



THE CITY OF
NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

922 Machin Ave
Novato, CA 94945
415/899-8900
FAX 415/899-8213
www.novato.org

Mayor
Denise Athas
Mayor Pro Tem
Josh Fryday
Councilmembers
Pam Drew
Pat Eklund
Eric Lucan

City Manager
Regan M. Candelario

Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

September 6, 2017

MINUTES

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

Absent: None

Staff: Hans Grunt, Senior Planner
Brett Walker, Senior Planner

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL: All Commissioners present

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

M/s: Farrell/MacLeamy (5-0)

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT CALENDAR: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

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: None

NEW ITEMS: None

PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP:

**1. RESIDENCE INN – NOVATO (BW)
P2017-055; DESIGN REVIEW
APN 143-011-06; 7546 REDWOOD BLVD**

Conduct a design review workshop to consider proposed site design and building massing for a proposed 103-room, 3-4 story hotel and 9,500-square foot retail building.

Senior Planner Brett Walker presented the staff report.

Applicant Don Cape, representing Tharaldson Hospitality Development, presented a history of the project, and the current site design to the Commission.

Commissioner Radovanovich asked Mr. Cape how vehicles will find the front door. Mr. Cape responded that there will be signage on the hotel building and monument signs along the streets to direct vehicles to the hotel.

Commissioner Farrell asked planning staff if there is a plan for access across Redwood Blvd at the proposed driveway location. Senior Planner Hans Grunt stated that the City has no plans to provide access across the center median of Redwood Blvd to the proposed project driveway site.

Vice Chair MacLeamy asked Mr. Cape if he is in contact with ROIC. Mr. Cape stated that he has been in contact with ROIC over the past couple of years, and that the site layout for the hotel was done in coordination with ROIC to complement their plans on the property to the south.

Commissioner Farrell asked where deliveries would occur. Mr. Cape identified the proposed loading zone on the site plan, and stated that the hotel would have their own laundry facilities, so deliveries would be minimal. Commissioner Farrell asked what the green area in the middle of the parking lot is for. Mr. Cape stated that it is an open space area resulting from the parking lot layout.

Donald McNair, Registered Landscape Architect for the applicant, stated that he is proposing a small olive orchard in that open space area to complement the orchard-style parking lot layout. Mr. McNair went on to explain the landscape plan to the Commission.

Commissioner Farrell asked if there would be pool access from the parking lot. Mr. Cape stated that pool access would be through the lobby area and require key card access for the safety of guests. Mr. Cape added that the hotel will not have a bar or restaurant.

Commissioner Radovanovich asked about traffic and whether a traffic light will be added at Redwood and Golden Gate. Mr. Walker stated that the pending environmental review will include a traffic study. The traffic study will analyze traffic counts and movements, and result in a determination regarding the need for an enhanced traffic control. Commissioner Radovanovich asked if the project was on the City's website. Mr. Grunt stated that the project is on the City's website.

Chair Balfe opened up the public comment portion of the hearing.

Fred Biagini asked what the proposed height of the hotel, stated that it looks like there is a large parking lot, asked why parking is not being placed under the building like the Whole Foods site, stated that the road

needs to be repaved, and stated that traffic congestion is a concern. Mr. Cape responded that the hotel would be approximately 50 feet tall.

Ms. Tlse asked who is completing the EIR, stated that four stories is too much, mentioned impacts to wildlife and Rush Creek, and stated that a traffic light is needed on Redwood Blvd.

Commissioner Radovanovich restated her concerns regarding access, emphasizing the difficulty of accessing the hotel from the north. She stated that she has no other concerns.

Vice Chair MacLeamy provided a history of the design charrette previously completed for the hotel site and ROIC sites to the south. He stated that the project site needs a stronger axis of streets to create a sense of arrival at the hotel. He stated that he likes the orientation of the building, but the building needs to details to make it more elegant. He stated that the corner/plaza area will be the pedestrian entryway into the site. Regarding the proposed olive orchard, he stated that he thinks there is a better design.

Commissioner Farrell aske planning staff if there is a way to breach the median for direct access from the Redwood Blvd southbound lanes into the project site where the proposed driveway is located. He stated that he would like to see some architectural features that relate to the Dairymen's building currently on the site. He stated that the hotel needs a unique, Novato context. He stated that the existing site is dilapidated, and that the project can improve the site.

Chair Balfe stated that the architecture should relate to the Dairymen's building. He stated that Vintage Oaks successfully utilized an agrarian historical context in their design.

Mr. Cape provided some feedback to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Barber stated that the landscaping is a nice standard palette. He stated that he prefers non-deciduous shade trees that will provide shade year-round. He stated that the plaza needs special attention. He questioned whether a PD zoning is suitable for the site. He stated that four stories is too tall, and that maybe the building should step down to two stories closest to Redwood Blvd. He stated that the north elevation needs work and that design components of the Dairymen's building should be integrated. He stated that he agrees with the staff report regarding the buildings architectural design, issues with the north elevation and connections along Golden Gate Place. He is concerned with access, and increased traffic associated with this project, Trader Joe's, and the SMART train. He questioned whether there is a superior design for the parking lot, and stated that the grey color for the brick at the building's base is depressing.

Commissioner Farrell asked if the proposed rezone to PD is the purview of the DRC. Mr. Grunt stated that the rezone is more appropriate for the Planning Commission and City Council to review, but the heightened design component that can be used as a basis for application of PD is important to the DRC.

Commissioner Radovanovich stated that it is difficult to comment regarding the proposed architecture because we do not have design guidelines. She stated that the building needs four-sided architecture, even from Hwy 101. A solution to access is needed; there will be much more traffic.

Mr. Walker stated that planning staff used the North Redwood Corridor Plan for guidance in staff's review of the project. Walker stated that there are multiple property owners in the corridor, and the timing of project is not controlled by the City. Walker suggested that this project can set the stage in terms of design quality for future development in the corridor.

Commissioner Farrell stated that the elevations on the north and east sides need to be looked at, and suggested that some historic context of the site should be taken into consideration.

GENERAL BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: 9:10 PM - M/s: MacLeamy/Barber (5-0)

DRAFT