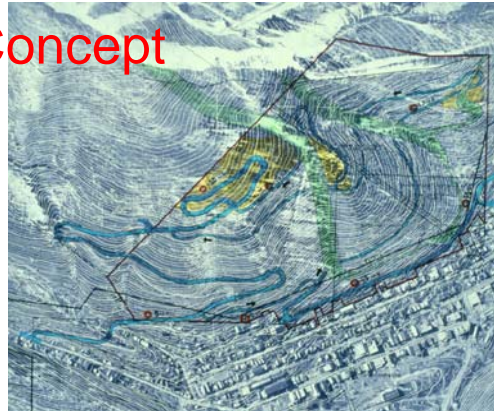


1986 Approval

When the City Council approved the Sweeney's Plan in 1986 the community made a conscious decision that reduced the overall amount of density from what was originally allowed on Treasure Hill (431 Unit Equivalents to 216); and consolidated development into one 11.5 acre pad. Numerous community benefits have resulted including summer and winter trails, 110 acres of dedicated open space, skier connection of Main Street to PCMR, and the Town Lift and Town Bridge Plaza.

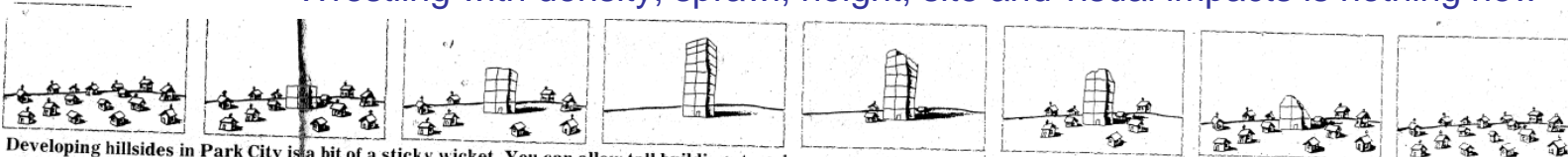


1984 Concept



1986 Concept

Wrestling with density, sprawl, height, site and visual impacts is nothing new



Developing hillsides in Park City is a bit of a sticky wicket. You can allow tall buildings to gain more open space. But, if you don't allow tall buildings on the hillsides, the tradeoff could be a lot of little buildings everywhere.

How should Park City's last 'open' hillside be developed?

News commentary

by TERI GOMES
Record editor

For all intents and purposes there is but one remaining "open" hillside in Park City. Aspens trees dot the gully and the mountainside known as Creole Gulch, and in the afternoon sun shadows play on the homes in Old Town.

The Sweeney family owns the nearly 125 acres that constitute the hillside. They have paid taxes on the land for years and recently they again approached the planning commission and the City Council about plans to develop the area.

It is a sensitive place; the new

Town Lift chair carries skiers up the mountain along the same route that mining tram cars once took ore down the mountain. There is a fragile fabric in the area where old miner's homes share space with modern brick hotel rooms.

The future of the hillside is in question. The rights of landowners are in question. Buzz words like *open space* and *density* and *height exceptions* are being tossed about by those who are debating the possibilities surrounding Creole Gulch.

Some say the land never should have been zoned to allow the maximum 400 plus units there. Some say the developers will never be able to

economically make the project "pencil out." Others say to allow a 95 foot building there is completely out of place with the character of Old Town. Still others contend nearly any plan that allows the city to maintain 120 acres of open space on that hillside is worth the trade-off.

Fought with complications, the Sweeneys have been before the planning commission numerous times and have spent thousands of dollars on various proposals on how best they could develop their land. Members of the city planning staff have spent endless hours looking at all those different plans to reach the most acceptable compromise possible to all parties.

On a split vote of the planning commission, the Sweeneys received approval of a plan which would allow them 1.77 units per acre, or a

total of 219 unit equivalents—a 49 percent reduction from the allowable density. To achieve the desired density swap they would need a height exception to the current land management code. Instead of the 45 feet allowed they want to build up to 95 feet in the Gulch.

Thursday, the City Council will call up the entire Master Plan for the project based on the request for the height exception. Those who would bet on such things are tempted to say right now it will most likely be a split vote with council members Jim Doiney and Kristen Rogers probably voting against, members Tom Shellenberger and Jim Santy voting for and Ann MacQuoid trying for whatever compromise she can to make the whole thing work.

Maybe the land should have been down-zoned years ago when the city

had the chance. Maybe, as the Sweeneys themselves admit, this project won't be built out for 20 years and by then all the players could change. Maybe a sort of tall building is worth a lot of blue sky and multi-colored foliage. Maybe the Sweeneys, without the approval, will take what could be 19 separate parcels and sell them off and the city will have little control over the single family homes that could dot the entire hillside.

It's a tough question. As a community we have repeatedly told city officials we don't like tall buildings. And we have repeatedly told them we do like open space. We have urged developers to work with city staff members to come up with palatable plans and we have urged planners to be reasonable with developers but not give away the farm.

We have told the planning commission they are an important body and serve a meaningful purpose. But when they allow something taller than code, we term them impotent and demur to the council for a decision.

The aye's and nay's from Thursday's city council meeting will echo against the hills of Creole Gulch for years to come. No matter the decision it will affect the morale of city staff members, developers, appointed commission members and the general public in far-reaching ways.

The Sweeneys have a right to develop their land. And Parkites have the right to expect city fathers (and mothers) to preserve the open hillside.

We do not envy the council it's Solomon-like choices.

- Park
Record
Oct. 1986