

MINUTES

CARBONDALE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Thursday July 15, 2021

Commissioners Present:

Michael Durant, Chair
Nick Miscione
Jay Engstrom, Vice-Chair
Kim Magee (1st Alternate)
Jeff Davlyn
Jarrett Mork (2nd Alternate)
Nicholas DiFrank

Staff Present:

Janet Buck, Planning Director
John Leybourne, Planner
Mary Sikes, Planning Assistant

Commissioners Absent:

Marina Skiles
Erica Stahl Golden

Other Persons Present Virtually

Ryan Lee, architect/Forum Phi
Damon Roth, 520 Mesa Verde Avenue
Keith Walzak/Cushing Terrell
Ted Kamp/Leland Consulting Group
Nora Bland/Cushing Terrell
Dave Dixon/Cushing Terrell

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Michael Durant

June 24, 2021 Minutes:

Jeff made a motion to approve the June 24, 2021 minutes. Jay seconded the motion, and they were approved unanimously, with Michael and Nick abstaining.

Public Comment – Persons Present Not on the Agenda

There were no persons present to speak on a non-agenda item.

CONTINUED VIRTUAL HEARING – Major Plat Amendment

Location: 520 Mesa Verde

Applicant: Ryan Lee, Forum Phi

There were six letters entered into the record that were sent to the Commission.

John stated that at the June 24th Planning and Zoning Commission Hearing, the Commission reviewed the application for a preliminary plat to subdivide an existing platted lot in Colorado Meadows Subdivision. He said that the Commission heard from Staff, the applicant and opened the public comments portion of the hearing, receiving public

comments, then closed the public comments portion of the meeting. He said that the Commission may, if they so wish, reopen the public comment portion of the meeting.

John stated that after lengthy discussion, the Commission made a motion to direct Staff to draft conditions of approval and to continue the hearing to the July 15th meeting. John said that the motion passed with three yes votes and one no vote.

John said below you will find the Preliminary Plat approval criteria, findings for approval and conditions of approval as requested.

John stated that you will find the Staff Recommendation for denial submitted for the June 24th meeting staff report below.

Commission Questions and Discussion

Michael asked for clarification of the conditions.

Ryan stated that they did not have issues with the conditions of approval that have been proposed. He said that they want to be sensitive of the neighbors, based on comments from the last meeting. He said that their lot split is not a precedent of this neighborhood. He showed a diagram of the fifty-four lots, in red, which none of them can be split because they do not meet the minimum lot area of 6000 square feet per lot. He said additionally the purple lots all have steep slopes that are on the dog park side, with development on the backside being near impossible. He said that the three green lots on his diagram meet the criteria for a lot split and the one at 520 Mesa Verde has existing access to the rear garage. He said that he would like to make a point that was discussed at the last meeting, which was an access easement, as outlined in the conditions of approval. He said that the access that currently serves the existing garage structure that we are proposing to replace is going to remain intact and that the utilities that are going to the garage structure will be re-utilized for the new structure in the rear.

Commission Discussion

Further discussion ensued regarding the access and utility easement.

Jeff asked the applicant to respond to Staff's three findings of denial.

Ryan said that the consistency of the lots in the current subdivision average 6000 – 9000 square feet. He said that making two separate lots in residential low density would make perfect sense to him. He said that it is not out of context for the neighborhood itself, looking at the map and the diagrams that they put together.

Ryan said that as far as the Comprehensive Plan it is something that is up for debate and that it is going to be continuing to change. He said that in their previous presentation that we tried to address the need for additional housing/infill housing, which is something that the Comprehensive Plan is very adamant about and that ADU's were supported. He said

that their opinion of the Comprehensive Plan and how we have met it has met the goals of that design intent document.

Damon said that their intent with the new property in back is to provide a home for a family. He said that if we were to do a detached ADU we would be limited to five hundred square feet. He said that it is a creative way that the P&Z and BOT's can provide more housing, within our community for people that live here and our friends. He said that it might not be all conforming to all person's mindsets, but we have an opportunity with a very large lot that we just don't use. He said that Ryan and he went through a lot of the objections from neighbors and that it seems that the biggest issue is parking. He said that we are going to have four spots in the back and that we could add a few more spots for the front house but we would lose some nice trees. He said that we are not adding an additional curb cut and we are providing housing without doing that. He said that he has one direct neighbor that is objecting, and all the others are supporting it.

Damon said that there had been concerns that if they do the lot split that we are going to do ADU's in each lot split, that will turn two structures into four. He said that one condition could be that there is no ADU on either lot and that we are willing to support.

Jay said that a point that he thinks is important is that the proposed house would use the same water and curb stop with the same sewer connection. He said that they are running through the middle of the front property and would be in the easement. He said that the Public Works Department for the Town of Carbondale would need to review. He said that if there was a leak or a break who would be responsible. He said that this would need to be addressed if this plan was to move forward.

John said that the applicant would have to do a new tap for both the sewer and water in the easement and it can not run off the existing structure.

Ryan said that if the easement is supported that we can then proceed with contacting departments and consults to get everything coordinated.

The Commission did not re-open the comment portion of the public hearing.

Commissioner Comments

- Access issue is a big concern with the lot split.
- Flag lot or back lots are common and as long as plats and agreements are in place in the deeds it would be doable.
- The Comp Plan encourages infill and density.

Further discussion ensued regarding continuing the public hearing to let the applicant prepare the easement agreements and plat.

Ryan stated that it is understood that they are moving forward at risk with an easement that is going to be recorded on a lot that hasn't been split yet.

John said that the easement is not recorded yet and that you would be bringing forward a plat showing what you want to do with the lot and showing access to it. He said that there is no approval on the easement until the Board of Trustees approve the final plat.

Ryan said that it is understood that we are putting together a plat that needs to be ready for an approval and ready for a stamp.

Further discussion ensued regarding the path forward and that an easement does not guarantee approval.

Further discussion ensued regarding Staff's three findings for denial.

Further discussion ensued regarding the applicant's willingness to disallow ADU's on either lot if their lot was split, which would need to be a plat note.

Motion

Jeff made a motion to deny the preliminary plat. Nick seconded the motion, and it was a tie, the motion failed.

Yes: Jay, Jeff, Nick

No: Michael, Nicholas, Kim

Motion For Continuance to September 30, 2021

Jeff made a motion to continue this application to September 30, 2021 to give the applicant a chance to respond to the conditions for approval. Nick seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Yes: Jay, Kim, Nicholas, Nick, Jeff, Michael

No: None

Jarrett Mork logged in for the Cushing Terrell portion of the meeting.

Comprehensive Plan Update – Consultant Team Cushing Terrell (CT) Meeting #2

The consultant team discussed Market Economics, Housing, Downtown, Downtown North:

Community Engagement Update

- Focus Group Sessions - Keith
 - Met with E-Board, June 28
 - Met with Cleer (Clean Energy Economy for the Region), July 14
 - Made Affordable Housing its own focus group

- Engagement Events - Nora
 - First Fridays, July 2
 - Third Street Center, Latinx Community/Outreach by Community Leaders, August 16
 - Potential Open House, not currently in the budget or scope, August 17

- Kathleen/PR Studio (Project Resource Studio) at Farmer's Market – Information and post cards.
- Kaleidoscope Website/Kathleen setup with a logo and survey – Chart Carbondale/Comp Plan Update – Website can be translated into Spanish, instructions at the top of the page. (168 responses so far) The survey closes August 6.

PSC Mtg. #1 Outcomes

- Vision + Goals Input - Keith
 - Recommendation 1 – Vision Draft;
'The Town of Carbondale is a proud steward of our natural environment, is a place of cultural and social diversity who celebrates its small-town character and offers a sustainable and self-sufficient town government that provides equitable and quality services to all community members.'
 - Recommendation 2 – Consider removing the four Areas of Alignment and fold each element into the Goals and Objectives discussion.
 - Recommendation 3 – Clarify terms, goals, objectives, policies, strategies etc.
 - Recommendation 4 – Reorganizing the eight Goal/Objective Statements.

Demographics/Market Economics/Housing – Ted Kamp/Leland

- Key Observation
 - Forecast growth/carrying capacity – predicting growth, influences, three main shapes of growth trendlines;
 - 1 – linear – We build about 20 housing units each year.
 - 2 – exponential – Our population grows by about 1.5% each year.
 - 3 – logistic (or constrained exponential) – We used to grow around 2% per year, but we're running out of land.
 - What are the current growth trends, four decades of Carbondale's growth, which are debatable;
 - Roughly linear, the town added 123 residents per year on average since 1980.
 - Roughly exponential, at least at first, averaging 4.9% growth between 1980 and 2000.
 - Predicting Growth
 - Pros: makes intuitive sense, fits the data, acknowledges finite resources.
 - Cons: Acknowledges finite resources, adds complications, carrying capacity can be increased.
 - Two Population Growth Scenarios
 - Share of county growth method (high) -12.8% over the whole 40-year period, 12.3% since 2010.
 - ❖ DOLA projects that Garfield County will grow with a slight exponential curve through 2030, then nearly linear from 2030 to 2050.

- ❖ We'll assume a constant 12.3% Carbondale share of countywide population growth (matching the latest decade of historical trend)
- Capacity-Limited, logistic (low), growth slows as the town approaches build-out.
 - ❖ This scenario assumes that the town has capacity for approximately 9,800 residents today.
 - ❖ With a population just over 7,000, the town is assumed to be within 30% of its supportable capacity.
 - ❖ The model also lets the total capacity limit to grow very slightly over time (allowing for technological advances and shifting attitudes towards allowable density), reaching 10,200 by 2040.
- Components of change – To better understand the drivers of growth;
 - ❖ Net migration – refers to the total of new residents coming in from other areas minus the total who leave, in a given period.
 - ❖ Natural increase – measures growth from births minus deaths, usually annually.
- Has the Town been able to achieve housing diversity
 - Housing Unit Demand – The number of housing units required per resident is a function of household sizes and vacancy rates.
 - ❖ Vacancy rates, in turn, are driven by household demand relative to supply plus non-resident demand (second homes, seasonal/occasional use)
 - ❖ Population per housing unit of towns in the region was charted.
 - ❖ Actively developing residential projects in Carbondale include a substantial portion of affordable units, signaling a commitment to residents over second-home and seasonal users.
 - ❖ Building Permit Activity – The current pipeline of under construction and planned/proposed residential units far exceeds historical precedent for the town, which has averaged just over 21 units per year in building permits since 2012.
 - ✚ 277 Total Units Under Construction
 - ✚ 199 Units (Excl. Assisted Living)
 - ✚ 105 Units Proposed
 - ❖ Almost all residential activity now underway falls under the general description of “missing middle housing”. Lying between suburban low-density single-family detached and urban high-density mid-rise. Variety of product formats and unit mixes, with many affordable units.

- ❖ Shifting population age – Median ages are rising steadily for the state and region. A shift with implications for housing demand. Pitkin County is an exception to the general trend, with median age peaking in recent years and declining through 2030. The rise in senior coinciding with decline in kids (0-19) is most striking. The growth in 20-somethings is somewhat counter to the national trend, which is more reflective of the aging of Millennials into their 30's.
 - ❖ Housing Affordability – Mountain communities often face a perfect storm of affordability challenges, as quality-of-life advantages and natural limits on infrastructure expansion combine to drive prices out of reach for most.
- How have new job trends, remote work economy, impacted the community
 - The northern Roaring Fork Valley and western Eagle County have historically served as bedroom communities serving visitor hubs to the south and east.
 - Carbondale has been maturing and is not just a bedroom community for Aspen, as it was in the past. It is becoming more self-sufficient.
 - Women and Hispanic/Latinx work workers, both residing and working in Carbondale, continue to outpace other groups in overall job growth.
 - Commercial real estate in Carbondale is dominated by retail and hospitality (lodging) space.
- Vision + Goals Input

Downtown/Downtown North/Residential Focus Areas - Dave

- Land Uses + Zoning
 - Housing Units in all three areas above total 633, about 32% of total housing.
- Character + Form
 - **Downtown** – Existing
 - Mix of pedestrian storefronts, civic buildings, office, urban housing.
 - About 204 housing units on 21 acres.
 - Vision for Future Land Use
 - “Heart of the Community”
 - Downtown commercial and institutional uses with opportunities for residential upstairs
 - Preserve historic buildings
 - Allow variety in new buildings
 - Shared parking
 - Walkable form

- Trends + Questions
 - Downtown hasn't seen recent development
 - How and why should growth be re-focused to Downtown? Historic Commercial Core Zoning: is it serving its intended purpose?
 - Many have tried to bring a project to fruition
 - Are historic preservation mechanisms effective/adequate?
 - How much growth capacity can be handled in Downtown?
 - About 3.7 acres of vacant land
 - @ 20 units/acre = 73 units
 - @ 40 units/acre = 147 units

 - **Downtown North** – Existing
 - Light industrial
 - Equipment storage
 - “Double-T” concrete buildings
 - Modular/mobile equipment and trailers
 - 40 tenants, + - 200 employees
 - Transportation
 - Vision for Future Land Use
 - 1) May remain a light industrial center for decades to come, or;
 - 2) Ideal location for mixed-use redevelopment complementary to downtown.
 - Extend the downtown
 - Pedestrian oriented
 - Limited to three stories
 - Or a combination of 1 and 2
- Trends + Questions
 - Developer is ready, waiting to see community's vision in process
 - Primed for housing? What kind....
 - Extension of downtown or new neighborhood?
 - Improve bike/ped, vehicle connections to downtown
 - Access to open space
 - New senior housing
 - How much housing growth capacity can be handled in Downtown North?
 - About 13-15 acres
 - @ 12 units/acre = 170 units
 - @ 24 units/acre = 340 units
 - What's the nonresidential vision in Downtown North?
 - Manufacturing? Amenities? Maker-spaces?
 - Job generating activities
 - Industrial? Services? Locally-generated jobs? Hospitality?
 - Most likely a combination

 - **Residential Focus Areas/High-Density Zone Districts** – Existing
 - About 425 housing units on 40 acres (10.6 units/acre)
 - Dense multifamily
 - Mix of housing types/affordability

- Mature neighborhoods
- Older housing, including single family
- Transition between commercial areas and less-dense neighborhoods, open space
- Incomplete sidewalk/accessibility network
- Vision for Future Land Use
 - To provide high-density neighborhoods comprised of a well-planned mix of single-family and multi-family dwellings...to provide a high-quality living environment
 - Keep existing apartments
 - Maintain housing unit and price mix
 - Allows 35' buildings with 5' setbacks
 - Some commercial uses by CUP
- Trends + Questions
 - Area of transition
 - Will these areas develop to existing allowable standards?
 - Are those standards acceptable?
 - Opportunities exist to ensure compatible design.
 - How much growth capacity can be handled in Residential HD?
 - Overall about 35 acres in R/HD districts
 - @ 4 units/acre = 215 units
 - @ 24 units/acre = 855 units

Overall Key Takeaways

- Based on projections, there's capacity for new growth that meets community vision, scale and character (e.g., growing up and not out) Let's discuss tools to guide that capacity.
- Downtown – Look at the tools to bring good projects back in downtown.
- Downtown North – Opportunity to guide growth to meet community needs for housing/services.
- Residential Focus Areas – Look at tools to ensure compatible design on transitional areas.

Discussion Next Steps - Keith

- Project Schedule + Key Milestones
 - Small Group Stakeholder Sessions - Ongoing
 - Community Online Survey – July 2- Aug 6
 - Project Steering Committee #3 – August 12 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
 - Mobility + Access
 - Aging in the Community
 - Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Keith said one item is the existing summary report that we will try to get that out the second or third week of August.

Commissioner Comments

Jarrett thought the Aspen price for an average house needs to go up. He said that regarding a traffic study that there are quite of few little parking lots around town and is this a factor that we need to consider at this level.

Michael said that these are vacant lots and that he wasn't sure if the property owner gets a tax advantage or not or possibly a lease. He said that Staff may know.

Keith said that we will be talking about mobility, access and parking at the next meeting in August.

Jarrett said that it was a great introduction on how dense our town could get.

Michael said that his approach is very simplistic. He said that we have property owners, and they have property rights, and they are deciding not to exercise their property rights. He said that the very first thing we need to do is ask them why. He said that we had applications in the downtown and that they didn't move forward. He said that he bets that Briston Peterson knows the highest and best use of Downtown North, or he wouldn't have bought it. He said that he didn't think we need a lot of community outreach for this because we have property owners. He said that we have two very large sites north of Capitol from the Third Street Center that could be developed that are currently slum lord shacks. He said why isn't that being developed. He said that we have two lots on Sopris Avenue between Eighth and Snowmass that are vacant that are multi-family. He said why haven't those small infills been developed. He said the only one that knows the answer is the property owner.

Dave said that we are looking under the hood. He said that one of the study groups will be a workshop with those that are the actors at play with some of the Downtown zoning to ask more questions.

Janet said that a lot of the lots in the downtown are still under one ownership. She said that some have been sold. She said she does have several on a list for focus groups and that she let them know about tonight's meeting as well. She said that there are architects and planners that are participants.

Janet said that she has talked to the owner on Capitol a number of times and that he has some creative ideas, which she usually has to say no. She said that she put him on the list, and she would like to bring him in.

Keith said that Nikki wants to know if we have data on multi-generational housing units.

Ted answered that it depends on what the exact question is. He said that Carbondale is so small that it's hard to slice and dice census data down to that level. He said we could probably figure it out for the County but that's not what we want to know. He said that some owners think their land is worth more and that they are willing to hold out because

the are a second or third generation owner. He said that some may have a little cash cow coming from their property. He said that there isn't always an easy answer.

Jarrett said that he has several friends that live out of their vans in this community, which is their choice. He asked if this was considered in any demographics.

Ted said that there are things flying under the radar, with people not reporting what their true jobs are or people in vans. He said that you have to except some uncertainty unless someone makes it a project to count all the homeless population. He said that it isn't a standard piece of data that we can get.

Keith said that we have focus groups that we talked about at the beginning and that if your friends would like to participate and give their opinions, we would love to talk to them.

Jay said that it was mentioned to look at tools to bring projects into the Downtown area and wondered what those tools were. He said that he would like to see those lots getting developed but that he wouldn't want to compromise in making it more affordable to build on. He said that we still want to see nice quality buildings.

Keith said that each one of those property owners probably has a different story. He said that they could be just waiting and that they are not ready to pull the trigger. He said that it could be zoning regulations or lack of incentives. He said why is the big square block sitting when it is a tremendous opportunity. He said that if it is important to the town to prioritize redevelopment that we want to start with the Comp Plan. He said that the Comp Plan wants to identify that as a high, high priority.

Michael said the property owner at Fourth and Main leases it to the Town as a park and that the property owner is perfectly happy with that.

Keith suggested doing a property owner driven workshop to get people thinking about ideas and possibilities.

Nicholas said that he didn't think it was a lack of ideas in our community and that we have a very creative community with an amazing amount of active residents with a bright culture that is more balanced than most, ethnically speaking. He said perhaps we have too many architects and planners that we don't know what to do with. He said that it is a combination of metrics, with pricing, codes, zoning, new constraints, or the idea of how we bring a product that checks these boxes, while creating a product that can be built in these locations under current land prices.

Staff Update

Janet said that the Board did it's first hybrid meeting this week. She said some Board members were in person, with our new configuration in one big room. She said equipment has been set up with TV's so people can still Zoom in.

John said that the tables have all been turned and the wall has been taken down so that members of the public are now sitting over where room 2 is. He said that there is sound amplification from the microphones that actually project into that room. He said that when we go to the hybrid type hearing turn off your mic if you have side comments, he said they are very sensitive. He said that it is still going to be broadcast on YouTube and on Zoom. He said that we will still have people Zooming in on the TV and that we will still have members of the public in the room if they would like to speak. He said that it has worked well for two meetings so far. He asked if the Commission would like to entertain going to that type of hearing in the future and if you are comfortable with it.

Nick said that with HPC that some members have issues not being able to get on Zoom.

John said that it is good to go.

Michael said everyone said yes.

Mary asked the Commission about the next meeting, July 29.

Michael said that if there isn't anything on the agenda then there is no reason to meet.

Janet said that she will verify that but that she doesn't see anything.

Janet asked CT is there was a way to consolidate all the data to post it on our Chart Carbondale website so people can look at it. She said that she would try to get it to the Commission.

Commissioner Comments

There were no comments.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made by Jay to adjourn, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 p.m.