

NOTICE OF MEETING
HILLSIDE REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF ST. GEORGE
WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that the Hillside Review Board of the City of St. George, Washington County, Utah, will hold meetings at the referenced site on **Wednesday, December 6, 2023**, commencing on-site at approximately 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

James Sullivan
Dave Black
James Dotson
Russ Owens

EXCUSED:

Jeff Mathis

CITY STAFF:

Assistant Public Works Director, Wes Jenkins
Planner III, Daniel Boles
Development Office Supervisor, Brenda Hatch

James Sullivan called the meeting to order.

1. Consider a request for a hillside development permit to remove the hill from the subject property located at approximately 1923 S River Road (see map below). The property is approximately 9.49 acres. **Meeting time is approx. 9:00 am, River Road across from Fort Pierce Drive.**

Bob Hermandson – This had an old approval from City Council for the hill to basically be removed. The owner, which is still currently the owner was not financially able to move forward and so the development agreement was not executed. So we are back here with the exact same proposal because our understanding is that it expired somehow because it was not executed. We are just asking to remove the hill in a timely fashion if possible if we can get it approved, meaning that we would have the hill removed in under 24 months, possibly half of that. Right now, there is an extreme need for material so that part of it would be as quickly as possible. Many projects are within a mile or two miles of here so the haul lengths would be minimal. The impact to any surrounding roads would be minimal as well. The result of that would be roughly a 34-pad detached project to develop in a PD scenario. That is really it on my end.

James Sullivan – We're here because the permit expired, so one of our main concerns would be the timing and obviously once she didn't have the funds to move ahead, we don't want to get halfway through it and then run into a problem. So we could talk about options and bonds. There are other issues we've got to deal with but that is one of our concerns.

Bob Hermandson – Whatever we can work out as far as that goes, we're willing to consider all of it. The developer then is the same as it is now. We would shoot for 24 months but even less than that, maybe half.

Russ Owens – From a bond perspective, how would that work? You can do a restoration bond, is there also some type of bond that you can put in place that says if you go over 24 months then it kicks in?

Bob Hermandson – That is a very interesting conversation, the material is being paid for by other projects, she is not paying for the material to be moved. It's being paid for by the projects receiving the material. There are multiple projects to do that. I'm open to discussion but how would you bond for it if it's free to remove it? That's my question.

James Dotson – That's the same thing, those developments could cease or stop and then we're half way through this hill and then where does it go? There is no one to buy the material.

Bob Hermandson – Great comment, let's look at some numbers and see what it would cost.

James Sullivan – The numbers would have to be based off the removal of the entire hill.

Dave Black – Looking back on the past minutes when we met on this before, as I recall the hillside board didn't recommend approval on this, they passed it and passed it on to the Council. One of the hang ups was that the hillside board didn't feel that they could make a decision that this hill was insignificant enough or small enough that it could be removed. I guess I kind of feel the same way, we have met on hundreds of hillside projects and this particular hillside is visible to the public, people in the area drive by here everyday and we made recommendations to preserve geologic features that have been less significant than this one on several projects. So it is kind of hard from a hillside perspective and a hillside ordinance to say that it's not significant let's let it go away. The other conversation that we had is they brought up several instances in the past where a hillside has totally gone away, didn't leave a scar after it was gone and essentially there was no evidence it was ever there. I don't know that it is necessarily covered under our current hillside ordinance. I agree that if we can make this go away in a very short time, it wouldn't leave a scar and we wouldn't even know that it was there in the past. I think a lot has changed in the last 10 years, there has been a lot more development around it, there are people in these adjacent developments that feel like that is a benefit to the City that they want that hillside to remain. I understand that the residential development to the north is somewhat organized in their efforts and that they will strongly protest the hill going away. Residents to the south are less organized but they would like to see it stay as well so I think from the general public there will be opposition at least from the nearby neighbors. I think things have changed also that before we had access to the back of it, now we don't. The only access to get in and out is at this intersection right here. The impact on the adjacent properties is going to be maybe different now then it would have been then. There are more people living in the area. I would anticipate that blasting is going to be required for the top cap of the sandstone, the red formation underneath it is at least going to need hoe rams, it is going to be a noisy operation. We have seen some things

come to Council recently regarding blasting on other developments and their concerns for blasting. There is a new ordinance being developed at the City now for blasting. Also, I know the City has been concerned about the impact of rock trucks and construction traffic on the roadways. I think that there will be some impact, especially at this intersection, of the trucks, to the existing roadways. I don't think they will hold up, that is a lot of trucks per day, they can be pretty heavy loaded trucks as well. Those are concerns for the Council when they review this. I think if we looked at this from an ordinance standpoint and looking at the slope map, there is a lot of red areas, steep slope areas that are non-contingent that area isolated that we could recommend not be considered adjacent to the hill itself. But the hill itself is pretty prominent. In my opinion, we should probably recommend that should not be disturbed. They could disturb the surrounding areas but that is my thought.

James Sullivan – You've done a good job of explaining the concerns, and that's a big one. Just the fact of getting it out of here in a timely manner would be one and two is the residents obviously and three is the noise. But aside from that it is, it's still not clear to us as a Hillside Committee what is insignificant and what is not when it comes to something like this. Obviously there won't be a scar when it's over. But was it something worth saving before we started?

Dave Black – I think there is maybe two options then, one is that we could suggest that we kick this down the road and give it to the Council without an opinion because we don't think it is covered under the ordinance in the scenario that they want to do. Or we can make a motion to recommend or not recommend this for approval. It would be one of those two things I would think. Another thing I think that has happened in the last year or two, I think that there is a development close to here that has got some really big stock piles, some really big disturbance, there's blasting, I would think that is maybe on the Council's mind and something like this could be very similar if it is not controlled and if it doesn't happen in a timely manner. Again, you are going to have a lot of noise and a lot of dust.

James Dotson – Bob have you looked at developing the land without removing any of the hill?

Bob Hermandson – I sure have. We have two full blown plans. The end result from a development standpoint, honestly the density is not much different, but just the look and feel and contiguous with the adjoining properties is better because you have more space. So, it ends up looking and feeling very similar to what is already here. You look at these disturbance lines and what is already here, this thing is basically a donut. The inside donut is not disturbed. There is probably 100 ft above that house all the way around that knob that is disturbed. It's really the cone section. The back side is not as steep. (Bob showed what was disturbed on the map) We looked at it both ways, the other way it is a mixed product type.

Dave Black – Let's drive around back and finish the discussions there.

Wes Jenkins – In your other layouts, do these houses get tore out?

Bob Hermandson – Yes, in any scenario these houses get tore out. We basically draw a line around the disturbance area and then get it to grade and develop it. These end up being a mixed product type buffering with detached units along those houses. Here I've got 3 or 4 three plex's. We would have to put in a bunch of retaining walls.

James Dotson – As you're standing back here all the River Road sound is gone. If we take this down, everything echoes right back up into this cove. We've got neighbors surrounding all around. This is not unique to St. George. I've been to Phoenix and looked at developments all over and they use these type of elements, a hill like this to build the houses into it and set them up and make it an amenity for the development. I just think, on this side it's not super pretty. But, as far as the 40%, it's our responsibility to protect, it's within the ordinance. On that side it is much prettier. You could terrace it and I would want a lot on this side.

Bob Hermandson – This is kind of a playground for kids here too, so it is kind of a safety concern. This part would essentially be a driveway and then we would have units here. It's definitely our preference to take it down.

James Sullivan – Would you be worried about rockfall?

Dave Black – I think by having a road at the toe of the slope it helps mitigate the risk of the steep area in the future. There would be some risk of that coming down. There is somewhat of a road here now. They might have to berm it or something to keep it from going down across the road. Either way there is some risk. A question that I have is say for instance if we did decide that this not be approved to remove the whole hill and then there is a new second option to look at does that come back to hillside? So, we can look at walls and the area of disturbance and stuff like that?

Wes Jenkins – Yes we would have to bring it back here because there is obviously 30-40%.

Dave Black – Yes there are some non-contiguous areas that are 30-40% so we don't have to address that scenario now, we are just talking about removing the hill or not, right?

Russ Owens – I guess I wasn't aware there would be a second alternative. It was either take it down or not. Now that there is, I think that would probably be the best alternative. Considering all the impacts of taking this thing down and whether you can do it in a timely manner, making sure there are people to take it to or places for it to go. I think the size of it is something that we haven't dealt with before. If there is an option to leave it, I think that is the way I would look at going.

MOTION: James Dotson made a motion to not recommend approval of the hill at this time based on the amount of 40% slope visible from the home side of the hill and that the applicant come back to the hillside with a different layout option that uses the usable space, we are open to removing the 40% slopes that are down below but we would have to look at that in the new layout. We would be willing to look at anything that has already been disturbed.

SECOND: Dave Black

AYES (4)

Dave Black James Dotson Russ Owens James Sullivan NAYS (0) Motion carries
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2. Approval of the meeting minutes from November 1, 2023.

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