**Planning and Development Committee Meeting (by Zoom)**

**September 1, 2020**

**Present**

Brad Sander David Budd

Georgette Larrouy Gerry Isaac

Melissa Murrieta Laurie Monti

**Absent**

Susan Lange

Todd Norton

Ike Isaacson

**Guests**: Jonathan Lutz - Tucson Auduban Society, Jesus E Robles- Design Build

**1.Approval of Minutes-** Minutes of the July 7, and Aug 4 meetingswere reviewed, and approved unanimously.

**Chairperson on Current Events:**

David Budd spoke at the recent Town Council meeting on process to review and adopt revisions to the Town Plan. The issue is whether to move forward or wait until the public can meet. David will discuss further with the Mayor.

The Town Plan with proposed revisions is now available to the public on the Town of Patagonia website under: Planning and Development/Agenda and Minutes

**2. Business Item**: Public Hearing for Use permit for renovation of the Patton Center of Tucson Audubon Society. Discussion and questions continued for approximately 50 minutes.

The proposal includes a change of use of the Patton house from residence only to multi-use space. It would provide lodging for researchers, public restrooms and community space for events (400 sq feet), and education exhibitions. The design would provide flexible space, keeping in mind the community need for public spaces for multiple use.

Tucson Audubon Society Director Jonathan Lutz gave an intro to history of the Patton Center which came under the responsibility of the Audubon Society beginning in 2014. He described how the Patton center contributes to the habitat for the birds and to the Patagonia community as a destination for Ecotourism. Jonathan comments that the mission has been to restore the riparian zone, diversify the plant community and create a community trail. Prior to acquiring 6 acres The Nature Conservation had been restoring areas on both sides of the creek.

Jesus Robles of Design Build landscape company commented that they have received a national award for the landscaping work completed recently. Jesus discussed the issue of building in a flood plain and in accordance with flood plain regulations, considering that the amount of renovation is substantial. The company has considered the options for demolition and not impacting the flood level, noting that they are working with the County and John Hayes on specifics of flood way regulations. They have consulted with Pima County flood control and JB Fuller Company is consulting on floodways flood plains engineering.

*Committee Discussion*:

David Budd made reference to the extensive reports and plan provided the Committee. Budd had visited the site as part of a “due diligence” visit. He was impressed with overall good care of the property. He raised the issue of the potential increase number of visitors, and it’s resultant impacts.

Mr. Lutz provided information on visitors—about 15,000 visitors annually since 2017. Visitors come from all 50 states and a dozen foreign countries. The area is considered a highly biodiverse region hosting some of the rarest birds that occur in the lower 48. Visitation is seasonal for specific birds and time periods averaging 60- 90 minutes with high turnover. He notes that the increase from prior years is due to full time staffing of the Center and use of Social Media. AZ Public Media has given publicity attracting the non-birder community.

The carrying capacity and parking is a concern especially during March and April. They estimate that 30-50 individuals can comfortably occupy the site with on-site parking and parking along the road. They have discussed mitigating the impact of traffic on the neighbors, in particular the Pipers, offering signage. So far the neighbors have not expressed a need for signage. If the need arises a solution could be to ask visitors to park near Town Park and run an electric shuttle to the site.

David Budd Noted that there has been a small increase traffic on Pennsylvania and 4th avenue with no substantial impact on quality of life.

Brad Sanders commented on his positive experience as neighbor of Patton house since 2017. He observed replacement of invasive Johnson grass with nature trail. He suggested a map of trails in the area. He observed that birders as a group are respectful not loud, but if a rare bird is sighted more people tend to congregate.

Concerns about the impact on sewage, wastewater treatment and the leach field in a flood event are addressed by Fuller engineering company with civil engineers. Jesus commented that the goal is to engineer for 110 to 120 visitors per day related to septic capacity with plans for alternative septic systems and testing the well for filtration integrity. Ongoing monitoring of impact is done by the County Health Department.

Gerry Issac observed that the county building permit also addresses many of the issues.

**Committee Recommendation**

Motion by David Budd; The Planning and Development recommends that the use permit for the Renovation of the Patton Center be approved. Seconded by Melissa Murrieta. All in favor; None opposed.

Motion approved.

Email of formal recommendation regarding use permit is requested.

Additional agenda items were rolled over to the next meeting.

Next meeting Oct 6, 7pm.

Move to adjourn meeting made by Georgette, seconded by Jerry, Approved.

Meeting Adjourned 8pm.