

**PARK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2012**

PRESENT: Nann Worel, Brooke Hontz, Stewart Gross, Adam Strachan, Jack Thomas, Thomas Eddington, Francisco Astorga, Polly Samuels McLean

WORK SESSION ITEMS

Land Management Code – Discussion of Story & Height

The Staff recommended that the Planning Commission discuss the interpretation of story as currently defined in the LMC.

Planner Astorga stated that in 2009 the Planning Commission and City Council held several meetings to discuss amending the Land Management Code. At that time the Steep Slope Conditional Use permit criteria was updated, as well as the overall height and how height is measured. It also addressed specific regulations related to the HR-1, HR-2 and the HRL District. Planner Astorga reviewed the existing regulations using a hand-drawn illustration.

Planner Astorga remarked that the major change in 2009 was the requirement to add a 10 foot setback for the third story. Another regulation indicated that final grade had to be within 4 feet of existing grade. The maximum number of stories was limited to three, and the basement counts as a first story. Planner Astorga pointed out that on a 30% lot and with the 27' height regulation, the numbers for a 10' setback do not work. If the entire lot is 30%, the minimum setback has to be 18 feet. Planner Astorga noted that another item added to the LMC in 2009 was that the roof pitch had to be between 7:12 and 12:12.

On a downhill lot, if the applicant wanted to accommodate a tandem two-car garage, an exception could be authorized for up to 35' instead of 27' to accommodate tandem garages. The Code indicates that a single family dwelling must have at least two parking spaces.

Planner Astorga noted that items were also removed from the LMC in 2009. The Planning Commission had the ability to allow a maximum height of up to 45 feet on lots with slopes 30% or greater, and that was removed.

Planner Astorga read the definition of a story per the current Land Management Code. "The vertical measurement between floors taken from finish floor to finish floor. For the top most Story, the vertical measurement is taken from the top finish floor to the top of the wall pate for the roof structure." Planner Astorga stated that the Staff has recently received several applications on downhill lots, where different architects have introduced a split level concept. He requested that the Planning Commission discuss split level this evening.

Planner Astorga reviewed a diagram to show the shift in levels and the staircases dividing the structure. He noted that the application would meet all the requirements of the LMC, with the exception of the number of stories based on interpretation of the definition.

Commissioner Thomas believed the present interpretation is the same interpretation the Planning Commission has given in the last two meetings. According to the strict definition of the Code as written, the diagram shown exceeds the three-story limit. Commissioner Thomas agreed that the

definition needed to be modified and corrected, and he thought the Planning Commission should consider the modification as suggested by Staff. He favored the idea of varying the floor plates as long as they stay within the maximum height. The Staff had suggested 37-1/2 feet as a discussion point, and Commissioner Thomas thought it was an appropriate height and closer to the intent.

Commissioner Thomas pointed out that when the Code first came before the Planning Commission there was a 10-foot story criteria that would have allowed more flexibility. When it went to the City Council, that criteria was modified and changed and the result affected the process. The Commissioners concurred.

Planner Astorga stated that the Staff understood the concerns and was prepared to introduce a solution, which would add a regulation to the Land Management Code. The measurement would be the vertical distance between the lowest finished floor towards the highest point on the highest ridge. The Staff believes that if they could implement that specific regulation, it would stop the terracing affect that could take place on a longer than usual lot.

Planner Astorga presented a diagram to show how the Staff reached the 37-1/2 feet height recommendation.

Commission Thomas felt that the overall maximum height made the story discussion less significant. Director Eddington felt it was best to define a story as one above the other and add a vertical maximum measurement. Planner Astorga pointed out that the intent for the 7:12 to 12:12 range was to encourage variety and avoid every building having the same pitch. Director Eddington remarked that the steeper the slope, the more impacted the project would be by the vertical measurement.

Planner Astorga stated that the Planning Commission researched the definition of story in other ski resort town. Based on that research, The Staff recommended changing the definition of story to, "That portion of a building included between the upper surface of a floor and the upper surface of the floor next above, except that the top most story shall be that portion of a building included between the upper surface of the top most floor and the ceiling or roof above." He asked for feedback from the Planning Commission on the proposed definition. Planner Astorga noted that the difference between the existing language and the proposed language is the reference to the floor next above it. He remarked that the language mirrors the definition of a story per the International Residential Code.

Commissioner Thomas stated that if they remove the three story restriction and add a new height restriction, the definition of a story has less meaning. However, he liked having some commonality with other communities on what is logical in the building world. Commissioner Thomas thought that cleaning up the story definition was a good idea.

Director Eddington clarified that the Staff had not considered completely removing the three-story issue. They had talked about giving better definition and parameters to a mezzanine or a split level. Commissioner Thomas thought they needed to think of the effects of half-story. Under the current definition, some of the cross sections are six stories. He felt the definition was too restrictive.

Commissioner Gross thought the 25% limitation on the intermediate floor seemed reasonable. Commissioner Thomas wanted to see diagrams of how that would work before making a decision. He suggested taking input from the design community to see if there were other conditions they had not thought about. The idea sounded good and he would like to support it, but he wanted to understand the fallout and what situations could occur under different scenarios. He felt the discussion was going in the right direction, but it needed to come back for further consideration.

Director Eddington stated that the Staff would work with different scenarios and come back with alternatives.

Commissioner Hontz was leaning towards the revised definition of a story because the new language clarifies that it has to be above. She favored keeping the 3-story limitation and the additional height limitation. She agreed with Commissioner Thomas about looking for unintended consequence.

Commissioner Thomas believed the intent of the Code is to reduce the mass and scale of houses in the Historic District, but there should be some flexibility in doing that.

Commissioner Strachan asked if the definition of mezzanine floor or loft had been pulled from somewhere. Planner Astorga recalled that it was a combination from Crested Butte and other towns. The language was not pulled word for word and the Staff tweaked it specific to Park City. Commissioner Strachan thought it set up inconsistent and vague language in the Code. He felt the revised definition of a story and the 37-1/2 overall height limitation was sufficient. The architects would have the ability to do what they wanted inside those parameters. He believed the mezzanine, loft, or intermediate floor definition was unnecessary and would only create problems. Director Eddington clarified that Commissioner Strachan was not concerned about split levels or mezzanines. Commissioner Strachan replied that this was correct. He thought it everything could be accomplished by the stepping requirement, setbacks, and a change to the height requirement. He was concerned that the 25% floor area calculation would be hard to do because the total floor area of the story in which it is placed would not be calculable. There would be so many half stories and steps that they would never reach the 25% point. Commissioner Thomas agreed.

Commissioner Thomas believed a critical step was the addition of the 37-1/2 foot height limitation, because it restricts the height of the building without being concerned about the stories inside. However, he still wanted time to think it through to make sure they were not opening Pandora's box.

Director Eddington stated that the Staff would come back with code definitions that address that issue, as well as definitions that would address keeping in the story and mezzanine.

Commissioner Hontz suggested keeping the story definition as revised and the 37-1/2-foot height limitation, and not the mezzanine definition. From her reading, when it is stepped, there would never be a loft or a split level. Commissioner Strachan asked if Commissioner Hontz was suggesting that a story is the portion of the building included between the upper surface of any floor and the upper surface of the next floor above, and that measurement could be taken from anywhere in the home. Commissioner Strachan provided a scenario based on Commissioner Hontz's interpretation. He noted that not all the floors in the diagram may expand the width of the home.

Director Eddington stated that it would be the entire width of the home depending on where the sections are drawn.

Commissioner Strachan was concerned about a building cascading up the hillside on a long lot. Director Eddington explained how the 37-1/2 overall height limitation would address that issue. Commissioner Strachan felt the explanation made it more certain that the mezzanine definition and the three story definition were not needed, as long as the height controls the cascade effect up the hillside and the concern for the cross canyon view.

Commissioner Thomas pointed out that the cross sections, like the example they were looking at, was consistent with the Code, as long as it remains under the 37-1/2 foot limit. However, under the current definition, the cross section would show six stories. Commissioner Strachan stated that without a cross canyon view, it would be difficult to know if that home would present the cascade problem. Commissioner Thomas replied that it has a footprint restriction and a maximum height from one point to another point.

Chair Worel thanked Planner Astorga for the background information he provided. It was helpful to see how other communities address these issues. Chair Worel opened the public hearing.

Craig Elliott, an architect with Elliott Work Group, felt the Planning Commission was headed in the right direction as far as capping maximum height and removing the requirements for floors. He noted that most sites have cross slope in addition to the slopes front and back. Removing the discussion about stories and maximizing the height and using the 27 foot grade makes a lot of sense with respect to a 75-foot deep lot. Mr. Elliott presented an image of homes in Park City that was taken from the Marsac parking lot. He noted that the majority of buildings in the photograph do not meet the existing current Code for various reasons, but it is a great depiction of what Park City is and can be. He chose that photograph because it is one of the steepest sections in Old Town. Mr. Elliott would like to have the discussion on lots greater than 75 feet deep and breaking the building into separate buildings or structures that are not connected. He believed there was an opportunity to maintain the existing character and scale, and still give people with larger lots the ability to create diverse and interesting projects. Mr. Elliott agreed with the discussion about removing the floor definition. He liked the cap of the building and the maximum height and following the 27 foot grade, as long as it pertains to a typical lot depth. Variations in lot depth and shape becomes a separate issue.

Joe Tesch disagreed with Commissioner Thomas' comment that the idea of the Code was to reduce massing and height. That was the case in 2009, but additional suggestions were made in 2011. There were joint meetings with the Planning Commission, Planning Staff and City Council and the idea of reducing height and size further was rejected. Mr. Tesch remarked that they were dealing with what occurred in 2009, but the idea is to not go smaller. Operating today under the impression of a mandate to reduce what has been occurring is a mistake. Mr. Tesch stated that another thing that came out of those joint discussions was that Park City is different neighborhoods and one size does not fit all. His recollection for those discussions was that there was no mandate for any neighborhood to attempt to reduce height or massing.

Chuck Heath, the applicant for 916 Empire, understood that there were recommendations to change the Code and possibly the rules. He wanted to know how this would affect his application, since his application was submitted under the current Code.

Assistant City Attorney McLean explained that Mr. Heath was vested under the Code in place at the time his application was submitted, and the interpretation of that Code. If the changes are less restrictive Mr. Heath could avail himself of that, but if they are more restrictive, he was still vested under the current application.

Mr. Heath asked how the new interpretation would differ from the current Code and how it would affect his application.

Commissioner Thomas clarified that the Planning Commission was talking about general amendments to the LMC with regard to stories, and not specific to any project. He recommended that Mr. Heath talk with the Staff regarding the interpretation to evaluate whether it would be more beneficial to move forward with his current application or wait until the changes are made and adopted and then resubmit his application.

Mary Wintzer commented on Mr. Tesch's remarks about there not being a mandate. She thought the visioning result had brought this to the forefront. Over 400 people responded and the City spent \$60,000 to do a survey. People overwhelmingly talked about scale and wanting to keep the small town feel and the historic nature. Ms. Wintzer believed the home on Ontario was the poster child for loopholes and being able to build a house far out of scale of the adjacent historic home. Ms. Wintzer believed there was wide sentiment among many people in Old Town to look at mass and scale to keep with natural setting, historic character and the small town feel.

The Work Session was adjourned.