

**TOWN OF BASALT  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING and PUBLIC HEARING  
Tuesday, October 2, 2018**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Planning & Zoning Commission was called to order at 6:07 pm. Commissioners present were Joan Keefe, Gino Rossetti, Bill Maron, Eric Vozick, Bernie Grauer, Rob Leavitt, and Alternate Tracy Bennett.

Staff present was Susan Philp, Town Planner; James Lindt, Assistant Planning Director; and Watkins Fulk-Gray, Staff Planner. A sign-in sheet for public attending the meeting is available for review at Town Hall.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**M/S ROSSETTI AND MARON TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2018. MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF 5 TO 0. COMMISSIONERS LEAVITT AND GRAUER ABSTAINED.**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**Pat and Barbara McMahon Minor Utility Facility and Slope Review**

Fulk-Gray introduced the application as a proposal to install two solar arrays, consisting of a total of 46 solar panels at 208 Ridge Road to offset the energy use for the residence on the site. He said that if the P&Z is comfortable, they will be making a recommendation to Town Council, who will review the project toward the end of the month.

He introduced the following discussion topics:

1. Visual impacts and neighborhood character. Fulk-Gray explained that there are three houses that can be seen clearly from the proposed array site. He noted that just because houses can see the arrays does not mean that there will be glare for those homes. Glare is determined by the angle of the sun and the time of the year. Fulk-Gray said that there have been conditions of approval suggested to reduce glare and address it if there is a problem. He said that he did not foresee any other negative impacts to neighborhood character.
2. Slope review. Conditions of approval have been suggested mitigating the possibility of rock fall during installation. Fulk-Gray said that the site is more flat, though there are steep areas around and below it. Philp added that it is in the Hillside Overlay District, which is another reason for the slope review. Commissioner Leavitt asked if there are residences below the arrays in the path of any potential rock fall. Tyler Sweeney said that it is unlikely a rock might find a path toward a residence.
3. Referral comments. Fulk-Gray highlighted suggested conditions of approval from the Fire District. He noted other conditions of approval regarding slope management and requiring tree removal permits.

Tyler Sweeney, the owners' representative from SunSense, provided an overview of the project. He stated that the visual impact of the proposed arrays is minimal, noting how difficult it is to see them from the Midland Avenue bridge. He said trees will block views of the array from most

homes. Two of the three homes that can see the arrays have signed a letter approving of the arrays, and the third home's residents have given a verbal OK. He said that the neighbor to the southeast, the Lee residence at 206 Ridge Road, would be most affected visually by the arrays. The McMahons have worked with them and a glare analysis has been done for that home, and the owners are OK with the proposal.

Sweeney discussed the mounting of the arrays. The type of mounting will not require digging, which should minimize the ground disturbance and potential for rock fall.

He said that the type of glass on the 46 panels on the two arrays is designed to absorb sunlight, not reflect it. He said ground-mounted solar arrays are common, though not all parcels in Basalt will work for ground-mounted installation.

#### Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Keefe asked why the owners wanted ground-mounted arrays instead of them being on the roof. Sweeney guessed that it was for aesthetic reasons or for wanting to replace the roof in the future. He noted that ground-mounted arrays are more expensive.

Commissioner Rossetti asked what the framework holding up the solar panels will be made from, and Sweeney said that they would be steel and aluminum. Commissioner Rossetti asked about the footing of the arrays. Sweeney explained that there would not be concrete footers, but instead a steel base plate with anchors hammered three to four feet in the ground. He said there would be very little disturbance to the ground.

Commissioner Rossetti asked what the project's timeline would be if approved. Sweeney replied that it depends on the timing of the approval and if there is snow on the ground. The McMahons were hoping to do the project in the fall. However, it is possible for the anchors to be installed year-round.

Commissioner Bennett asked if the proposed number of panels is typical. Sweeney said that the number needed varies greatly, and for large homes this would not make a dent in their energy use. He said that this project is estimated to cover 110% of the home's energy use. Smaller homes may only need ten panels. Fulk-Gray noted that the McMahons will be selling electricity back to the grid at times.

Commissioner Rossetti asked if the project would cover the entire electric usage. Sweeney said that the McMahons' would, and that they have factored in their plans to purchase an electric vehicle in the future.

Commissioner Leavitt asked what the budget is for a project like this. Sweeney said average costs are often around \$3 per watt, and that custom designs are more expensive. He said this project, which is more challenging, so may be more than \$45,000.

Commissioner Vozick asked about removal of trees. Sweeney said that two trees need to be removed for the project to work, but other bushes nearby can stay. Commissioner Vozick asked how the trees will be mitigated, and Philp replied that it will be up to the Town.

Chair Maron asked about glare, and suggested that if glare is coming off panels, they are not functioning properly. Sweeney agreed and said that the glass used is anti-reflective. He said it is possible for there to be glare from very sharp angles, when the sun itself might be blinding

anyway. Chair Maron asked if there is less glare than window glazing, and Sweeney said that there is much less. Philp said that Staff had spent time learning about glare from the panels. Sweeney said that generally, glare is not an issue. When it does come up, they do glare analyses, including when solar panels were installed near the Aspen airport.

Fulk-Gray said he had also spoken to Holy Cross about glare. Holy Cross has not experienced people complaining about glare. Chair Maron suggested reviewing the section of the Code relating to glare so that this discussion would not happen during every hearing.

The public hearing was opened at 6:25 pm.

No members of the public were present. The public hearing was closed at 6:26.

**M/S ROSSETTI AND VOZICK TO APPROVE THE PROJECT PER STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION. MOTION PASSED BY A VOTE OF 7 TO 0.**

### **Master Plan Update**

Philp suggested that the P&Z discuss the Town Council worksession about updating the Master Plan that took place the previous Tuesday. She displayed on the wall the main points that the P&Z brought up, including being aspirational, less negative, being visionary for the Downtown area and entryway into Basalt, getting the best possible urban designers and planners. Town Council should be leaders in identifying what they want. The P&Z also discussed connectivity, providing housing to get young people back in the community, having the right mix of housing, having the right kind of jobs, partnerships with others to provide what the Town needs, and discussion about a potential IGA.

Philp then discussed individual Town Councilor comments. In general, they are looking for better collaboration between the P&Z and Council with more and regular check-ins and informal conversations. They encouraged outside-the-box thinking. They want to know what funds the P&Z needs for the update, and one Councilor suggested taking what they think they need and doubling it.

One Councilor wants to see three options for price.

Councilor Schendler wants to see the big picture scenario, as well as interchangeable scenarios for things the Town may not be able to afford.

Mayor Whitsitt wants to see the survey beforehand and wants it to be relevant. There was lots of discussion about intergovernmental relations.

Councilor Infante suggested involving housing partners, Pitkin County, and the need for joint planning. He also mentioned that the strategic plan provides guidance from a "50,000-foot level."

Some subjects discussed were: community infrastructure, local economy, land use, and the environment. These topics came out of the Town Council's retreat a couple of weeks ago. Ryan Mahoney is going to discuss these topics with department heads more before sending out this list.

Philp noted that Staff is working on budget and will present it for the first time this coming Tuesday, not in a packet, but presented for the first time at the meeting. A plug-in number for the Master Plan update is \$250,000. She noted that the wish list for all projects exceeds the Town's ability to pay. There are numerous infrastructure and fleet upgrades being requested.

Chair Maron suggested either selecting a liaison from the P&Z to meet with them or have them select a liaison to the P&Z, or both. He said that the Town could do the same thing with the Roaring Fork Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Philp recalled the idea that the P&Z invite the Town Council to a P&Z meeting, noting that there will be fewer time constraints than when the P&Z appears at Town Council meetings. Chair Maron noted that a benefit of this is that it will not be broadcast on TV and there may not be reporters.

Commissioner Rossetti stated that he thought the recent meeting was good and felt it was positively received, with lots of nodding in agreement. He perceived less fighting than at previous times, although there are disagreements about the River Park project. He noted his support for the River Park project, or something like it.

Chair Maron agreed with Commissioner Rossetti. Commissioner Bennett disagreed and said she thought there was lots of disagreement during the River Park hearing. Chair Maron said that this has always been true for the site. He noted the desire for there to be a boutique hotel at there, but asserted that it could only be possible with at least 85 rooms, and said this is not realistic.

Commissioner Leavitt asked if economic feasibility is something the P&Z should be considering. Chair Maron said it will come up and that they should discuss attainable goals in terms of the Master Plan. Commissioner Leavitt suggested that any decision will be 51/49, and asked how the P&Z can address that. Chair Maron said that the elected officials have to be trusted to make a decision. Commissioner Keefe said that it is the responsibility of Town Council to give ideas for things they want and would approve, and to go and find it, rather than asking applicants to bring ideas to them to shoot down. Commissioner Bennett expressed frustration that the P&Z has recommended approval for projects that do not get built.

Commissioner Vozick noted that the conversation often strays "into the weeds," which is something that has been stated that should be avoided. Commissioner Keefe asked if the P&Z can discuss what it wants to see. Commissioner Rossetti recalled past discussions like this that had come up with hotels, housing, retail, and nonprofit facilities. He noted that developers need to be involved in the discussion because they know what is feasible. Commissioner Rossetti informed the P&Z that he went to Santa Fe last week and to Buena Vista. A developer in Buena Vista has built a 44-unit boutique hotel, with rates around \$190-\$220 per night currently, and adjacent to it market rate housing with two-bedroom units. The site is on the Arkansas River, which is a different setting than Basalt, especially in light of the roaring river and big mature trees. Commissioner Rossetti added that the hotel, entertainment, housing, and parks are all in a mixed-use 40-acre site on the river. He said that it is a wonderful development right on Main Street. He said that Town Councilor Bill Infante had visited the development also and liked it. Commissioner Rossetti said the Town should go back to what the people of Basalt said they wanted during earlier public outreach. He reiterated that the River Park in Basalt is a great site for a hotel. He asked how the P&Z should move forward.

Chair Maron referred to Glenwood Springs's confluence sub-area plan, in which they used three consultants that Basalt could look at. He said the plan is impressive. The firm that did public outreach was Community Builders, and also Studio Insite, and Van, Meters, Williams, Pollack from San Francisco. Chair Maron encouraged everyone to look at the plan and look at the firms. He said that the plan is quite visionary for a town like Glenwood Springs, and could be a model for Basalt's Master Plan. It is different and more creative than Glenwood Springs' comprehensive plan, Chair Maron asserted. Commissioner Rossetti noted the importance of actually getting something built, which has not occurred in Glenwood Springs. He said that the P&Z and the community should share their input before any consultants start. After that, pen could be put to paper for the plan. Commissioner Keefe agreed, and made a comparison to wanting a mansion but not being able to afford a mansion. She asked if there is another advisory group, such as a school, that could be tapped into. Chair Maron noted that this is what Community Builders does. He suggested reaching out to young students, like high school students too. Commissioner Leavitt asked if he is suggesting another iteration of Our Town Planning, and Chair Maron suggested using the previous work and doing some of it again. Commissioner Bennett said she does not want to see lots of money spent on studies. Chair Maron said that a huge amount of money was spent on consultants during Our Town Planning.

Commissioner Vozick suggested working with RMI to help create a development proposal using high-quality energy efficiency ideas. Various commissioners agreed. Commissioner Rossetti noted how Town Council asked the developer to continue working with Town Council, but did not mention the P&Z. He encouraged the P&Z to keep working on the Master Plan, especially the entrances to town at Two Rivers Road and Willits.

Chair Maron noted that the P&Z approved the current proposal and that it is buildable. Commissioner Vozick said that while he voted on it, he might not have voted for it twice because it is not visionary and forward-thinking enough. Commissioner Bennett noted the need to discuss the parking issue, and said it needs to be rethought. Chair Maron recalled a previous proposal in which the Town would have had to pay for a sub-grade parking area in a place that is below the water table, which would have been much too expensive. Commissioner Vozick asserted that there are out-of-the-box parking solutions. Commissioner Bennett said that this would have to be part of the Town Code.

Chair Maron said that the private sector will only bring forward proposals on which they can make money. Commissioner Rossetti offered an example of allowing a 4-story building with parking on the first level, which would represent big savings on parking costs. He asserted that the "Big V" concept is worthless. Philp encouraged the P&Z to move forward.

Chair Maron said he voted for the project because it is achievable, not perfect, but Council did not go that direction. He brought up the three firms involved in the Glenwood Springs plan and suggested getting prices from them. Philp agreed that the Town should get prices from these consultants, but explained that it is limited by the procurement process. She said that for \$250,000, the Town Council probably would not go for not following the procurement process. Chair Maron asked what a realistic number would be, and Commissioner Keefe suggested asking Town Council is comfortable with.

Commissioner Rossetti suggested finding out costs. Philp said that \$250,000 had been inserted into the budget as a plug-in number. She guessed that about \$230,000 was previously spent with Design Workshop and they did not get to the plan adoption stage. She said that she had reached out to DOLA to try to get prices for some award-winning plans that are out there. She said it is a good idea to reach out to Glenwood Springs.

Chair Maron offered to reach out to Mike Gamba, who knows well. He said the City coordinated the plan and that they did it rather than the DDA. Philp offered to reach out to the new city manager. Commissioner Keefe asked if the Council has to be happy with the firms selected for the Master Plan update. Chair Maron warned against the Town Council taking over the process, saying that it happened during the River Master Plan to poor results. Philp said that the P&Z could be involved in interviews. One way to do this is where the Town picks the firm it wants for each separate task, as it did during previous design work for the River Park, or the Town could pick the parameters of the project and the consultants would respond by picking their own teams.

Generally, Philp said she prefers picking the team itself, although sometimes it means forcing people who don't know each other to work together. Chair Maron said the Town picking teams is better than going out to RFP. Commissioner Keefe asked if there has been anything done in the past that can be used to save money, and Chair Maron said there is the Our Town Planning work. Commissioner Keefe suggested writing a clear scope of work to go out for bid.

Philp asked if the P&Z would want teams to come to the Town with their ideas about citizen participation or for the Town to pick ideas prescriptively. Commissioner Rossetti asked if Philp and the Town could pick firms and have them present to the P&Z or Council. Philp noted that the Town has to put things out to RFP, because of the procurement policy. Only in very particular scenarios can RFPs be avoided, like when there is a unique service. In the past, Philp explained, the Town Council was unhappy with what they perceived as loose spending. Philp noted that the Town does not have to pick the lowest bid. Commissioner Vozick suggested tailoring the RFP to get the people the Town wants. Philp noted that the Town does not have to take the lowest bid during the RFP process, and make selection criteria whatever it wants. The Town will over-advertise beyond what is required, and can send the RFP specifically to firms it wants to apply. Chair Maron said he does not want the Town to get the usual cast of characters.

Commissioner Vozick asked how RMI could fit in with this project, as they are not land planners. Chair Maron suggested they could fit in Robert Krehbiel, the hydrologist's, project scope. Philp said it is possible someone from RMI could meet with the P&Z. Commissioner Rossetti asked a clarifying question about the procurement process, and Philp explained that anyone will be able to apply. Staff can shortlist the applicants. Chair Maron said that when the economy is booming, the best firms don't even enter competitions.

Philp suggested coming out of the October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting with solid recommendations, allowing the Town to draft an RFP. She said she does not want to preclude doing some brainstorming for unique ideas and specific designers to do targeted work such as the entry to Basalt. Chair Maron agreed and expressed a desire to think outside the box.

Commissioner Rossetti left the meeting at 7:08 pm.

Chair Maron noted the overall Glenwood Springs comprehensive plan, which was recommended to him as forward-thinking, but he said it is not, and that it contains familiar tropes like "small town character." He stated he does want new ideas. However, he also suggested aiming for attainability. Commissioner Keefe noted that they have lots of ideas, but need help implementing them.

Lindt noted how one Town Councilor wanted three options for price. Chair Maron said this will be hard. Philp suggested addressing the councilors' comments head-on, such as Councilor Infante's comment of "ask for what you want and double it." She noted that they want price options, but not three entirely new strategies for the plan update. She said that Town Councilors tend to have good memories on what they ask Staff and P&Z to do. Chair Maron offered to come to the Planning office to brainstorm ideas. Lindt recalled how in the past, there were options presented in the format of "base price," "base price plus," and "base price plus a lot." Philp said implementation strategies are tough. She said that Town budget negotiations are difficult because there is lots of competition for limited dollars. She said that the P&Z will reconvene in two weeks to discuss this further. She will look at the confluence plan in Glenwood Springs and send the P&Z links to the plan.

**Commissioner Comments and Planning Department Updates.**

Commissioner Vozick asked what happened at the Roaring Fork Apartments today. Philp said that there was work being done on the fire sprinkler system, and the sprinkler system blew out the drywall and fell through the ceiling. The building has been evacuated and the library has turned into an evacuation center. The electricity and water have been turned off. Lindt said that nobody was hurt. There was about a foot of water on the first floor, which was the only floor that suffered damage. The owner is in town and tried to calm people. Philp said that the Red Cross is working with people to provide emergency help. She said that she and Lindt are very disappointed because it is such a good project. Sprinklers are tricky, and she recalled a couple of months ago at the Alpine Bank building when there was a sprinkler flooding issue.

**M/S VOZICK AND LEAVITT TO ADJOURN. MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF 6 TO 0.**

The Planning and Zoning Commission adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

TOWN OF BASALT  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

By  \_\_\_\_\_  
William Maron, Chair

Attest  \_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Philp, Planning Director