 If a variance is requested for building color or material, documentation demonstrating historical use of the proposed color or material within Grand Lake is required as precedent.

**2. Ground Level Interest**

Design Intent:

The CBD Overlay Zone serves as the town’s central commercial and visitor destination. As such, building design at the street and ground level should prioritize the pedestrian experience by offering visual interest, weather protection, and a welcoming environment that encourages foot traffic. The goal is to create a comfortable and engaging streetscape through a consistent street wall and clean, visually appealing commercial facades.

Buildings should be perceived as predominantly two stories in height, supported by a required setback above the second story. This setback helps reduce the visual bulk and mass of buildings and ensures new development remains compatible with the traditional scale and character of the area.

Design Guideline:

- 2.1 Commercial uses are required on the ground floor for the first 50 feet of depth from the property line along all street-facing frontages (does not apply to alleys).
  - a. Residential uses may be permitted on the ground floor beyond the initial 50 feet.
- 2.2 All development within the CBD Overlay Zone shall maintain a maximum front setback of 10 feet from Grand Avenue, measured from the property line.
  - a. The maximum setback may be measured from a covered overhang. For example, a covered outdoor patio located 10 feet from the property line would meet the requirement.
  - b. The maximum setback applies to the entire length of the property frontage along Grand Avenue.
- 2.3 A third-story stepback is required on all street frontages after the first two stories.
  - a. On corner lots, the stepback is required on both street-facing frontages.
  - b. The step back shall be a minimum of 12 feet, measured from the face of the building, including any covered structural elements.
- 2.4 The street wall, as defined in the Town Code, shall be maintained.
  - a. The maximum setback reinforces the street wall edge.
  - b. Development is encouraged to incorporate creative public seating and open space within the maximum setback area if applicable or along street-facing frontages other than Grand Avenue.

**3. Connectivity**

Design Intent:

The CBD Overlay Zone is intended to prioritize pedestrian experience. As such, developments shall ensure safe, year-round pedestrian access and connectivity for all users, including the elderly and those requiring ADA accessibility. Pedestrian connectivity refers to the movement of people from the public realm to and through a site, as well as connections to adjacent sites. Internal pedestrian access should enhance walkability and provide clear, intuitive links to the public realm.

Design Guideline:

- 3.1 In accordance with the Town Code, development shall incorporate a covered walkway that connects commercial elements to the public realm. This requirement applies to all street-facing facades.

- a. If a building is set back to the maximum allowable distance along Grand Avenue, at minimum, a portion of the development must extend to the public boardwalk to establish a connection to the public realm.
- b. The design of boardwalks and covered walkways shall comply with Town Code Section 12-7-4(C)(3)(c).
- c. Construction of the boardwalk and covered walkways shall be the responsibility of the applicant.

3.2 Open space requirements are waived for mixed-use buildings.

- a. If open space is proposed, it shall not be located along the Grand Avenue frontage.
- b. For buildings set back to the maximum allowable distance along Grand Avenue, it is encouraged that public seating, art installations, or landscaping elements be incorporated to enhance the pedestrian experience.

**4. Parking**

Design Intent:

The CBD Overlay Zone is intended to foster a compact, pedestrian-oriented environment where development is not centered around vehicle access. The emphasis is on creating a high-quality pedestrian experience, with the expectation that visitors and residents will park once and access multiple destinations on foot. Much of the overlay zone includes existing or potential right-of-way (ROW) parking. Parking requirement reductions are intended to support this walkable urban character.

Design Guideline:

- 4.1 Development within the CBD Overlay Zone is exempt from the commercial parking requirements outlined in the Town Code, with the following exceptions and conditions:
  - a. Hotels, motels, and other commercial uses that involve overnight accommodation are not exempt. These uses must provide the adequate parking either on-site or through an off-site parking plan approved by the Board of Trustees.
  - b. If public parking spaces have not been constructed within the right-of-way (ROW) directly adjacent to the subject property, the applicant shall be responsible for constructing the necessary parking spaces to support their proposed development.
- 4.2 Residential development within the CBD Overlay Zone is eligible for reduced parking requirements as follows:

- a. Studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units shall require a minimum of one (1) parking space per unit.
- b. Units with three (3) or more bedrooms shall require a minimum of two (2) parking spaces per unit.
- c. All required residential parking spaces shall be provided on-site.
- d. Where residential parking is required, it shall be accessed from alleys when feasible and designed to avoid detracting from the commercial frontage and pedestrian realm.

**5. Roofline**

Design Intent:

Buildings should reflect the simple forms and traditional character of Grand Lake’s historic architecture. Roof forms should be either flat with stepped or articulated parapets (commonly referred to as “false fronts”) or sloped in gable or hipped configurations. New buildings should maintain the scale of traditional structures, which includes not only overall height and width, but also the proportions and relationships of architectural features. These features should use simple vertical and horizontal articulation to establish human scale, add visual interest, and avoid monotonous facades.

Design Guideline:

- 5.1 Roof forms shall be simple in design.
  - a. Flat roofs are appropriate, especially on larger buildings, and should include variation in the cornice line.
  - b. Sloped roofs are appropriate and should reflect the pitch and proportions of traditional buildings.
  - c. A combination of flat and sloped roofs is acceptable but should remain visually simple and not overly complex.
- 5.2 The second story roofline shall be either gabled or, if flat, include a false parapet.
  - a. For buildings with three stories, any stepback applied to the design shall be secondary to the second-story roofline. The second-story roofline should maintain the traditional sawtooth or ziggurat profile.
- 5.3 A basic building form is preferred. Any variation should be subordinate to the overall massing and contribute to a cohesive design.
  - a. Varying building heights may be used to reflect different modules.
  - b. Larger buildings should be divided into smaller modules that reflect the scale and lot widths of traditional town structures.

- c. Moderate wall plane offsets, such as notches or projections, may be used to add interest.
- d. Excessive variation that results in a visually busy or disjointed design is discouraged.

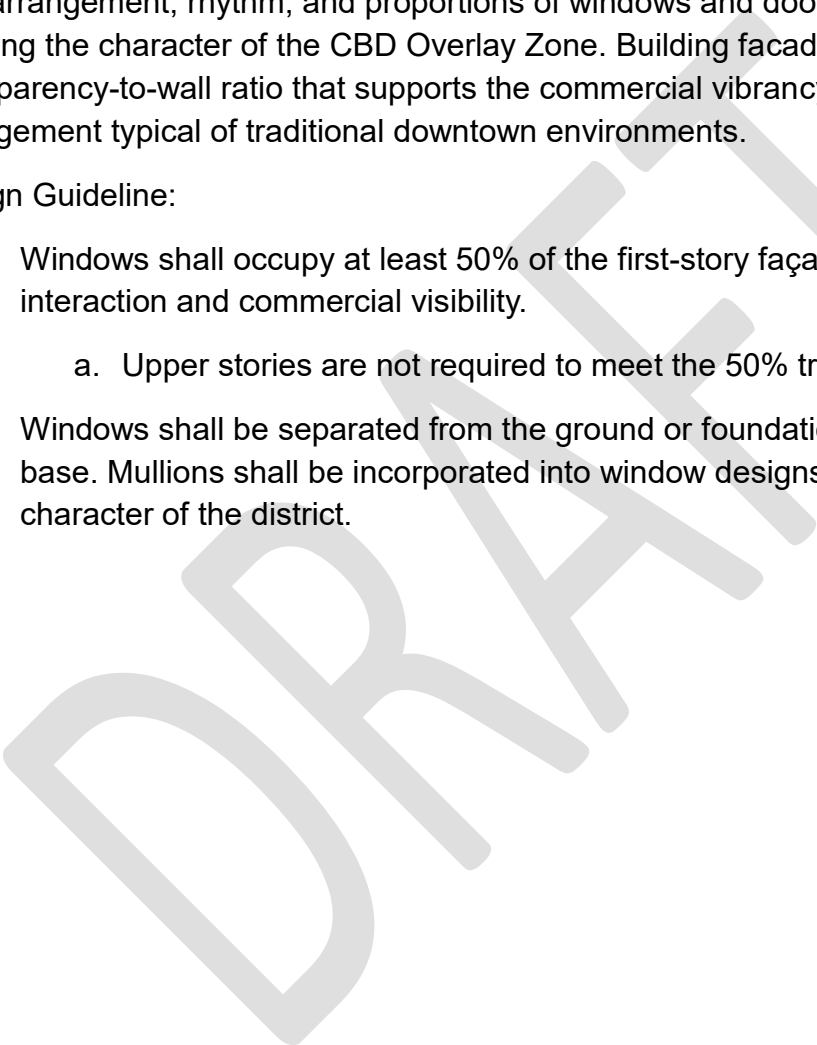
**6. Windows**

Design Intent:

The arrangement, rhythm, and proportions of windows and doors play a key role in shaping the character of the CBD Overlay Zone. Building facades should maintain a transparency-to-wall ratio that supports the commercial vibrancy and pedestrian engagement typical of traditional downtown environments.

Design Guideline:

- 6.1 Windows shall occupy at least 50% of the first-story façade to support pedestrian interaction and commercial visibility.
  - a. Upper stories are not required to meet the 50% transparency standard.
- 6.2 Windows shall be separated from the ground or foundation by a defined material base. Mullions shall be incorporated into window designs to reinforce the historic character of the district.





## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October 22, 2025  
**TO:** Chairman Shockey and Planning Commissioners  
**FROM:** Emily Weber, Contract Staff - Planning Department  
**SUBJECT:** **QUASI JUDICIAL (PUBLIC HEARING)** – Sketch Review of a Preliminary Plat for eight lots located at 120 County Road 663, commonly referred to as the Ruger Subdivision.

### Overview

- **Property Owner and Applicant:** Michael P Ruger Living Trust
- **Applicant Representatives:** Mike Ruger
- **Project Location:** 120 County Road 663
- **Project Zoning:** Single Family Residential – High Density
- **Request:** The applicant is proposing to subdivide a 4.88-acre parcel into eight individual residential lots. Lot sizes range from 0.39 acres to 1.01 acres.
- **Attachments:**
  - Preliminary Plat



### Background

The property was annexed into the town earlier this year via Resolution 05-2025. The annexation agreement included the following key provisions:

1. A maximum of nine residential lots is permitted. However, due to topographic constraints, the site may realistically accommodate only six or seven lots. Each dwelling must be accessible to fire and emergency services.
2. The access road is unlikely to meet town standards typical subdivisions. The Town Water



Department emphasized the importance of the water main in County Road 663, which supplies all of Grand Lake. This main is protected from freezing by a specific combination of soil and snowpack. Relocation or replacement would be financially burdensome, potentially disruptive to water service, and may not be physically feasible. Road improvements are possible but must not endanger this critical infrastructure. Specifically, paving or reducing the grade below 8% is unlikely.

- 3. Stormwater improvements are required to mitigate flood risks, particularly following post-fire flooding that impacted County Road 663. It is also required that drainage concerns are addressed during the subdivision process.

**Staff Analysis**

The subdivision request follows a three-step review process: Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plat, and Final Plat. The application is currently being considered under the sketch plan review process.

The site is zoned Single Family Residential - High Density (RSH). All proposed lots meet the minimum zoning requirements:

Measurement	RSH
Minimum Lot Area	5,000 SF per home
Minimum Lot Frontage	50'
Minimum Floor Area	800 SF (500 SF for ADU)
Maximum Floor Area	NA (800 SF for ADU)
Front Setback	25'
Side Setback	10'
Rear Setback	10'
Maximum Height	32'

Because the proposed subdivision includes more than five (5) lots, the applicant is required to provide at least ten percent (10%) of the housing units as attainable for lower- and moderate-income households, in accordance with Town Code Section 12-10-3 Inclusionary Zoning. To meet this requirement, the applicant has agreed to dedicate one lot (Lot 8) to the Town for use as attainable housing.

Additionally, in accordance with Town Code Section 12-9-10(I)(3)(f) Land Dedication, the applicant is required to dedicate seven percent (7%) of the gross land area for public purposes such as schools, parks, police and fire stations, or other community uses. To satisfy this requirement, the applicant has agreed to a 10- to 15-foot multi-use trail easement along County Road 663, extending from Portal Road to the water treatment plant. The specifics of this easement will be further evaluated during the next phase of the review process to ensure compliance with the 7% land dedication requirement.

Other Key Considerations for the Applicant:

- Town Code Section 12-9-10 (H) (7) Steep Slopes.  
As a general rule, developments on slopes greater than 20% but less than 40% shall be required to have engineering studies prepared to determine the suitability of the geologic and soil structures for development and the types of mitigation. Development on steep slopes is discouraged on slopes over 30% and prohibited on slopes over 40%.



At the time of preliminary submittal, the following items must be addressed:

- Update signature certificates to comply with Town Code.
- Provide legal descriptions for all lots.
- Revise plat notes to reflect the title commitment and correct zoning.
- Include the trail easement on the plat.
- Submit a drainage plan addressing runoff impacts on County Road 663.
- Fulfill all additional preliminary submittal requirements per Town Code.

**Planning Commission Discussion and Determination**

The Planning Commission is asked to conduct an informal review of the proposed subdivision. No formal recommendation will be made at this stage. The discussion will help identify potential conditions or concerns that may influence the Preliminary and Final Plat submittals.

# RUGER SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION PLAT SEC. 5 T3N R75W 6TH PM Grand County, Colorado

### DEDICATION

KNOW ALL PEOPLE BY THESE PRESENTS: That The Linda Ashley Randall Living Trust dated 02-04-2011 and The Michael P. Ruger Living Trust dated 02-14-2011 are the owners of the real property situated in The Town of Grand Lake, Grand County, Colorado, more particularly described as follows:

Part of Government Lot 3, Sec. 5, Township 3 North, Range 75 West of the 6th PM, Book 249 Page 274

That it has caused said real property to be laid out and surveyed as Ruger Subdivision.

That it hereby dedicates all rights of ways shown on the accompanying plat to the public forever, and that it hereby dedicates all easements shown on the accompanying plat as easements.

In Witness Whereof:

By: Michael P. Ruger  
For: Michael P. Ruger Living Trust Dated 02-14-2011

By: Linda Ashley Randall  
For: Linda Ashley Randall Living Trust dated 02-14-2011

STATE OF COLORADO  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ ) SS

IN WITNESS WHEREOF: The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, by Michael P. Ruger, as authorized representative of Michael P. Ruger Living Trust Dated 02-14-2011.

My Commission Expires:

Notary Public

STATE OF COLORADO  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ ) SS

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_ as authorized representative of The Linda Ashley Randall.

My Commission Expires:

Notary Public

S

### SURVEYORS CERTIFICATE:

I W. D. Ward Colorado Registered Surveyor No. 25971, hereby certify that this plat of Ruger Subdivision represents the result of a field survey done by me or under my responsible charge, based on facts known to me, and that said survey complies with Article 38, Article 51, Colorado Revised Statutes, 1973, as applicable, and that the monuments required by said statutes and the Town of Grand Lake Subdivision Regulations have been placed on the ground.

W.D. Ward, PLS 25971

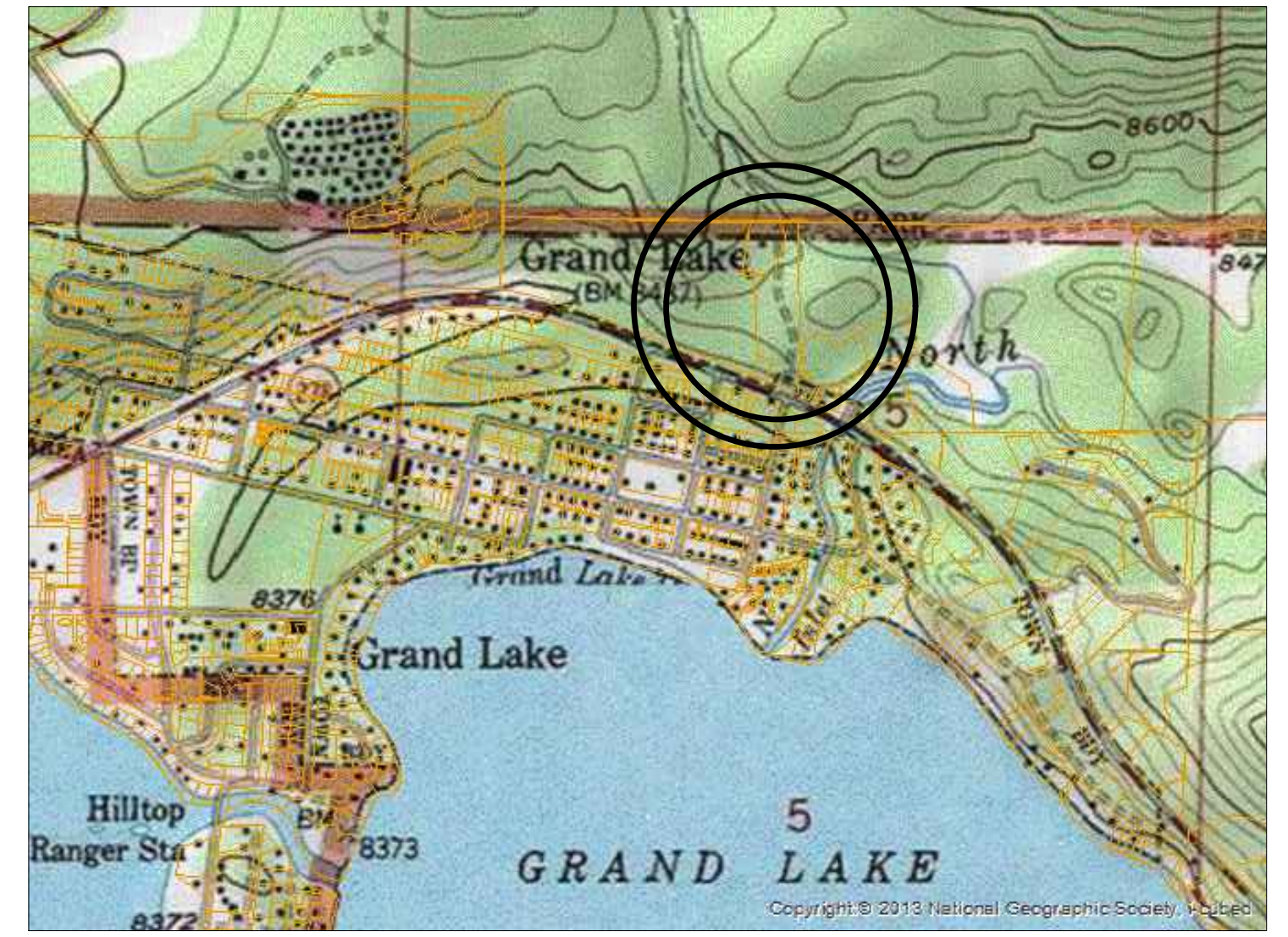
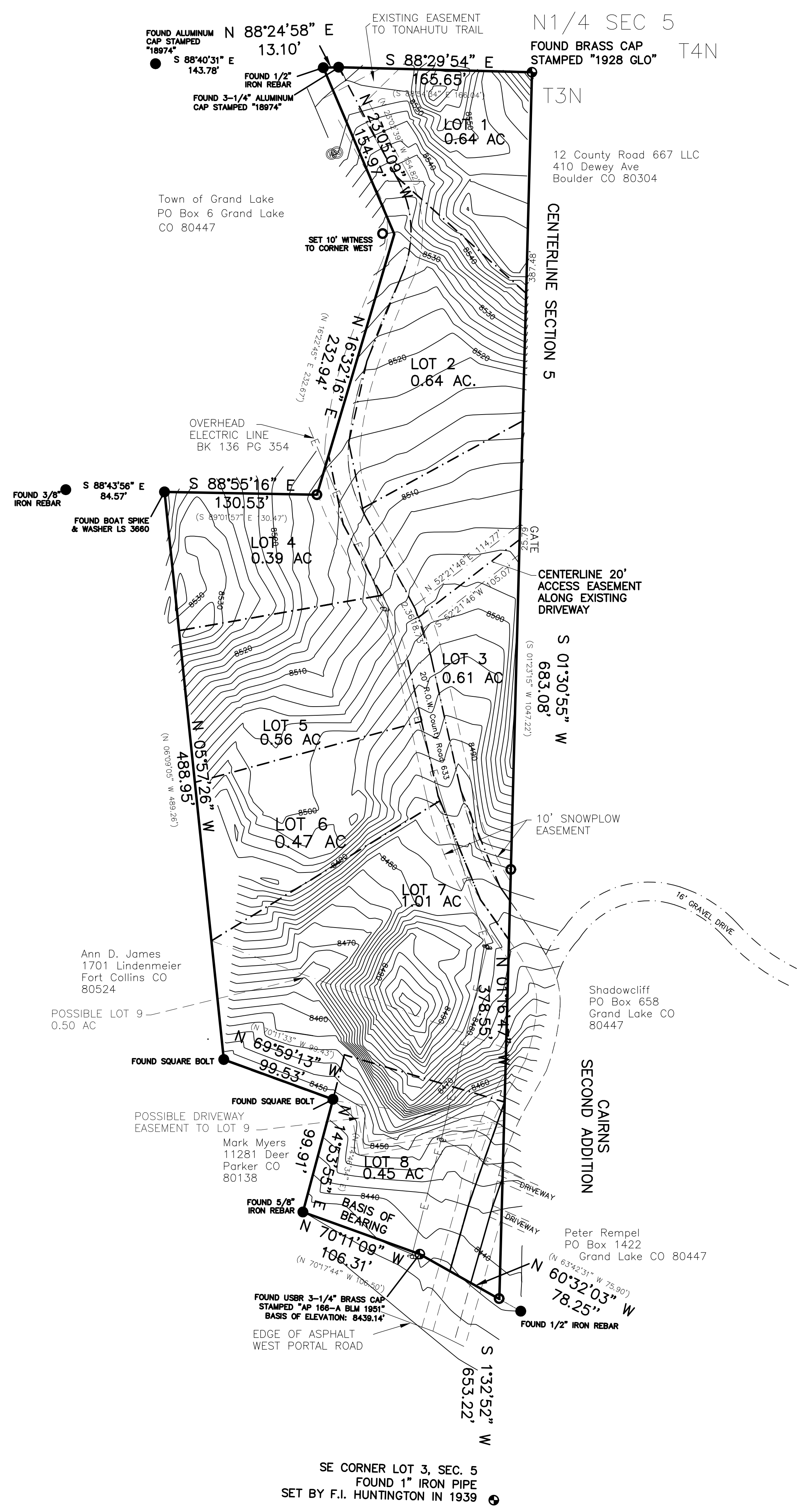
### BOARD OF TRUSTEES CERTIFICATE

Approved and all public dedications accepted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ by the Board of Trustees of Grand Lake, Colorado.

Mayor  
Town of Grand Lake  
Grand County, Colorado

Attest:

Town Clerk



VICINITY MAP: 1" = 2000.00'

### NOTES

- 1. Applicant: Michael P. Ruger Living Trust Dated 02-14-2011. 5160 Redwood Drive, Bow Mar CO 80123
- 2. Zoning: Grand Lake UGA
- 3. For title, reference to a title commitment is recommended.



UNIT OF MEASUREMENT: ISFT  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 2'  
DATUM: The surface of Grand Lake = 8367.0' NAVD29

Azimuth Survey Company  
P.O. Box 653 Fraser, Colorado 80442  
f800-725-2734 p970-531-1120

RUGER SUBDIVISION  
PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION PLAT  
SEC. 5 T3N R75W 6TH PM  
Grand County, Colorado

DATE: 08-01-25  
SCALE: 1" = 60' wBY: A427023 JOB: