

**PARK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MINUTES
AUGUST 22, 2012**

PRESENT: Charlie Wintzer, Brooke Hontz, Mick Savage, Adam Strachan, Jack Thomas, Thomas Eddington, Katie Cattan, Mathew Evans, Polly Samuels McLean

WORK SESSION ITEMS

Land Management Code Amendments – General Discussion

Planner Kirsten Whetstone reported that the Staff was doing an annual update of the Land Management Code. She handed out a Staff report that outlined a few of the major changes for consideration. Additional minor changes were not included in the Staff report. Planner Whetstone pointed out that four pages of the Staff report was a pending ordinance for these various amendments.

Planner Whetstone reviewed the redlined packet of amendments. The first was Review Procedure under the Code and addressed different sections of the Code related to review procedures, primarily the appeal process. Planner Whetstone explained that the primary reason for the change was that an applicant could not go through two appeals with the City. It has to move on to a court jurisdiction. She noted that it applied to design reviews, administrative reviews and final actions that get appealed to the Planning Commission and then to the Board of Adjustment.

Planner Whetstone acknowledged that the Planning Commission had only been given the material this evening. She recommended that the Planning Commission read the material and the pending ordinance and come prepared to discuss it at the next meeting on September 12, 2012.

Chair Wintzer asked if the next meeting would be a work session discussion or whether the Planning Commission would be asked to take action. Planner Whetstone stated that the LMC amendments would be noticed for public hearing and discussion, but no action would be requested.

Planner Whetstone referred to the redlined amendment addressing changes to roof pitch, patios and the proposal to require a building permit for certain impervious surfaces in the Historic District.

Planner Whetstone noted that the section titled Master Planned Developments was a relook at various items and issues raised over the past year regarding master planned developments in Old Town and criteria that should be looked at in Master Planned Developments.

Planner Whetstone referred to Chapter 10 – Board of Adjustment and noted that that redlined version removes the Special Exception. The Board of Adjustment is allowed to grant variances and various things, and they can also act on a Special Exception, which is no longer in the State Code. The Staff proposed to delete the Special Exception, but they had not decided what to replace it with. Some of their ideas would be presented to the Planning Commission at the next meeting for discussion.

Planner Whetstone commented on the Definitions Section and the proposal to add definitions for green roofs, impervious surface, split level, story, half-story, and a zero net energy building.

In response to a question of whether or not the Planning Commission would take public input on the proposed amendments, Chair Wintzer believed it was best to hold public comment until the next meeting to give the Planning Commission the opportunity to review the material handed out this evening. Chair Wintzer encouraged the Commissioners to carefully read the proposed amendments and contact the Planning Department with any questions prior to the next meeting. Director Eddington stated that Planner Whetstone was the lead planner on the amendments; however, other Staff members would also be involved. He encouraged the Commissioners to contact Planner Whetstone to schedule a time to meet with her or another Staff person.

Assistant City Attorney McLean commented on the review process for Historic District Design Review, as well as Administrative Conditional Use Permits. She explained that the proposed change came out of litigation involving 811 Norfolk, in which the court ruled that the City process applied in that case had excessive appeals, which is not allowed by State Code. However, Section 302 of the State Code allows for an application process that allows designation of routine land use matters. An application of proper notice will receive informal streamlined review and action if the application is uncontested, and shall protect the right of each applicant and third party to require formal consideration of any application by a land use authority; and that that decision can be appealed. Ms. McLean stated that that portion of State Code reflects the process the City has where the Staff review is a streamlined review that can be taken to the HPB and further appealed to the Board of Adjustment. Ms. McLean remarked that the amendment tailors the language to more closely reflect the State Code language to make clear that their intent is to follow the State Code.

Commissioner Strachan asked for the impetus behind the changes to the MPD portion of the Code, Chapter 6. Director Eddington explained that the Master Planned Development process began in 1994 and at that time it was allowed in most of the zones. It has morphed over the years and MPDs are allowed in some zones and disallowed in others. The language has been altered and it is now at a point where MPDs are allowed in the Main Street zone if it crosses over into another zone. The intent is to clean up the language and make it more applicable.

Director Eddington noted that a related discussion on the Kimball Arts Center was scheduled before the City Council to consider the opportunity to have that project go through an MPD. Projects on infill lots are challenging and currently there is no opportunity to look at an MPD. Director Eddington clarified that the City Council would not take action on the Kimball Arts Center. It would simply be a policy discussion on whether to allow an MPD to be applied in that situation. Director Eddington invited the Commissioners to attend the City Council meeting to hear that discussion. He clarified that it would be a general policy discussion and not specific to the Kimball Arts Center.

Commissioner Strachan pointed out that the information handed out this evening had a definition of story and split level. Therefore, when the Planning Commission provides the Staff direction for the next work session on the story issue, they should not ask for those definitions because they have already been provided.

Commissioner Savage noted that the applicants who had their projects continued this evening had stayed for the work session because the Planning Commission committed to have a discussion regarding the interpretation of story, independent of the proposed amendments. He pointed out

that whatever changes are made to the LMC would not apply to these applications. Commissioner Savage believed the Planning Commission needed to discuss the interpretation question in an effort to provide those applicants some guidelines related to their projects as a consequence of the continuation.

Planner Whetstone agreed that it was a two-prong discussion. One was an interpretation of the current Code and the other would be the LMC amendment that addresses potential reasons for different interpretations.

Commissioner Thomas was unsure if they could resolve both issues this evening without first seeing the minutes from the Planning Commission and City Council meetings when the Steep Slope criteria was established. He vaguely recalled talking about stories and heights and he would like to have those documents to clarify some of the issues.

Assistant City Attorney McLean recalled, and as reflected in the Code, that the three stories was under the Historic District height limitations for each zone; and not part of the Steep Slope CUP. Commissioner Thomas concurred, but he still felt that the previous minutes were important because it pertained to the discussion.

Planner Katie Cattan provided a brief history of the process. She explained that when the Planning Commission went through the Steep Slope process there was a 10 foot limit per story. It was quantifiable for Staff to enforce the 10-foot story limit. However, when the process reached the City Council level, the 10-foot limit per story was removed. That changed the clarity because people could expand the stories and work up the hill.

Planner Cattan recalled that the reason for removing the 10-foot limit was based on construction issues on some of the challenging slopes, particularly for the garage. The City Council decided to take out the 10-foot limit for the garage level to create a garage entrance on grade.

Planner Whetstone remarked that the current definition of story in the LMC does not make sense because the City Council took out the vertical measurement. Commissioner Thomas thought it still made sense, but it changed the definition. Planner Whetstone pointed out that the LMC does not address how the stories should be added up.

Commissioner Savage asked Commissioner Thomas to explain his perspective on the story issue and his concerns.

Commissioner Thomas stated that the issue evolves from the beginning of the Steep Slope criteria. The intent was to reduce the mass and scale of projects that were coming before the Planning Commission. They were seeing projects that cascaded up as high as eight stories. Therefore, size, visual impact, and commonality with other projects in the neighborhood became a primary concern. Steep Slope criteria was established to reduce the mass and scale. Commissioner Thomas believed the Planning Commission clearly intended to have a Code that created buildings that had more commonality with the historic character of the community. He noted that the Steep Slope process included discussions about number of stories, modifying grade, maximum heights, and shifts in building. It was not isolated to the number of stories inside the volume. It was also the impact from across the canyon.

Commissioner Thomas recalled the 10-foot per story limit and he thanked Planner Cattan for reminding him that the City Council had made that modification. Commissioner Thomas stated that the floor to ceiling issue was still defined in the definition. He believed the issues have been clarified and defined, but they need to see the minutes and come together on the interpretation.

Commissioner Savage believed there was a clear misunderstanding on the definitions since three applications came from the Planning Commission with a recommendation to approve, and the Planning Commission would not move forward on those applications based on interpretation. If the Planning Commission thinks the Staff misinterpreted the definition, he wanted like to hear the Staff's reasoning.

Director Eddington stated that part of the challenge was the vertical measurement between finished floor to finished floor. What is not addressed in the definition is the issue of a half floor and/or a split level. Depending on where they take a section drawing, a project could end up with three or six levels if they are split levels. Director Eddington remarked that finished floor to finished floor was ill-defined in the definition section of the Code.

Commissioner Strachan believe there were two separate issues. The first is from which point inside the structure to take the vertical measurement. The second is the issue of getting around the story requirement by creating separate accessory structures. There may not be three stories in one structure, but cumulatively there could be several. Commissioner Savage agreed, and felt they could have divided the applications this evening into those two different parts. Commissioner Savage concurred; however, those projects were still tied to the definition of a story and different interpretations.

Planner Whetstone read the definition of a half-story taken from the Webster definitions. "A half story is an uppermost story, which is usually lighted by dormer windows in which a sloping roof replaces the upper part of the front wall". She clarified that the definition only talks about half stories on the upper portion.

Commissioner Strachan stated that he attended the City Council meeting when they approved the LMC amendments proposed by the Planning Commission. He recalled from the discussion that the Council took the position that what happens inside the structure does not matter if the applicant is bound by the 27 foot requirement. The City Council was not concerned with how large the story could get, which is the problem they have today.

Commissioner Thomas pointed out that the Code does not say you can have 3.5 or 3.25 stories. It specifically says three stories, whether the stories are 10 feet floor to floor, 9 feet floor to floor, or 12 feet. Using an example similar to a plan they saw this evening, Commissioner Savage thought they could keep the outside looking exactly the same and reconfigure the inside to where it would adhere to the three story rule. If applicants have that ability they would be compliant. Beyond that he did not understand why they should care how the inside is configured.

Planner Whetstone explained that the Staff interpreted some projects as three stories because it had a mezzanine or landing. She asked if they should count a landing that gives character inside a

house as a story. Planner Whetstone felt that was the issue that needed clarification.

Chair Wintzer stated that the mistake they continually make is that they write the Code with words and not with pictures. He suggested that the Staff prepare drawings that clarify and interpret the definition of a story. Commissioner Strachan noted that the definition of a basement in the LMC does show a drawing.

Commissioner Hontz stated that she attended the same City Council meeting that Commissioner Strachan had referenced, and the entire reason for removing the 10-foot limitation was to create flexibility between the three stories and the height. The City Council felt that defining 10-feet per story would limit flexibility. Commissioner Hontz thought they were where they were supposed to be based on the idea of flexibility. She understood that the Planning Commission needed to come to some consensus, and believed the City Council had set them up for this.

Commissioner Thomas stated that not allowing the additional half level above three stories reduces the mass of the building. In effect, that is working according to the initial intent of the Code. Commissioner Savage argued from the perspective that if someone presents a plan that is compliant with Code, it is no one's business what it looks like inside. Chair Wintzer and Commissioner Thomas explained why they disagreed with Commissioner Savage. Commissioner Savage thought the criteria should be based upon whether it is consistent with the objectives about how it looks from across the valley. The valley does not know how many stories are in the building. Commissioner Thomas pointed out that if a limit is not set on the number of stories it can cascade up the hill. That was the reason for having the criteria. Commissioner Savage believed that could be constrained by footprint, setbacks and other constraints from the outside.

Chair Wintzer clarified that the Planning Commission could not move forward on any applications as long as they are in conflict with Staff on the definition of story.

Planner Cattan suggested that they talk about whether a story that goes up 5 feet in elevation is considered a half story or one story. She stated that if the Planning Commission agrees that the three applications seen this evening were 3-1/2 stories, then the Staff interpreted the Code wrong by saying that the level of a story could be split.

Planner Whetstone referred to a house on Park Avenue that has a door, two windows, a roof and dormers. The structure is a simple box without a basement. It has a 9 foot ceiling because of the roof pitch. Based on her research, that structure is a 1-1/2 story house.

Chair Wintzer called for public input on the issue of a story. Speakers were advised to keep their comments general and not related to a specific project.

Craig Elliott with the Elliott Work Group asked the Commissioners to clear their minds of their own opinions and listen to his comments. Mr. Elliott regretted that he had not come before the Planning Commission to argue the three-story issue during the amendment process. At the time he thought it dealt primarily with Ridge Avenue and 75' lots that had 50 feet of grade change. Mr. Elliott stated that the interpretation had become such that it was changing the way he thinks about what they were doing in town. Mr. Elliott remarked that the Code definition is nearly identical to the definition

in the International Residential Code and the International Building Code. It talks about a story being vetted from a floor level to the floor level next above. That means perpendicular to the floor or the roof; and not to the side. Mr. Elliott noted that the Building Code never addresses a shift in floor plane. He pointed out that the discussion is about a shift in floor plane and not different floors or different stories. It is all one floor that shifts. He stated that being able to shift the floor plane is a fantastic tool for an architect because it provides variety, the opportunity for interest, and delight. It is something that is valuable and can add interest to the town and the community, and not just the interior of a space.

Mr. Elliott stated that he lives in a split level house in Thaynes. He designed it, built it and has lived there for 18 years. He has been in Park City for 19 years and he never thought they would be having this discussion.

Mr. Elliott stated that an interpretation like this is not going to protect neighboring property owners or Park City. It is not going to provide additional value to the community. It will not reduce the densities in these houses because they will design them differently. Instead of having a garage with a level above it and three stories, the garage will be the top floor with two floors below it, just like all the houses on the east side of Lowell. Mr. Elliott remarked that the solutions they have seen through the shift in the floor plane gives variety and building mass above a garage. It is an opportunity to do something good. Mr. Elliott stated that if everything is pushed down to the same floor, they would be digging a deeper hole. They would be trucking more dirt out of town and driving more dump trucks. It would require more shoring and more concrete to support and retain the earth around it. The result will be more dangerous to the adjacent house than what already exists. Mr. Elliott reiterated that changing the interpretation will not change the amount of square footage that people build, and it will not improve the character of the architecture on the street. It will not change how things look from across the valley.

Mr. Elliott commented on issues that deal with the depth of a lot. Discussions over the past year with Staff have been about building multiple buildings on a lot and the story definition made by individual buildings. Mr. Elliott stated that a story is defined across the entire lot. A 140 feet deep lot is typical of what is going on. Different colors, forms and shapes are unique to Park City and the goal is not to put everything into the same box.

Mr. Elliott stated that he was not interested in doing any more houses on a steep slope in town. He has three under contract that he intends to finish. If the interpretation goes in the direction of their discussion it will not benefit the town and it will not benefit the people who own the property.

Commissioner Thomas stated that Mr. Elliott's interpretation of story and that a story is relative to the immediate space below, goes back to the notion of stepping a house completely up the hillside. He noted that the Code was created to put a limitation on that.

Mr. Elliott drew a sketch of a storied house to make his point.

Commissioner Strachan asked Mr. Elliott for his opinion on how the definition of a story applies to a structure that has a number of detached accessory structures, but has the appearance cross-canyon of seven or eight stories. Mr. Elliott replied that on a lot deeper than 75', separate buildings

in a surrounding context was not a bad thing. Commissioner Strachan asked Mr. Elliott's opinion if the compatibility requirement was the only regulation and there was no objective limitation. Mr. Elliott stated that as some who does design work, he believed the context of the site and where you build is the most important element in any design.

Commissioner Thomas thought Mr. Elliott would agree as a professional that they also have the responsibility to look at how a structure fits into the compatibility of a community and its impact on the historic character of the community in terms of mass, scale and size. He remarked that the Code originated with trying to create a Code that resulted in more commonality with the historic character of the community. Commissioner Thomas stated that the building could still be stepped in the process Mr. Elliott identified in his diagram, but only three stories were allowed.

Chair Wintzer suggested that the Staff schedule this as a work session item and come back with a series of drawings that show different scenarios to help define the definition of a story.

Commissioner Hontz stated that the Code change was precipitated by multiple structures that came in. She was not on the Planning Commission at the time and she opposed one of the structures. She came in a demonstrated that it did not meet the Code. Commissioner Hontz stated that when she came to the Planning Commission with her concerns they agreed with her but could not make that finding, and it went to the City Council. She believed it would have been a better design had it done what they were trying accomplish this evening. That era is the reason why they got to three stories. She did not want to turn back the clock. Commissioner Hontz stated that she lives in a two-story house; however by Staff interpretation, it is actually one story. There are many consequences to contemplate and she thought the Planning Commission should refine what they wanted to see come back. She needed time to read and digest the definitions and personally did not want more input before they had the conversation.

Director Eddington suggested that the Staff come back with a set of clear drawings to help the Planning Commission understand and aid in their discussion. Chair Wintzer noted that the Planning Commission had three applications that were waiting on an answer to the question. He thought the Staff should come back with a professional opinion on the definition of story.

Commissioner Savage acknowledged that he was not on the Planning Commission when the definition was written. However, speaking from logic, he believed the constraint that was applied related to the mass, scale and appearance from the exterior. In his opinion, a story is what is directly above and not what is on the other end of the building.

Director Eddington pointed out that the definition as written talks about the interior and floor plane to floor plane; and that is the challenge. He agreed that the intent may have been misguided in the definition, but they have to work within the definition. Commissioner Savage stated that if floor plane to floor plane is a vertical measurement, he would argue that at least one structure they saw this evening was never more than three stories at any point.

Planner Evans noted that not all development in Old Town require a Steep Slope CUP. Therefore, some structures with the same scenario may have been approved by various Staff members under

the HDDR process and never came before the Planning Commission. Commissioner Savage stated that if that did occur, it would be valid precedence independent of the CUP requirements. Planner Evans noted that he currently has two applications that do not require a Steep Slope CUP that do exactly what they were talking about. Commissioner Thomas felt that was another reason to come to some agreement on interpretation.

Assistant City Attorney McLean explained that the definitions were in the Code. In thinking about this issue, she directed them to the definitions in the last chapter and the key words, 1st story, story and structure. They should also look in the H Districts for guidance on what constitutes a story. Commissioner Savage requested that the Staff email a document to the Planning Commission that includes all the components of the Code that would help prepare them for the next meeting. Director Eddington offered to provide that documentation and include images.

Jonathan DeGray was not opposed to the Planning Commission discussing heights and levels and amending the Code for future projects. However, he agreed with Ms. McLean about looking at the Code as written because the projects currently before them were based on that Code. It was important for the Planning Commission to come back with a solid interpretation on what is written.

Chuck Heath asked about process and the time frame for taking action on the projects that were continued this evening. His project was continued once for additional information and when the information was provided, it was continued again because there was a question about interpretation. He felt it was important for the Planning Commission to define the interpretation of a story so these projects could move forward or go away. Chair Wintzer stated that the issue should be resolved at the next meeting. Once they have that resolution, they could begin discussing projects that were continued for that reason.

Assistant City Attorney McLean pointed out that the applications this evening were continued to a date uncertain. To be fair to the applicants, the Planning Commission should resolve the issue at the September 12th meeting and the items could be re-noticed for the meeting on September 26th.

Commissioner Thomas clarified that he raised the issue because he had heard three different interpretations of a story and he felt it was important to have a consistent interpretation that benefits the community.

The Work Session was adjourned.