



Planning Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

June 1, 2015

THE CITY OF
NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

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

City Manager
Michael S. Frank

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
Julian Skinner, Engineering Manager
Veronica Nebb, Assistant City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order. As only one member of the Design Review Commission is in attendance (Michael Barber), this will be a meeting of the Planning Commission, and not a joint meeting with the Design Review Commission.

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA: M/s, Tiernan/Havel. Ayes: 7 (Dawson, Havel, Jordan, Salazar, Strauss, Tiernan, Wernick). Noes: 0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. APPROVAL OF PC MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2015 (DD,PT,CH,RJ,LS,SW)

M/s Tiernan/Wernick. Ayes: 6 (Dawson, Havel, Jordan, Salazar, Tiernan, Wernick). Noes: 0. Abstain: 1 (Strauss).

CONTINUED ITEMS: None

NEW ITEMS:

2. RECEIVE PRESENTATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE NORTHWEST QUAD WORKSHOPS (BB)

Provide initial direction 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 the presentation on the White Paper for the Northwest Quad. Dan Parolek, Principal of Opticos Design, gave a power point presentation on the outcome of the workshops on the Northwest Quadrant Neighborhood Plan.

Mr. Parolek spoke about the “Missing Middle” housing types that largely haven’t been built since the 1930s/1940s – duplexes, fourplexes and bungalow courtyard developments which can be regulated through form-based zoning codes to resemble the form of existing homes in the NW Quad neighborhood.

QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commission Jordan asked about the economic viability of a form based code. This type of code doesn’t increase costs, and similar development costs that exist for residential construction would be expected with a form based code.

Commission Strauss indicated that design criteria would need to be maintained in the Northwest Quad.

Commissioner Havel asked about notification and outreach. Director Brown indicated there was extensive outreach, with door hangers, flyers, in both English and Spanish.

Commissioner Wernick stated that a form based code could be as simple or as complex as necessary or as needed by the neighborhood. Mr. Parolek indicated that the City might need to rethink its design review process as part of a form based code for the Northwest Quad.

Commission Salazar indicated that density is a big issue for the community. There would be some increase in density in this neighborhood if a form based code were created for the Northwest Quad. Director Brown replied that the recommendation is to limit density to that of the existing Medium Density Multi-Family District, which is 10 to 20 units per acre. This is comparable to the average existing density of the existing neighborhood and the new Habitat for Humanity project on Fourth Street.

Design Review Commissioner Barber stated that the onus remains on the design review process to finesse the project.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

One speaker stated that increased traffic occurs on Vallejo, and these are drivers using Vallejo instead of Grant Avenue.

COMMENTS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Commission discussed the Vision Statement. Commissioner Havel provided language to staff to shorten the statement. Commissioner Strauss indicated that careful design considerations should be considered on a case by case basis. The City Attorney reminded the Commission that more specific language about design should be in a document like a form based code (FBC), and not in the General Plan. There was overall support to make the Vision Statement more general.

Director Brown discussed the recommendations from the White Paper:

1. Slow down traffic in the neighborhood on Vallejo and Olive
2. Improve pedestrian safety and walkability
3. Increase the number of street trees in the planter strips
4. Explore the potential for park space or a tot lot
5. Strengthen neighborhood identity:
 - a. Consider/evaluate raised intersection to function a Gateways into the Northwest Quad
 - b. Neighborhood signage and other amenities to define the neighborhood
6. Prioritize Code Enforcement
 - a. Vehicle storage, upkeep of landscaping (for example)
7. Strengthen communication with neighborhood
 - a. Kiosks for neighborhood dialogue and communication
8. Consider designating sub areas differently
9. Refine rules to ensure compatible development occurs.
 - a. Eliminate the policy which precludes redevelopment of properties that contain a sound single family dwelling
 - b. Consider creation of a form based code with a medium density multiple family range of 10-20 units per acre.
 - c. Revise zoning regulations for non-conforming apartments in the study area.

The Commission recommended these policy options, with some minor edits, to the City Council.

3. **GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY FOR FY 15-16 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (ED)**

Consider providing a report to the City Council regarding whether Novato's Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2015/16 is consistent with the Novato General Plan, including whether the new structures/facilities contained therein are consistent with the Novato General Plan relating to the location, purpose, and extent.

No CEQA is required. The Planning Commission's report to the City Council does not constitute a project recommendation. Therefore, the Planning Commission is not required to provide a recommendation regarding an environmental determination

for the proposed CIP projects.

Planning Manager Dunn introduced the topic of the annual General Plan consistency report of the Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2015-2016. Engineering Services Manager briefly discussed each program of the FY 2015-16 CIP.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no speakers on this topic.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissions Salazar and Wernick indicated they did not support the use of Measure F funds for the Hill Recreation bocce ball courts. Commission Strauss asked how projects are selected for the CIP. Engineering Services Manager stated this project was identified as a revenue enhancement in the Fiscal Sustainability discussion held by the Council within the past three years. Commissioner Jordan, who also participates on the City's Measure F subcommittee, discussed that the bocce ball project has a good return on investment, and the bocce ball courts were presented to the public several times. Mr. Skinner stated he would provide the return on investment information to the Commission.

Commission Strauss questioned why the crosswalks proposed along Ignacio were at Country Club and not Fairway. Mr. Skinner indicated that for this project, Ignacio has been divided into thirds, and the area around Country Club is the first of three area to have crosswalks installed. Commission Strauss stated that the merits of a project should be discussed, and not a discussion between projects. Commission Jordan inquired about the police locker rehabilitation.

Vice Chair Tiernan moved, Seconded by Commissioner Havel, to forward the report to the City Council and finding that the proposed FY 2015-16 Capital Improvement Program is consistent with the General Plan. Ayes: 6 (Dawson, Havel, Jordan, Salazar, Tiernan, Wernick). Noes: Strauss.

GENERAL BUSINESS: None

UPCOMING AGENDAS AND QUORUMS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned by the Chair at 9:45pm.