



THE CITY OF
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Mayor
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Councilmembers
Denise Athas
Madeline Kellner
Eric Lucan

City Manager
Michael S. Frank

Planning Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

February 2, 2015

REVISED MINUTES

Change indicated by italics and underlining

Present: Dan Dawson, Chair
Peter Tiernan, Vice Chair
Curtis Havel
Robert Jordan
Leslie Salazar
Jay Strauss
Susan Wernick

Absent: None

Staff Present: Bob Brown, Community Development Director
Elizabeth Dunn, Planning Manager
Veronica Nebb, Assistant City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order.

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

M/s, Tiernan/Strauss, Ayes 7 (Dawson, Havel, Jordan, Salazar, Strauss, Tiernan, Wernick), Noes 0 to approve the final agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. APPROVAL OF PC MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2015 (DD, PT, CH, RJ, LS, SW)

M/s, Tiernan/Jordan. Ayes: 6 (Dawson, Havel, Jordan, Salazar, Tiernan, Wernick), Noes: 0, Absent: 0, Abstain: 1 (Strauss), to approve the minutes of January 20, 2015.

CONTINUED ITEMS: None

NEW ITEMS:

2. DISCUSSION OF THE COMMUNITY IDENTITY CHAPTER OF THE GENERAL PLAN (ED)

Planning Manager Dunn addressed the Commission to discuss the review process for the evaluation of policies and programs in 1996 General Plan. While the purpose is to streamline the General Plan so it's easier for the public and staff to read, and easier for staff to implement and monitor, the Council's direction was to use as much of the 1996 General Plan as appropriate.

The Community Identity chapter of the General Plan is being discussed tonight. The chapter was reviewed by staff, creating a table with information on each existing policy and program as to accomplishments since 1996, reasons programs may not have been implemented, and recommendations to retain, modify or delete each. The Design Review Commission provided comments at its meeting on November 19, 2014, and a two person subcommittee of the Planning Commission reviewed this document. Below are the comments from the Planning Commission on the Community Identity Chapter of the General Plan:

- Policy 1: Ok with staff's response
- Program 1.1: Ok with staff's response. A question was asked about whether a form-based code for the Northwest Quad would be implemented. This could be an outcome of the workshop for the Northwest Quad area, but it's too early to say if there is interest by the neighborhood for this kind of fine grained design plan.
- Policy 2: Ok with staff's response.
- Policy 3: Ok with staff's response.
- Program 3.1: Ok with staff's response.
- Program 4.1: Clarify that this program is being retained, as staff's initial recommendation was to remove this program. Discouraging the use of sound walls/walled subdivision would be included in design guidelines versus as a separate policy or program.
- Program 6.1: Okay with staff's response. Comment to ensure a buffer or transition between adjacent land uses (e.g.: residential and commercial)
- Program 7.1: Ok with staff's response
- Policy 8: Ok with staff's response.
- Policy 9 (and 10): Combine Policy 9 and 10 into one policy. Staff to clarify between undergrounding of new and existing utility lines.
- Policy 11: Ok with staff's response.
- Policy 13: Ok with staff's response.
- Policy 21: Ok with staff's response.
- Policy 23: Retain this program, and clarify drive through uses.
- Policy 24: Ok with staff's response.
- Policy 25: Ok with staff's response.

Public Comments:

One member of the public spoke on the concern of Program 6.1© being eliminated and rolled in Program 1.1. This speaker also questioned what a better material than wood for would be for fences along Novato Boulevard. The Planning Commission would not endorse wood walls on a thoroughfare like Novato Blvd.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE HILLSIDE/RIDGELINE PRESERVATION WHITE PAPER (BB)

Community Development Director Brown gave a powerpoint presentation on the Hillside/Ridgeline preservation white paper. This presentation included examples of commercial and residential projects that have been built before and after the Hillside/Ridgeline ordinance has been in place.

The Director posed four questions to the Planning Commission where new programs would be created in the General Plan to:

1. Map the ridgelines or a better definition of a ridgeline. The 7-0 straw poll from the Commission was to create a better definition of a ridgeline.
2. Create an exception process. The Commission endorsed an exception process for residential properties developed prior the Hillside/Ridgeline Ordinance. A 5-2 vote of the Commission was to also allow an exception process for non-residential uses, with Dawson and Havel voting “no”,
3. Retain the 4,500 square foot limit for new residential construction. The Commission endorsed the current square foot limit, and didn’t recommend revising this for new residential construction.
4. Change the slope when the Hillside/Ridgeline Ordinance applies, from 10% to 15%. The Commission endorsed retaining the existing slope of 10%. Commissioner Tiernan indicated he could endorse 10% for residential, and 15% for non-residential development.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Director Brown discussed the schedule for General Plan evaluations going to the City Council for discussion. Additionally, a discussion about upcoming public workshops for the Northwest Quad, and other ways to engage the community occurred. New development projects that have been submitted, and anticipated development projects were discussed.

UPCOMING AGENDAS AND QUORUMS: (STAFF)

Staff discussed the upcoming Commission calendar.

ADJOURNMENT:

Adjourned by the Chair at 9:45pm.