



THE CITY OF  
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CALIFORNIA

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# Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

October 19, 2016

## MINUTES

**Present:** Marshall Balfe, Chair  
Michael Barber  
Joe Farrell

**Absent:** Patrick MacLeamy  
Beth Radovanovich

**Staff:** Hans Grunt, Senior Planner  
Matt Gilster, Planner II  
Bob Brown, Community Development Director

### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order.

### APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

The agenda was approved without changes. M/s: Farrell / Barber; passed 3-0-2

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

### CONSENT CALENDAR:

#### **1. APPROVAL OF DRC MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2016 (MBAR, MBal, JF, PM, BR)**

M/s: Farrell/Barber; passed 3-0-2

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**CONTINUED ITEMS:** None

**NEW ITEMS:** None

**PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP:**

- 2. WOOD HOLLOW HOTEL (MG)  
FILE: P2015-091;  
DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP  
APN 125-202-13 AND 14;  
NORTHWEST CORNER OF REDWOOD BLVD. AND WOOD HOLLOW DR.**

Conduct a second public workshop to review and provide comments on the revised site design, circulation, building massing, and architecture for the development of a new 46,865 square foot, 87 room hotel on two parcels totaling 4.49 acres; Assessor's Parcel Numbers 125-202-13 and 14. The project includes associated access drives, parking, bio-retention areas, retaining walls, grading, and landscaping.

Planner II Matt Gilster presented the project and gave an overview of the revised proposal, building architecture, project history, and application process.

Young Kim, the architect for the project gave a presentation describing the revised project proposal and gave an overview of the key revisions to architecture, site design and parking layout.

**Commissioner Questions to Staff:**

Commissioner Farrell asked staff to explain the height limitation of the building

Commissioner Barber asked if the project complies with city parking standard.

Project Planer Matt Gilster explained that the hillside and ridgeline protection ordinance sets the maximum height of non-residential building at 35 feet. However, this standard can be exceeded with the approval of a Master Plan and Precise Development Plan, which are a part of this proposal; confirmed that the project complies with the City's hotel parking standard.

**Commissioner Questions to the Applicant:**

Commissioner Farrell asked the applicant to confirm the height of the retaining wall adjacent to the pool and whether or not landscaping including trees will be allowed along Wood Hollow drive due to site constraints created by the property line, wetland and PG&E easement.

The project architect stated that the retaining walls adjacent that the pool would be 7-8 feet tall. The applicant stated that they would work on a more detailed landscaping plan including trees along Wood Hollow, if feasible.

Commissioner Barber inquired about the proposed landscaping along Wood Hollow Drive. Sees potential issue with the landscaping due to the location of the property line and wetland. Asked the applicant what the size of the rear retaining wall was.

The project architect stated that the northern retaining walls would be between 7-9 feet in height.

Commissioner Balfe asked the applicant to describe the proposed trees to be located in the planters within the PG&E gas easement in the center of the proposed parking lot.

The applicant responded by stating that the landscaping plan was preliminary and they would focus on tree species and size in the full landscaping plan that will be brought before the commission.

**Public Comments:**

Robert Atkinson 119 Cobblestone Court- Asked about the required size of bio swales. Commented that the required parking on site could be an issue, if the hotel parking lot was to become full people would fight for parking spaces on Redwood Boulevard and Wood Hollow Drive, competing with SMART riders for parking. Inquired about the building height requirement. Inquired about the application process.

Clay Freeberg 235 Butterflied Drive- Requested that the applicant choose evergreen trees for the landscaping to prevent barren winter views. Requested the hotel have solid balconies to enhance privacy. Requested the applicant use more muted earth tones and avoid white paint. Inquired about kitchenettes in the hotel rooms the potential for the hotel to become housing. Suggested a berm be added along the southerly limits to the parking lot for screening. Stated that story poles will help clarify the proposed building heights.

Arlene Evans 115 Cobblestone Court – Stated that she understands the story poles will be installed after the workshop. Expressed thanks to the applicant for the improvements made in the revised design of the hotel. Stated that having served as a Planning Commissioner for Marin County she is aware of the hillside regulations which would allow development on the parcel if there are no other feasible building areas, these regulations were created to avoid a legal taking of property. However, this allowance does not need to allow maximum FAR buildout on the site. Stated concern regarding the design of the parking lot and would like to see efforts made to reduce the heat sink of the asphalt and provided staff with personal research detailing possible solutions and tree canopy measurements associated with planter sizes, which would reduce the heat effects of the parking lot. Stated that if the wetlands buffer was to be reduced the applicant should provide adequate wetland enhancements as a mitigation measures in response to the exception.

Bertie Freeberg 235 Butterfield Drive- Stated that she agreed with previous public comments. Stated that she had concerns regarding the retaining wall which will encroach into the PG&E easement setback. Asked if the shrubs proposed to be installed across the PG&E pipeline easement would be allowed. Asked the applicant if the grading at the entrance of the hotel can be terraced. Was confused about the measurement of the height of the building.

The applicant responded to questions from the public including the height measurement of the building and the allowances for development and landscaping within the PG&E setback which does not include rooting trees. Stated they will be preparing more detailed landscape plans for future meetings.

Staff addressed the questions regarding the application process and informed the public that the complete application will require a story pole plan and installation as well as a full environmental

data submission and review and a formal PG&E approval of the site design features over and adjacent to their easement.

Public comment period closed.

### **Summary of Commission Comments:**

#### Commissioner Farrell

- Expressed appreciation for how responsive the design revisions are e.g. eliminated sub-parking, better scale and “look” of the building design - overall approves of the new design of the hotel.
- Encouraged the applicant to provide a full landscape plan that also address the plantings along Wood Hollow Drive and the full extent of plantings within the PG&E easement, if any.
- Agrees that evergreen trees would be preferred for the site, recommending coast live oak, does not support adding a berm along southerly limit of the parking lot, does support opportunities to enhance the wetland given encroachment request.
- Stated that the hotel should include more earth tones, the applicant should darken up the color tone of the building.
- Stated that the proposed window wells over some of the rooms would be awkward and are probably unnecessary.

#### Commissioner Barber

- Commented that he is concerned about the placement of landscaping along Wood Hollow drive and the size and effectiveness of the landscaping within the main parking lot.
- The parking lot landscaping will need focus and creative solutions to reduce the heat problem and create attractive and effective landscaping.
- Underlined the need for more landscaping overall.
- Commented that the entrance to the hotel should be altered to be more inviting as viewed from the primary driveway entrance from Redwood Blvd.
- Agreed that suitable mitigation measures should be implemented to give the community a quality wetland which will also serve to create an attractive view for hotel patrons.

#### Commissioner Balfe, Chair

- Commented that he approved of the new design.
- Commented that pavers would be a good alternative to asphalt to reduce heat in the parking lot and create a more attractive view from the hotel.

- Commented on the importance of a formal approval from PG&E on the landscaping and development features within the pipeline easement and any setbacks thereto.

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**3. NOVATO GERNERAL PLAN UPDATE (BB)**

**Feedback on the Draft 2035 General Plan.**

Item was continued to November 16, 2016: M/s: Farrell/Barber; passed 3-0-2.

**ADJOURNMENT:** M/s Farrell/Barber. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.