

TOWN OF SNOWMASS VILLAGE

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

January 4, 2023

Members Present:

Brian Marshack, Chairman
Stan Clauson
Elese Denis

Staff Present:

Dave Shinneman
Brian McNellis
Sara Nester
Clint Kinney
John Carlin

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Alex Jaunch
Jay Shumaker
Nick Lheureux
Jim Gustafson
Doug Faurer
Matthew Dube

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by Brian Marshack, Chairman.

Item 1: Approval of December 14, 2022, Meeting Minutes:

The Minutes from the 12/14/22 meeting were brought up for approval. Elesé Denis made a motion to approve, second by Stan Clauson and approved unanimously.

Item 2: Special Review of the Proposed Transit Application – Continued: Dave Shinneman, Community Development Director, started the conversation by stating that he looked at our code last night, and spoke to the managers office about it. The code reads that “The appointments to the Planning Commission expire after the first Council meeting in January.” We have three members whose terms have expired, so they have technically not been reappointed to the commission. We can have a meeting with a quorum of three.

Staff has put together the packet and a resolution. If the commission chose to approve it tonight, they could. All members of the Planning Commission have been involved in this conversation since it was on your plate November 30, and this will be brought into consideration.

Dave mentioned that all members who are waiting to get re-appointed can be involved in the conversation, but we have to be mindful of only having current members vote.

Brian McNellis, Senior Planner, stated that this is the fourth Special Review specific meeting that we have had on the proposed transit center. The first meeting was on November 30, and then it continued December 7 when we had our initial site visit. It was continued December 14 with a site visit showing the story poles, and the meeting tonight.

As mentioned previously, there were some changes made to the draft resolution. Pay attention specifically to conditions 4-7. Staff has done their best attempt to reflect some of the discussions that have gone on in the last several meetings. We can make any changes as needed. Staff recommends approval for the resolution tonight.

Brian Marshack, Chairman, stated that at the last meeting we requested additional materials. There are additional materials in our packet, so it may be good to go over these documents.

Alex Jaunch, Architect, showed the group a 3D BIM model which is what all of our working drawings and renderings come from. In terms of accuracy, he can proclaim 1/8 inch or more. This is all built off our point cloud data, so everything is as you see it. The gray halftoned items are existing conditions, and the new structure is at the top of the new platform. We have done our best to model the existing conditions and surrounding elements to provide a true representation of what our impacts are around the site. He continued going over this document in detail.

Stan Clauson asked if there is a landscape model that can be turned on to the model.

Alex responded that landscape plans were provided in some of the previous documents. Landscape in the previous packages/submittals is just as accurate. The only thing lacking is official planting selections. We have made most of the final decisions on planter locations, vegetation, materials etc., but of course these things can be changed. Alex offered to pull up the 2D landscaping if there were additional questions.

Stan commented that in some of the earlier renderings, it did not seem that the landscaping in front of the tall wall at lot five was accurately represented or viable in that location. He asked if this has been adjusted in any way.

Alex responded that we have heard the concerns, and understand them. Nick was brought along tonight to discuss our plan of action. Some of the latest renderings and talks with Public Works have a wider landscape area of nearly 9 feet of landscape between the wall in lot 5. The landscape area has been

increased. In the last rendering there were aspens shown, and we have since learned that this is not the direction that we want to go. We have heard you. You want something with more screening, higher screening, fenced screening, a variety of things instead of doing a linear line of aspens.

Dave commented that when Brian McNellis mentioned items 4-7 on the conditions, we did state the wall is designed to retain the realignment of Carriage Way, shall be detailed to allow for planting of spruce trees adjacent to lot 5 to screen this feature, and incorporate a veneer that is natural in appearance to blend in with the surrounding landscape. We can certainly modify this language or add to it. Alex stated that this is very doable.

Jim Gustafson (Gus) asked if, based on the 3D model there are rendered versions of this model. He mentioned that it looks like maybe the model was cut off where the road comes off of the upper road before it gets down to lot 5 on the right side.

Brian Marshack asked what the height of the wall is.

Alex responded that at the top it starts at 0, goes 4 to 4 ½, 5, 7 as it comes down to 13.

Else Denis asked with the timeline is for when we hope to start this project.

Clint Kinney responded that it could be sometime between April and July. We're still working on some of the construction management pieces.

Else asked for clarification of where the 9 feet of planting is located.

Nick Lheureux, Landscape Architect, responded that it is located in the area of the wall.

Brian Marshack asked some questions about the height of the wall.

Alex responded that the highest point is 13 ½. It is a general slope from 0 to 14.

Brian Marshack stated that with the walls how they are, especially the lot 5 wall, it feels like a medieval fort/castle. He thinks that Stan's point about the 7-foot maximum with 4-foot incremental spacing in Pitkin County would soften things. He has safety concerns about the 14-foot wall. He feels that it needs to be softened up from the hillside with landscaping. He is struggling with the intersection. It isn't great now, and he doesn't see any solutions. He's concerned about pedestrian access, and it seems a bit confusing.

Alex stated that the goal is to eliminate all pedestrians going around or down the hillside. There are no sidewalks in the plan for now, but there could be a future plan to do this. The sidewalk that is within the plan is to have pedestrians go through the mall.

John Carlin, Transportation Supervisor, commented that right now people walk up Brush Creek in front of the entrance to Upper Carriage Way and they tend to walk through the current RFTA depot. This is the flow right now. There is access to Upper Carriage Way, but people don't walk up there because it's so narrow and it's posted to use the stairs. The natural flow is to go through the depot, over to Incline, then over to Fuel and down the stairs. If it is signed and obvious that this is the flow of pedestrian traffic, and it should be helpful.

Gus commented that he saw a woman last week with her suitcase walking up Brush Creek Road heading up right from where the bus layover area is. He agrees with Brian.

Clint asked if they would like a sidewalk there.

Brian Marshack responded that if a crosswalk is going to be there, there is a need for a sidewalk.

Clint told the Planning Commission to list this as a recommendation if they would like to.

Doug Faurer commented that there is some reluctance to see the wall happen. It needs to be softened. He provided a seasonal suggestion – covering it with ivy.

Else commented that what she is hearing is that we don't like the wall. She doesn't know if trees or a specific planting is what will solve the problem. She feels like we keep coming back to the same place and same drawing of a concrete wall. She is thinking of Snowmass Village and things that fit into the mountain. To her, this is a big piece of concrete going onto the mountain long term.

Dave commented that we have a resolution that has been gone through over three meetings and prepared with conditions. The Planning Commission has the ability to approve, approve with conditions or deny the Special Review request.

An example of a wall on Carriage Way was shown to the commission which is around the same height.

Stan commented that there is a softer wall in front of the big wall to soften the situation. He is less concerned with the movements on the platform itself. He

thinks that the platform itself at the grade level it is solves some significant issues with respect to the connectivity of the mall. However, he thinks that at the lot 5 area the wall is unbroken and needs treatment more in line with the example shown to the board. He thinks that the single-loaded wall has prevented the town from having the kind of landscaping and separation of the wall into tiers that really would be extremely beneficial to the project. If the one single-loaded parking bay was removed, then make that two 7-foot segments at its highest peak, or something similar to what the group saw in the visual representation. This would allow for a variegated landscape. When transportation improvements are done, they aren't afraid to take away lineage. If they are putting in a light rail or something, they are perfectly ready to not widen the street, but simply make it less of a functional street for private vehicles to provide for a transportation improvement.

Matthew Dube commented that he supports Stan's comments, and they are all valid. The wall treatment, the scale and the parking are in direct conflict. In his process, he's thinking that the no net loss of parking is going to have to be eased if the aesthetics of the wall are to be mitigated properly. A quick calculation shows that a 9 ½ planting strip between the parking and wall, if you plant along the centerline 4 ½ foot spruce trees, are going to come into contact with vehicles.

Gus commented that he wanted to add on to what Matthew said. He has a question for planning staff and Clint. When he has been on the other side as applicant, he commented that he has been asked to make modifications to a plan during the process. He feels that there are significant enough concerns that he doesn't necessarily approve it as is, we'd like to see how the resolution might happen. He would also like to add that this is the largest most visually impactful project that the Planning Commission has approved since Base Village.

Doug commented that he would support Stan's comment on eliminating a row of parking in the form of recommendation. This would create a greater landscape buffer for the wall.

Stan commented that a recommendation in writing is one thing, but a recommendation with a visual is more compelling. He feels that if council had a visual which illustrates their intent, it would be very beneficial to the process moving forward. This would also be for the owners and the Planning Commission.

Stan commented that he is aware of the capabilities of DHM. He would like them to work on some renderings of the Planning Commissions intent and idea, and this would be beneficial to bolster the written condition of approval and make it clearer to the council.

Brian Marshack made a motion for the owners to come back with a design and renderings that indicate what has been discussed at the meeting. Specifically, an increase of landscaping, division of the wall into tiers, provision of pedestrian walkway along the perimeter of the garage. Stan Clauson made a second and approved unanimously.

Alex commented that he totally understands the lot 5 and the wall, they are on board and can provide tiering of this option. There are no concerns, and he fully understands DHM's capabilities. As for the sidewalk along the perimeter, he has major concerns about this. The impact of increasing and moving the retaining wall has major cost implications. For every foot that is moved into the hillside, it is substantial dollars. In his professional opinion, it creates safety issues. He does not like the idea of putting pedestrians or even giving them the opportunity to go down this roadway. The whole idea around this project is to separate vehicle and pedestrian movements. We have tried to do this by giving them a clear and determined path at the platform to take the sidewalk around. As John mentioned prior, this is the current movement now.

Nick commented that we have a very substantial package wayfinding packet that directs people who are new to the area, or returning. It identifies the main path of travel. Not only is there a visual buffering of the structure, but also visually separating the vehicular from the pedestrian ways. When people come to the terminus points of where do they go from here, there is a sign directing them through the elevator ways, up the stairwell, by and around the current best stream path of travel.

Brian Marshack feels that this design is too urban. The slide that was just shown makes him feel like he's in a city. Dense streets, no setbacks. The overhang, some landscaping. It's a solid mass of concrete. If we could push the road out and have a setback. This is a pedestrian family town which is consistent with our plan. If we pull the road out, we can soften this, make it safer, and make it more of a mountain, less urban type of project.

Dave spoke to a couple of points as there has been a lot of discussion on the topic. The Planning Commission does have the authority to hire consultants and perform studies prior to Town Council. We are working with the town, so we can be very specific with conditions. He's happy to help with writing this up. Then this would be sent to Town Council, and they could always hire the consultant.

Gus commented that speaking to Stan's concern, we don't need a fully engineered solution to understand how it will work. He doesn't think that it will take a month to conceptualize how this might work without having it fully engineered.

Stan brought up something that doesn't seem clear to him. When it was asked what something is, he was told a planting area. When he saw the renderings, it was a wall adjacent to the roadway and it didn't look like a planting area at all.

Nick responded that the wall is there to avoid headlights and seeing parked vehicles. The area that he highlighted for the group is 15' to 18' wide. This is something that we could work on conditions for to consider what is planted here.

Alex clarified some additional information for the Planning Commission.

Stan commented that if there is exactly 18 feet from the parked vehicle and roadway, there would be plenty of room for planting and verticality. He also mentioned there is room for a sidewalk.

Nick responded outside of the overhangs, yes.

Alex went into detail about issues with the sidewalk in certain areas.

Matthew brought up a question about the columns. He asked if we had, or could look at moving the columns in towards the interior of the space, or away from the road and incorporate this into the wall. Another option would be to cantilever the overhang so there are no columns.

Alex responded that we are at our limit for cantilevering and went into further detail. This is going to be a staging area for the Snowmass shuttle.

Doug asked how snowmelt and drainage is handled on the platform.

Alex responded that the entire platform is snowmelted, so there will be no need for snow removal. Everything is strategically drained with floor drains.

Doug asked how we will prevent the drains from freezing.

Alex responded that there will be heat tape and we can insulate the pipes as necessary.

Brian Marshack commented that it is their duty to hold everything to the highest standard with the Comprehensive Plan and their goals. He allowed his commissioners to comment.

Stan commented that what he thinks they are looking for, is visual representations of the softening along lot 5 area, and a restudy of the perimeter of the building, such that it would provide for pedestrian movements, as well as providing for screening in a softer way than a site wall.

All commissioners agreed.

Matthew commented that it is their job is to bring their expertise in these matters and to advise if some of our recommendations aren't in line with what council has said previously. I think it is well within our purview to make these recommendations.

Alex commented that shifting the road is redesign. The reason for this is that there are very stringent and radical grades on this site. You have to understand the grading, the percents of change in the roadways and sidewalks, and the movements before you can confirm if something works or not. We have to run the grades and changes to make sure it will work. There are fire trucks, buses, vehicles that are trying to make these movements, and there are a lot of moving parts to matching up with 14% grades. This is not something their team can turn around in a week or week and a half.

Doug commented that we are in agreement about the landscaping, but he is wondering if there is a consensus on the sidewalk.

Ellese commented that she doesn't have the expertise to comment.

There was a question about the width of the street – 24 feet at the smallest point.

There was a motion made by Stan Clauson for the applicant to come back with a design on the tiering of the wall with landscaping improvements along lot 5, and to explore pedestrian safety along the perimeter of the parking deck adjacent to Brush Creek Road, second by Ellese Denis and approved unanimously.

Matthew suggested moving forward the comments that were made at the last meeting about sense of place, materials, light, community character, and citing the town hall and recreation center as examples.

Dave stated that there are 7 recommendations and conditions in the resolution at this time. He tried to capture the architecture that Matthew just spoke to in condition 6.

Matthew is suggesting flushing it out a little more with the prior comments.

Dave said that he would like to know how he would like this to be revised. Matthew made some remarks. "He is suggesting this for inclusion of the prior statements of the commission. He is suggesting that the two buildings on the platform be designed to be in harmony with the site and that the design used context appropriate materials, interesting use of form and light, and that there are visual elements that engage the eye." He suggests that the existing

language in section 6 should be deleted. Specifically, “the look is too generic” should be revised. The comments that he suggested infers this sentiment.

Stan Clauson made a motion to revise condition 6. Elsese Denis made a second and it was approved unanimously.

Brian Marshack opened up public comment.

Jay Shuumaker provided a presentation to voice his public comment.

This meeting was adjourned at 6:07 P.M.