



THE CITY OF
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Denise Athas
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Pat Eklund

City Manager
Michael S. Frank

Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

September 17, 2014

MINUTES

Present: Joseph Farrell, Vice Chair
Beth Radovanovich
Tom Telfer

Absent: Michael Barber, Chair
Patrick MacLeamy

Staff: Elizabeth Dunn, AICP, Planning Manager

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order. Vice Chair Farrell, and Commissioners Radovanovich, and Telfer were present.

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

The agenda was approved without changes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

One member of the public spoke about the urbanization of Novato and San Rafael, the use of federal funds and grants and her belief that the federal monies create “top down” politics. Commissioner Telfer responded that the role of the Design Review Commission to review design for projects, and attempt to get first rate designs that relate to the environment of Novato. Vice Chair Farrell concurred. The DRC is not involved in various social issues.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

- 1. APPROVAL OF DRC MINUTES OF AUGUST 20, 2014 (MB,JF,PM,TT)**

Continued to a subsequent meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: (CITIZENS)

Interested persons may speak on any of the below-noted CONTINUED or NEW ITEMS up to three minutes per individual; 20 minutes for applicant; 10 minutes per recognized group. Speakers are limited to one opportunity per item, so please be thorough and to the point. Prior to speaking please submit a speaker card to the Meeting Recorder.

CONTINUED ITEMS:

NEW ITEMS:

2. REDWOOD AND GRANT BUS FACILITY RENOVATION (ED)

Conduct a public meeting to consider shelter and windscreen designs and provide a recommendation to the City Council for these designs for the proposed renovation to the existing bus transfer facility on Redwood Boulevard, between Grant and DeLong Avenues, in Downtown Novato.

Presenters for the proposal: Paul Price, of Mark Thomas and Company; Ron Kappe, Kappe Du Architects; Scott Stohler, Merrill Morris Partners, Landscape Architecture and Planning.

Commission Radovanovich asked about the materials of the wind screens, and the orientation of the windscreens.

Paul Price presented the two shelter and windscreen designs.

- Option #1 creates more protection for the bus patrons.
- Marin Transit attended a Farmer's Market in July. Comments from shoppers at the Farmer's Market indicated there is a split between option #1 and #2.
- Current bus patrons don't like the cross walk that exists today. They need and want a safer crosswalk. Marin Transit is working with the City on this issue.
- Bike racks are proposed to be on the west side, and there's not room on the east side for this feature.
- One or two trees can be planted in the platform area.
- Option #2 is more open, and a more contemporary design.
- The windscreen is a fine mesh material and is not as likely to be vandalized.

Ron Kappe, Kappe Du, also discussed the shelter and windscreen designs.

- The vertical element are wood. The windscreens are umbrella shaped, and can be installed in either Option #1 or #2.

Scott Stohler, Merrill Morris, spoke to the landscaping.

- The plant materials and paving on the plans is representative of what exists in downtown currently.
- Trees are added in the medians.
- The planting/seating areas are to be 7 feet wide.
- Public safety staff can see through the landscaping, and bus drivers can see over the landscaping.
- A railing will be installed, and the intent is to focus riders to the middle of the platform.

Comments from the Design Review Commission:

Vice Chair Farrell:

- Overlay the windscreen on the shelter designs
- Full set drawings are needed for review of this proposal
- Is there a code requirement for a bus shelter? No, this is an issue of community values, and what is an appropriate design for a downtown bus facility.

The public hearing was opened.

Four members of the public spoke. The comments are provided below:

Speaker #1:

- Question of the cost (estimate of four million dollars) for a bus stop without enlarging it.
- If there's no change in capacity, why do people
- This design changes the bus headway
- Believes this supports focused growth

Speaker #2:

- Prefers a third design (with a bus stop on the west and east sides of Redwood Blvd.)
- If renovating this facility, the new design must prevent drug dealing.
- Do not endorse these plans, or send them to the Council, and say no
- The facility is adequate now so tweak what's there

Speaker #3

- What's said is different for Novato residents than for residents of Marin County (such as: bike lanes are being installed; Novato residents are not qualified to weigh in on design).
- Weave design is untested
- With a 15 minutes headway, a PDA (Priority Development Area) is to come
- The money would be better use to connect to SMART (this would be Novato's hub going forward)

Speaker #4:

- Overlay of the windscreen is essential
- Wants to see materials on plans
- Doesn't endorse weave as this is not elsewhere in the County; show that this works and take proposal back to the Council

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Radovanovich had the following comments:

- She's disappointed in both options
- More outstanding architecture is needed
- The cupola is out of scale; this feature is not integral to the design
- Look at Tahoe City for examples of good shelter design

Commission Telfer had the following comments:

- Agrees with Commissioner Radovanovich, as he's also disappointed; he doesn't like Scheme B
- Traffic is bad and alternate transit systems are needed, but the design needs to feel like Novato; also wants to see bike lands on the plans.
- Scheme C has potential; it's top heavy; all of the designs are of the same or similar height and size and are boring; they need to be broken up
- The windscreens need to be part of the architecture of the shelter.

Vice Chair Farrell had the following comments:

- Feels that mediocrity was put forth
- Scheme A is top heavy and has spindly columns
- Don't mimic the cupola to say that this is Novato – this is too cliché
- Scheme B is haphazard and looks like a temporary shelter
- Scheme C is like Scheme A
- Cut back size of both shelter and make these smaller
- Concerned that the low seats will be damaged
- The design can be contemporary; it doesn't have to be "Old Town"; for example; elegant design elements like a contemporary agrarian theme or wineries, using classic materials.
- 3D images and superimposed photographs are needed for the public

Commissioner Radovanovich stated that beautiful, simple elegant architecture is needed.

M/s, Radovanovich/Telfer, to continue the discussion about architecture and designs for the bus shelters, and incorporate the comments of the Design Review Commission. Ayes: Farrell, Radovanovich, Telfer. Noes: 0, Absent: Barber, MacLeamy.

PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP: None

GENERAL BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: 8:40pm