



CITY OF NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 13, 2023 – 7:00 pm

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Commission Present: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Derby, Engdahl, Havel, Heath, and Tiernan

Commission Absent: None

Staff Present: Deputy Director Steve Marshall and Senior Planner Brett Walker

B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA

COMMISSION ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Tiernan and seconded by Commissioner Derby, the Planning Commission voted 7-0-0-0 via roll call to approve the final agenda.

AYES: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Derby, Havel, Heath, and Tiernan

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

D. CONSENT ITEM - NONE

E. UNFINISHED AND OTHER BUSINESS - NONE

F. PUBLIC HEARING

F.1 VALLEY OAKS

CEQA MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

P2021-047; GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

P2021-048; MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

P2021-049; DESIGN REVIEW

P2022-065; PRECISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

P2022-066; VESTING TENTATIVE MAP/VACATION OF RIGHT OF WAY

Senior Planner Brett Walker presented the staff report.

Commissioner Tiernan asked questions regarding drainage and PG&E gas lines.

Senior Planner Walker addressed Commissioner Tiernan's questions.

Commissioner Engdahl asked a question regarding the proximity of the airport and potential noise impacts from airplane operations at Gness Field Airport.

Senior Planner Walker explained the Marin County Airport Land Use Commission review process.

Michael Hooper, representing Campus Properties (Applicant), made a presentation regarding the project's site design, sustainability, and site constraints. He also discussed the proposed mix of affordable housing units. He responded to Commissioner Tiernan's questions regarding the location of the PG&E gas line easements, street location, and impacts to wetlands.

Robert Lee, WHA Architects made a presentation regarding the project's proposed architecture, site amenities, site layout, and mix of residential units.

Commissioner Dawson made comments about onsite infrastructure, the age of the PG&E gas pipeline, and the potential for landslides at the site.

Commissioner Derby asked a question regarding the typical affordability requirements and the applicant's proposed affordable housing units.

Senior Planner Walker addressed Commissioner Derby's questions, including commenting on the junior accessory dwelling units proposed in the project.

Commissioner Engdahl asked a question regarding the SMART comment letter.

Deputy Director Marshall noted SMART's letter addresses the Transit Oriented Communities policy of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Commissioner Tiernan asked who approves changes to the project if the property is sold.

Senior Planner Walker referenced the objective standards developed for the project.

The public hearing was opened.

Tom Langley, Cobblestone Court resident, stated he lived through the Buck Institute slide incident and recommended this project stay away from the toe of any slopes.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Heath commented on the addition of junior accessory dwelling units and noted the flexibility these units provide for different living arrangements.

Mr. Hooper responded to public and commissioner comments regarding landslide concerns, PG&E gas pipelines, and the SMART letter.

Deputy Director Marshall responded to Commissioner Engdahl's earlier question regarding airport noise and compliance with the Airport Land Use Plan.

Commissioner Havel stated he visited the site and viewed the site from the Atkinson residence (on Cobblestone Court). He does not see any disruption of views from Cobblestone Court. He stated the alternative affordability option is a bad idea and that units should be distributed throughout the project site, rather than concentrating them in Valley Oaks South. He thought the junior accessory dwelling units are a good idea for generational housing and stated the CEQA document is thorough and the IS/MND is adequate.

Commissioner Derby stated the project is great and that he likes the junior accessory dwelling units. The alternative affordability plan is appropriate since the City is getting additional affordable units. He stated that 25 units per acre in proximity to the SMART station is nearly impossible.

Commissioner Dawson stated the site is challenging due to constraints, the mix of housing types and junior accessory dwelling units is good, and he agrees with Commissioner Havel regarding the distribution of affordable housing units, but he does appreciate the additional affordable units proposed with the alternative plan.

Commissioner Crockett stated he supports the resolutions as recommended by staff and that he likes the dispersion of affordable housing units.

Chair Heath stated she likes the project, generally prefers the dispersal of affordable housing units, but believes an exception should be made for this project.

COMMISSION ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Tiernan and seconded by Commissioner Dawson, the Planning Commission voted 7-0-0-0 via roll call to adopt the CEQA resolution as presented.

AYES: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Derby, Havel, Engdahl, Heath, and Tiernan

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

COMMISSION ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Tiernan and seconded by Commissioner Engdahl, the Planning Commission voted 7-0-0-0 via roll call to adopt the General Plan Amendment resolution as presented.

AYES: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Derby, Havel, Engdahl, Heath, and Tiernan

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried.

COMMISSION ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Dawson and seconded by Commissioner Derby, the Planning Commission voted 7-0-0-0 via roll call to adopt the Master Plan, Precise Development Plan, and Design Review resolution as presented.

AYES: Commissioners Crockett, Dawson, Derby, Havel, Engdahl, Heath, and Tiernan

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried.

COMMISSION ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Tiernan and seconded by Commissioner Derby, the Planning Commission voted 7-0-0-0 via roll call to adopt the Vesting Tentative Map and Exception Request resolution as presented.

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

COMMISSION ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Tiernan and seconded by Commissioner Derby, the Planning Commission voted 7-0-0-0 via roll call to adopt the vacation of public right-of-way resolution with the revised Exhibit A Map presented to the Commission at the hearing.

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

G. GENERAL BUSINESS – NONE

H. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS –

Deputy Director Marshall stated the next Planning Commission meeting is December 11, 2023, which will include the Fireman’s Fund site project and the Village at Novato project. A special Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2023, and will include an item regarding check cashing businesses and Housing Element zoning map amendments.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Commission adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly adopted at the Planning Commission meeting of May 13, 2024.

/Steve Marshall/
Steve Marshall, Deputy Director of Community Development