



CITY OF NOVATO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

WEBEX TELECONFERENCE

Wednesday, August 19, 2020 - 7:00 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL

The Design Review Commission meeting began at 7:00 PM.

Commission Present: Chair Joe Farrell, Vice Chair Patrick MacLeamy, Commissioners Michael Barber, Michael Edridge, and Emily Studer

Staff Present: Planning Manager Steve Marshall, Senior Planner Brett Walker, Planner II Kaitlin Zitelli

B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA

COMMISSION ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner MacLeamy and seconded by Commissioner Barber, the Design Review Commission voted 5-0-0-0 via roll call to approve the Final Agenda.

AYES: 5
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

D. CONSENT ITEM

D.1. Approval of DRC Minutes of July 1, 2020 (PM, JF, MB, ES)

COMMISSION ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Barber and seconded by Commissioner MacLeamy, the Design Review Commission voted 4-0-0-1 via roll call to approve the DRC Minutes of July 1, 2020, with Commissioner Edridge abstaining.

AYES: MacLeamy, Barber, Studer, and Farrell
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Edridge
ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

E. CONTINUED ITEMS

NONE

F. NEW ITEMS - HEARINGS

F.1 COSTCO FUEL FACILITY P2020-025; DESIGN REVIEW AND USE PERMIT APN 153-340-36; 300 VINTAGE WAY

Conduct a public hearing and make a recommendation to the Novato Planning Commission and City Council regarding site design, building massing and height, architecture, and landscaping for the Costco Fuel Facility, a 28-fueling position gas station, proposed to be located at 300 Vintage Way.

Brett Walker, Senior Planner presented the staff report, describing the project location, proposed project, entitlement approvals required, and proposed site design, landscaping, and architecture. A comment letter from Michelle Derviss was also recognized and displayed for Commission and public review.

Design Review Commissions asked questions regarding parking and safety. Walker responded that the Vintage Oaks Shopping Center will have more than the minimum number of parking spaces required by the zoning code, exceeding the 1 space per 300 square-foot requirement. Walker stated that traffic safety will be analyzed in the required California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document that the City is currently drafting.

Joseph Welch, Architect representing Costco, made a presentation describing the site design, building materials, overall project. Mr. Welch described the proposed red light/green light signals to assist customers with accessing available gas pumps.

David Babcock, Landscape Architect representing Costco, described the landscape plan.

The Design Review Commission asked questions of applicant team addressing the location of fuel tanks, queuing capacity, tree selection, a fuel truck position. Costco's provided responses to these items.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

NUMBER OF SPEAKERS: 2

Silke Valentine, Novato resident and 350 Marin member, stated her concerns for impacts on the environment and stated that there is a climate emergency.

Kevin Morrison, Novato resident, stated that he reviewed the purpose of the Design Review Commission and the purview of their review. Mr. Morrison does not believe that DRC's role is particularly clear and felt the Commission should speak-out on appropriateness of a fuel station.

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Studer stated that the project visually matches Costco and the landscaping is nice, but is concerned with traffic congestion, fuel tankers, and parking. Commissioner Studer stated that the canopy looks very big; she questioned the need for so many fueling positions.

Commissioner Edridge stated he agreed with Commissioner Studer and has concerns regarding safety with the positioning of fuel tankers; agrees with the public commenters, and that vehicle charging stations are a better use than a gas station.

Commissioner Michael Barber made comments regarding landscaping, stating that locust trees might be a problem and that they should look at other choices, and that pin oaks are not attractive and that an alternative is recommended. Commissioner Barber asked who will be responsible for maintaining the landscaping. Planning Manager Steve Marshall responded Costco would maintain. Commissioner Barber noted the need for more robust tree staking given windblown trees at Vintage Oaks. Commissioner Barber also questioned what will happen if traffic backs up and that the parking situation will be bad.

Commissioner MacLeamy noted he presumes the traffic engineering is acceptable and that this is a better location than the previously reviewed site for a fuel center. Commissioner MacLeamy appreciated the simple diagram of the site design and fueling/existing are good.

Chair Farrell noted that Costco wouldn't reduce parking if it hurt sales, but he is concerned about vehicles queuing into Vintage Way. However, he observed the issue of parking and vehicle queuing were land use matters to be addressed by the Planning Commission. He noted the Commission's desire to comment on such matters, but reiterated the focus of design review. He noted the fuel center design is efficient and minimalist, or rather utilitarian and felt it harmonized with the Costco warehouse design; landscaping will definitely address visibility. Commissioner Farrell noted that from a resident view he would oppose a fuel center, but was prepared to move the project forward from a design perspective.

Commissioner Studer made a motion that the item be continued, and that Costco look at 1) the design of the canopy structure because of its height and scale, 2) landscaping enhancements, 3) traffic congestion in the parking lot and on Vintage Way; and 4) fuel tanker safety. Commissioner Barber seconded the motion.

Chair Farrell entered a separation motion to recommend approval of the project's design. The motion was seconded by Commissioner MacLeamy.

After a procedural discussion with staff, Chair Farrell withdrew his motion. The then discussed Commissioner Studer's motion to clarify items expected to be addressed based on continuance of the matter. Commissioner MacLeamy asked if a request for a continuance is included in the motion. Chair Farrell asked Commissioner Studer clarifying questions regarding the motion.

Costco representatives were polled to see if there was agreement on a continuance. Costco's representatives agreed to the continuance.

Chair Farrell called for a vote.

**Commission Action: Vote to continue the item per Commissioner's Studer's motion.
Ayes: 3; Noes: 2; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0**

**AYES: Barber, Studer, and Edridge
NOES: MacLeamy and Farrell
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None**

**F.2 VINTAGE OAKS PAD W BUILDING
P2020-023 DESIGN REVIEW
P2020-024 USE PERMIT
CEQA CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT – SECTION 15303
APN 153-340-28; 128 VINTAGE WAY**

Conduct a public hearing and provide a recommendation to the Zoning Administrator regarding site design, building massing/scale, building design and architecture, landscaping, and public art piece for the development of a 5,925 square-foot commercial building with three (3) tenant spaces, including a drive-through aisle serving one of the tenant spaces.

Planner II Kaitlin Zitelli presented the staff report, and described the purpose of the design review hearing and the project.

Glenn Wood, architect with SGPA Architecture and Planning, presented the project on behalf of Vintage Oaks at Novato.

Commissioner Farrell asked if the landscape architect was present to discuss the landscaping plan. Mr. Wood responded that the landscape architect was not present or available for this hearing.

The Commission did not have any further questions of staff or the applicant team.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

NUMBER OF SPEAKERS: 0

None.

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner MacLeamy said the project was an improvement over the existing structure; he appreciated the site plan and improvements to pedestrian and vehicle circulation.

Commissioner Barber agreed with Commissioner MacLeamy. He would have liked more detail in the landscape plan, including sizes of the trees and shrubs. Commissioner Barber requested an added condition of approval that all trees be 24-inch box sized trees.

Commissioner Edridge commented that the project was a big improvement and asked if there was enough room on the walkway for pedestrians to walk comfortably past the seating area. Commissioner Edridge requested a condition of approval that additional trees be added along the Vintage Way project frontage.

Commissioner Farrell commented on the amount of landscaped area, and that the parking and circulation is an improvement over the existing design. He also commented on the necessity of drive-throughs given the current restrictions due to COVID-19 and that he liked the whimsical nature of the proposed art piece.

Commissioner Studer agreed with other commissioners comments. She commented that screening consisting of grapevines may have been nice between the seating area and parking lot. She commented that she liked the art piece and the placement of the sculpture, although she did not see the need for a new drive-through. Commissioner Studer said overall the project was visually attractive.

Carter Hemming of Vintage Oaks at Novato asked to be recognized by Chair Farrell. Mr. Hemming wanted to bring attention the entry improvements accompanying the project and

the benefits to pedestrian and vehicle circulation. He also observed that Vintage Oaks maintains lease controls that can direct employees to park in other locations – noting the Commission’s comments on parking earlier in the evening regarding the Costco proposal.

Moved: Barber Second: Edridge

That the Design Review Commission recommend approval of the project with added conditions of approval, as recommended in the staff report.

Commission Action: Vote to recommend approval. Ayes: 5; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0

AYES: Barber, Studer, MacLeamy, Edridge, and Farrell

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

G. GENERAL BUSINESS

These items include significant and administrative actions of special interest and will usually include a presentation and discussion by the Commission. They will be enacted upon by a separate vote.

NONE

H. ADJOURNMENT

Moved: MacLeamy Second: Studer

Adjourn meeting at 9:06 PM.

Commission Action: Vote to adjourn. Ayes: 5; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 0

AYES: Barber, Studer, MacLeamy, Edridge, and Farrell

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly adopted at the Design Review Commission meeting of October 7, 2020.

/Shelley Woods/

Shelley Woods, Senior Office Assistant