



THE CITY OF  
**NOVATO**  
CALIFORNIA

922 Machin  
Novato, CA 94945  
415/899-8900  
FAX 415/899-8213  
[www.novato.org](http://www.novato.org)

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

City Manager  
Michael S. Frank

# Planning Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

August 4, 2014

## MINUTES

**Present:** Dan Dawson, Vice Chair  
Curtis Havel  
Jay Strauss  
Peter Tiernan  
Susan Wernick

**Absent:** Robert Jordan, Chair

**Staff Present:** Bob Brown, Community Development Director  
Elizabeth Dunn, Planning Manager

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

The meeting was called to order.

### APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

M/s, Tiernan/Strauss, Ayes 5 (Dawson, Wernick, Strauss, Havel, Tiernan), Noes 0, Absent 1 (Jordan) to approve the final agenda.

### PUBLIC COMMENT None

### CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. **APPROVAL OF PC MINUTES OF JUNE 16, 2014 (RJ, DD, CH, JS, PT, SW)**

M/s, Tiernan/Havel. Ayes: 5 (Dawson, Havel, Strauss, Tiernan, Wernick), Noes: 0, Absent: 1 (Jordan) to approve the minutes of June 16, 2014.

### CONTINUED ITEMS: None

### NEW ITEMS:

2. **NORTH, NORTH REDWOOD WORKSHOP (BB)**

**Provide initial recommendations to City Council regarding potential policy considerations to aid staff in preparation of the Draft General Plan.**

**No environmental review is required. This information will be incorporated into the General Plan update process and an environmental review will be prepared for that document.**

Community Development Director Brown gave a summary of the results of the North, North Redwood Boulevard workshops held in June 2014.

The two issues that affect the North, North Redwood Boulevard area are land use and traffic. There are physical constraints in the area with scattered wetlands, and gas transmissions lines, and opportunities, with the arrival of SMART, a future bike path along North, North Redwood, proximity to the American Assets/Fireman's Fund offices, some of the Campus Properties sites, and the Buck Center, and the area's natural beauty. Traffic modeling assumptions were discussed, as well as the various land use scenarios and potential circulation improvements that were evaluated to determine future traffic impacts in the area. The City is working to create interest in the existing bio-tech firms in Novato, and strengthen this relationship with other firms that would like to relocate to Novato. Additionally, the City can capitalize on the nearby SMART station and improve non-automobile access to this station. Feedback from the residents who attended the June 2014 workshops was provided.

All of the Commissioners had questions relating to the kind and design of infrastructure improvements that are proposed (ex: traffic light at Binford and Atherton; could a tunnel be constructed for Redwood Blvd. under San Marin Drive?). Commissioner Havel stated that design guidelines were important, and that this is an opportunity for bio-tech firms to move into the area. Commissioner Wernick inquired if the kind of land use changes that might be approved would make the land around SMART more valuable, and Director Brown stated yes. Commissioner Strauss stated that if 3,500 employees might be in this area in bio-tech firms, where would they live? As it exists today, the BPO (Business and Professional Office) General Plan land use designation prohibits housing. He felt this land use category should be revised to create opportunities for more organic development that might include housing as well as job-producing development.

The public comment period was opened, and four members of the public spoke. These comments ranged from: 1) concerns about potential traffic impacts and levels of service in the area; 2) no interest in office uses, and that housing or bio-science could be built in the Black John Road area; 3) office and research and development could be supported by adjacent residents. Public comment was closed.

Commissioner Strauss restated his desire for more flexibility in new land use regulations, which would allow housing as a permitted land use; Commissioner Havel discussed the need for more refined design guidelines for future development. Commissioner Wernick stated that: 1) traffic at Redwood and San Marin will always be an issue; 2) a reluctance to change zoning for housing at Campus Properties site; and 3) the City will have a better sense of SMART and future development and housing demand once SMART is operational. Commissioner Tiernan stated that American Assets could be a great incubator for bio sciences, and supported a connection between East Campus Drive and Redwood Boulevard. His concern is where other businesses in the City (lumber yard, junkyards) might relocate if North, North Redwood Boulevard becomes housing and bio sciences. Commissioner Dawson stated that there should be allowances for residential and office in the area. This could balance traffic in the area, but there's no cheap solution for traffic improvements. He supported mixed use on the Fireman's Fund site as it relates to SMART.

Director Brown restated the themes he heard from the Commission:

- 1) Flexibility in allowing development of housing in the area, and
- 2) The American Assets site has the potential for mixed use development.

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

Planner Dunn informed the Commission about the future Agendas and of the status of the Planning Commissioner recruitment.

**UPCOMING AGENDAS AND QUORUMS: (STAFF)**

Director Brown gave an update of the North Redwood Streetscape Design Charette.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Adjourned by the Vice Chair at 9:15 p.m.