SCCC Minutes 2.19.20 DRAFT

Snowmass Capitol Creek Caucus Board Meeting of February 19, 2020

Snowmass Fire Station Annex

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting began at 7 pm.

Board Members: David Chase, Molly Child, Glenn Russell, Helene Slansky , George Johnson, Jill Sabella

Guests: John McBride, Dwight and Nancy Maurin, Steve Child, Jeanie Child, Michael Kinsley - member of Open Space & Trails Board, and Mark Grotjahn

Guests representing Mark Grotjahn/Bear at Door LLC: Chris Bendon - principal BendonAdams consulting firm, Mike Simpson - Koru Bear Ranch, Jeffrey Schwartz - Bear Ranch, Mike Albert - Design Workshop, Reilly Thimond - BendonAdams, Luis Menendez - architect

MIINUTES

David asked that the minutes of January 21, 2020 be approved. George moved that they be approved; Helene seconded. All in favor.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Currently there is $22,577.64 in the unrestricted account and $22,480.51 in the Snowmass water work account, for a total of $45,858.15.

COMMITTEES

Variety Show

Molly asked if Saturday, June 27 would be a good date. Location is still to be determined. Julie Wyckoff has offered her Snowmass Cottages lodge on other dates. Besides music, plays, readings, etc, Molly encouraged visual arts to be on display.

Bird Watching

Molly contacted ACES Community Program Director Phebe Meyers to find out if any birdwatching is scheduled for our valley this summer. Since they alternate locations, there won’t be an event at the Bear at Door/Capitol Creek Ranch until 2021. Their winter birdwatching schedule can be seen on their website ([www.aspennature.org](http://www.aspennature.org)), and the summer schedule will be posted later this Spring. Anyone who would like to host a birdwatching event can contact Phebe via ACES or the website.

Snowshoeing

Molly announced there will be a snowshoeing event on Monday, March 9th at 4 pm on the Bear Ranch, formerly Capitol Creek Ranch, in the riparian zone of Capitol Creek. This event is being coordinated with the Roaring Fork Conservancy.

Annual Spring Road Clean Up

Molly said a date will be determined a little later in the spring when the snow has melted.

Art Tour

David spoke about coordinating a studio artists’ tour with Emma and the Upper Snowmass Creek Caucuses.

David also said he’s contacted a person in Basalt who could help with maintaining the website and communicating in ways other than just the website, like Facebook. This would help with engaging more with our valley neighbors.

BEAR AT DOOR APPLICATION

Chris Bendon, principal at BendonAdams, reviewed the proposal currently before Pitkin County which covers Lot 1-5 Subdivision Amendment, Activity Envelopes, Site Plan Review, and Extension of Vested Rights. These are proposed changes to the 2002 approved Capitol Creek Ranch Conservation Easement with Aspen Valley Land Trust, and Open Space & Trails. This land is currently owned by Bear At Door LLC/Mark Grotjahn.

Basically the proposal is to resubdivide the five lots, with notable changes in their activity envelopes. There are new site plans for Lots 1, 3 and 4. Lots 2 and 5 have a new activity plan. and a possible solar array on Lot 1. Lot 4 would be Mark’s home. There would be a new main road access off of Capitol Creek Road. Bear at Door LLC is requesting an extension of vested rights - a 2-year extension on Lots 3 and 4 and a 5-year extension on Lots 1, 2 and 5.

Chris stressed that the architecture is simple, subtle, and with respect for the landscape. This is to be a place for Mark to receive respite.

Mark spoke on why he chose this parcel and that while he was in school at Boulder, he always wanted to live in Colorado.

David addressed how we all have that same love for this valley and that we want to maintain the integrity of it, as is inherent in the Master Plan, approved by the County. Things to be addressed are: 1. Lots 3 and 4 are proposing larger floor areas than the Master Plan states might be considered. 2. We encourage traditional ranching architecture; 3. adjusting lots results in adjusting conservation easements. AVLT holds the Conservation Easements, with OS&T as co-holder. The application must deal with these organizations before the Caucus can sign off.

Molly voiced her concern that the conservation easements restrict building to 5,000 sf.

Chris said there are property rights and that some of the main building would be underground in concern for height. He stressed that: 1. the easement says the total sf of the 5 Lots together meets the requirement (with averaging 5,000 sf each, the total of the five lots is under the total sf allowed); 2. that architecture is relative and personal; 3. that the proposed adjustments would be in compliance with all regulations.

Molly commended Mark for taking time to get to know the land. She expressed concern about building a warming hut on the rural and remote south end of the ranch - this site had been extinguished to uphold Bob Child’s plan to protect wildlife habitat - and that the three miles of the ranch’s riparian zone will be increasingly important with climate change. She said that the #1 goal of their Conservation Easement was to preserve the agricultural status and rural character of the valley.

Mark responded that some of the main building will be underground so as not to obstruct the view, with a “beveled land form” in place.

George expressed concerns that being rural and remote -

1. that it is a fire zone

2. given the 8,000’ elevation,snow on the flat roof

3. square footage closer to 5,750 sf

4. architecture is not fitting into the rural ranching landscape of this valley

5. energy conservation, given the high ceilings and concrete construction in a +”.

Dwight addressed the two ditches on the Child ranch - the McPherson and the Green Meadow ditches, and that they don’t have any exclusion zone for maintenance of the ditch and to protect the ditch from being encroached upon by the house, as happened at Roaring Fork Ranch.

Chris asked if the Caucus feels they have not made adequate provisions to protect downstream users of the two ditches. They don’t want to obstruct any ditch and will put in an adequate easement. George asked that they define the development’s proximity to the ditches.

Helene questioned whether Bear Ranch use would always be for Grotjahn’s personal use or if there were plans for additional development of buildings on other lots.

David addressed the warming hut structure proposed for the far south end of the easement needs to be consistent with the language in the easement.

Molly added that if you build near the wilderness, it opens the door to more adverse effects on the wildlife.

John McBride questioned who would live there in 20 years. That small is better than big and that any development in this valley is very important to the residents of this valley,- the protection of the rural character to be preserved and unchanged. He said that, in his opinion, the layout of the home is incompatible with the historic character. In his opinion people settle into this valley for the long-term and the Caucus needs to think about whether this proposal is compatible with our valley.

Mark expressed that he doesn’t think this architecture is out of character with the valley. The design is deeply rooted and complementary to the site.

Luis Mendenez, architect, spoke on the rural architecture design of the structures — silos and water towers, hay bale stacks, flat roofs to reflect the valley floor, and concrete and wood clad being native materials.

Michael Kinsley, who is a member of the Open Space & Trails Board, said that when large parcels of land change hands, we hold our breath; that we are very protective of this valley and regard it as sacred; that it will be very important to see renderings and get better acquainted with the plan; and that the County needs to review wildlife migration and habitat impact. Michael said he feels ambivalent about pushing the valley’s architectural perspective, but that we want any development to be compatible with this valley. He stressed the danger that with land development in incremental changes irreversible damage to local habitat can occur. He also said he is most concerned about the two warming huts. Michael appealed to let the valley influence the owner/builder.

Mike Albert, landscape design consultant, commented on the good land stewardship that Mark is concerned in making, and that Mark will not manipulate or change the natural landscape. That Mark shows restraint in his development. No lawns. Nothing ostentatious. Keeping the riparian areas intact. His plan is to limit disturbance, i.e.sagebrush areas will be untouched where new roads are made. A circular drive will connect the mechanical to the main house and fire truck access; a beveled landform to look natural will be created so that the house “lives” in the land, and there will be native landscape right up to the house. Currently, there is a “rock bar” - a tiny dry ridge of rock cleared from from previous ranchers from hay fields in that location.

David thanked Mark for bringing his team to the meeting. He tabled the application review until the next Caucus meeting which is Tuesday, March 17. The application will again be on the Agenda.

It was suggested that for the next Caucus meeting, the representatives of Bear at Door LLC bring a model of the buildings on their sites and also a rendering of the view of the development from the road.

David proposed to table the application and asked that the meeting be adjourned. George seconded. All in favor.

David stressed that the Caucus wants to help Bear at Door LLC and also maintain the integrity of the valley, as stated in the Master Plan. David also stressed how there’s a lot of material in the “all at once” application package to come to grips with - 1. conservation easements; 2. time extensions; 3. that there’s lots of time to get all this passed, and that there are several steps to go through and that he hopes they will welcome interchange with the Caucus.

Chris expressed how the architecture is a personal expression of Mark.

The Caucus questioned how it fits into the land.