



## Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2025, 5:00 PM

Town Hall – Administrative Center | 10183 Truckee Airport Road, Truckee, CA

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**1. Call to Order** 5:06 PM

**2. Roll Call**- Chair Cavanagh, Vice Chair Taylor, Commissioner Clarin, Commissioner Toups, Commissioner Kaufman – all present.

**Staff Present:** Jenna Gatto, Town Planner; Chelsea Crager, Senior Planer; Scott Mathot, Senior Civil Engineer; Kayley Metroka, Administrative Technician.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Public Comment**

**David Diamond:** Watched the first Planning Commission meeting with the new commission and was very impressed to see how the commission and the town worked together to discuss the item and thanked the commission and staff for what they do.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

**5.1 March 18, 2025 Minutes**

**Commissioner Clarin made a motion that was seconded by Vice Chair Taylor to approve the March 18, 2025 Minutes as proposed. The motion passed and carried the following vote:**

**Ayes:** Chair Cavanagh, Vice Chair Taylor, Commissioner Clarin, Commissioner Toups, Commissioner Kaufman

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** None

**The motion passed 5-0**

**6. Public Hearings (Minor Review)**

**7. Public Hearings (Major Review)**

**7.1 Application 2024-00000033/DP-PD-UP-ZC-SP (Tahoe Forest Hospital District Gateway West)**

**Disclosure from Chair Cavanagh-** Has drove by and viewed the site many times and discussed the site with many community members. Does not have any financial interest in the project.

**Disclosure from Jason Toups:** Met with applicant, Dylan Crosby; Mountain Area Preservation's Sophia Hendrick; visited property once, and neighboring lot twice.

The applicant is requesting land use approvals to allow interior and exterior modifications to an existing multi-tenant commercial building, establish medical offices within the building, install new signage, and construct a new 75-space surface parking lot, including associated retaining wall and landscaping.

**Recommended Action:** That the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 2025-06, approving the Development Permit, Planned Development Permit, Use Permit, Zoning Clearance, and Sign Plan.

### **Applicant Presentation given by Dylan Crosby and Sandy Walker**

#### **Clarifying Questions for Applicant:**

- With the increase in offices, how is it possible that you are not going to add employees?
  - We will add them eventually, because of our space limitations we are not in a place to recruit. This will give us room to recruit.
- Regarding your new goal for scheduling patients, where are you currently at compared to the set goal?
  - It is variable by provider, but we use a metric called “Third Next Available” and on average we are out over 30 days.
- Regarding project phasing- what is the timeline you are trying to achieve if you were to get approved today?
  - The real criticality is to get a grading permit for the north lot as soon as possible. We are confident in that window. There is ample opportunity to do the TI work on the western portion of the building, but if we cannot operationally support the clinic with the parking next summer for the next phase, we essentially add a year to the construction.
- There is a condition of approval for the undergrounding of the utilities to be done before the grading, is that correct?
  - Yes.
- Regarding access for people who are looking to be dropped off at the clinic- how would you accommodate that request and need?
  - We would be happy to provide a drop-off location and partner with the town to make that decision. That would be a great addition to that project. The parallel parking spaces would be optimal, I think.
- Can you explain if you have done any forecasting or needs assessments for the future build-out of this area and how this development fits into the future vision?
  - We have no immediate new developments proposed to the site. We have another project in the old Rite Aid site and improvements.
- Do you anticipate these two developments in the pipeline now will suffice to service those additional people or will this bring to light the need for additional or less space?
  - I don't have a direct answer, but this project and the new development will help to evolve to meet the community's needs. We are going through that assessment now.
- Have you considered other backup power options other than the proposed diesel generator?
  - We did look at natural gas but there was a significant cost impact. The more reasonable and reliable is to go with diesel.
- How many people work there now?
  - About 40 in the clinic.
- Can you explain the EV charging stations?
  - There will be 13 total. Four will be fully serviced and the remainder will be EV ready for future.
- You have included heated sidewalks, correct?
  - Yes, at the rear of the building.

- Had you considered less convoluted access for wheelchairs from that rear lot?
  - We considered different options but one of the impediments of making it more of a direct access point is you don't have that visual queuing distance so it creates a safety hazard.
  - Staff: It was tied to a separation distance for intersections. It also helped with the connectivity with the ADA spaces being directly adjacent to the building. It was less about the vehicles coming in and out but wayfinding to the parking lot. It would be a circuitous route and Truckee Fire had comments on not being as direct access as this alignment.
- Regarding the fire line in the back- it connects to the west to a driveway to provide a through route, correct?
  - Yes. We worked very closely with the fire marshal to provide turnaround flexibility and access needs.
- For pedestrian safety, the way your parking lots are set up when you get out of the car, pedestrians are in traffic. If there was a way to put a sidewalk down the middle of the parking lot that would be helpful. I have almost been hit in your parking lot. I think that is something to think about. Adding striping would be helpful.
  - We will take those comments into consideration. We originally were going to move access to the building but that plan didn't meet code so we couldn't move forward with that alignment. We will absolutely take into consideration of all populations of people we serve in the community.
- Regarding landscape design – did you consider crabapple trees? Are there aspens in this design?
  - Yes, there are. We received input from a community member, and we are very open to different species of trees.
- Would the EV charging station be free?
  - Yes.

#### **Clarifying Questions for Staff:**

- Since the hospital will be recruiting additional employees, wouldn't there be an affordable housing component?
  - Without the exact employee generation from the hospital, the employee generation is based off FTEE (full-time employee equivalent) and it is a generation rate on the type of use, multiplied by a square footage. In this case, the employee generation rate for existing or previous uses is the same as a medical office. When comparing those two numbers it comes out to a net zero for FTEE. If the actual generation rate is different- that is something to look at.
- Why is an electric charging station a public amenity?
  - It is above and beyond what is required in the building code, so it is an amenity that serves the public.
- A public amenity to me is something everyone would want to use like a playground, benches, picnic tables. I don't consider the EV charging station a public amenity. What else could we ask them to do?
  - It is to the commission's discretion to look for other opportunities for a public benefit. We also looked at some transit options but a lot of those weren't applicable in today's world.
- The section is the front, is that a bus stop, a TART stopping area?
  - That is proposed parallel on-street parking which is consistent with the envision DPR project. This is a continuation of those design standards. Swapping the head-in parking for parallel parking is more advantageous for bicyclists and pedestrian safety.
- Where would TART pick up?
  - The bus would use the existing transit stop a couple of hundred feet down the road in front of the Safeway parking lot.

- A TART passenger vehicle could pull into any parking spot or parking lot they need to do pick up a passenger.
- Is there anything you would need to partner with the applicant to come up with a drop-off location?
  - We have had similar requests in the western zone, and we denied those requests because the entirety of the parallel parking spaces is in the town right-of-way which makes them public parking spaces. I would encourage the applicant to find a location on the property.
- The number of parking spots does not include the parallel spots, since those are public, not designated for the hospital, correct?
  - Correct.
- Do you know of any other retaining walls on Donner Pass Road that exceed six feet in height?
  - I cannot think of one besides the existing one this one is proposed to be tied into.
  - This is a fairly common solution to parking lot construction on this particular hillside further east on Donner Pass Road.
- When did we add the six feet max to the code, is that new?
  - No, this is not new. We changed about 5- 6 years ago how that is measured, but not the height max.

**Public Comment:**

None.

**Deliberation:**

- Since the EV charging station is free to the public, I do consider it a public amenity. For example, I do not use playgrounds, but I could use an EV charging station.
- Has the town considered a curbside EV charging?
  - Staff: We don't currently have any, and that hasn't been considered yet. I can see some conflict regarding the location of the charging port of various vehicles, especially being so close to a bike lane.
- Regarding the height of the retaining wall- the code says "Generally, no retaining wall should be higher than six feet. Unless the wall is architecturally treated and of an exceptional design, appropriate for the site, would reduce ground disturbance, improve visual quality or achieves other town goals." There are a number of things this wall is doing. It is tying into the adjacent wall, reducing ground disturbance. I see the EV charging as a bonus on top of these other items where it's already hitting the need of the code in my opinion. I'm not even sure it's necessary from the language of the code.
- Well said.
- I can see that interpretation.
- Why can't the drop-off be in the public right-of-way?
  - Staff: The drop-off is specifically for the use of the adjacent property owner, which doesn't provide the public benefit use of a public parking space where you could park there and walk wherever you wanted to.
- What is the reason the original proposed parking lot plan isn't being used?
  - Staff: It is a more secure circuitous route where it is more difficult for users to find the primary parking location up on the hill. The fire district had concerns with this based on maneuverability of larger emergency vehicles. We worked with the applicant team and the Chief Building Official and they are comfortable with the ADA accessibility path proposed.
- How come you didn't use the option that doesn't have the awkward chicane movement?
  - Staff: There was one other one that was a direct drive aisle because of the grade difference at about 11% which changes the speed at which vehicles could go to leave the parking lot.

- The current proposal meets objective standards, even if there are things we don't love.
- Is there any other traffic calming proposed to slow traffic and make crossing safer?
  - Staff: I am not aware of anything; I think the general geometry and grade differential should help with that.
- They could put in stop signs and their own crosswalks, correct?
  - Staff: Yes, if they want to.
- We can request that in an additional condition.
- Signage would be critical.
- I just want to make sure this condition doesn't hold up the process.
- How much of the retaining wall is at 13 feet tall?
  - Applicant: It is at its highest point on the east side. By the time you get over to the west, it is at zero.
- It won't be more than 10 feet at its highest, and the code states if a wall is to be more than 6 feet, no one section be more than 10 feet.
- It is terraced and it does tie into the one next door.
- The lot has already been impacted. The code does state that slopes that have been disturbed are not technically supposed to be counted in the exceeding 20% calculation. It looks like the areas proposed for impact are shallow. The visual findings I made seem to be consistent with the code.
- I am not comfortable with not having a real number with the number of staff this building will have.
- It is based off the number of employees in the entire building- how many employees were in that building when it was maxed out?
- Regarding the formula – is that purely square footage?
  - Staff: Square footage.
- The project is reducing their square footage by about 1,000 sq ft, correct?
  - Staff: Correct.
- It seems like it is intensifying the number of people.
  - Staff: Without having data from Tahoe Forest specifically, the rates are just based on retail, office, industrial, etc.; and retail and office are the same generation rate.
- This is out of the scope of this hearing, but this goes back to the discussion of the town possibly restarting their master planning exercise because we see this formula isn't adequate to address this question.
- Does anyone have concerns about the employees and the potential housing component?
- I think what staff has recommended to us is adequate. If we want to see these old buildings brought up to speed, we have to make it somewhat friendly for the developers to do that. If we add too many restrictions and requirements, we are going to lose that opportunity.
- I applaud the district for finding a way to reuse this building, update it, and improve how it looks.
- It is going to be a ton safer.
- I want to applaud the visual benefits and the consistency of Donner Pass Road, with no cost to the town. The sidewalk, the parallel parking, and the undergrounding of the utilities. This is a great compromise that is beneficial to the town, patients and providers.
- The improvements of the streetscape are also very welcome.
- I want to echo that we do need a more comprehensive look at this area and reinitiating the master planning process for the hospital district.

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Taylor that was seconded by Commissioner Kaufman to adopt Resolution No. 2025-06, approving the Development Permit, Planned Development Permit, Use Permit, Zoning Clearance, and Sign Plan; and adding the below two new Conditions of Approvals to be approved by the Community Development Director and Town Engineer prior to the certificate of occupancy:**

- 1) Prior to final certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall submit for review and approval by the Community Development Director and Town Engineer a signage and/or striping plan for the parking lot with the goal of traffic calming, reducing vehicle speeds, and enhancing pedestrian safety.
- 2) Prior to final certificate of occupancy, the Applicant shall continue to work with the Planning Division and Engineering Department to consider an appropriate on-site drop-off location for pedestrians.

The motion passed and carried the following vote:

**Ayes:** Chair Cavanagh, Vice Chair Taylor, Commissioner Clarin, Commissioner Toups, Commissioner Kaufman

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** None

**Motion passed 5-0**

**8. Staff Reports**

Possible projects for the May Planning Commission meeting: Pioneer East Business Park, project amendment on Trails End, rezone LLA and a possible historic district project.

**9. Information Items**

None.

**10. Commission Member Reports**

- Submitted questions to the planning department for a personal project and got a rapid and thorough response and wanted to thank the planning division staff.

**11. Adjournment** 6:22 PM To the next meeting of the Planning Commission, May 20, 2025, 5:00 PM at 10183 Truckee Airport Road, Truckee, CA 96161.