

SCCC Minutes Jan 19,2021

Board Members Present: David Chase, Molly Child, Chris Collins, Judy Frey, George Johnson, Judy Hill Lovins, Glenn Russell, Jill Sabella, Helene Slansky, Vicki Treece

Guests:

Tina Staley and Harris Sherman, Emma and Stephen Whitelande, Kathy De Wolfe

Presenters: Bob Clark- owner Buttercup Ranch, Mike Benz - architect, Alan Richman - planner

David moved that the meeting agenda first present the Buttercup Ranch LLC Application.

Chris introduced the Buttercup Ranch as a 20-acre triangular parcel which runs alongside Little Elk Creek community, entrance just before Little Elk Creek turn, with the western most part almost to Alexander Avenue.

Bob Clark said his family is in the valley now with the Rosebud Ranch located on the McCabe Ranch at 477 Elk Creek Road which is used as a family compound of 8,200sf, and the Buttercup Ranch will be designed very similarly.

Clark stated: "We use it (Rosebud) strictly as a family compound. We don't rent it out - don't do any Air B & B or anything like that. It's 100% private and used for our common, our family and some of the neighbors have been able to use the property for weddings and stuff like that. Within McCabe Ranch we've been good neighbors with everybody in there. We have a large family and have decided to build another place similar in quality and this property was on the market for a couple of years."

The plan is to demolish all existing buildings except the artist studio of 1,000 sf. The 55-year old main house is not reusable so a new house complex would be built. The surrounding evergreen trees are worth protecting so the new house would be as close to the evergreens as possible.. Also redo fencing and irrigation restore the land into irrigated meadows, and build a new 1,700 sf barn, partly underground.

The new house is to fit into the neighborhood as a simple farm house, with natural colors and landscaping. A net-0 friendly home, that "fits into the neighborhood and feels like a 100-year old home"

The entrance off Capitol would be moved uproad a bit, then circle back to the north side of the house. The riding arena near LEC and Capitol would be rebuilt as a high quality riding arena area because they anticipate keeping horses on the property. Also, renovate the corrals in the front and completely restore that area that was apparently where cattle were loaded when there was a big cattle operation there including a small dairy operation.

Alan Richmond said the existing driveway doesn't provide adequate maneuverability to the fire department. The plan is to improve degraded areas which haven't been irrigated in years, cluster structures and restore agricultural values.

Clark added that the western part of the parcel is “mostly flooded really most of the year, is full of bugs, not in good shape and is really kind of a nuisance I would think to LEC because its really kind of a swamp most of the summer and our intention obviously would be to correct all of that immediately and restore that to it’s agricultural history.”

Helene commented that that area is a wetlands. Migrating sandhill cranes pause in those wetlands. Helene expressed her concern for the size of the house and asking for a TDR to be imported and that normally there needs to be a good case for a “special use”, and that it’s larger than the SCCC Master Plan’s preferred size.

Clark said he’s not sure what a Special Use would be. “When we bought the property we were very careful to look at the zoning. The property is slightly over 20 acres so we confirmed that before we bought the property confirmed what the current Master Plan requirements and zoning are for that particular kind of location . its very similar to what I built at Rosebud and I kind of went through a similar process so the site qualifies for for 5750 sf and it qualifies and is actually a perfect candidate site for the invention of the TDR’s.”

Alan Richmond. We paid a lot of attention to the Master Plan. The house size would be 7,200sf with the studio adding an additional 1,000sf. This plan would return this parcel to its agricultural roots and that it would 1. return to the agricultural heritage of this valley. Horse and cattle ranching, by restoring the meadow; 2. the clustering of buildings to a small area, no development on the 10 acres of wetland; 3. the buildings clustered in a ranch-like character. A cabin will be brought from Missouri built originally 1830’s to represent an original homestead of reclaimed barn wood. That they are committed to an LEED certified building, of rural character, agricultural facilities, energy and resource efficient - so therefore there is very sound basis for an application for a TDR.

Clark said they want to preserve the wetlands which now has stagnant water and bugs. That the house is low to the ground, broken up into smaller sections.

Helene commented that such a large house size is not traditional for a ranch.

Alan added they have shown respect for LEC by not moving the house closer to LEC than the existing house. The plan is the house is approx 400’ from the nearest LEC neighbor and 1500’ from Little Elk creek. Alan stressed the LEC neighbors will enjoy the green meadow again and the overall landscape plan.

George stressed concern about the future activity and size of the house, that it is larger than anything in the Capitol Creel valley except the monastery main house. Clark commented it would be the same size as Rosebud Ranch, and that it will fit into the site with the existing trees and new landscaping, and that the house site floor level drops 15’ from LEC. He wants it to feel very much like Rosebud.

Molly commented the proposed house size is about 3 times the size of existing house on the property.

Tina Staley, the closest LEC neighbor, asked about the height of the planned house.

It would be 24-26’ high, one and 1/2 stories - the second level being dormers. And 10-12’ higher than the existing house.

Harris asked about the irrigation rights and reliance on community water. Clark said they have "outstanding" water rights - .495 c f/sec. They will irrigate with a mixture of flood irrigation in the 4-5 acre pasture with sprinkler irrigation in the front parcels along Capitol Creek Road and will use the current ditches. Clark said "everything in the west would use current ditches and will use considerably less water than is currently being used now, so they can deliver more water downstream."

Molly asked that story poles be put up.

Tina asked about what kind of activity would occur - how would they use the property. What kind of new vegetation would be added. Amount of water used, and asked for his commitment to his answers.

Clark said many of the answers are in the application. That he understands how the water works, that he wants to be a good neighbor, and has met with George and the Letterers, that they would use native plantings for this kind of agricultural use. That he would not be using the land for agricultural animal feed-type agriculture, that it zoned agricultural and can be used for several types of agriculture. Would be strictly family use, mostly in June and July and during ski season. That they would use it like they use the Rosebud ranch. Maybe have horses.

Harris Sherman - "Can you help us understand more about other activities you're talking about. Do you have any idea what the caring capacity of the land is and what kind of activity would occur at the corral - it would be helpful for us to understand what you are planning for this area outside of the house."

Clark - "It's strictly for my family use. For my family and we would use it not dissimilarly from the property we have".

Vicki questioned the need for a 7,200 sf home and two properties when we're all trying to be conscientious and have less.

Clark responded "it's not too large for me the way my family lives. and then we have a good number of bedrooms. We have a large expanding family. We're following the zoning and requirements to receive a TDR" . Since Buttercup is so similar to Rosebud, he wasn't anticipating any controversy. "That's why we paid as much as we did for the land and very carefully read what the requirements were and that this was a great receiver site for a TDR and no body else bought the property for two years and its very similar to what I built at Rosebud so I didn't think it would be controversial at all, to be honest with you."

Stephen Whitelande asked if Clark could speak to what will happen on that property when his family is not visiting.

Clark - "We would have a caretaker who stays in the art cabin. We take outstanding care of our property."

Stephen - "my question pertains to if you plan to ever host events at the property that could be impactful to your neighbors".

Clark. "I don't think so. We have had a couple of weddings at the property (Rosebud) but we're not in the event business at all. We don't intend to develop the property at all, sell it. We don't

intend to ever sell Rosebud and we don't intend to ever sell this property so it's really for family use. All our kids are pretty respectable... we're good neighbors."

Clark added that Rosebud is a little more "grand" than Buttercup and that Buttercup is meant to look like a farmhouse, with the main house almost the same (size) as Rosebud.

Molly. The layout and dimensions are similar to Rosebud?

Clark - Rosebud a little more grand and we don't want to do that at Buttercup.

Judy said she was impressed by the Buttercup plan and not concerned about the big house as it will be well hidden in new landscaping and that she is excited about it being an energy net-neutral house.

Alan said the height limitations are below regulation. Square footage is about identical.

Alan said Clark tried to fit the new house in, to soften the impact. Sent out public notices to LEC neighbors with an info-link to county files and the application document. His intentions are to create landscaping to soften the impact of the new home as well as not obscure neighbors' views. With landscaping - and adding a berm - he hopes to block the view to the house complex to LEC neighbors. He's taken careful thinking, and says it will all be a dramatic improvement on what is now an eyesore, with rotten fencing, etc. Buttercup will feel like it's been there a long time, said Richmond.

Clark said he realizes LEC neighbors enjoy great views and that he did his landscaping plan with that concern.

"If you look at the plan you'll see in my option it will be dramatically improved by what the new development does. Honestly - its a pretty big eyesore that property, as it currently states - just a dilapidated piece of property with a bunch of rotten fencing and that's its right on the road and what we would do would be an improvement and it will also feel like it was there over a long period of time."

Emma Whitelande said that they've been "very fortunate the 5 plus years that we've lived here that to have excessive privacy... and realize there will be increased activity there but we want to maintain our privacy and we have no doubt that you'll do a beautiful job on the house". She commented that they moved to LEC to get out of Aspen/Willits for the want of mountain privacy - shielded privacy - and that they are concerned about the lights from the proposed complex and "increased activity in what is really our front yard."

Clark: "I would commit to - right now - we would do everything in our power to not have you see any lights - plant trees in front of them or whatever. We want to work hard with the neighbors ...hard with neighbors. It's won't be a beehive of activity. We intend to be good neighbors. No-one likes change."

David. Commends Rosebud and encouraged caucus board to go visit it. At Buttercup, he said looking at the landscape plan and additional plantings for screening that it's extraordinary and the art of screening from all sides is huge. The new construction would be screened significantly from people's view and he thinks it a nice project.

Kathy deWolf who's known Bob for 20 years, as a friend, spoke of his honesty and experience for him to do it right. He notified all landowners in LEC with a letter when he first had his plan. She thinks the house will fit well into the community despite it's size, and that the LEED designation is huge.

Judy Hill asked his address and contact. And it was given.

Jill asked him to clarify if these are both part-time homes?

Clark said "Our intent would be to make Rosebud our main home - where we spend the vast majority of our time - and this home (Buttercup) would be used by us and our family too."

Tina Staley said she is excited about the plan and looking forward to seeing more of the plan and asked what is the caucus' process? How does one forward concerns to the Caucus?

David said the caucus board will meet privately and discuss the application and all of what are the concerns in the community. The board will either approve it or not, and if approved it is then forwarded to Planning Dept., which then forwards it on to the BOCC . If we do not like the plan, the consensus of caucus board does not approve, we will return it to Bob and Alan with suggestions of how this can be made acceptable and we'll move forward from there.

David added that it looks like we will have another session given comments tonight but if you have concerns then send that directly to the caucus , or to David directly or any of the caucus members.

Clark asked that anyone please call him directly-- "I happy to put commitments that I make in writing and expect to be committed to the things ". "In the application I committed to doing the (?) certified home. It's not something I'm just saying, its a commitment I made as part of my application so I have to do it. I did everything I said I would do in the GMQS process including getting a LEED certification certification. I didn't commit to the zero but don't know how I'm going to do it yet, but I'm committed to getting to the net 0 on the home. and I do think I can."

David. Thanked Bob and Alan for presentation.

David asks for questions and concerns.

Helene - asked everyone look at Rosebud and bring questions to the next special meeting. "I'm not ready to make a decision. This is too big to make a decision on this discussion".

Emma and Steve commented that it's their the primary view plane and they want to maintain the quality of the valley - but the size of house is too large

Tina asked about what is process with the caucus?

David. Caucus will either approve, forward it to Planning, then it goes to the BOCC If we don't like it, then we will return to Bob and Alan - and move forward.

Jill. Concern about houses this size that are part-time/second homes in this old ranching community and feel attached to the land and history here as a ranching community.

Vicki. Concern about loosing view?

Emma - primary concern about losing primary view plane. We're going to be looking at the house... We could be losing some of our view. We're raising the next generation in Old Snowmass. We moved here to get away from Aspen and want to maintain the quality of our valley and fear this is Aspen. The 7200 sf is too much. To reduce carbon footprint need a smaller house. "We're concerned where this valley is going and we don't want to lose all the reasons we moved here for."

Helene. I don't think it's consistent with the architecture in the valley. the size is way bigger than anything else in the area.

Chris said there are other large homes in the valley - like Curt Russell and McCabe.
Helene said it's the proximity of Buttercup to others, not so distant as other large houses.

Alan - at least half dozen to 10 homes around this size in the valley.

George. Allowable by county codes We can approve the project but with an objection to the house size. It's up to the county. Do we welcome TDR's? Master plan? We can approve the project and if house is too large we can approve but object to the house size.

Helene. You don't approve it unless its consistent with what you want.

George. We can say we approve but don't like the size of the house.

Helene. No. No approval until the size of the house is reduced is my way of thinking. It's inappropriate to the neighborhood.

George. I forward a motion here - that we accept the project as proposed but object to the size of the house. That's my motion.

.Glenn. Would the board accept approve is the house was 5750? Is the only difference the TDR? The majority of the opposition is the 5750 to 7200sf, what we're really saying is a TDR should not be approved. He can go but we can still say the is out of place with what the caucus would like to see as far as growth in the valley. Too large and that's not where the caucus wants? We should appreciate that he wants to improve the property. A low key operation. Out of place with what the caucus would like to see?
Is it just the TDR that the caucus objects to? Would we accept a 5750?

George. It is however allowable under the county codes. It's probably where the county is not wanting to go but I guess we can approve the project but if you feel the house is wrong then we can approve with an objection to the size.

Helene. Then you don't approve it, if it's not consistent with what you want.
It's way premature to take a vote on this project. there's too much in question to even consider a motion.

Chris. Are you saying nowhere in Capitol Creek should a TDR be landed?

Alan. That's what I'm hearing tonight. The new Master Plan is welcoming to TDR's and the Caucus members are not respecting the Master Plan. The old plan said no; the new one is welcoming.

Glenn. We need to stick to the Master Plan or change it. Until it's changed we need to adhere to it.

David. We respect the right of TDR's, but prefer 5750. I am not bothered by a 7200sf home.

Glenn. It's a low profile. Big but conscious of how it looks for the valley. Bob lives down the road so has a good sense of that.

Vicki. It could be a lot worse. Bob has been communicative, has conscientious landscape and improve wetlands

Judy Hill. If it's agreed to TDR's in the Master Plan, we need to stand by that.

Chris. I hope everyone looked at plan. It's very soft. I think it's well planned. Set back from the road. The pastures are dried. There's much to improve. Reclamation of the south east side will be fantastic and with landscaping, it looks extremely nice.

Helene. The house is too big. The landscaping is trying to direct our attention from the house size. I vote to table the discussion. I don't think we're ready to vote. I don't think people have had a chance to consider it long enough or have had a chance to go look at Rosebud, I think it's premature to vote.

David. I think its good to table this discussion and to have a special meeting Feb. 2 to discuss this further. Let's table this discussion tonight.

Alan. The County meeting is Feb. 16

Glenn. We should have meeting before so as not to hang people up. Release our decision before their scheduled county meeting.

All in favor of tabling this discussion tonight.

George. Let's pick it up soon so there's time for them to prepare for County.

Chris. I make motion to table for 2 weeks. Meantime set-up a tour to Rosebud

David. i will schedule a zoom meeting Feb 2 to discuss this and make a decision. Everyone get over to Rosebud and also look at the Buttercup plans.

Judy H. Seconded the motion. All in favor.

David. The Minutes were distributed. I would accept motion to approve.

Judy Hill Lovins moved. Chris seconded. All in favor.

David. As to Board elections - i would open floor to nominations to board officers.

Helene. If current slate of officers are willing to continue, we should accept. No-one opposed.

David. Officers therefore remain the same.

Vicki sent out treasurer's report. She said we ended up making about same amount as last year, despite no picnic, presumably from the new website. Vicki was encouraged with our new website, that we'll be ok and probably bringing in even a little more money than before.

David. Jill and Molly have been thinking through our communications - the website and Constant Contact. Do we want to continue with Shayla - or ask Devon to take on ministerial kinds of things. The website has attracted double what we had before. Do we continue with Shayla or ask Devon to take on the ministerial things. Everyone should have gotten a report from David on website use. We've gone a long way - it's double what we've done before. We can defer that conversation to another time.

Molly has a website report she'll send out before next meeting.

Glenn. This was brought up before and there's support for Shayla to train Devon. Everyone thought it was a good idea.

David. We can work with both people. Shayla done a great job could continue with design work and have Devon work, too.

Glenn. I make motion to ask Shayla to train Devon and to come up with a structure to maintain the website at a lower cost, utilizing Devon, and to proceed as early as this week to get this arranged. George seconded.

Molly said website's WIX platform is a very user-friendly program. Will only take a short training. Only a few more adjustments to the website for Shayla to make before transferring to Devon.

All in agreement to this.

Meeting adjourned.

Zoom call scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 2 at 7pm. A Constant Contact notice will be sent out.