

**TOWN OF BASALT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
WORKSESSION
Tuesday, June 30, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting called to order by the Chair at 6:00 pm.

Commissioners present included Bill Maron, Eric Vozick, Rob Leavitt, Joan Keefe, Bernie Grauer, Gino Rossetti, and Alternate Tracy Bennett.

Staff present included Susan Philp, Planning Director and James Lindt, Assistant Planning Director.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/S ROSSETTI AND KEEFE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 16, 2020. MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF 7 TO 0.

AGENDA ITEMS

Eagle County Referral – PDA-9101: Willits Bend PUD Amendment for an Affordable Housing Project.

Lindt introduced the project as a proposal in unincorporated Eagle County that the P&Z is reviewing as a referral. The project is an amendment to the Willits Bend PUD, in which 75 tax credit housing units are proposed on the northern portion of the 4.6-acre property. The property is located at Willits Lane and Widget Street. Lindt displayed the site plan. Some structures would be removed. The portion of the current development adjacent to Willits Lane are mixed-use, live-work buildings. The current approval allows for 59,000 more square feet of development than exists currently, including 10,000 square feet of residential. The proposed housing development would be a mixture of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units serving individuals and families making between 60% and 80% of area median income (AMI). Lindt noted that the applicants propose to increase the maximum height from 35 feet to 40 feet. He explained that the proposed amendment would reduce the expected vehicle trips per day from 920 to 687 from the currently approved development program, according to the Applicant's engineers. The applicants propose to add 123 parking spaces for the 75 additional units.

Lindt began discussing the draft comments on the project as presented in the packet.

As drafted, the letter states that the proposed development is consistent with the housing objectives in the 2020 Master Plan, and that the location inside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is appropriate for urban development.

Eagle County would be encouraged to require backup deed restriction on the affordable housing because the tax credit limitations expire eventually. The back-up deed restriction was required of the Roaring Fork Apartments.

The Town supports the potential for a future road to connect to East Valley Road. Currently there is an easement from the northern property line to the southern property line of the Willits Bend Development for a future road connecting from Willits Lane to Original Road. This ability is proposed to be maintained. However, Lindt explained, the current site plan only shows road and parking in this easement, so such a road would not be precluded by this project. This future road is also requested by the CDOT access plan.

Lindt explained that the Town is concerned about residents' access to transit, and recommended pedestrian flashers on Willits Lane. The nearest bus stop is at Hillcrest Drive, which from the site would involve crossing Willits Lane to the Willits Trail, and then crossing Highway 82 at Two Rivers Road. There is already a concrete crosswalk across Willits Lane.

The Applicant will be required to obtain a Town access permit since Willits Lane is a Basalt road.

The Applicant should be required to add more parking and create a parking management plan. Lindt compared the project to the Roaring Fork Apartments, which was required to have 1.7 parking spaces per dwelling unit, with a total of 56 units. The proposed project proposes 1.64 spaces per unit, including some 3-bedroom units. The Town's experience with the Roaring Fork Apartments tax credit project has been that the parking for the Roaring Fork Apartments is always full, even though it is steps away from BRT. Staff believes there is a need for additional parking at the proposed development.

Lindt said another draft condition would require the Applicant to pay the \$1,000 Willits Lane fee per unit that all development accessed from Willits Lane has been required to pay.

Another draft condition requires the Applicant to work with WE-Cycle to find a good location for a bikeshare station and provide an easement for one.

Lindt said that another draft condition requires the Applicant to put a note in all lease agreements putting the tenants on notice that there are industrial uses and zoning on the adjacent property. This is a similar requirement to other developments inside Town limits when there are residential developments adjacent to industrial uses, including the 525 Basalt Avenue project.

It is proposed that the Applicant be required to consult with CDOT regarding the need for a new access permit.

Lindt described a proposed requirement that the Applicant consult with the school district about creating a safe and efficient plan for school bus loading and unloading at the development. He said that with 75 affordable housing units, including two- and three-bedroom units, there will likely be school children.

Another comment in the draft letter indicates a need for some infrastructure improvements, though some of the improvements may be beyond the scope of this affordable housing project. The

comment suggests Eagle County partner with the Applicant, the Town of Basalt, and perhaps RFTA, to work on pedestrian connections. One such connection is an improved trail between the Highway 82 and Two Rivers Road intersection to the Hillcrest Drive bus stop, which will likely be used by tenants. Secondly, the trail on the south side of Highway 82 from Willits Lane to Original Road, which includes a bus stop, should be improved.

Finally, a draft comment has been included asking that another referral be sent if the project is changed to not be a deed-restricted housing project.

Lindt said that P&Z's options for the draft letter are to direct Staff to transmit the letter as drafted or suggest changes to the letter and direct Staff to submit the letter as amended. He said that the Applicants were invited to come to the P&Z meeting tonight, but elected not to. Philp noted that there are letters from the public that Staff will read during public comment.

Chair Maron asked for Commissioner questions.

Commissioner Bennett asked what triggers the road connection to become a through road. Lindt said that the access control plan that was adopted by CDOT, Eagle County, and the Town, includes a recommendation for this through road. Also, the Willits Bend approvals included an easement for this. However, there are no easements on the properties to the north. Lindt explained that there is not a "trigger" for the creation of the road, but if the properties to the north were redeveloped there could be an opportunity for a road. Commissioner Leavitt pointed out that the access control plan indicates that a road "shall be" built once the aforementioned properties redevelop. Lindt said the easement for a road is already in place for Willits Bend, but not yet for the properties to the north. Philp added that whether easements can be obtained depends on the type of redevelopment. She noted the Shelton Drilling property is under contract currently, but she doesn't expect easements to be obtained at this time, nor is the connection in the capital improvements plan.

Commissioner Bennett asked if there are solar panels currently. Commissioner Leavitt said there are. Commissioner Bennett said she would like to encourage the project to continue using solar panels.

Commissioner Keefe said she agrees with there being more solar panels and supported a future road easement.

Commissioner Vozick clarified that the projected number of vehicle trips in the current approval is theoretical, and not actual current trips.

Commissioner Leavitt asked if the number of vehicle trips per day would be 8.5 trips per day, as he calculated, or 10 or 12 trips per day. Lindt said that there is a difference between single-family and multi-family uses as trip generators, and that the traffic study, which does not explain its calculations in great detail, may be accounting for some internal capture of trips. He explained that internal capture is for accounting for trips within the same area as the study location, and serves to reduce the stated number of forecasted trips. Lindt said that the single-family rate of trip generation is usually 9 to 10.

Commissioner Rossetti clarified that the draft letter will be sent to the Eagle County Community Development Department and that it is under their jurisdiction.

Chair Maron asked if the project would be the full buildout of the PUD, and James said yes. Chair Maron added that he is currently working on a tax credit project in Carbondale, and that the State requires an environmental commitment in excess of what Basalt requires. Specifically, they require the "enterprise green community standards," which is hard to meet and maintain affordability and quality of life.

Philp opened public comment, but noted that it is not an official public hearing. She noted that Lindt had received an email from Bill Hegberg, who lives in River Oaks, and who has had correspondence with Eagle County. Rickie Davies from Eagle County sent additional comments. Lindt described Bill Hegberg's comments as mainly related to traffic impacts and the traffic study. He asked questions about Parcel 5 of Sopris Meadows, which is behind the Basalt Industrial Park, and whether the trips included Parcel 5. Rickie Davies explained that the trips per day in the application were just from this project. The project in question is predicted to generate fewer trips per day than the approval currently in place, per the Applicant's engineering report. Mr. Hegberg encourages a connection from Original Road to Willits Lane, and wants the applicant to prove that they can make that connection.

Chair Maron clarified that what the P&Z is considering is a referral comment to Eagle County, pursuant to the IGA that exists between the Town and the County. Comments should be kept to three minutes, and commenters should state where they live. Philp provided for the record how to provide public comment. She dialed John O'Donovan on speakerphone. Mr. O'Donovan said he lives in Unit 414 in Willits Bend. He said he has no issue with employee housing, but objects to the project on the basis that the proposed development is very different from what he bought into in terms of density, green space, and traffic. He said he doesn't think it will benefit the existing or future residents.

Philp dialed Colleen Collins. Ms. Collins said she is a resident at Willits Bend. She said she feels that the project is very rushed and that the other owners just found out about it. She said that the HOA has not unanimously endorsed the project, and that the HOA only meets once a year. She said that she bought her property with a different expectation, and that the scale of the project is very large. She noted that she is not opposed to affordable housing, but there are already traffic issues, and expressed doubt about the reduction in vehicle trips. She wants to make sure that the project is done well, that all the infrastructure needs have been looked at, and that the current residents have a voice. She also said that she thinks the buildings being too tall and casting long shadows is important to consider.

Chair Maron closed public comment and opened it up to Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Grauer noted that encouraging and developing affordable housing was the number one priority of public input during the Master Plan update. He suggested that Basalt should be sympathetic to these goals, and that the most efficient means is multifamily housing. He said it seems to be an appropriate setting. Commissioner Grauer complimented staff on their analysis of the project and said he would be pleased to support the letter on the referral.

Commissioner Rossetti agreed with Commissioner Grauer and said he is comfortable with it.

Commissioner Leavitt compared this project to the Meyer Ranch project, saying that this proposal is too far from public transit and has a stoplight that gets backed up in the mornings. He said that the proposal began with 16 residential units and has now risen to a total of 95, including what is proposed plus the existing. He labeled this increase “unconscionable.” Recalling the funds appropriated by Town Council for the Basalt Avenue underpass, he noted that the access across Highway 82 to the bus stops is not a good or safe location, and said that this is in the Master Plan. Commissioner Leavitt said that the existing buildings are tall, and that the proposed buildings would be 10 feet taller, which would not be to scale with any other buildings around. He summarized his comments stating that the project is too dense, the buildings too tall, the traffic impacts need to be looked at in conjunction with Sopris Meadows. He said he is disappointed that none of these points are covered in the letter. He said that he doesn’t like the Highway 82 bus stop access. In point #12 in the draft letter, he has some grammatical issues and suggested tightening it up.

Commissioner Vozick said he agrees with Commissioner Leavitt’s comments and wants to take another look at traffic impacts and does not like the access to bus stops. He said that while the project is close to mass transit, it is not with safe access. He suggested putting this in a comment. He suggested referencing other affordable housing projects that are energy net zero to see if the applicants could aspire to this.

Commissioner Keefe said that the connection to Original Road is hypothetical and that she wants more clarity on how it could be achieved. She agreed that access to the bus stops across Highway 82 is tricky.

Commissioner Bennett agreed that the access to bus stops is questionable. She asked if there will be green space and playground areas, and said there should be if there is not. She said the building height is an issue for her, especially compared to what is there now.

Chair Maron said he understood Commissioner Vozick’s interest in energy efficiency. He suggested adding language asking for the project to be “net-zero ready,” which is vague but still conveys intention. He said that the project is about creating a landing place for their kids who grow up and want to move back to Basalt. He said that affordable housing lives or dies based on economies of scale. He noted the 700-unit deficit of affordable housing identified in the valley-wide housing study, adding that they would not get there if they waited for a perfect location. Regarding the height, he said that he would be able to see the building from his bedroom, but that he can live with it because the need is so great. He said that while crossing the highway is a valid concern, people will be able to cross it.

Commissioner Leavitt asked if the letter would be reviewed again by P&Z after being edited but before being sent. Philp said that they can send it to them, but that they need to be careful about having a meeting outside a meeting. If there are concerns about it, they may need to convene a special meeting, as they cannot vote by email. Commissioner Leavitt said he could not vote to approve it without seeing it edited. Philp suggested making a motion with the things they want to see in the letter and editing it as stated. Staff could then send it to P&Z, and if there are still

problems with it, they could have a special meeting. Commissioner Leavitt indicated that he is not completely satisfied.

M/S ROSSETTI AND GRAUER TO TRANSMIT THE LETTER PER STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS.

Chair Maron asked if Rossetti and Grauer would be comfortable adding a net zero-ready recommendation. Commissioner Grauer and Commissioner Rossetti said it would be fine. Philp summarized the motion as including net-zero ready but none of the other comments made during the discussion.

MOTION PASSED BY A VOTE OF 4 TO 3. COMMISSIONERS KEEFE, VOZICK, AND LEAVITT WERE OPPOSED.

Commissioner Comments and Staff Updates

Philp said that the Planning Department has been really busy and has new building permit information for the Steadman project. TACAW has its foundation permit. They have been receiving many comments about parking in Willits Town Center and Staff is monitoring the available parking on Robinson Street and Market Street adjacent to Market Street Lofts. There have been many building questions for projects big and small. A time has not yet been determined for a joint P&Z-Town Council meeting, as the P&Z has stated that they want to do that in person. Lindt added that they have been dealing with lots of zoning complaints as well. He said that the next significant application the P&Z will see is for St. Vincent's church, probably in early August.

Chair Maron asked if the Jadwin parcel is still alive. Lindt said he heard from the applicants earlier this week and that they are working on concepts.

Commissioner Leavitt asked if Staff had received anything regarding Sopris Meadows Parcel 5, and Lindt said they have not, aside from an application submitted for completeness quite a few months back. It has not been pursued.

Chair Maron asked if Stotts Mill has been platted and fully approved. Lindt said that the documents are ready to be recorded but have not been. The owners are working with Home Supply Ditch Company on some items before recording the final plat.

M/S ROSSETTI AND VOZICK TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION PASSED BY A VOTE OF 7 TO 0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 pm.

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By 
William C. Maron, Chair

Attest 
Susan Philp, Planning Director