

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Chair Leas.

ROLL CALL

Mike Giller	Mark Leas	Allen Frechter	Susan Propper
Ethan Guerra	Steve Gerard	Elaine Gort	

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

With the below changes, February 20, 2024 Planning Commission Minutes were approved.

Page 8 of packet, page 6 of minutes, Steve Gerard stated, “as well as historic buildings we’re” change to “were” not “we’re.”

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

With no changes, the March 5, 2024 Planning Commission Agenda was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION ISSUES:

- No comment

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. Popov Residence (EM), 20 Rounds Rd., PL-2024-0024

Mr. Gerard made a motion to call up the Popov Residence project, seconded by Ms. Propper. The motion passed 7 to 0 and the project was called up.

Ms. Muncy gave a short presentation of the project, a proposed new single-family residence of 5,999 sq. ft. with 6 bedrooms, and 5.5 bathrooms.

Mr. Frechter: No questions.

Ms. Gort: No questions.

Mr. Gerard: I do not favor these long driveways when there is an alternative of a shorter option. This one seemed unique for the reason I will refer to as “cutting” if you look at the middle third of the driveway they are proposing to cut into 6-8 ft of hillside where there might be less site-disturbance if there were a retaining wall. It looks like a 6 ft section of the hillside will be scraped. If you review 7R, retaining walls in Section C. retaining walls are preferred rather than a cut. (Ms. Muncy: Some of this is necessary to get the correct grade for the driveway. The property owner is trying to minimize the use of retaining walls and the site disturbance of the driveway.) I am troubled by wanting to shave off the hillside instead of a retaining wall, which will contribute to runoff. 7R Section A. says minimize site disturbance rather than cutting they should have some retaining walls. Is there a policy or anything we can look at that says they should not have to put in a retaining wall? (Mr. Kulick: There is nothing that says they must have retaining walls; they are only recommended. This applicant has been on the other end of the circumstance where this Commission has assigned negative points to retaining walls when they are excessive for the driveway. I think the cut and fill language in the code was intended to prevent benching sites for the home itself not necessarily for a driveway installation. The majority of impacts from this project are from the subdivision itself and the homesite. We have assigned a fairly substantial negative four points to this project recognizing that the driveway could be built differently but that they have minimized the use of retaining walls.)

- Mr. Leas: You are saying that the negative points assigned considers the site disturbance from the driveway? (Mr. Kulick: Yes, and Staff would not recommend additional points for this project.)
- Mr. Gerard: I would not recommend additional points. I would recommend a retaining wall. I think this is cost Engineering and they would rather have the hillside erode than build a retaining wall.
- Mr. Giller: This driveway is cut on both sides, 2-3 ft and 3-4 ft on either side. It is a large trench to stay at the 8 percent grade. This is an odd design and will look less appealing when it is completed. (Ms. Muncy: This design is trying to solve several issues: they are forced to enter the site on the right side because of the steep slope, they are attempting to minimize the curvature and length of the driveway, and avoid previously planted trees.)
- Mr. Guerra: I concur with the staff that it does meet the 7R requirements. I try to reduce rock walls if possible, they stand out visibility wise and they are problematic when trying to plow. I would prefer to see this driveway with grading set back, visually, rather than a large rock retaining wall. I think we are over the top on erosion control measures. On big projects it can be an issue but less so on smaller projects like this home. I understand that others have problems with the long driveways but I think the visual impact here is less than a rock wall.
- Mr. Giller: Can Ms. Muncy speak to the revegetation requirements? (Ms. Muncy: They are proposing some additional landscaping above the driveway and the area will be required to be revegetated with a new layer of topsoil and native seed mix.) There is a 2:1 slope max.
- Ms. Propper: No comments.
- Mr. Frechter: I went and looked at the site. There is a steep berm from the road so I think the driveway will have little visibility from the roadway. It will be a bobsled run coming down the driveway in the winter but that is the owner's issue.
- Ms. Gort: No comments.
- Mr. Gerard: We have a conflict here with the code saying we should recommend retaining walls rather than cuts.
- Mr. Guerra: No additional comments.
- Mr. Giller: No additional comments.
- Ms. Propper: No additional comments.
- Mr. Leas: No additional comments.

Andy Stabile, Allen Guerra Architecture, Applicant: This is a very tricky site. We had several versions of the driveway to show the HOA and this was the version that was most agreeable. We had to contour that way to make the slope. Both sides of the argument were discussed here; we tried to minimize the amount of retaining wall from a visual perspective so we did end up grading back a bit. If it is the Commission's request we could add some additional retaining walls to reduce the overall site disturbance. This was less of a money-savings decision and more of a visual decision.

The project was opened for public comment. There were no comments and the comment period was closed.

Ms. Gort made a motion to approve the project with the attached findings and conditions, seconded by Mr. Gerard. The motion passed 7 to 0 and the project was approved.

OTHER MATTERS:

1. Town Council Summary

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 pm.

Mark Leas, Chair