

TOWN OF SNOWMASS VILLAGE

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

December 7, 2022

Members Present:

Brian Marshack, Chairman
Matthew Dube, Vice Chairman
Jim Gustafson
Stan Clauson
Doug Faurer
Elese Denis

Staff Present:

Dave Shinneman
Brian McNellis
Sara Nester
John Dresser
Clint Kinney
Sam Guarino
John Carlin

Members Absent:

Christy MacLear

Others Present:

Tim McMann
Jay Schumaaker
Matt Gwost
Dave Mercatoris
Alex Jauch

Item 1: Snowmass Transit Center – Site Visit:

Brian Marshack, Chair, started the conversation by stating that this would be a site visit, and an official public meeting. Alex Jauch, Architect, will give a tour of the proposed project. There are to be no public comments until the group has returned to Town Hall. This is a time for commissioners to comment and discuss things amongst themselves.

This meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

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Sam Guarino
Betsy Crum

Members Absent:

Christy MacLear

Others Present:

Jay Schumaaker
Alex Jauch

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:20 p.m. by Brian Marshack, Chairman.

Item 1: Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 30, 2022: The Minutes from the 11/2/22 meeting were brought up for approval. Jim Gustafson made a motion to approve, second by Matthew Dube and approved unanimously.

Item 2: Special Review Application – Continued: Brian Marshack, Chairman, opened the meeting by stating that there was an official site tour of Town Park and provided a Q & A. All members that are currently at the meeting attended the site visit, as well as a couple of members from the public.

Jim Gustafson (Gus) brought up a follow-up item from our last meeting. He asked for some of the earlier ideas showing how/why the reverse circulation could work. He visualizes the worst-case scenario. There is a new bus driver, it's snowing out, there's a ruckus going on in the bus, and people are trying to ask questions – it seems like when the people are walking in front of the buses all the time, it seems like an inevitability sooner or later, there will be conflicts. The reverse circulation seems to make so much sense. He also brought up the story poles discussion that he started with Dave through email. He knows from experience that when you stand on a sloped site, it is hard to get oriented to how high things are.

John Dresser, Town Attorney, responded that he thinks this is something that should be put to the commission rather than a request outside of a meeting so everyone can hear the request, the applicant, the commissioners, and the staff. If this is what the commission desires, that's how this should happen.

Gus responded that he requests from the commission that we have story poles at some point.

Brian asked if everyone is in favor of the story poles and marking the corners. All commissioners agreed.

Dave Shinneman, Community Development Director, commented that there were several questions on the site visit as to where the structure and where the road comes in across from Daily Lane, and where the structure begins.

Doug Faurer commented that seeing something with a three-dimensional presentation to it, whether it is a model, or it can be done visually.

Stan Clauson commented that he is unsure if there is a formal motion with a second for story poles. He made a motion that we have story poles marking the frontmost corners of the building, and in addition to this, there are some stakes/street paint markings showing the departure of the roadway. He feels that we only need two story poles.

Matthew Dube, Vice Chairman, commented on the location of the poles. Based on the elevations that are in the presentation, he thinks it would be appropriate to see one pole marking the maximum height of the elevator tower. This is shown in the east exterior elevation. He would also like to see the maximum heights of each of the two buildings, and the maximum height of the platform itself. These are all points that are represented in the elevations in the project description.

Brian McNellis, Senior Planner, is wondering if there is a need to install these, or if they can be out there in real time. It sounds like you want two story poles at two corners. We can have someone out there with the appropriate size poles holding them for the Planning Commission to view.

Brian Marshack commented that this is fine.

Brian McNellis asked for a point of clarification, the top of the platform, should this include the top of railing as well?

Matthew responded yes, top of the railing. The maximum height.

Brian Marshack commented that he wants to see stakes or where the roads are going to come in the intersections.

Brian Marshack made a motion to approve the story poles, second by Gus and approved unanimously.

Alex Jauch, Architect, went through the feasibility study which was initially started with/contracted on. He went over the options that we reviewed to come to the counterclockwise movement.

There was a continued discussion about the concern of the safety of the center island where all of the pedestrians go.

Gus asked if it would be possible to have a second staging area that is less expensive to build. It may not be quite as efficient, but it seems like it would be safer to have the pedestrians always entering on the right side of the buses.

Sam Guarino, Transportation Director, stated that he understands what he is saying about other options for staging. He would take folks away from the staging on this. Operationally, for the bus system, because of the number of bays there would be, the platform/design would be very difficult to make it work operationally.

There was continued discussion about how this idea could or couldn't work.

Clint Kinney, Town Manager, stated that we wanted this design to work. The science, the math, the turning radius, and everything else didn't work. Intuitively, we agree, but after all the analysis that went on, the consensus of council is that it doesn't work. All options were shown on the screen to board members.

Else asked for something to ensure the safety of pedestrians as they go across the space.

Clint responded, as the applicant and owner, a condition of approval from the planning commission is appropriate. The town has the same concerns as well. A condition of approval to continue to improve safety would be supported.

Dave mentioned that the safety question has come out many times, and this has been discussed by staff as well. A thought that staff had regarding safety and helping to make sure that people are directed to the crosswalk. There was a discussion of landscape planters or railings that would direct people from the platform.

Clint said that we are open to suggestions to be safer, but we are happy with the current design, but if there are ways to improve it, we are on board.

Matthew commented that because of the clockwise movement of the buses across the space, pedestrians walking towards the mall may not know to look left. To clue in the pedestrians to look left, it would help with Elese's concern. There are many visitors that come to the area that are not familiar with the patterns of movement.

Sam responded that as a long-time bus driver, and as the Transit Director, they are trained to always yield to pedestrians.

Alex commented that this is not unheard of, and it happens quite often. Rubey Park for example, has multitudes of crossings around it where buses are continuously crossing one way or another. 27th street in Glenwood is the same. We rely on the drivers to be aware of their surroundings because pedestrians are oblivious.

Brian Marshack asked what the average number of people coming through the transit center is in two hours.

Sam responded that he has a number to not hold him to, but he will come up with a more accurate number later. Anywhere between two and four thousand in a two-hour peak period. The team has worked hard to make sure that there is an accurate queuing space. There will be the RFTA superintendents, the foreman, and SkiCo ambassadors assisting with these processes as well.

Doug mentioned that he understands the need for the planter boxes to help with channeling traffic and keep the flow going. Is there an opportunity to work with SAAB on this? This would be in addition to the landscaping.

Brian McNellis commented that this has been discussed, and we certainly think there is an opportunity for this. In terms of the platform itself, and installation of art, we would have to see how pedestrian flows are working. We have set aside interior and exterior space for SAAB to place in the new transit center.

Clint commented that council has been firm in their desire to have a discovery 2.0 presence. It may not be art, and may be more science, but this has been in the works.

There was a request at the last meeting to provide more details on the parking garage. Alex tried to show additional views of the garage to provide a better perspective and provided possible signage.

Elese commented that bringing out the natural colors of our environment rather than concrete e.g., greens, browns, whites.

Brian McNellis commented that he likes the idea of bringing the skirt wall behind the columns because it does allow the contrast to occur.

Stan Clauson asked if board form concrete will be used on the walls.

Alex responded that they will be steel form.

Stan asked if the screen is pulled back, what is the soffit or underside that is revealed, just the concrete slab?

Alex said that it will be a bare-colored concrete.

Matthew asked if it would be appropriate to install downlighting in the soffit.

Alex responded that it could be something that they look at. They have been on the approach of minimizing lighting as much as possible. We were potentially looking at the entry piece if this could be minimally backlit for evening short-term lighting.

Dave commented that after talking with Pokolodi, they are down below, so when you look up the lights may be recessed in the garage. This is one of the reasons staff asked for the skirt wall.

Brian Marshack asked if there is any circulation in the garage.

Alex responded that he spent three hours researching yesterday, and no, there isn't any. We meet the requirements. We meet all open-air requirements, and he tried to build in a buffer that he did the calcs from the bottom of the screening.

Stan asked for an explanation of the process for approval.

Dave responded that from this review of the special review application if you look at the staff report it will guide you. It is consistent with the comprehensive plan, comply with the development code, compatible with the appropriate use and location of surrounding uses. All these things come into play. What he anticipates coming out of this is a resolution from the Planning Commission with a set of recommendations and conditions to go to council. The Town Council will then approve the final plan and the special review application.

Matthew brought up a question for Dave and the email he sent out about height and setbacks. Height and setbacks are some of the fundamental setbacks that the commission is asked to review. Is it true that there are no existing requirements in the code?

Dave responded correct, that under the public zoning district, or the SPA, there is no set standard. He thinks that what he is looking at is the criteria under the special review application to say, is the height appropriate or not. Is it blocking a ridgeline or a nearby view? It's like PUD – you're setting the standard with this application.

Stan commented on parcel C, the addition to the mall. When this was built, he feels that it created some adverse gradients for pedestrians. He thinks that this is long asked for correction. It appears to him that it corrects a very adverse situation relative to the entryway to the mall from the lower parking lots and pedestrian ways, and the bus itself.

Alex was able to pull up a 3D drawing to show, per Doug's request.

Doug brought up the need to remove the retaining wall and the tall pines. He's wondering how tall they will be when they are replaced.

Alex responded that the size of the trees hasn't been called out. They are meant to fill the space like the existing space. The landscaping team has said that the current trees are a little large.

Stan brought up the discussion that CDOT typically has spacing between an intersection and a driveway. Right now, the spacing between Upper Carriage Way where it meets Lower Carriage Way is very minimal. He is wondering what has been thought of for that.

Alex responded that the idea that this is purely buses only will limit that impact. It isn't a true intersection, and our traffic team has studied this.

Matthew asked a question about the retaining wall. 14 ½ feet from the wall to the driving surface is a lot of material. What type of treatment is proposed for this to make it a little more aesthetic.

Alex responded that the formal engineering drawings were sent to the town. This portion of Brush Creek, and the centerline of the road is under 10%. The current Carriage Way is well over 14% in some areas. The area between the parking entrance and lot 5 based on the renderings are under 3%. We are trying to do our best with some of the existing grades in the area. We're working on the lot between lot 5 and the retaining wall to improve the landscaping. We're balancing parking designs and layouts with Public Works and hope to have some landscaping in that area to soften the area with landscaping.

Doug asked where the snowmelt begins.

Alex showed the snowmelt exhibit and went through the areas that are snow melted.

Stan asked if all buses will be turning right from the platform?

Sam responded that all RFTA buses will be, and most of the shuttle buses will be as well. The caveat of that is that when we are running service to Mountain View, we would turn left.

Stan asked if we would consider a right turn provision for Upper Carriage Way at this intersection? It seems that a car turning right onto Lower Carriage Way from Upper Carriage Way might have sight issues with larger buses.

Alex commented that there shouldn't be anything within this view corridor. The lane is wide open from this intersection, nearly all the way down to the apex of the corner. This is the reason why there is less landscaping in this area.

Alex brought up a question from the last meeting about utility plants. He showed the overall utility plants and the storm drains. He provided detail to the board.

Stan asked if it is reasonable to consider whether any opportunities are developed from this for the existing village shuttle station? Is there any other redevelopment that could occur that would be beneficial?

Clint responded that the most official document that we have gotten is the most recent housing plan that the Planning Commission has seen. It talks about combining the Snowmass Inn and this property into a larger workforce housing project. The feasibility was on the lower end of it, but we know this is a prized piece of land that is a great opportunity if we're working with adjacent property owners, or ourselves.

Doug brought up the construction period that was mentioned on the site visit – is it really 27 months?

Alex responded that a lot behind this is the phasing itself. If we had a clean slate and no impacts to pedestrian traffic, adjacent owners etc., we would likely be able to have this done in eighteen months. We are trying to impact the property owners as little as possible.

Matthew asked if the Planning Commission can comment on the construction management plan, or is it strictly the project itself?

Clint responded that he is going to defer to Dave. Town Council will review this. We are hoping to have a high-quality draft for the owners (Council) by next week for their review.

Dave responded that it isn't part of the Special Review Application, but the building permit application.

Brian Marshack asked how big the retaining wall is at the base of lot 5?

Alex responded that he doesn't have a rendering, that his team is working on it as we speak. He does have a profile that provides the heights. He reviewed this with the board. He confirmed that the retaining wall is fourteen feet.

Brian Marshack asked how high it is from Carriage Way to the top of the garage?

Alex responded nineteen feet at the entrance.

Brian Marshack asked for a 3D rendering of the retaining wall.

The conversation continued about the retaining wall, and the possible redesign or elimination of lot 5, as well as parking.

Brian Marshack said that it would be beneficial to have the story poles up next week at 3:00 p.m. so the board members can see them. There will also be cones showing where Carriage Way comes out.

Dave mentioned that staff will work with the applicant and consultants to get this done. He suggested that staff prepare a draft resolution with conditions for the next meeting. He has made note of the safety concerns, art on the walls, the discovery 2.0, the skirt wall, colors that are more natural. Things can be added or subtracted as it is seen fit.

The next meeting will be at 3:00 p.m. for a site visit, and there will be a continued meeting and a public meeting following in Council Chambers.

This meeting was adjourned at 6:11 PM.