



**CITY OF NOVATO**  
**CALIFORNIA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**DRAFT - MEETING MINUTES**

Via Zoom Teleconference

**Monday, May 9, 2022 – 7:00 pm**

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The Planning Commission meeting began at 7:00 PM.

**Commission Present:** Commissioner Bill Crockett, Commissioner Dan Dawson, Commissioner Ronald Gerber, Commissioner Curtis Havel, and Commissioner Lia Heath

**Commission Absent:** Commissioner Justin Derby and Commissioner Peter Tiernan

**Staff Present:** Steve Marshall, Planning Manager and Sean Kennings, Consultant (LAK Associates)

Planning Manager Marshall opened the meeting by requesting the Planning Commission appoint a chair pro tem to conduct the hearing since the chair position is vacant and Vice Chair Tiernan was unable to attend the meeting.

**Commission Action:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Dawson and second by Commissioner Gerber, the Planning Commission voted 5-0-0-2 to appoint Commissioner Havel as chair pro tem.

**AYES:** Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Gerber, Havel, and Heath

**NOES:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Derby and Tiernan

**Motion carried.**

**B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA**

**COMMISSION ACTION:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Dawson and second by Commissioner Gerber, the Planning Commission voted 5-0-0-2 via roll call to approve the final agenda.

**AYES:** Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Gerber, Havel, and Heath

**NOES: None**  
**ABSTAIN: None**  
**ABSENT:**  
**Motion carried.**

**Commissioners Derby and Tiernan**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT**  
**NONE**

**D. CONSENT ITEM**

**D.1. Approval of PC Minutes of March 28, 2022 (DD, JD, RF, RG, CH, LH, PT)**

**COMMISSION ACTION: Upon a motion by Commissioner Gerber and second by Commissioner Heath, the Planning Commission voted 4-0-1-2 via roll call to approve the minutes.**

**AYES: Commissioners Dawson, Gerber, Havel, and Heath**  
**NOES: None**  
**ABSTAIN: Commissioner Crockett**  
**ABSENT: Commissioners Derby and Tiernan**  
**Motion carried.**

**E. UNFINISHED AND OTHER BUSINESS**  
**NONE**

**F. PUBLIC HEARING**

**F.1. LIFE SCIENCES ORGANIZATIONS & CAMPUSES AMENDMENTS**  
**NOVATO INDUSTRIAL PARK MASTER PLAN/PRECISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**Request:** Consider and possibly adopt resolutions recommending the City Council approve amendments to the Novato Industrial Park Master plan and Precise Development Plan to assign a maximum floor area ratio of 1.2, a maximum building height of 68-feet, and other land use and development standards and controls for life sciences organizations in the Hamilton and Ignacio Industrial Park subareas of the larger Novato Industrial Park, and finding such amendments to be exempt from further environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines sections 15162, 15164, and 15183 based on an addendum to the Final Environmental Impact Report certified for Novato General Plan 2035.

Planning Manager Marshall introduced Consultant Kennings.

Consultant Kennings presented the staff report, including a PowerPoint presentation.

Planning Manager Marshall advised the Commission the item was being considered under an amendment to the agenda involving the correction of a broken hyperlink to the draft resolution recommending approval of the proposed amendments.

Commissioner Dawson asked if the 300,000 sq. ft. limit was additive to existing development at the 0.6 FAR level.

Planning Manager Marshall confirmed the 300,000 sq. ft. limit was a net figure for development above an FAR of 0.6. This allows credit for existing development.

Commissioner Gerber asked for more background regarding the basis of the 300,000 sq. ft. limit.

Planning Manager Marshall commented the EIR for General Plan 2035 noted impacts resulting from life sciences development up to 500,000 sq. ft. As a result, a sensitivity test approach was taken to find the point at which significant impacts would not occur. The 300,000 sq. ft. limit was identified as the point where impacts would not occur. He noted the proposed amendments acknowledge the 500,000 sq. ft. level and provides options to consider allowing development beyond 300,000 sq. ft., including additional traffic analysis as necessary.

Commissioner Gerber noted the traffic study was conducted prior to COVID and commute patterns have changed with remote work. He inquired whether those circumstances would have a bearing on the development limit.

Planning Manager Marshall confirmed future traffic analyses would identify whether there has been a change in trip generation due to more remote work.

Commissioner Gerber observed that many of the life sciences uses were low intensity from the perspective of the density of employees per building.

Consultant Kennings confirmed that circumstance and noted the parking ratios reflect the lower employee density.

Commissioner Heath inquired about the CEQA review to accommodate development over the 300,000 sq. ft. limit.

Consultant Kennings provided a summary of the EIR's impact analysis and findings relative to life sciences uses over 300,000 sq. ft., including a general overview of the mitigation measures to support such development. The mitigation measures could be implemented to allow development over 300,000 sq. ft.

Planning Manager Marshall noted the development limit and traffic mitigations could be revisited with a future review of traffic conditions.

Commissioner Crockett noted the height proposed for life science buildings and asked how the proximity of taller buildings to US 101 was considered.

Planning Manager Marshall provided an overview of the aesthetics analysis contained in the General Plan EIR, including the visual simulations prepared for the analysis. Regarding US 101, the aesthetic analysis did not identify any impacts associated with greater building heights along the roadway. He noted the visual simulations in the EIR are simple massing concepts

and don't convey the details of architecture and landscaping that improve the appearance of new development.

The public comment period was opened.

Betsy Ricketts, representing Ultragenyx, supported the amendments and encouraged the Planning Commission to recommend approval of the proposed standards.

Shar Zamanpour, representing BioMarin, stated the amendments bring a cohesive approach to future growth of life sciences organizations. She stated BioMarin supports the recommendation to approve the amendments.

Coy Smith, representing the Novato Chamber of Commerce, noted the Chamber supports the proposed amendments.

Marie Hoch inquired why no notice was provided to the Hamilton community and had concerns about views of new development from Hamilton.

The public comment period was closed.

Commissioner Crockett asked staff to address the comments of Ms. Hoch.

Planning Manager Marshall explained that notices were sent to all property owners within the Hamilton Industrial Park and within a 600-foot radius from the boundaries of the Park. Hamilton Landing is well beyond the notice area required for the proposed amendments. He stated this evening's meeting was published in the Marin IJ and used eNotify to send a notification of the hearing to subscribers. He further commented the amendments would apply to the Ignacio and Hamilton Industrial Parks, which likely aren't visible from Hamilton due to screening by Reservoir Hill.

Commissioner Gerber noted the General Plan EIR did the heavy lifting of analyzing expanded development and included various public discussions on the matter. He noted the amendments support a 30% increase in rooftop equipment coverage.

Commissioner Heath expressed her support for the amendments, noted the increased rooftop coverage was reasonable, and looks forward to the city continuing a partnership with local life sciences firms.

Chair Pro Tem Havel noted adoption of General Plan 2035 and the Planning Commission's support of Plan. He felt that expanded life sciences development is occurring in the appropriate location and visual impacts have been adequately addressed – there is no need for additional CEQA review. He stated Novato is uniquely situated to support expanded life science development.

**Commission Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Dawson and second by Commissioner Crockett, the Planning Commission voted 5-0-0-2 via roll call to adopt the resolution recommending the City Council find that no further environmental review is required for the proposed amendments.**

**AYES: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Gerber, Havel, and Heath**  
**NOES: None**  
**ABSTAIN: None**  
**ABSENT: Commissioners Derby and Tiernan**  
**Motion carried.**

**Commission Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Dawson and second by Commissioner Heath, the Planning Commission voted 5-0-0-2 via roll call to adopt the resolution recommending the City Council approve the proposed amendments.**

**AYES: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Gerber, Havel, and Heath**  
**NOES: None**  
**ABSTAIN: None**  
**ABSENT: Commissioners Derby and Tiernan**  
**Motion carried.**

## **G. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **G.1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

**Commission Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Dawson and second by Commissioner Crockett, the Planning Commission voted 5-0-0-2 via roll call to appoint Commissioner Tiernan as chair of the Planning Commission.**

**AYES: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Gerber, Havel, and Heath**  
**NOES: None**  
**ABSTAIN: None**  
**ABSENT: Commissioners Derby and Tiernan**  
**Motion carried.**

**Commission Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Havel and second by Commissioner Dawson, the Planning Commission voted 5-0-0-2 via roll call to appoint Commissioner Heath as vice chair of the Planning Commission.**

**AYES: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Gerber, Havel, and Heath**  
**NOES: None**  
**ABSTAIN: None**  
**ABSENT: Commissioners Derby and Tiernan**  
**Motion carried.**

## **H. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS**

Planning Manager Marshall advised the Planning Commission of an upcoming community meeting regarding Novato Housing Element update on May 16, 2022.

Planning Manager Marshall noted there are upcoming agenda items for the Planning Commission hearing of May 23, 2022.

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning Commission adjourned the meeting at 8:01 PM.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly adopted at the Planning Commission meeting of May 23, 2022.**

**/Steve Marshall/**

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**Steve Marshall, Planning Manager**