Treasure Comments

From: Brian Van Hecke <thincpc@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2016 1:30 PM
To: Treasure Comments
Subject: THINC - important document to review
Attachments: Brad Olch letter.pdf

We would like to submit the attached letter written by Brad Olch back in 1986.

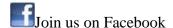This letter provides important context into the decision.

Best,

Brian

http://thincpc.wordpress.com/

THINC (Treasure Hill Impact Neighborhood Coalition) is a 501c(3) non-profit organization. Founded by Brian Van Hecke and a few members of Park City's residential community in response to the threat of the development of Treasure Hill, THINC now consists of hundreds of Park City's residents. The group includes residents, business owners and homeowners from all over Park City including Park Meadows, Pinebrook, Thaynes Canyon, and Old Town. THINC's collective mission is to raise public awareness and to help initiate action in order to preserve and protect Park City's Historic Old Town.

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Memorandum:

To: Honorable Mayor
        City Council
From: Brad Olch, Chairman
        Planning Commission
Date: December 27, 1985
Re: SWEENEY PROPERTIES MPD
        RECAPPING THE VOTE

The following is intended to clarify the basis for the split
vote by the Planning Commission over the approval of the
Sweeney Properties Large Scale Master Planned Development.
The proposed project was approved subject to the conditions
and documentation contained in the Staff Report dated
December 11, 1985, as amended. The Council's ultimate
approval of the required height variation is necessary to
accommodate the cluster concept for the development of the
hillside portion of the project. Rather than go into a lot
of background or discussion relative to other alternative
project concepts, I will confine myself to detailing why, in
my opinion, the various Commissioners voted the way they
did. Similarly, because the focus of much of our
discussions and deliberations was with regard to development
concept proposed for the hillside properties and not others
included within the overall MPD, that will be the area I
will primarily address.

IN FAVOR

Ruth Gezelius, Ray Robinson, Cal Cowher, and I voted
for approval of the cluster concept and density proposed in
the latest submittal. It is our fervent belief that the
cluster approach to developing the hillside properties is
preferable and that the density proposed (roughly one-half
of what the underlying zone would allow) is reasonable. The
majority of the Commissioners have supported the direction
taken with agglomerating development on specific sites as
opposed to spreading the project and its impacts across the
entire mountain-side. The recently adopted Comprehensive
Master Plan and related policies toward development all
favor this approach. Once we agreed that a cluster concept
was preferable, our efforts shifted toward examining ways of
mitigating potential adverse impacts. With the density
fairly set, it became a matter of where it could best be
accommodated. The last several submittals each resulted in
density being transferred from the most sensitive site
(adjacent to and south of the Town Lift Mid-Station) to the
area where intense development could be better handled
(Creole Gulch).

Commissioner Ruth Gezelius was concerned from the outset with the impacts a project of this scope would have both on the adjacent neighborhood(s) and the hillside. In direct response to some of her early input, the proponents further compressed the development clusters to minimize site disturbance/grading and tree removal. While remaining concerned over building scale and similar issues, Ruth was also quite aware of the alternatives to a MPD approach for the development of the Sweeney's property. With the current zoning what it is and the probable impacts resulting from a more conventional approach to development (i.e: extending Norfolk Avenue and subdividing the property), I believe she weighed the project's merits and voted accordingly.

Ray Robinson voted in support of the project because it represents a truly viable or "doable" development concept. Ray was also considering the fact that it is anticipated to be 10-20 years before the hillside area will be developed and that Park City is apt to be somewhat different by then. Although he too was concerned with overall building mass and scale (primarily the Mid-Station site), Ray often pointed out that the Sweeney family does have the right to develop their property.

Cal Cowher supported the cluster approach almost from the beginning. Cal expressed that this was an effective means of allowing efficient development that would have both a positive impact on the city's economy and result in the preservation of a prominent hillside (97% open space) at no cost to the taxpayer. As an engineer and developer, Cal was quick to point out that we, the Planning Commission, are finally starting to see projects that make sense; to both future developers/hotel operators and the city.

Because of a tie, I was called upon to cast the deciding vote. I voted in favor of the project based upon not only what the other Commissioners expressed as positive attributes, but also because of what the general public wanted. The public that attended our meetings over the past six months supported the cluster approach over other alternatives without exception. If some level of development was in effect inevitable, my preference was to seize the opportunity to master plan it and not encourage land subdivision and resultant piecemeal development. Certainly, I too would have liked to see less density and smaller buildings (smaller and lower is almost always better!). The fact remains, however, that we had our chance during the Comprehensive Plan updating and failed to act to change the zoning of the subject property. All things considered, the "pluses" of the MPD outweighed the "minuses" from my perspective.

IN OPPOSITION

Randall Rogers, Ron Whaley, and Steve Deckert voted to oppose the motion for MPD approval. Although there was no discussion whatsoever that night, it is my recollection that the key issue remained to be the scale of development proposed for the Town Lift Mid-Station, and the Creole Gulch site to a somewhat lesser degree.

Randy Rogers remained concerned throughout the review process over the density of development proposed. While he understood that the density proposed represented a substantial reduction from that which the underlying zoning would allow, he was not convinced that any of the other development concepts presented could realistically result in a comparable level of development. In looking at the detailed visual analyses prepared on photographs of the site, Randy continued to have serious reservations whether a project of this scope and size would ever be appropriate for Park City.

Ron Whaley was also suspect of the density proposed. From the outset, Ron questioned whether any cluster-type concept could be designed in harmony with the Historic District. Although supportive of the fine-tuning which occurred throughout the review, it is unlikely (in my estimation) that any large-scale project would satiate his concerns.

Steve Deckert also was uncomfortable with both density and scale. Had density ranges been acceptable to the Sweeney's that started at about one-half of that which was requested, Steve may have supported the project. While Steve initially liked the idea of extending Norfolk Avenue to solve existing access and circulation problems, he too could see the merits of the cluster approach. Had density ranges been proposed thereby affording the Planning Commission greater flexibility and discretion at the time of conditional use approval, Steve may have voted in favor of the Master Plan.

I have asked that the staff keep the Commissioners informed as to when this project will be discussed by the City Council. Several of the Commissioners have expressed an interest in being present in order to more thoroughly describe their respective positions.