

Emma Townsite Steering Committee Meeting – Dec. 1, 2020

Dec. 1, 2020, 5:30pm (Virtual Meeting) – **Steering Committee Members:** Sara Nadolny, Carolyn Shipp, Harry Teague, Martha Ferguson, Liz Newman, Matt Annabel, Michael Kinsley, Suzannah Reid, Jason Smith, Mitzi Rapkin, Margaret Simmons **Open Space Staff:** Lindsey Utter, Jessie Young, Janet Urquhart

On Dec. 1, 2020, the group met via a Zoom virtual meeting to review public feedback submitted in response to the Committee’s draft recommendation for future use of the Emma Store buildings and to consider changes to the recommendation.

Committee members noted some members of the public advocated uses that the committee has ruled out, such as a restaurant or brewery, and some members questioned the ability to provide a coffee shop or community meeting space there. Commercial use of the space is not supported by the Emma Caucus’ master plan, noted Liz Newman, though small, ancillary commercial uses (a museum gift shop, for example) could be appropriate.

Sara Nadolny said the Town of Basalt planning staff does not favor commercial uses such as a full-scale coffee shop, but rather something like a coffee cart as an ancillary use. Committee members agreed a small-scale retail operation should be accommodated within the recommendation.

Jason Smith suggested the possibility of lowering Hwy. 82 in front of the buildings be flagged in the recommendation as unlikely, given its prohibitive cost.

Martha Ferguson and Harry Teague expressed concern that nothing will happen with the buildings at the conclusion of the process. Teague called for a viable plan for the buildings, suggesting art studio space. It would be a low-traffic, low-key use, he said. Even the small building to the rear could work as studio space, said Matt Annabel. The studio use would allow the buildings to transition to something else when the time is right, Teague said.

Art studios are not precluded by the recommendation as it is drafted, but the county can’t be the manager such a facility, Lindsey Utter said. There may be a local entity that would be willing to run it, Teague said.

Committee members also agreed that use of the buildings as a “community meeting space” is too intensive, given the traffic such a use would generate and the need to manage the space for such uses. However, the group agreed that use of the buildings as a small-scale gathering space should be accommodated in the recommendation.

The committee agreed that the addition of a soft-surface trail to the rear of the buildings and a pocket park where trail users could enjoy the property is a desired amenity that could generate interest in the buildings. Interpretive signage to explain the site’s history would also be

appropriate. The group agreed the park idea should not be listed as a potential use, but instead be recommended as a use that will go forward as part of the inspiration and innovation steps.

Ultimately, the group agreed to de-emphasize the list of potential uses within the recommendation and instead provide examples of potential uses under the Parameters for Future Use(s) section of the recommendation. The parameters are the key piece of the recommendation, as they set the boundaries of what can happen at the site, Michael Kinsley said.

Liz Newman asked if the group should recommend that the county retain ownership of the buildings in perpetuity. If they are subdivided and sold, state historic regulations prevent much alteration to the exterior of the buildings, and the county has regulations to prevent them from being allowed to fall into disrepair, though this would likely require lengthy court action, Suzannah Reid said. No action was taken to address future ownership of the buildings within the recommendation.

Jessie Young said the draft recommendation will be revised in accordance with the group's directions. The revised draft will be circulated to the committee via email for feedback; the committee can then decide whether a follow-up meeting is needed.

Proposed changes to the recommendation:

- Additional language regarding the cost/feasibility of lowering the elevation of the highway
- Allow for small-group gatherings rather than community meeting space and move it down in the list of examples of potential future uses
- Make the trail addition and pocket park an interim use that will be pursued
- De-emphasize the examples of potential uses, making this a sub-section under the Parameters for Future Use(s) section and reorganizing the list to move small-group gathering space down
- Clarify the Caucus master plan's position on commercial use