



Town of Paradise Valley

6401 E Lincoln Dr
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Minutes – FINAL

Hillside Building Committee

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

8:00 AM

Town Hall Boardroom

Committee Members

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jarson called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

Present 5 – Chair Scott Jarson
Member Blair Portigal
Member Sue-Meng Lau
Member Robert Brown
Member Tim Dickman

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Town Attorney Michael Goodman
Community Development Director Chad Weaver
Hillside Associate Engineer Juan Gonzalez
Hillside Development Planner Jose Mendez
Lead Management Specialist Cherise Fullbright

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION

3. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. 25-139 Combined Review for an Addition/Expansion at 4751 E Marston Drive (APN 169-20-078)

Mr. Gonzales explained the proposal for a combined review at 4751 East Marston Drive, located on Camelback Mountain. He clarified that this was an addition and expansion to an existing home, which is currently 100% disturbed with a total area of approximately 0.63 acres. The proposed project includes enclosing a rear covered patio and adding two bathrooms, increasing the home's square footage from 4,359 to 4,641 square feet. Because the addition exceeds 100 square feet, the item required committee review rather than chair approval. He confirmed there would be no changes in height, lighting, landscaping, or roofline. The exterior will be re-stuccoed with a compliant prairie grass color, and existing roofing materials will be matched.

Scott Merritt, representing Fineline Designs and the property owners, confirmed that the addition was simple, maintained the existing style and drainage, and remained within the building envelope. He reiterated that no lighting or landscaping changes were planned.

Chair Jarson thanked Mr. Merritt and confirmed with him that there were no changes to the lighting or landscaping. He noted the project only barely exceeded chair-level approval limits and appeared to be well integrated with existing structures. He opened the floor to the committee and the public but received no further comments. He then checked with the staff for concerns.

Mr. Gonzales confirmed there were no concerns from staff and said the project was straightforward.

A motion was made by Chair Jarson, seconded by Member Dickman, to approve the item with standard stipulations as per staff. The motion carried with the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Chair Jarson, Member Portugal, Member Lau, Member Brown, Member Dickman

B. 25-104 Combined Review for a remodel and addition to the Existing single-family home at 8201 N 54th Street (APN 168-75-022)

Mr. Mendez provided an overview of the item proposing a 1,893-square-foot expansion to an existing 6,274-square-foot single-family home on a 0.998-acre lot, increasing the total size of the home to 8,167 square feet. Additions included enclosing front and rear patio areas, adding a new bedroom, and constructing entry steps. He explained that while the initial engineering review required full on-site grading and drainage, further analysis reduced that requirement. The proposed height complied with the 40-foot maximum, measuring 33 feet 10 inches from the lowest point. Building materials and colors complied with light reflectivity limits. Lighting included wall sconces, recessed downlights, and a decorative pendant, all compliant except the pendant, which required further review. The original landscape plan included non-native plants, which had since been updated with compliant native species. Driveway lighting would be installed and meet town code requirements.

Tom Pansing, the project architect, clarified that much of the addition was under existing rooflines and only about 625 square feet extended beyond the original envelope. He noted functional goals, including improving front access and connecting the garage to the house. He explained that the existing roof would be replaced with a standing seam metal roof and that aesthetic adjustments would reduce visual prominence. He also described plans for softening the home's appearance with muted colors and recessed lighting.

Chair Jarson asked clarifying questions about the roofing material, rooftop access, and reflectivity mitigation. He suggested embedding sand in the roof coating to reduce glare and inquired about changes to the revised landscape plan. He confirmed that non-native plants like Ficus and pygmy palms had been removed. He expressed concern about downlight placement near the structure and requested that three fixtures be moved away from architectural elements.

Member Dickman asked about the pendant fixture's placement, visibility, and light output.

Mr. Pansing responded that the fixture was still under design, and the applicant would be open to limits on brightness.

Mr. Mendez confirmed the 750-lumen maximum.

Member Lau raised concerns about visibility due to the home's elevation and suggested shielding.

Chair Jarson reiterated the importance of glare control and flexibility in design.

Member Dickman also requested staggering of driveway lights to avoid a "landing strip" effect.

Mr. Mendez confirmed the fixtures were small and code compliant.

Member Lau and Chair Jarson asked about rooftop deck fixtures and wall transitions.

Mr. Pansing agreed to consider terracing at the new entry to blend levels and preserve design harmony.

Chair Jarson and Mr. Pansing discussed the use of a mixed paint palette involving desert tones like turmeric, which the committee supported.

Member Brown raised concerns about construction logistics, including contractor parking and portable restrooms.

Mr. Gonzales explained that a construction staging plan is required at the permitting stage, but it has not yet been submitted.

No input from the public was provided.

A motion was made by Chair Jarson, seconded by Member Brown, to approve item 25-104 subject to the standard stipulations, and adding the following stipulations:

- Flat roof surface to be top-coated or broadcast with sand or equivalent to mitigate surface reflection
- Entry light fixture, cut sheet, and detail to be submitted for final approval by staff and chair
- A number of three recessed can lights to be relocated away from the built surface by approximately six inches, so as to not illuminate the surface area
- Driveway lights to be staggered or offset so as to mitigate a lined-up or row appearance, with a plan to be submitted for approval to staff and the chair
- Entry stair retaining wall to be mitigated with terracing or landscape, with a plan to be submitted for approval by staff and Chair
- Final paint mix color to be submitted to the staff and chair for final approval

The motion carried with the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Chair Jarson, Member Portugal, Member Lau, Member Brown, Member Dickman

C. 25-140 Formal Combined Review for a New Driveway and Drainage Upgrades at 5749 E Quartz Mountain Road (APN 169-02-021A)

Mr. Gonzales explained that the proposal aimed to regrade a previously cut driveway, address drainage issues, and stabilize the slope to prevent erosion and boulder movement. The existing disturbance was 28.2% of the site, and the proposed disturbance would be reduced to 24.14%. Measures included new pipes, catch basins, drop inlets, and retention tanks, along with slope stabilization using rock pinning and mesh. Catchment fencing was proposed on neighboring properties to prevent rockfall during and after construction. He clarified that the fencing and mesh materials were specified, and geotechnical studies supported the plan.

Chair Jarson asked for clarification on the pinning methods and their purpose.

Mr. Gonzales explained that rods up to 25 feet would be drilled into the slope to prevent collapse, and fencing would help catch falling rocks.

Jon Gillespie, attorney with Rose Law Group, explained that this was the first phase in building a future home and was focused on stabilizing the site and installing essential infrastructure. He

emphasized the safety benefits to the neighborhood and introduced the project team, including engineers and the future architect.

Member Dickman asked whether a drainage ditch currently existed and where runoff would ultimately go. He inquired whether the committee had authority to approve easements on other properties.

Nick Prodanov with Land Development Group described a drainage plan that separated off-site runoff from on-site drainage. Off-site flows would be conveyed along the uphill side of the driveway, while on-site water would be captured and released slowly. He confirmed that the ditch would be carved without blasting and that catch basins would help slow down water before it reached the street.

Mr. Gonzales clarified that town staff would require legal easements and maintenance agreements before issuing permits.

Mr. Gillespie confirmed they were working with neighbors to obtain consent and finalize agreements.

Chair Jarson asked about the direction and flow of water.

Mr. Prodanov confirmed water would be managed with multiple drains, pipes, and tanks to mirror historic patterns.

Member Lau raised concerns about debris maintenance in the catch basin.

Mr. Prodanov explained that long-term upkeep would be recorded and required of future owners.

Member Dickman asked about the project timeline.

Mr. Gillespie estimated three to four months, though he acknowledged some variability.

Member Lau questioned whether the catchment fencing was permanent.

Mr. Gonzales confirmed the catchment fencing was permanent and would arrive pre-finished to match its surroundings.

Member Lau expressed concerns about the visual impact of the high fencing and suggested that homeowner awareness was important.

Jeff Van, the geotechnical engineer, explained that the slope was unstable due to prior failures and required rock bolting and mesh to prevent future movement. He described installation techniques and the importance of thorough inspection. He also discussed the separate fencing system for the north side, meant to catch falling boulders, which had been tailored through simulations.

Chair Jarson asked staff about the disturbance calculations and aesthetics.

Mr. Gonzales confirmed the stabilization measures were included in the disturbance figures.

Chair Jarson expressed concern about visual impacts and stated the application lacked aesthetic detail, such as physical samples for mesh and fencing.

Mr. Gillespie confirmed the timeline was flexible, but their goal was to stabilize the site now to safely build a home later.

Member Dickman suggested stipulating a time limit on the temporary easement.

Mr. Gonzales explained that permanent maintenance agreements would govern ongoing responsibilities.

Mr. Gillespie added that a detailed construction timeline would be included in the staging plan.

Member Brown recused himself from voting due to past involvement with the HOA.

Chair Jarson acknowledged the application's technical soundness but reiterated the need for aesthetic clarity and a complete understanding of the visual outcomes.

Rick Ross, a resident and HOA board member, spoke during public comment. He strongly supported addressing the site's safety issues, especially rockfall and flooding, which had impacted multiple homes. He emphasized the urgency of completing work before the monsoon season and thanked the town for finally moving forward. However, he also highlighted concerns about aesthetics, given the community's long-term view of the site, and asked for thoughtful integration and landscaping to soften the visual impact.

Mark McCain, representing the owners of Lot 2 directly below the subject property, echoed the concerns about safety and aesthetics. He emphasized the importance of the timely installation of catchment fencing before any grading, the need for regular inspections, and the value of stipulations for beautification. He also mentioned ongoing legal and procedural coordination with the applicants regarding easements and site access.

Kerry Zang introduced himself as the owner of the red-roofed home directly below the property in question. He described living in fear of rainstorms since 2013 due to runoff and falling rocks. He expressed support for stabilizing the slope, emphasizing the danger it posed to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He cited significant damage to his property, including \$600,000 in flood repairs, and noted his neighbor experienced a boulder crash causing \$25,000 in damage. Although he acknowledged confidence in the engineering team, he expressed frustration that residents had not been given access to the engineering reports. He called for safety measures to be completed before any construction begins, requested a timely timeline, and advocated for the town to supervise the work with support from an independent engineer. He also emphasized that any protective measures crossing his property must be clarified and agreed upon in advance.

Member Dickman asked whether the applicant would consider a 30-day continuance to allow residents to review the plans and build consensus.

Mr. Gillespie responded that he shared the urgency and noted that work had been done thoroughly and submitted to the staff. He believed continued coordination with neighbors through the maintenance agreement could address their concerns, including aesthetics.

Member Dickman noted that while the team was high quality, the issue of whether reports had been shared with residents remained unresolved.

Mr. Zang clarified that he had not seen the reports and wanted assurance that what was promised would be executed. He stated he would not approve of further activity on his land without seeing the full scope of work, including all reports.

Chair Jarson asked if anyone else from the public wished to speak.

Ellen Andeen-Keller introduced herself as a longtime Paradise Valley resident and the town's vice mayor. She recalled an accident during the original construction of the area and raised concerns about truck routes and construction staging.

Mr. McCain expressed concern about delays if the application was not approved. He urged the committee to implement immediate safety measures and to avoid further exposing downhill properties.

Mr. Ross echoed Mr. McCain's points. He emphasized the community's support for prompt action, provided aesthetic and safety issues were addressed. He expressed confidence in the technical team and the town's oversight, but reiterated concerns about visual impact and urged cooperation between the HOA and the applicant.

Mr. Gillespie suggested that the maintenance agreement includes a collaboration with lot 2, lot 4, and the HOA to ensure aesthetic considerations were addressed.

Member Dickman replied that aesthetic components could not be separated from the approval process, especially since the fencing and mesh were integral to the project.

Member Lau added that the issue was about contextual blending, not beautification, and suggested a 3D rendering or photo montage to visualize the mesh and fencing on the slope.

Chair Jarson asked staff about the height of the mesh.

Mr. Gonzales replied that it would range from 25 to 30 feet. He confirmed that the site had water and electric utilities and detailed the bonding formula, estimating a \$147,000 hillside assurance bond.

Chair Jarson noted that the bond might be insufficient to restore the site if work were abandoned.

Mr. Gillespie confirmed the applicant was ready to begin work immediately after permits were obtained and that financing from Lot 8 was in place.

Member Dickman asked if HOA approval was also required.

Mr. Gillespie stated that HOA approval was not technically required but confirmed they would continue coordinating with the HOA and were open to its architectural review board commenting on the fencing materials.

Mr. Gonzales confirmed that no permit would be issued until all required documents were submitted and inspections passed, including updated stormwater protection plans and legal agreements.

Chair Jarson expressed concern that the application did not include visual materials addressing aesthetics, such as mesh samples or restoration plans. He said the committee had to weigh urgent safety needs against the long-term visual impact on the hillside.

Mr. Gonzales clarified that if the application were continued, the next official meeting would not occur until September unless a special meeting was called.

Member Dickman supported a short continuance and offered to make himself available for a special meeting.

Member Lau summarized the committee's concerns as threefold: aesthetics, project timeline, and access to background reports. She supported stipulations and suggested renderings of how the mesh would appear on the mountain.

Member Portigal stated that while the committee could approve the item with stipulations to move forward on schedule, changes to the technical plan would require a delay. He believed aesthetic elements could be addressed later through staff and chair oversight, with input from neighbors and the HOA.

Chair Jarson pushed back, stating that the committee would not have recourse to alter the visual outcome once the mesh was installed. He insisted the application lacked the necessary aesthetic detail to meet committee standards.

Member Dickman agreed and stated that the committee could not approve the visual portion after the fact since the fencing was central to the technical solution.

Mr. Gillespie emphasized that the catchment fence's primary role was safety. He acknowledged some progress had been made on aesthetics but reiterated that it was still a fence with a functional purpose.

Mr. Van confirmed the fence was designed for safety and explained that decisions about patina, paint, and landscaping could be finalized within 30 days if the committee approved the concept. He raised concerns about irrigation on an unstable slope, noting any watering plan would need to be reviewed for slope stability impacts. He stated that retaining and rockery walls were considered but rejected due to ineffectiveness and visual issues, and that the catchment fence was the only viable solution.

Chair Jarson acknowledged the solution's effectiveness but noted it was not visually appealing.

Member Dickman asked whether the Chair would entertain a motion.

Chair Jarson preferred first to consult the committee and the applicant on whether they could provide material samples and a restoration plan by early July, suggesting a continuation as an option.

Mr. Gillespie said they could provide the requested materials but preferred to move forward with approval and address aesthetic specifics as a stipulation reviewed by staff and the Chair prior to permitting.

Member Dickman responded that the project's scale was too significant to defer aesthetic decisions to staff, which was sometimes done with more minor applications.

Mr. Mendez supported the idea of approving the technical solution now and handling aesthetic details later, noting that final touches like color and landscaping were easier to review separately.

Mr. Gonzales shared precedent for splitting an application, approving technical elements while continuing the landscaping portion to a later meeting.

Chair Jarson stated his concern with applications of this scope being submitted without physical samples. He emphasized the committee's responsibility to protect the hillside's visual integrity and expressed discomfort with approving such a visually impactful project without knowing how it would look. He noted the long-term consequences of approving such a feature and favored continuation to obtain the necessary visual materials. He made a formal motion to continue the

item to the July 9th meeting or the next available meeting.

Mr. Gillespie asked for clarification on expectations for that July date.

Chair Jarson explained that the continuation aimed to give the applicant time to prepare visual and aesthetic materials for proper review.

Member Dickman added that engaging neighbors in aesthetic discussions would be beneficial.

Mr. Gillespie confirmed they would work to provide visual representations and coordinate with the HOA.

A motion was made by Chair Jarson, seconded by Member Dickman, to continue the item. The motion carried with the following vote:

Aye: 4 – Chair Jarson, Member Portugal, Member Lau, Member Dickman

4. STAFF REPORTS

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chair Jarson expressed frustration with incomplete applications that relied solely on digital representations. He emphasized the difficulty in enforcing aesthetics after approval and the need to capture every detail in the initial application, since deviations post-approval are difficult to correct.

Member Lau commented on the burden placed on the committee and public assessing visuals based on incomplete or technical information. She criticized the lack of visual renderings for a project of such scale and noted that the technical data did not help neighbors understand the long-term visual impact.

Chair Jarson agreed and stressed the committee's duty to ensure the community understood what was being built.

Member Lau commented on the complexity and variety of recent projects.

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

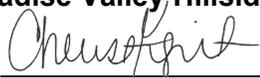
The next Hillside Building Committee meeting dates are tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at 8:00 AM and Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 8:00 AM.

7. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Chair Jarson, seconded by Member Dickman, to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 AM. The motion carried with the following vote:

Aye: 5 – Chair Jarson, Member Portugal, Member Brown, Member Covington, Member Georgelos

Paradise Valley Hillside Building Committee

By: 
Cherise Fullbright, Secretary