**Patagonia Planning and Development Committee**

Annual Summary of Activities- 2020-2021

Due to the COVID environment, the Committee did not meet in the spring months of 2020 until July of that year. At that July meeting the May officer elections were held, with David Budd elected Committee Chair, Todd Norton as Vice-Chair, and Laurie Monti as Secretary.

August of 2020 through April of 2021, monthly meetings were held, and a number of issues addressed.

**Use Permit Applications**: the primary Use Permit application was made by the

Audubon Society, for a thorough overhaul/rebuild of the Paton Hummingbird Center at 477 Pennsylvania Avenue. A discussion/community forum of an hour’s length covered all aspects of the plan, involving extensive improvements across more than an acre of land in Town limits. The Committee formally recommended the Town approve the plan.

**Variance Applications**: the Town has returned to the practice as described in

Chapter 7 of Code, of having simple applications for Variance come directly to the Town Council. For several years the Town experimented with having those applications reviewed first by P and D. The last request processed by the Committee involved a request at 240 Duquesne Avenue for relief on setback requirements on a garage addition, in early 2020. In December of 2020 of that year that property was reviewed again, relative to fire-retardant construction. All was considered satisfactory and compliant at that time.

**Public Hearings on Town Plans:**

A major agreement between the Town and South 32 Corp. related to improving roads and infrastructure along Harshaw Road, from 3rd Avenue to past the Post Office, was reviewed for broad community input. One major concern was the nature of parking, and eventually the plan was altered to accommodate safer, angle-in parking. After discussion in the December, 2020 and January, 2021 meetings, the Committee passed the issue on to Manager and Council, along of course with all comments gleaned from citizens. No formal Recommendation was required.

In the spring of 2021, a special meeting focused on possible Town plans for Major

Events, such as the Fall Festival, and also prospects for a free-standing Visitor’s Center, to be operated by the Sky Islands Tourism Association. It was generally felt that the Festival had become almost too successful, placing an enormous burden on Town infrastructure for a few days a year. The general feeling expressed was that a slightly smaller Festival, and other events throughout the calendar year, might constitute a better path for Patagonia in the future.

Interest in a full-fledged Visitor’s Center is high, and indications are that funding from sources such as the Economic Development Administration constitute a realistic path to building an excellent Center. The prospect of a decorative rail-road car as the Center, or a part of a Visitor’s Center structure, was discussed as a promising possibility to be explored.

The largest remaining available space for a Center is the southern part of Doc Mock Park, on the McKeown St. side, across from the public restrooms, where a nice expanse of land exists in which a full-sized structure can be placed. It was noted that the Town should leave that part of Doc Mock park undeveloped, until such time as the placement and scope of a Visitor’s Center is established.

# The Patagonia General Plan

Beginning in the Fall of 2019, the Town decided to review and renew its General Plan. The P and D Committee has reviewed the entire plan and made minor recommendations for changes mostly regarding language. It is Mayor and Council’s intent to hold public hearings, at an appropriate time, to review the plan and proposed revisions. Pursuant to that process, it is anticipated that a revised Town Plan, for the decade of the 2020’s, will be approved by the Town.

# History and Procedures of the Planning and Development Committee

Although a few members of P and D at any one time may be able to help with “institutional memory” —the history of how planning issues have developed and been handled— the outgoing Chair, David Budd, recommended a booklet discussing history and expectations for new Committee Members. The object would be to catch new members up to speed to old history, and to the expectations of Town Code. An initial, rough draft of that orientation booklet was submitted by Budd to be developed further, if time permits, by the Committee.