

TOWN OF SILT
REGULAR PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
February 6, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.
HYBRID MEETING

The Silt Planning and Zoning Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, February 6, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.

Roll call

Present

Chair Lindsey Williams
Vice Chair Michael Bertaux
Commissioner Robert Doty
Commissioner Eddie Aragon
Commissioner Jennifer Stepisnik
Alternate Vanessa Westmoreland
Alternate Dana Wood

Also present were Contract Planner Mark Chain and Community Development Manager Nicole Centeno.

Pledge of Allegiance

It was noted that there was an agenda change. Because of the number of people from the public and a development team for the Westerns Slope Veterans Coalition, it was suggested that this Informational Item begin immediately after approval of the consent agenda.

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes of the January 9, 2024 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting.

Vice Chair Bertaux made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Second by Commissioner Stepisnik; the motion carried unanimously.

Conflicts of Interest

Commissioner Bertaux informed the commission that he knew the architect, Marc Hogan, for many years. He said he could be nonbiased. This was acceptable to the Commission.

Western Slope Veterans Coalition

Commissioner Centeno introduced this project. She said it was an informational item only. Originally this was intended to be a Site Plan Review but because of some differences in the underlying zoning compared to the potential development plan specifics, it was thought that a different course of action, a PUD rezoning, was needed. Centeno noted that she had informed Jon Kuersten that he would be able to make a quick presentation to the Commission. Jon was

joined by property owner Marc Hogan, Jon Pettit and Jeremie Oates. He indicated he had a PowerPoint presentation that has not yet been seen by staff or anybody else.

John said he wanted to get in front of the Commission because of a project application he intended to help make in the future. He said he did not want to talk too much at this time. He said he was helping to make an application on behalf of a group of homeless Western Slope Veterans on property owned by Marc Hogan on the east side of ninth Street one half block north of the roundabout and north of Stop and Go. He Introduced Jon Pettit. Jon identified himself as a Marine veteran who had been successful in a previous life and now lived in Glenwood Springs. He said he had not been involved in the military for 40 years. He also said there are problems with the present situation of some veterans including the fact that there have been a couple suicides and the Valley. He said this helped compel him to get involved with helping this Veterans organization. He said they have office space in Glenwood Springs at a cost of one dollar year and proximally 5000 ft.² in size. It's dedicated to the Veterans Resource Coalition and that they are certified 501- C3.

They recently got a grant of \$100,000 from the VFW. He said he does not want this to go to waste. He wants to help solve some of the existing problems. He said they have found a piece of ground for a small housing development to be devoted to Homeless Veterans.

Jeremie Oates identified himself. He said he was a career member of the special forces and a native of the Roaring Fork Valley. He also wants to reduce the risk and stress on veterans in the area including injured veterans and those who need geriatric care. He Indicated that homelessness was the biggest need at this time, and he was hoping to do something useful.

Marc Hogan introduced himself as the owner of the property and an architect. He noted that he is acting as a designer for the property. He said there was no dedicated housing for veterans in the area and there are a number of homeless veterans who were in distress. He then went over some demographics related to the situation.

Marc went over the development concept. He noted this was an ideal spot. He said the property had the following characteristics:

- centrally located
- located north of the roundabout near I 70
- public transportation was available
- the development plan included 14 tiny homes; that were set up as 7 duplexes.
- There was also one residence for an on-site manager as well as a community building. Individual units would be 384 ft.² in size. Details were still being massaged but right now the units are being designed for single occupancy.
- Prefabrication/modular construction was a possibility
- There would be a facility manager on site full-time
- the property would remain under one ownership
- they are hoping to get funding to help subsidize the project
- goal was to get these people on their feet
- he was hoping to go to the trustees pretty soon.

Mr. Hogan thanked the commission and said that input from the neighborhood is important.

John Kuersten said that he had talked to the Fire Marshall and a turnaround design as shown in the concept plan met their criteria. There was then more discussion regarding fire access.

John showed pictures of the 7 duplexes and noted that there were 15 parking spaces, some of them being tandem in nature. He also said that all units would be accessible units. There was an existing drainage ditch on the east side and this would remain. Other features of the project they are considering were xeriscaping, secure fencing and that the buildings would be one-story in height. presently working on a creative color scheme.

Mr. Kuersten then went over background related to the Comprehensive Plan and how the project would conform with the plan. He said he had also talked to representatives of Xcel and each unit would have their own heating and cooling unit.

Commissioner Aragon ask about the timing. He was thinking that a project like this could take 2 and half to three years and he was curious of the schedule. Mr. Kuersten talked about getting final plat approval and then obtaining money for one time construction. There was then some discussion about site lighting and Mr. Hogan said site lighting will be downcast and shielded. The presentation was then over.

The presentation being over, Chair Williams opened the floor for the commissioners to ask questions. She inquired as this appears to be an interim place how is that going to work in the long-term? Mr. Hogan said he had talked to Cheryl Strause and the Board of County Commissioners, and perhaps it could work as a long-term option for some residents also. Chair Williams asked who was going to be the administrators of the project. It was noted that it would probably be the Coalition but it depends on who they partner with.

Commissioner Westmoreland inquired as to whether there was a landscaping plan, or if they could xeriscape to cut down on water usage. The applicant confirmed that they are planning to xeriscape as much as possible.

Commissioner Doty had questions about what the coalition is doing now. It was noted that PTSD needs to be addressed. There was then some discussion whether the potential clients for the property would be under medical/mental duress. It was noted that some of the clients have PTSD, perhaps depression and another related issues. Mr. Kuersten said they would limit, if possible, leasing out to sexual offenders or those who had violent tendencies. There are also questions of whether females would be allowed residence in the project.

Vice Chair Bertaux talked about some experiences his family had in the past. He then confirmed that there was going to be a fire hydrant and clarified storage for each unit. Bertaux expressed a possible concern for the tandem parking proposal. There was also some general discussion about conflict resolution, resolving disputes and similar items. It was asked whether Habitat for Humanity would have any role and that was not foreseen at this time.

Chair Williams then opened the meeting for public comment.

Trey Pruett, 220 N. 9th St. noted he had a concern with parking. He was not sure that an alley easement should qualify for public access. He thought a wider travel lane may be required. Natalie Hurt, also of 220 N. 9th St. said she was the previous deed holder for Trey's property and that had been the case since 2021. She wanted to open up a dialogue as there were conflicts between surveys of the proposed property and an adjacent one. She also had a concern with the amount of parking, use of an alley easement for primary access, and lack of a sidewalk/vestry and access.

Lisa Orosz spoke on behalf of 130 9th Street. She noted her husband had been in Desert Storm and she had a long background of support for the veterans. Still, she had many concerns and

stated her husband was a retired firefighter. She said there may be problems with those with mental and emotional disorders and she also had concerns regarding the alley and parking. She is not sure that there were jobs available for some of the residents. She said there are no resources in Silt, to help with the needs of the veterans. She just thought there were too many unresolved problems at this time.

Cheryl Strause, 1709 Orchard Avenue identified herself as the Executive Director of the Garfield County Housing Authority. She gave extensive background about some of the current programs, cost of the housing, subsidies available, and the need for support for the Veterans who may live at the site. She noted that they did have medical personnel that could work with the project in Silt. She quickly reviewed a couple of grants they were trying to get from HUD. She noted that they were only in the planning stage for the project and they would continue to try to work on some of the issues and would provide updates if they become available.

Indira Barron, 1022 Domelby Court identified herself as a housing specialist. She is familiar with some of the HUD programs and each individual would have supportive health services from the VA unless they transition out of the program or project. Vouchers for care are available. She said they were trying to get homeless veterans off the streets and a maximum of 30% of rent comes from the individual themselves. They are not required to work under certain circumstances. Vice Chair Bertaux asked where these supportive programs came from. Indhira noted that it was the VA that decides how much support individuals need.

Eli Evans lives at 943 Grand Ave. He lives just above the project to the north. He has some concerns about the access. He said he has owned his property for 16 years and this is the first he has heard of using an alley for access. He thought there should be a discussion about this. He was not sure it was wise to put a project with this density between the roundabout and the Stop Sign at Grand and 9th. Silt is not the right location for this project, there's a 75% chance of increased crime, which our Silt Police Department will not be equipped to handle this. Evans asked what happens 10 years from now, when funding goes away. This project is a noble deed, but in the middle of a residential area is not the right location.

Laura Jurcedo, 942 Main, spoke next. She asked whether the necessary services are located nearby. She indicated the location of the site has no nearby grocery store or similar facilities, no nearby clinic or hospital and there have been few sources of employment without the ability to have an automobile. She was also concerned with potential crimes. She noted that some of the work and services for the potential clients could fall onto the Silt Police force. She also asked about the future of the property and what may happen if the use would change in the future. She noted she was not against the shelter but thought this was not the right spot. Perhaps there was a better location where there were more services such as in Glenwood Springs or Rifle.

René and Maria Rosa of 941 Grand Avenue also spoke. She said she didn't have much to say. She wanted to thank veterans for their service but was wondering if some larger living spaces may be required.

This ended the public comment.

John Kuersten said it was important to get feedback now during the process. He said that they have had preliminary contact with some neighbors and the issues and they were doing their best to solve any concerns. He noted there would be an on-site manager who hopefully can handle most of the situations. He said a lot of people seem to think that no place is the right place for such facility; but he hopes by providing a stable environment they can help re-assimilate some of the veterans back into society.

He also wanted to tell the neighbors that they have no intention of extending the alley out to the east. Mr. Hogan thanked the neighbors for the input and wanted to inform the neighbors that there would be monthly drug testing even though he was not sure if that was even legal.

Jon Pettit stated that he had one time been homeless because of problems and he remembered some of the things he went through and that was difficult. He said we don't want these issues the recurring here either. They have even spoken about drug and alcohol testing, if it's legal to do so.

There was also a question on the alley and Mr. Kuersten it was an alley and just that.

Chair Williams noted that this discussion was the first of many steps for such a project like this to move forward. Vice Chair Bertaux said that if someone has further comments, they can write them down and provide them to Manager Centeno. There was a question from someone about how the neighbors would get notice of such meetings in the future and Centeno briefly describe the process.

Chair Williams said that she knew discussions like this are sometimes difficult but it was good to see members of the public gathering in the lobby as that meant they were interested in the town.

Commissioner Stepisnik thanked all for the conversation and said she also has some concerns. She noted that there appear to be resources available. She indicated she thought that there were some safety concerns but that it was a great project.

Vice Chair Bertaux said he was supportive of the project but that it may be a bit too dense for that particular property. He also noted some alley and pedestrian issues.

Commissioner Woods said she supports the concept but not as it is presented at this particular time. She said she had some reservations. She wanted to know more about the services available and what would be guaranteed.

Commissioner Doty thanked everyone for coming and thought that as long as the project meets the comprehensive Plan that would probably be good for the town. He said he wanted to be fair and balanced. He said he had a lot of friends who are vets. But he also wanted to note that the easement for ingress and egress is an impact on the neighbors and needs to be addressed.

Commissioner Aragon thought that it was a good concept and that right now there are still some areas that gave him concern. And he hoped that the development team would address these.

As a final note, Mr. Kuersten noted that the access for this property and some of the related issues are result of actions taken 100 years ago.

Planner's Report

Planner Chain said he wanted to keep this brief and kept his report to simply saying that 511 N. 5th St. is scheduled for the March Planning Commission Meeting and that he expects the application for Heron's Nest to be made in the next few weeks.

Commissioner Comment

Planner Chain asked if he could interject for a moment. He said he thought it was a bit unfair to the Commission that the applicant for the potential project said that he was just coming in to get some feedback but had an extensive presentation mapped out and that the Commission did not have the opportunity for staff to review this information and provide their thoughts ahead of time. Commissioner Aragon said he thought it was good idea to get the input.

Commissioner Woods said she had a suggestion; perhaps the Town could look at getting some interpretation services for people who speak other languages. She said it would help decisions perhaps be more representative of the entire community.

There was no other Commissioner Comment.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Bertaux made a motion to adjourn the meeting; second by Commissioner Stepisnik. The meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Chain
Planner

Approved by the Planning Commission



Lindsey Williams
Chair