

Alta Planning Commission
Minutes
June 10, 2008

The Alta Planning Commission held a meeting on June 10, 2008 at 12 pm at the Market Street Grill on 2985 East Cottonwood Parkway (6580 South), Salt Lake City. Planning Commission members in attendance included Skip Branch, Jon Nepstad, Jan Striefel, Joan Degiorgio, Lee Kapaloski, Prescott Muir, and Rob Voye. Mayor Tom Pollard was present, in addition to Town of Alta staff member Kate Black. Town of Alta attorneys Kimberly Chytraus and Katie Lewis were also present. Members of the public present included Mark Haik, Charles Livsey, Jen Clancy, Onno Wieringa, and Jennifer Garner (with a court recorder).

Mr. Branch called the meeting to order, and asked for any additions to the agenda. No additions were recommended.

Comments from the Chair

Mr. Branch noted that the Planning Commission passed the revised Land Use Authority Ordinance onto the Town Council. The Base Facilities Zone Ordinance has been worked through and passed along to the Town Council. The two remaining items that will be discussed today are height and density regulations and the Subdivision Ordinance.

Mayor Pollard summarized the Town Council Public Hearing that took place June 9, 2008. First, the Town Council went through the Planning Commission Land Use Authority Appeal Authority Process and discussed definition changes. Next, discussion ensued regarding parking and the Base Facilities Zone as submitted to the Town Council from the Planning Commission.

Mayor Pollard expressed that following existing parking regulations may be too harsh, and puts unnecessary hardship on developers. From Mayor Pollard's insight into the hotel industry, he felt that guest use parking requirement was excessive. Citing the experience with remodeling the Rustler, Mayor Pollard proposed that one parking spot per eight guest rooms is sufficient.

As for live in employees, Mayor Pollard suggested one parking spot for every two live in employees. The one obstacle is a natural disaster situation where property is destroyed, needs to be rebuilt, and parking has to be provided. Mayor Pollard feels that in this situation, the Parking Management Plan will be used. In regards to parking requirements, Mayor Pollard suggested that there needs to be a change in coverage.

During the Public Hearing, it was discussed that the Planning Commission did not really address height, and the Town Council proposed raising the requirement to 60 feet, or three stories above road. This was suggested as a more aesthetically pleasing situation whereas instead of looking at rooftops, people will be looking at attractive buildings. The Planning Commission and Town Council must work together to really hammer these

issues out. Mayor Pollard emphasized that the major goal should be to continue the economic viability of the community, but to do so within guidelines presented. To this end, the Planning Commission needs to be more proactive.

Mayor Pollard noted that at a previous Work Session there was much discussion regarding the definition of guest room. Ms. Lewis pointed out that 600 square feet is the definition for a guest room in the Base Facilities Zone Ordinance. The Town Council has discussed that this definition gives the hotel developer a density bonus for small rooms, and increased flexibility on how to structure their hotel. Finally, Mayor Pollard applauded the Town Council work sessions for generating productive open discussion.

Ms. Lewis recalled one final comment regarding the Appeal Authority Ordinance. Currently, if an application is rejected, the applicant had 10 calendar days to appeal. The Town Council decided to increase the timeframe to 15 calendar days for appeals.

Mr. Branch discussed the Patsy Marley project in preparation for the next meeting. Mr. Branch noted that today's discussion about Subdivisions might guide us as far as application is concerned. The Planning Commission needs input from the staff about how to go about looking at the application.

Discussion with Possible Approval the Following Minutes from Previous Planning Commission Meetings. November 13, 2007 and April 16, 2008.

Discussion ensued regarding minutes from the November 13, 2007 and April 16, 2008 Planning Commission meetings. There was some discussion about whether unapproved minutes could be forwarded to the Town Council for action. Ms. Lewis believed that this does not apply to this situation. It was moved to approve both sets of minutes, and the motion was seconded. The Commission unanimously voted to approve both the November 13, 2007 and April 16, 2008 minutes.

Discussion on Density and Height Requirements for the Base Facilities Zone

Mr. Branch requested input from the staff and counsel before discussion commenced on height and density regulations. Ms. Black read Mr. Guldner's comments about previous height and density regulations in the Base Facilities Zone, and current proposals. The current height regulations in the Ordinance were determined by the Planning Commission, and refer to no direct number. It is noted however that all existing structures are about one story above road. The height requirement recommended to the Town Council by the Planning Commission is 20 feet above street level. The Town Council suggested 60 feet, as discussed above. There was some debate regarding exactly how this height is measured. Ms. Lewis read a convoluted definition of building height as defined in the Uniform Zoning Ordinance.

Mayor Pollard suggested that every application should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. There was a comment made suggesting a guideline number so the applicant has somewhere to start.

Mr. Kapaloski stated that 60 feet above street level would be a good benchmark for applicants, and a decision could be made from there. Mr. Kapaloski noted that each of those five lodges is in a very different setting with respect to the road (e.g., Peruvian Lodge vs. Goldminer's Daughter), and the effect will be different for each lodge.

Mr. Branch asks if anyone has any concerns about height restrictions. Ms. Degiorgio stressed that we all have a different idea of what this should look like, and suggested a mock up of the different height regulations.

Mr. Voye brought up the Goldminer's Daughter as an example. If the Goldminer's Daughter could build 60 feet above the road, it would be a whopper of a building in the middle of the town. Mr. Voye suggested basing height off the grade of the road, not just the road itself.

Mr. Kapaloski asked what is the goal regarding the height requirement discussion. What are we trying to recommend to the Town Council? Mr. Kapaloski continued that it is difficult to look at each lodge uniformly, as they are all unique structures that would be hard to standardize.

Mr. Branch asked the Planning Commission what they want Alta to look like in the future. What do we want to see aesthetically? Mr. Branch then noted that the proposed height regulation is 20 feet unless by reviewed by the Land Use Authority, which can then determine whether the height can be increased or decreased. This creates the option that every proposal can be viewed on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Kapaloski asserted that we need to have a benchmark, and with creativity and design, maybe the project will end up very different; but we at least need a starting point.

Ms. Degiorgio stated that visual stimulation should be part of the submission for any project. Ms. Degiorgio suggested that the Planning Commission should set a vision for what we want Alta to look like. This should be visionary but realistic so developers have something to shoot for. Ms. Degiorgio stated that the Planning Commission should be proactive instead of always reacting.

Mayor Pollard discussed the earmarking of funds by the Federal Government to look at some of the Town's issues. This proposal will most likely include: 1) density issues, 2) Community Center, and 3) garbage facilities. Mayor Pollard suggested that maybe we could bring the Planning Commission into this study and incorporate some of the previously mentioned issues.

Ms. Degiorgio brought up a few questions. What do we want Alta to look like? Do we want it to be just hotels? Do we want to in fill and make it more walkable? Mr. Pollard

suggested that the Planning Commission work with the Alta Ski Lift Company to coordinate long-term goals.

Mr. Branch asked Mr. Muir if he knows of any Planning Commissions that hire firms to create a visionary project. Mr. Muir responded that it occurs often. Mr. Branch thinks this would be a great idea, and would be a rich product from this group. Ms. Striefel asked if money is available for a project like this. Mr. Pollard responded that it has been earmarked for a Community Center, garbage/recycling program, and long range planning.

Mr. Muir discussed his involvement with visionary planning in the private sector, and acknowledged that it does take time, effort, and money, but does give valuable direction.

Mr. Branch acknowledged that now as an adjunct to the density/height discussion, we are discussing a long-range vision. Mr. Pollard noted that the company who did the long range vision for Solitude is engaged with helping the Alta Ski Lift Company. The Town and Alta Ski Lifts have common goals, and as discussed above, it would be ideal to have a dialogue with Mr. Wieringa.

Mr. Branch brought the meeting back around to the height requirement. Ms. Lewis summarized the recommendations of both the Planning Commission (20 feet) and the Town Council (60 feet), and clarified the option of adopting the Town Council recommendation but reserving the right to discuss and revisit the issue. Alternatively, the Planning Commission has the option to recommend something entirely different.

Mr. Voye suggested using a height restriction based on existing buildings regardless of where the road is. Mayor Pollard stated that the Town Council suggested 60 feet as to increase the visual effect as you enter from the road. Maybe in the future, we should hire a firm to make some plans regarding density, height, and parking. The Planning Commission could come back and revisit those issues then.

Mr. Muir suggested that outside help may be useful, that way we do not give Town Council one recommendation or another. We should approach the Town Council regarding options to finance outside help. Maybe we could use part of room tax revenue.

The Planning Commission decided to wait until a master plan is done before making another recommendation. The Planning Commission needs to include the Town Council in this process to help get professional input.

Mr. Kapaloski asks if the Town Council recommended 60 feet period, or 60 feet plus or minus. Mayor Pollard recalled that the Town Council wanted 60 feet plus or minus for a benchmark.

Mr. Branch asked the Planning Commission if we should include density with our recommendation to the Town Council. Mayor Pollard noted that the Town Council did

not discuss density but was planning on adopting the Base Facilities Zone, which calls for 33 rooms per net developable acre, and each guest room defined as 600 square feet.

Ms. Lewis reminded the Planning Commission that they do not have to make any formal recommendations today. The consensus regarding height is that the Planning Commission does not have enough information yet to address height. For now, height can still be addressed on case-by-case basis.

The discussion turned back to density. Mr. Kapaloski clarified that what we are really talking about is not guest rooms, but guest room *space*, and this should be more explicit in the Base Facilities Zone. Ms. Chytraus recalled that in the Town Council meeting it was decided that 600 square feet should refer to the space however it is used; i.e. it can be divided. Mr. Muir suggested that it could read 19,800 square feet of guest room space per developable acre and that the wording should be cleared up as to avoid ambiguity. Ms. Degiorgio acknowledges this as a good idea to create more flexibility.

Mr. Branch asked the Planning Commission if they want to encourage the Town Council to define guest room space rather than number of rooms per net developable acre. No motion was needed, but the Planning Commission was in agreement. Ms. Striefel emphasized the need to make this section more understandable as to prevent misinterpretation.

Discussion, with Possible Action on Recommendations to Forward the Proposed Subdivision Ordinance to the Alta Town Council

Mr. Branch asked the Planning Commission if they wanted to begin discussion on the Subdivision Ordinance with so little time left. The Planning Commission decided that it would be discussed next meeting.

Discussion and Vote Whether the Alta Planning Commission should go into closed door session to discuss litigation matters pursuant to Sections 52-4-204 and 205 of the Utah Code

Mr. Branch asked the Planning Commission if they wanted to go closed-door session to discuss litigation. Mr. Muir motioned not to go into a closed-door session. Ms. Striefel seconded the motion. Each Commissioner voted in the affirmative.

Ms. Degiorgio motioned to adjourn the meeting of the Planning Commission. Ms. Striefel seconded that motion with each Planning Commission member voting in the affirmative.

These minutes were passed and approved on the fourteenth day of October, 2008.

Claire E. Runge
Assistant Town Administrator