

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

ROLL CALL

Dan Schroder	Michael Bertaux
Rodney Allen	Jack Wolfe
Dave Pringle	

Jim Lamb, Leigh Girvin and Mark Burke were absent

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Pringle: brought up the fact that there was a copy-machine error making page six (6) of the packet hard to read.

Mr. Allen: page eight (8), should read “agreed that the house *was* previously ridgeline development”.

With these two changes, the minutes of the August 17, 2010 Planning Commission meetings were approved unanimously (5-0).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Neubecker: Would like to re-arrange agenda to allow time for Mr. Chris Guarino to show up with a multimedia presentation for VAB worksession. New agenda order: Other Matters, Commission training; work session Village at Breckenridge Master Sign Plan (MGT); worksession: Free Basement Density (MM); preliminary hearing, VRDC Building 804 Hotel Change of Use.

Mr. Neubecker stated that the Town Council Report would be presented after the first worksession. This should give Mr. Burke time to get here. We called him on phone. With one change, the Agenda for the September 7, 2010 Planning Commission meeting was approved unanimously (5-0).

CONSENT CALENDAR:

- 1) Summit County Building and Grounds PV (JP) PC#2010041; 106 North Ridge Street
- 2) Pedowicz Addition (JP) PC#2010047; 116 Windwood Circle
- 3) Bly Building Exterior Remodel (MGT) PC#2010050; 111 Ski Hill Road
- 4) Lot 23, Corkscrew Flats (CK) PC#2010046; 290 Corkscrew Drive

Mr. Pringle questioned the ‘home-office’ for the Pedowicz Addition. Will this space be only a home office, or a bedroom too? Does this require a ‘home-occupation license, parking, etc.? (Mr. Mosher answered the questions.)

With no request for call up, the consent calendar was approved as presented.

WORKSESSIONS:

- 1) Village at Breckenridge Master Sign Plan (MGT)

Mr. Thompson presented. The Village at Breckenridge (VAB) is requesting signage to ease property identification while enhancing vehicle and pedestrian safety along Highway 9 and how these issues pertain to the unique circumstances of the VAB property. A few variances are proposed.

As a result of the current remodel at the VAB, the Homeowners Association (HOA) is establishing commercial signage guidelines that will maintain a more uniform retail (and way finding) signage plan throughout the Village. VAB would like to find a way to easily orient visitors and help them navigate their way to their final destination without confusion. Although VAB is directly on Highway 9 (Park Avenue), there are challenges for out-of-town guests trying to navigate their way to the VAB due to lack of proper signage and no clear indicator for the narrow, easy to miss, entry to Circle Drive between the Liftside Inn and the Village Hotel. The applicant believes there are two solutions to the above dilemma: have signage along Highway 9 that is easily identifiable for approaching vehicles and clearly identify the Circle Drive entry. A second area of the Master Sign Plan that the applicant would like feedback on are the tenant signs and pedestrian way finding.

Staff generally agrees that this project is unique as this is a major destination for the public with access to the Medical Center, Peak 9 base and five buildings all including multiple retail locations. Staff requested feedback from the Commission on the following issues:

1. Did the Commission believe a variance is warranted for a sign larger than 20 sq. ft. facing Park Avenue?
2. Would the Commission support a variance for an entry arch?
3. Did the Commission support multiple freestanding way finding signs?
4. Did the Commission agree that multiple facades should be counted toward the “building frontage” measurement to determine tenant sign area?

Mr. Guarino, Wember Inc., General Contractor for the Project, presented a Power Point presentation on the VAB project. He discussed the challenges (property identification, circle drive identification, public easements, medical access, multiple buildings, general public way finding, safety and guest experience, etc.); items considered for variance (logo/sign along highway 9, new circle drive entry arch, retail signage, additional way-finding signage, special considerations for pedestrian lighting.) He presented photos of each of these areas for visual examples. He discussed in detail the existing and proposed retail signage dimensions (compared to the past used square footage), as well as proposed designs and locations and way-finding proposals. He proposed lighting options that will improve the traffic flow in the circle drive area to provide better pedestrian safety. Mr. Guarino showed the three (3) different size options for the Village wall sign (20, 65 and 140 square feet options), and explained how well or difficult it would be to read these signs.

Commissioner Questions/Comments:

Mr. Schroder: How far back would ‘pre-existing conditions’ apply? (Mr. Thompson: Showed some pre-existing photos of the project prior to the start of the remodel project. Mr. Guarino will show more in his presentation.) Will ‘way-finding for your neighbor’ (Vail owned buildings) be done?

Final Comments: Issue 1, sign variance: Concerned with the small Village wall sign, as well as the large one, and also concerned with lighting being too bright and obnoxious. Also, we do not want the entire town to think that everyone needs or deserves a billboard. Issue 2, arch variance: Agrees that a ‘statement piece’ would attract people as needed. Issue 3, way-finding signs: Supports signage and way-finding. Issue 4, building frontage measurements: The presented math is good; use existing formula. Lighting: Would like to see Mr. Guarino explore further lighting options.

Mr. Pringle: Will the Village wall sign be lit for easier visibility at night? (Mr. Tony Wait, HOA Manager: Agreed that the sign will need to be lit.) I suggest new technologies (GPS, way-finding kiosks, etc.) that may be a better way for people to find their ways around as opposed to a large, possible eye-sore sign. I am not so sure that a large sign on the side of a building is the look we should go for.

Final Comments: Issue 1: Is concerned that this sign will look like a ‘billboard’. We need to use the smallest effective sign possible. Issue 2: Questioned if the arch would add a ‘cluttered’ look. (Mr. Guarino: It would not.) Issue 3: Supports proposed signs. Issue 4: We need to keep these numbers the same throughout town, just to keep it fair for everyone. Lighting: Does not think that the proposed option is the best one. He suggested that a light pole in the center will be obstructive; another option may be raising lights up on the building, pointing them toward the circle drive. Supports re-writing the town codes to allow larger-scale projects to address new lighting options such as this.

Mr. Bertaux: Final Comments: Issue 1: Agrees that the middle size sign would be the most effective. Issue 2: Thinks that this arch is not considered a part of the ‘gated community’ fence ordinance. Issue 3: Supports way-finding. Would like to see a directory to ‘Main Street’ and ‘Riverwalk.’ Issue 4: Consistency needs to be kept. Let’s keep this sign frontage the same as previous projects. (Mr. Thompson: Discussed with the Commission historical signage calculations (which were dated to the 1980s) in comparison to this project.) (Mr. Wolf: I agree that we need to support proper signage to these retail businesses, even if that requires update Town signage calculations to allow for changing times.) (Mr. Pringle: Suggested that the size of the sign should represent the retail space available. We need to re-write the code to say “The sign cannot exceed “x square feet maximum.”) (Mr. Guarino: As of this point, the Village would be in-charge of getting each of the oval sign frames. Each sign/logo would be different for each retail business, but the framing/sizing would be the same for each location.)

Mr. Wolfe: Why did the Council decide to decline arches in a setting like this? (Mr. Neubecker: Explained a bit of history on that issue, and how we do not want an archway to become a status symbol, which is not Breckenridge's community character.) Good job to Mr. Guarino for the presentation; however, I am disappointed that only five (5) of the eight (8) buildings will be addressed by this remodel. Even though these three (3) extra buildings are not legally under the same ownership, we want a coherent look, not only 'partially' remodeled. Does Mr. Wait think that these new changes will really solve way-finding issues in the area? We would hate to make these changes and guests still not able to find their way around.

Final Comments: Issue 1: Is supportive of the larger than twenty (20) square foot signage. Issue 2: Agrees that an archway is needed. Issue 3: Supports way-finding and retail signage, but is concerned for the number of signs that are listed. Too many way-finders will turn-off our way-finding abilities if too many signs are used. Issue 4: Does not agree that a number or size needs to be given to available signage space. Size of signs should be based on need, not building frontage. Lighting: Is concerned about the light island for accessibility and traffic congestion. I question if we could do that lighting option without the island. I am also concerned about the 'busy-ness' or 'clustered' look with the added island and light. (Mr. Guarino: We do not want guests driving all over that circle drive, doing twelve (12) point turns, etc.)

Mr. Allen: Final Comments: Issue 1: Agrees that the sign needs to be as small as possible while being effective. A sign in this area would add positively to an ugly stucco wall, but let's not make it too big. Lighting can be addressed later, it will be okay. Issue 3: Supports signs. Issue 4: Supports a calculated value for allowable signage. I would like to see only one (1) sign in-front of each retail space entrance, as opposed to a sign for doors that are blocked off and not an entry point. Also, I support a uniform size sign for each retail space, instead of a larger sign for a tenant for more square feet. Lighting: I support the lighting option, as the light island may de-clutter the area from cars and traffic.

2) Free Basement Density (MM)

Mr. Mosher presented. This is the third review of a proposal to further incentivize the restoration, renovation and adaptive reuse of historic commercial buildings by allowing 'free' basement density for uses other than storage. As proposed, this policy change could only occur to commercial historic structures that would be locally landmarked.

During the last review of this subject on March 3, 2009 the Commission expressed concerns about:

1. Larger historic buildings adding new uses (separate from the ground level) instead of using the space for support density for the primary use above and the possible impacts.
2. The source of this 'free' density.
3. Parking impacts of the additional density.
4. Financial impacts to the property owner.

The discussion this evening explores the potential benefits and impacts of allowing free basement density for uses other than storage. Those issues regarding the possible source of any density, possible financial incentives and other issues not related to the Development Code are planned to be discussed with the Town Council.

The benefits:

1. An incentive for additional historic preservation/rehabilitation.
2. Locally land marking additional historic structures.
3. An increase in economic vitality for the Town.
4. More efficient use of main level density for the patron's needs (additional retail/restaurant square footage).

The possible impacts:

1. Increase in parking requirements. The parking requirements, for the most part, could be addressed via the Parking Service Area and additional fees to be paid (where eligible).
2. May increase vehicular and pedestrian activity.
 - a. The added density would be beneath the historic structure only, maintaining the footprint; however, the added circulation needs from added density could impact the historic character of the property. Policy 17 (External Circulation) may apply. This would be reviewed at individual site plan review.
3. May create negative site impacts.

- a. In some cases (if the basement is large enough), egress doors/windows may be required in basements. In the past the Town has approved egress window-wells if placed behind the primary façade with proper landscaped screening. Policy 7 (Site and Environmental Design) may be applied.

Staff is supportive of providing additional incentives for restoration of historic commercial properties for adaptive re-use and long term preservation. We understand that there may be site impacts and monetary impacts (parking, plant investment fees, TDRs, housing); however, we would like to find a way to encourage such preservation through a policy change. For the most part, Staff believes that this additional density can provide some incentive without significant impacts to each site.

Many of the remaining historic structures in Town are very small. We have had several requests from applicants to place uses other than storage (such as management offices, kitchens, and other support functions) in basements to allow for better retail/seating areas on the main level. Owners of those few larger buildings are asking for uses beyond storage to make the task of restoration/renovation economically viable.

Staff welcomed any Commissioner comments and requested direction to proceed with drafting a policy for review.

Commissioner Questions/Comments:

- Mr. Schroder: I support having ‘flexible’ incentives based on if the building basement would be used as “support functions” for the space above or for a separate retail use. Support providing the density for free (not having the property owner pay for density). In favor of having part of the incentive be paying for parking impacts. (Confirmed with Mr. Mosher that Service Area parking exists in Town.)
- Mr. Pringle: I support the idea in concept; however, there may be unforeseen impacts. I have concerns about possible bandit uses being placed in basements. This may be hard to track. (Mr. Grosshuesch: All businesses come in for a business license, signs, etc. allowing staff to check all applicable regulations and fees.) Support providing incentives beyond “storage only” for basement uses. Also support having ‘flexible’ incentives that would address the impacts for large historic buildings differently than smaller historic buildings. Having a separate retail space in the basement of a large building would generate greater impacts than an office or kitchen which supports the space above. I believe that TDRs for this density should be addressed by the Development Code, keeping the opportunity for all equal. (Mr. Neubecker: There is the possibility of using variable incentives.)
- Mr. Bertaux: Would upper level residential uses be allowed? (Mr. Grosshuesch: If the proposal comes in with residential on the upper level in order to have the restoration work out, the Code could allow it. Residential is discouraged on the main level. Basement retail is not very successful anyway.) I believe the benefit should be for commercial uses only. Upstairs, rather than basement, is a better place for retail. Would a remodel/rehabilitation trigger Building Code issues that could negatively impact the historic building? (Mr. Mosher: The current code allows for flexibility in code specific items for historic buildings. This is not generally a concern.)
- Mr. Wolfe: A building as large as Abbey Hall could have a separate use in the basement with much greater impacts than if the space were to support the use on the main level. I believe these situations should be treated differently. Also, any available density on the property must be used first before receiving any ‘free’ basement density.
- Mr. Allen: I support providing incentives for historic structures. The Cellar is a good example of placing ancillary uses in the basement. If residential is needed in the upper level to make the numbers work, we should allow it. I support the idea of ‘variable incentives’; for example, parking being ancillary. I support ancillary impacts if the two levels are used are different.

TOWN COUNCIL REPORT:

There was no Council Report presented.

PRELIMINARY HEARINGS:

- 1) VRDC Building 804 Hotel Change of Use, Tract C, Peak 8 Subdivision (MM) PC#2010048; 1593 Ski Hill Road
(Mr. Bertaux abstained from the discussion as an employee of the Breckenridge Ski Resort.)

Mr. Mosher presented a proposal to construct a 100 room hotel at the base of Peak 8 with 57,235 square feet of Guest Rooms, 9,012 square feet of commercial use and 20,757 square feet of Guest Services. This is a modification to the original proposal that was approved with a 47-room condo/hotel lodge totaling 54,442 square feet with 10,360 square feet of commercial space and 20,219 square feet of Guest Services.

Mr. Mosher also touched on the subjects of additional landscaping in the rear of proposed building, other master plan details, drainage and water quality, and lighting.

Mr. Randy May, Vail Resorts Development Company (Applicant): Continuing to look at this property as a condominium project will put the building construction further out than desired. We would like to look at this project as a hotel instead. This building fits within all the design parameters and previous commitments made with this project and the Master Plan. With this change, will come standard room configuration changes; outside of these basic changes, the only other change is that we have added a spa area on the 5th level, which was not proposed with the condominium plan. The valet parking issue is different from the typical hotel/condominium parking, but that is simply where we are at with this project. Rock Resorts have done the same on other developments. Seasonal and mobile plaza-area landscaping (planter-boxes, flowers, trees, other plantings, etc.) will be provided to soften the patio area; many of these plantings will be movable to adjust to each outdoor entertainment/seasonal need. One Ski Hill Place will have the general check-in area for all of the associated nearby hotels and condos; a shuttle system and valet luggage transport will be provided from One Ski Hill Place to the proposed hotel. Skier services (ticket office, guest services, etc.) will be located on the southwest end of the hotel near the gondola station. Ski school will be located on the northwest end, and restaurants in-between the two on the west side of the building. There will also be a grade-change along Ski Hill Road as it heads toward Peak 7. (Mr. Mosher: Staff has allocated density to the spa for being a ‘public’ commercial space, not just use for the hotel guests.) Parking was placed only one level underground to protect the existing hydrology and prevent possible negative impacts to Cucumber Gulch. The base of Peak 8 is a basin for a lot of water that flows from the slopes above and the water table below. (Mr. Ken O’Brien, Architect: Generally, valet parking is addressed in the way that we have proposed it. Similar ski resort hotels have similar parking situations.)

Staff has worked closely with the applicant and agent to carefully review this proposal and proposed densities against the 2005 Amendment to the Peaks 7 and 8 Master Plan. Staff found the architecture, density and mass, and site planning to abide with the Master Plan.

Staff welcomed comments on the following:

1. Did the Commission have any comments on the proposed change from a condo-hotel to a full hotel use?
2. Were there any comments on the preliminary architecture?
3. Did the Commission believe there should be additional landscaping placed in the plaza at the base of the ski runs?
4. Did the landscaping placed at the base of the development (street-side) seem adequate for site buffering?
5. Did the Commission have any comments regarding the proposed valet parking only proposal?

Staff welcomed any additional questions or comments from the Commission.

Mr. Allen opened the hearing to public comment. There was no public comment and the hearing was closed.

Commissioner Questions/Comments:

Mr. Schroder: Is the snow melt point assessment as proposed a net zero? (Mr. Mosher: Yes. There is public use on one side and the large plaza on the other.) Questioned the current bus system loop, bypassing Peak 8 then stopping at Peak 7 and then returning to Peak 8; will that stay the same? (Mr. May: The current bus turn-around at Peak 7 is smaller than the new proposed one. Also, some guests still do want to go to Peak 7, off of the same bus. But yes, it will follow same route.) The proposed ski school location seems to be too far from the kids’ chairs. (Mr. May: Described in detail how ski school access is provided within the buildings.) I support the proposed change of use. I like the open plaza for easy navigation; good if we can move those planters around if they are in the way. The preliminary architecture looks good. Looking forward to having more detail. Not too concerned with adding additional landscaping. There is adequate site buffering landscaping. As for the valet parking only, I am okay, as long as you understand the future issues you may have with this.

- Mr. Pringle: I support the overall architectural look, but please establish detail on building materials at next hearing. (Mr. May: The same materials will be used, consistent with One Ski Hill Place.) No problem with the change in use. Support the architectural compatibility of the proposed hotel and One Ski Hill Place. Permanent landscaping will be in place, larger specimens would be better. More detail needed at next meeting. Movable plaza landscaping is good, able to be enhanced over time. Excellent street-side landscaping; no problems with proposed. The valet parking seems ok, as long as you understand what you're getting yourself into. In general, all good! Tally-ho!
- Mr. Wolfe: Is this project proposed as a five (5) star hotel? (Mr. May: Yes.) I question the location of employee parking based on the Master Plan, as well as meeting-space parking. Using a valet parking system will need to be a permanent decision. If this building ever has a change of use, it will never be able to have anything but valet parking. (Mr. May: Acknowledged. We will have a covenant running with the project.) Does the Master Plan allow for a change of use? (Mr. Mosher: Explained that this option is allowed.) I support the change of use. I support the architecture, but I do not like the word 'iconic'. The plaza landscaping should be consistent with how it is done at Ski One Hill Place. Street side landscaping seems to be adequate. The hotel operator would like to see both underground and surface parking provided. I am okay with the valet parking, as long as there is a strong covenant in place.
- Mr. Allen: Questioned 'allowed and proposed density' stated on page fifty-four (54) of the packet; the numbers don't match. (Mr. Mosher: Staff will look at that closer at next review. Staff has a worksheet that accurately tracks all of the density, mass, amenities and skier services at the base area.) Support the hotel use. Commend you for changing this use! The architecture meets our absolute policies, but I do not love the proposed architecture. Needs more detail. Let's get a little more creative; step up and make it look more like a five (5) star hotel! Support the flexible plaza plantings. Green and soft spaces are necessary, especially on the street side. Seasonal landscaping on the plaza side is fine. Would prefer to see regular parking here and meet the code, but don't know how this could happen. Minimize the parking impact more if you can. For a five-star hotel, who wants to drop their car and bags off at another location and ride a bus to their room? (Mr. May: There will be a small service desk/check-in/lobby area in this building, but not enough to accommodate guests of all one hundred (100) rooms.)

OTHER MATTERS:

Mr. Neubecker discussed the Steamboat Springs APA conference happening October 6-9. Travel and conference fees will be available to the Commission. Also, please remember the Planning Commission field trip to Vail on October 14.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Rodney Allen, Chair