



THE CITY OF  
NOVATO  
CALIFORNIA

# Planning Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

October 7, 2013

## REVISED MINUTES:

Added language is indicated by italics and underlining

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Mayor  
Pat Eklund  
Mayor Pro Tem  
Eric Lucan  
Councilmembers  
Denise Athas  
Madeline Kellner  
Jeanne MacLeamy

City Manager  
Michael S. Frank

**Present:** Robert Jordan, Chair  
Gary Butler, Vice Chair  
Dan Dawson  
Jay Strauss  
Peter Tiernan  
Michael Walker

**Absent:** Cris MacKenzie

**Staff Present:** Bob Brown, Community Development Director  
Elizabeth Dunn, Planning Manager  
Christine O'Rourke, General Plan Manager

### CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order.

### APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

M/s Tiernan/Dawson (passed 6-0-1) to approve final agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT None

CONSENT CALENDAR: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

### CONTINUED ITEM:

1. 2 RANCH DRIVE OFFICE CONVERSION (ED/SM)  
P2012-048; GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT  
P2012-049; MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT  
P2012-050; PRECISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT  
CEQA CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION  
APN 125-591-17; 2 RANCH DRIVE

Consider a General Plan, Master Plan and Precise Development Plan Amendment assigned to the Atherton House from Low Density Residential (R1) to Mixed Use (MU). It has been determined that the project is exempt

**from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 (n) “conversion of an existing single family residence to office use”.**

Staff requested a continuance to October 21, 2013 to hear the proposal at 2 Ranch Drive. The Chair provided the opportunity for members of the public to speak about this item, however, no one was in the audience to speak on this matter. The Commission approved the continuance to October 21, 2103.

**NEW ITEM:** None

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**2. PRESENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY VISION MARIN 2013 BY MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE**

Susan Stompe, and Rick Frates of the Marin Conservation League (MCL), and Phil Peterson of the Audubon Society gave a presentation about the “Community Vision Marin 2013” report prepared by MCL. This report discusses issues MCL feels are important for communities to consider. As the City of Novato is beginning its General Plan update, MCL wanted to present this information. One question to MCL was about the maximum square footage of homes proposed by MCL, and where this number of 3,500 square feet was derived. Ms. Stompe indicated this is the limitation used by the County of Marin. There were no other questions of representatives from MCL.

**3. PRESENTATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN WORK PROGRAM (CO)**

Christine O’Rourke, the General Plan Manager for the update of the General Plan, gave a presentation about the potential focus areas, and white papers regarding the update to the General Plan.

Two members of the public spoke. One indicated that land should not be annexed for affordable housing, that the City’s Hillside Regulations should be protected, and that a workshop for planning for the North, North Redwood Boulevard should occur. One Hamilton resident requested that Hamilton be considered as a focus area.

Commissioners recommended that Hamilton be included as one of the focus areas, over South Novato Boulevard. Staff should continue to research if the federal deed restrictions are lifted, can be removed at Hamilton.

**4. CITY COUNCIL/EXECUTIVE STAFF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS: BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES (BCC’S) (ED)**

Staff provided a discussion paper, prepared by the City Clerk, about trying to improve the effectiveness of the City’s Boards, Committees, and Commissions. The following are the comments from the Planning Commission:

- Allow people to apply to multiple Commissions, and rank which Commissions they prefer to be on. The purpose of this is to have people not feel rejected if they’re not selected, and not apply when a similar appointment is available. If applicants have multiple options, the chances of them volunteering for a Commission increases.
- Have joint meetings, with the CC, PC and DRC. As all three bodies deal with some aspect of developing land, there’s an appropriate reason for all three to meet together.

- See if it's possible to have the online application be filled out online. The process - of printing out the application, filling it out, and sending it back - is tedious.
- Look at the questions to see if they're relevant. For example, the relevance of whether a potential Commissioner attended college. Simplify or be more selective with the questions asked as it relates to the Planning Commission.
- While more of an observation, the PC questioned how better marketing could occur to create greater interest in applying for these positions.
- The Planning Commission has questioned their role in the larger decision making process regarding land development proposals. A check in meeting with the Council will help to fortify the relationship between the City Council and the Planning Commissions: even if the Council takes an action that is different from a recommendation or action of a lower body, the role of the lower hearing body is still important.

**UPCOMING AGENDAS AND QUORUMS:**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Adjourned by the Chair at 8:40 p.m.