TOWN OF SNOWMASS VILLAGE

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

December 20, 2023

Members Present:
Brian Marshack, Chair
Matthew Dube, Vice Chair
Elese Denis
David Seglin
Jim Gustafson
Doug Faurer
Stan Clauson

Staff Present:
Clint Kinney
Dave Shinneman
Brian McNellis
Ashleigh Huff
Sara Nester
Betsy Crum

Members Absent:

Others Present:
Molly Somes
Patrick Rawley
Sara Duffin
Heather Henry
J.R. Spung
Erica Goldon

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Marshack.

Item 1: Approval of 11-15-2023 Meeting Minutes:
The minutes from the 11-15-23 meeting were brought up for approval. Commissioner Gustafson brought a question to the attention of the Housing Director Betsy Crum regarding a previous request. Chairman Marshack made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Dube, and they were approved unanimously.

Item 2: Draw Site PUD Application:
Brian McNellis, Senior Planner, started the conversation by introducing the Draw Site PUD Application. Mr. McNellis emphasized the significance of this meeting as an opportunity for review of the sketch plan and providing comments to the applicant. The Town Council, through a four-to-one vote, agreed to make this application.

Mr. McNellis discussed the eight review standards, including appropriateness of use, consistency with the town's comp plan, architecture and landscaping, mass scale and density, natural resources, hazard areas, access and circulation, parking sufficiency, timetable, phasing, and community welfare. Mr. McNellis reminded the Planning Commission to refer to and critique the project based on the review standards from the Code.

Mr. McNellis stated that at the end of the review, the staff will draft a resolution of recommendation for the Town Council per the recommendation or direction of the Planning Commission. Mr. McNellis handed the introduction over to Dave Shinneman, Director of Community Development, to discuss the comprehensive plan and its relevance to the project.

Dave Shinneman, Community Development Director, gave an overview of the comprehensive plan, emphasizing its consistency with the draw site and its relevance to the project. He then discussed the review standard of consistency with the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Shinneman described the history of the parcels, mentioning the dedication of these parcels was in part for employee housing. He also highlighted several statements in the comprehensive plan referring to this site and the need for employee housing. He said the Comprehensive Plan is a visioning document that sets the goals and aspirations of the town.

Mr. Shinneman referred to specific sections of the comprehensive plan that discuss the draw site area and encourage higher-density residential development close to town centers for sustainability and steady economic activity. The plan also addresses the possible need for a higher density or height for projects to be financially viable.

Mr. Shinneman referenced the workforce housing master plan adopted in 2021 and its relevance to the review. Acknowledges that while the comprehensive plan supports the draw site project, it doesn't dictate approval or denial of the specific proposal. Indicates that aspects like height, intensity, and scale are open for review in the development process.

Commission Members posed questions to Mr. Shinneman, seeking clarification on the comprehensive plan's relationship with the Workforce Housing Master plan.

Mr. Shinneman answered clarifying that the Master Plan can be considered as an extension of the comprehensive plan. Mr. Shinneman also confirmed the Draw site was considered in the Workforce Housing Master Plan as one of the preferred sites.

Chairman Marshak asked for clarification on what the commission should consider for review.

Mr. Shinneman answered that the purpose of the Sketch Plan review is explained is the first step in the PUD planning process and allows the Commission to raise issues, examining alternative approaches, and allowing the proposal to evolve through a review of the eight standards described previously.

A question was raised about the build-out chart not addressing the Draw site project. The staff recommends an amendment to the build-out chart in the Comprehensive Plan to include the appropriate number of units for the Draw site. This could be done concurrently with the rezoning and preliminary PUD (Planned Unit Development) process.

Commissioner Clauson opened the discussion about a potential conflict of interest. The town attorney has determined that there is no conflict of interest at the previous joint meeting. A suggestion is made to revise any reference to Clauson Raleigh to avoid confusion. Agreement to make the necessary revisions. It is noted that this clarification was made during a joint meeting for full transparency.

Betsy Crum, Housing Director, introduced herself and introduced the design team, including J.R. Sprung from JVA, Patrick Raleigh (land use consultant), and Erica Golden (site architect). Heather Henry and Molly Solms from Connect One, the landscape team, are also online.

Ms. Crum Provided context about the critical need for housing in the valley, citing community surveys and business surveys where housing consistently ranks as the number one need. She emphasized the acute shortage of housing, especially with rising rental prices and the challenges faced by businesses in recruiting and retaining employees and stressed the urgency to address the housing need. She expressed excitement about presenting a plan that builds upon the master plan developed during the COVID-19 time to address the housing need in a significant way.

Commissioner Faurer acknowledges the acute housing need and provided a timeline perspective on the project. He asked about the potential timeline from start to finish, considering the approval process and construction.

Ms. Crum responded the project could take around 3 years if everything goes smoothly, with a year for permitting and a 24-month construction period. Town Manager, Clint Kinney, described the need for a vote of the people in November of the following year and indicated construction would probably not start before 2025.

Chairman Marshack encouraged moving forward with the presentation, redirecting the focus to the upcoming information session.

Patrick Raleigh, Raleigh Design Planning, introduced himself and the project team. Mr. Raleigh mentioned the project's foundation on the 2019 Town Council policy objectives and the subsequent development of the master plan, unanimously recommended by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Town Council. Highlights aspects of the comprehensive plan, emphasizing the limited available land and the central location for high-density development around the town hall and the draw site. Emphasized the benefits of concentrating development in areas with existing services.

Mr. Raleigh outlined the core issues: mass and scale, access and parking, and community purpose. Acknowledged feedback received and discussed the receptiveness to reduce parking, building height perception, and the focus on sustainable approaches. He highlighted the need with reduced parking to focus on amenities such as electric vehicle charging stations, car share programs, and enhanced pedestrian amenities. He acknowledges the need for road design refinement, considerations for adding Snow Melt, addressing complex grading, ensuring accessibility, and prioritizing pedestrian safety.

He stated that he recognizes the need for additional studies prior to submittal of a Preliminary plan. MR. Raleigh introduced Erica Golden to continue the presentation.

Erica Golden from Site Architects presented the survey conducted over a year ago, outlining the initial three-month focus on-site analysis, including wildlife, wildfire investigation, geotechnical studies, debris flow, rockfall, and a phase one environmental site assessment. Ms. Golden presented the various options her team designed stressing the emphasis on minimizing disturbance based on site analysis and avoiding steep parts of the site shown in the master plan.

There was a discussion about access around buildings based on Fire Marshall preferences and the need for a turnaround. There is a clarification that the Fire Marshall desires access around all buildings, and a turnaround is necessary for fire trucks.

Ms. Golden finished the presentation of the design progression and introduced the preferred alternative, a two-building solution with a parking garage and green roof in between. Reduction of parking allowed for stepping down of the building height, addressing perceived height and mass from various viewpoints.

Ms. Golden introduced Heather Henry to continue the discussion.

Heather Henry, Connect One, introduced landscape design aspects, integrating technical components such as road design, fire access, and grading scenarios. Ms. Henry stated that the focus on achieving aesthetics, with more intense landscaping in interaction spaces and blending the site into the hillside reduces its footprint with an emphasis on accessibility with ADA-compliant ramps, handrails, and stairs, allowing for direct connections within the site. Ms. Henry touched on coordination and critical aspects involving drainage, snow storage, and technical considerations to manage snowmelt areas. There is a discussion of the solar array, coordination with Core (the original grantor), and exploration of relocation options to meet the town's needs.

Ms. Henry introduced J.R. Spung to continue the presentation.

J.R. Spung, JVA Engineering, presented the road design, emphasizing the preference for fire department access to each side of the buildings, especially considering the height of some structures. He explained the need for switchbacks to avoid huge cuts and sinking into the hill. Mr. Spung mentions that various options were considered, and debris flow and stormwater management were also analyzed.

Mr. Spung concluded the presentation and opened the discussion to questions from the Planning Commission.

The meeting participants actively engaged in discussion, expressing their concerns, and suggestions, and seeking clarification on various aspects of the proposed project. Meeting participants explored questions related to the project's alignment with the town's needs, potential flexibility in design, and the importance of addressing natural hazards.

Ms. Crum shared the unit mix based on current demand, waiting lists, and the preferences of potential residents reviewing conceptual floor plans and emphasizing the functionality of units and the considerations for outdoor decks, laundry, and storage.

Commissioner Faurer posed a question about parking and the proposed reduction of parking spaces. The developers highlight the flexibility of the design, mentioning the option to increase parking by adjusting the height of the parking garage in the center building. There's also a suggestion to use the green roof for additional parking without affecting the building's height. The potential impact on the amenity of the green roof is acknowledged if additional parking is added, emphasizing that it wouldn't affect the buildings' scale, mass, or height.

Commissioner Clauson posed a question about debris flow. The developers confirm that the debris flow basin is sized to handle the entire debris flow coming down the middle channel. Geologic studies, including rock fall analysis, have been conducted, and no hazards have been found on the site related to building placement. The back and forth between the Planning Commission and the project presenter highlights the careful consideration of natural hazards, stormwater management, and the integration of these elements into the project's design, with an emphasis on maximizing benefits and minimizing potential risks.

Vice Chairman Dube posed a question regarding traffic volume and safety. The Town Manager, Clint Kinney, answered stating that the impact depends on the number of approved units. Mr. Sprung also indicated that traffic counts were previously discussed, emphasizing the importance of springtime counts for the worst-case scenario.

Commissioner Gustafson requested a shadow study. Staff entered the discussion on the need for shadow studies, but acknowledgment that they haven't been done at this time in detail.

Chairman Marshak asked staff to prepare a summary of the existing zoning, and the proposed zoning changes, stressing the importance of focusing on the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Seglin posed a final question regarding the public vote needed for the project, asking for clarification on what will be presented to the voters. Mr. Kinney clarified that a description of the project, proposed cost, and sources of money for the project would be included.

Chairman Marshack confirmed there will not need to be any new appointments for 2024.

Commissioners and staff agree further discussion of the Draw Site application will be needed and agree to continue the discussion until the January 3rd meeting.

Commissioner Denis made a motion to adjourn, and Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion, all were in favor.

This meeting was adjourned at 6:05 P.M.