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Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

March 15, 2017

MINUTES

Present: Marshall Balfe, Chair
Patrick MacLeamy, Vice Chair
Michael Barber
Beth Radovanovich

Absent: Joe Farrell

Staff: Bob Brown, Community Development Director
Hans Grunt, Senior Planner

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA: M/s Radovanovich/Balfe: 4-0-1

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT CALENDAR: None

1. APPROVAL OF DRC MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 15, 2017 (MBAR, JF,PM,BR)

M/s: Barber/Radovanovich: 3-0-2

PUBLIC HEARING: None

CONTINUED ITEMS: None

NEW ITEMS: None

PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP: None

GENERAL BUSINESS:

2. DRAFT FORM BASED ZONING CODE – NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD (BB)

Conduct a workshop to provide feedback to staff on a draft Form Based Zoning Ordinance applicable to the Northwest Quadrant Neighborhood. The Form Based Code, if approved, will set forth design standards regulating building form e.g. placement of buildings, usable yard space and required parking, on properties within the Northwest Quadrant Neighborhood intended to preserve and enhance the scale and character of the Neighborhood.

Community Development Director Bob Brown and consultants Tony Perez and Megan Reineccius of Opticos Design presented the Working Draft of the Northwest Quadrant Form-Based Code, focusing on the intent of the code change which would allow replacement of existing single-family homes in the multi-family zoned neighborhood with building types and sizes which are more compatible with the character of homes in the neighborhood than current multi-family zoning regulations.

Commissioner MacLeamy then opened the public hearing.

Public Comments:

Eleanor Sluis, 487 Ridge Road: Objected to any changes which would allow increased density, stating that the neighborhood is auto-oriented and does not want to be walkable. She indicated parking at the front of the lot is preferable to being behind via a driveway. She objected to the form-based code being more controlled by staff and involving more exceptions.

Ryan Bartling, 5 Carmel Drive: Stated he lives just outside the neighborhood but is concerned with more traffic if density is increased. He indicated that the draft code doesn't provide incentives for the existing apartment buildings to be renovated.

Rachel Calvert, 1104 Second Street: Retain the existing single-family dwellings and the current zoning. She suggested modeling the neighborhood appearance if every lot is built-out.

Commissioner MacLeamy closed the public comment period and asked for comments from the Design Review Commission:

Commissioner Barber – Agreed that the design and condition of the apartments are a major problem in the neighborhood. He stated concerns with the form-based code which would limit design flexibility, and questioned whether the limits on the building width are practical with a side driveway leading to parking in the rear. The proposed code would not incentivize owners or existing non-conforming apartments to redevelop.

Commissioner Radovanovich – Indicated the proposed housing types would create an interesting neighborhood. The form-based code would provide more direction, and be a bit more prescriptive, than existing zoning which results in applicants pushing the zoning limits and puts the DRC in difficult positions having to scale back proposals.

Commissioner Balfe – The apartments built to a higher density are a challenge to see redeveloped. The proposed form-based code would be positive for new development and providing more controlled regulations in this area would be an appropriate effort. He supported controlling the pace of redevelopment and the requirement to have doors facing the street to give a greater sense of community.

Commissioner MacLeamy – Stated that most projects don't so site planning well in terms of how the parking is located and how buildings address the street. The DRC frequently plays stopgap on poorly designed projects that meet the current zoning regulations but are out of scale with their surroundings. He believes the form-based code would help the design process by better regulating site plan and scale components of a project. He stated that the Northwest Quad neighborhood has deteriorated and needs some change.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:25p.m.

DRAFT