

9/25 WCC Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Kara Silbernagel
Ellen Sassano
Mavis Fitzgerald
Tom Melberg
Amber Kurkoski
Allen Jones
Ellen Anderso
Curtis Wackerle
Marty Schlumberger
Donnie Mack
Tom Allspaugh
Valerie Hincy
Jennifer Outwater
Casey Ward
Kimberly Tongish
Deborah Hutchinson
Amuy Behrhorst
Nancy Pearce
Steeve Sklar
Jeff Aldrich
Stephen Heron
Matt Gerzina
Livy Balm
David Bull
Robert Oxenberg

Kara explained the initiation of the county wide comprehensive plan , called Vision 2050, by the community growth advisory committee 3 years ago as a state mandated process. The new plan has been driven by the county’s greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and meeting new state regulation requirements. Its largest adjustments have been the new energy use regulations and the reduction in maximum permissible residence size. The county maintains that it is “foundational” to the future plan to maintain the rural character of unincorporated Pitkin County, and that the goal of the plan is to put the “intensity” of any new growth on a new trajectory, specifically for traffic, special events, and STR’s. Kara said that the plan and subsequent land use code language would be “friendly” to the building of community housing outside of the urban growth boundary. It would maintain aspirations of preserving local small scale agriculture, scenic quality and wildlife habitat and limit growth of commercial activity, avoid sprawl, and manage the intensity of recreational use. Kara said that the timeline for the Vision 2050 plan was to produce a new draft by the end of October and adoption by the beginning of January. Passing the resulting amendments to the county land use code could take until the end of 2026.

The caucus questions of the Vision 2050 plan were about how the specific caucus master plans would be impacted and that the plans for specific properties, e.g. Phillips, is not compliant with the Woody Creek Caucus adopted master plan nor with the criteria for community housing siting laid out in the Vision 2050 plan, nor in the current county plan or land use code, meaning it does not comply with the requirement that community housing be developed near available public transportation, utility, and emergency services resources. The vision 2050 plan talks about encouraging different “types” of community housing outside of the UGB by which the county means CDU’s and “low density “ clusters of town homes. There is some support for these in the current WC MP.

Other comments from the caucus were that the county should seek to cooperate with Snowmass and Aspen to build community housing within the urban growth boundary so as to limit the need for commuting to the available jobs that those communities are originating through their continued building and growth. Another comment was that within the Regional aspect chapter of the Vision 2050 plan, cooperation within Pitkin County with Snowmass and Aspen on community housing is placed secondarily to cooperation with Eagle and Garfield counties. Furthermore, several caucus members commented that they have been particularly distressed over the recent large monetary contributions that Pitkin County has made to the finances of communities outside of Pitkin County while we currently have community housing struggling to make reforms without any county assistance. Kara said that Aspen is working on updating its own community plan which will address the issue but they are waiting to see what the county plan says to make decisions. Another comment from the caucus was that the county should be less permissive with ongoing construction projects in order to reduce traffic, noise and environmental perturbation.

Regarding the Phillips property specifically, Kara told us that the county’s current plan was for a total buildout of 73 units, inclusive of the already extant 42 units on the property, that \$8.5M so far had been budgeted and appropriated to reform the water and septic systems which is mandated by state regulation.

Kara told us that all the caucuses had been complaining about special events and STR’s creating extra traffic, but there are no specifics in the Vision 2050 plan to address it. She said that The Vision 2050 plan would be changed so that there would be no new title of “transitional” zoning in the land use code or the plan. Everything label transition zone would be relabeled “semi-rural”. She said transportation availability and distance from utilities would be the decisive factors in the location of any new community housing. Ellen Sassano spoke about water use in the county saying they would curtail future plans for water features’ that the state would put in other reforms, and that the county was considering making proven water source a requirement for land use applications.

Allen Jones