



Action Minutes
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
7:00 p.m. – Thursday, August 6 – 2009
City Council Chambers, 809 Center Street

Call to Order — 7:00 PM

Roll Call —

Present — S. Daly, Vice Chair; D. Foster; L. Kasparowitz; B. Schultz; M. Tustin; J. Warner

Absent — R. Quartararo (with notice)

Staff — A. Khoury, Assistant Director; E. Marlatt, Principal Planner; D. Lauritson, Senior Planner; M. Schwarb, Recorder

Audience — Approximately 30

Statements of Disqualification — None

Oral Communications —

No action shall be taken on these items.

The Chair may announce and set time limits at the beginning of each agenda item.

Speaking from the floor:

- Don Dibble with concerns about the intersection at Water & Soquel.
- Ed Davidson with concerns about sandwich board signs on sidewalks and, also, the new housing element does nothing to address the lack of rental housing.
- John Bergwall wants to see the planning commission meetings on television.
- Gillian Greensite could not access the agenda items on the internet, the new building on Mission St. is massively out of scale, and concerns about commercial projects not requiring a permit prior to trenching.
- Doug Deitch, Executive Director of Monterey Bay Conservancy (previously Pogonip Foundation) with concerns regarding changing the cultural landscape in the area.

Commissioner Schultz expressed concern about the lack of screening of the air conditioning equipment on the roof of the new restaurant at the Dream Inn and requested staff to look into the matter.

Announcements — None

Approval of Minutes —

June 18, 2009

ACTION: Commissioner moved and Commissioner Kasparowitz seconded that the minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was approved 3-0-3 with Commissioners Daly, Tustin, and Kasparowitz in favor and Commissioners Schultz, Foster and Warner abstaining.

July 2, 2009

ACTION: Commissioner Warner moved and Commissioner Schultz seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was approved 6-0 with Commissioners Daly, Foster, Tustin, Kasparowitz, Schultz and Warner voting in favor.

Public Hearings —

1. **2956 Mission St., Ext. 09-067 APN 002-691-03**
Planned Development, Design, Coastal, and Administrative Use Permits for a new 86-room hotel with underground parking in the IG/CZO zone district. (Environmental Determination: Negative Declaration) (Encinal Partnership I, owner/filed: 5/4/09) DL
This project requires a Coastal Permit which is not appealable to the California Coastal Commission.
RECOMMENDATION: That the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the Planned Development, Design, Coastal and Administrative Use Permits, based on the Findings listed in the attached draft City Council resolution and the Conditions of Approval listed in Exhibit "A".

Assistant Director Khoury introduced Senior Planner, Don Lauritson, who presented the staff report.

The Commissioners asked questions and made comments regarding:

- Signage facing Highway 1.
- Access to Mission Street or Highway 1.
- Green design elements.
- Traffic impacts.
- Accessibility and pedestrian requirements.
- Number of employees.
- Lack of architectural interest.
- Using up land zoned Industrial.
- Food service.

The applicant, Paresh Patel, spoke briefly about the project stating he agreed with the staff presentation. In response to questions from the Commission the applicant stated that

there would be no pets allowed and no smoking and there would be 7 full time and 7 part time employees. He was available for further questions.

The public hearing was opened.

Speaking from the floor against the project:

- Jessica Bernhardt
- Ted Goldstein
- Gillian Greensite
- Reed Chance
- Dilip Patel
- Ed Davidson
- John Bergwall

Speaking from the floor in favor of the project:

- Reed Searle reluctantly in favor on behalf of SCRAP
- Debbie Bulger on behalf of SCRAP with suggestions for improvements

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Tustin said she did not have a good feeling about the project and was concerned with signage and access. She felt that it might possibly become student housing and it didn't seem to fit. Not the right feeling, right hotel, right fit for the West side. Do we really need this?

Commissioner Warner said she had the same concerns regarding visibility and access as Commissioner Tustin. Also, the aesthetics is not what we would want for the approach to Santa Cruz. She mentioned there is no access to food nearby to walk to from this location.

Commissioner Schultz expressed reluctance to push commercial signage a mile further north than the current commercial signage that begins at Swift St. He noted that he was not necessarily against a hotel at this location, but was against one of poor quality and design. He suggested that the applicant hire a local architect as a consultant and follow their recommendations. He also suggested that the quality of the materials, the articulation and the exterior detailing be improved. Additionally, he felt the building should be required to be LEED Certified Gold. He would support a condition of approval that the Planning Commission review the final landscaping and signage plans.

Commissioner Foster stated that he thought this would be a nice location for a "very green" hotel with an emphasis on people who want to get on a bike and go to Wilder Ranch, Natural Bridges and West Cliff without crossing any major streets. "Fairfield" is not in Santa Cruz County and while he understood Marriott's need for "branding" he also felt it was important for Santa Cruz to be concerned about its branding as well. He felt there was nothing special about this project that made it fit in Santa Cruz or the neighborhood. He expressed concern about the lack of a landscaping plan and agreed with Commissioner Schultz about quality of design and materials. He felt that the project needed to be redesigned if there was serious interest in building a hotel here.

Commissioner Kasparowitz agreed with the architectural problems and noted that in many ways it was “franchise architecture”. He noted that this is the entry to town whether you see the building directly, or not. He was concerned that no landscape plan was submitted and also concerned regarding the grading and the removal of heritage trees. He felt that at the least the project should be continued if the applicant were willing to do that. He felt strongly that the quality of the project would be the major issue at this site and the site is awkward to get to.

Commissioner Daly agreed with the prior comments and felt it was different and new to put a hotel in that area as it would set a precedent since this is the gateway to Santa Cruz from the north it means the Commission must pay more attention. He appreciated the public coming out to give their opinions and felt the staff report was good, but the applicant’s presentation was limited and lacking. He said that this was an important project and needed more hands on from the Commission.

ACTION: Commission Warner moved and Commissioner Foster seconded recommending a continuance for redesign if the applicant was willing.

The applicant asked for a recommendation from the Commission to the City Council.

ACTION: Commissioner Tustin moved and Commissioner Foster seconded that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council deny approval of the Planned Development, Design, Coastal and Administrative Use Permits. The motion passed 6-0 with Commissioners Tustin, Foster, Daly, Kasparowitz, Schultz and Warner voting in favor.

The Commission took a break at 8:40 PM and resumed the meeting at 8:47 PM.

General Business —

- 2. North Pacific Ground Floor Retail Ordinance Amendment.**
RECOMMENDATION: That the Planning Commission direct staff to prepare a text amendment to the Downtown Recovery Plan allowing ground floor office uses on North Pacific Avenue.

Assistant Director Khoury introduced Principal Planner, Eric Marlatt, who presented the staff report.

The public hearing was opened.

Speaking from the floor:

- Reuben Helick
- Blue Wilson
- Ed Davidson

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Daly noted that mixed use with retail is the vision for the downtown, but the suggested amendment is reasonable.

ACTION: Commissioner Schultz moved and Commissioner Warner seconded that the Planning Commission direct staff to prepare a text amendment to the Downtown Recovery Plan allowing ground floor office uses on North Pacific Avenue. The motion passed 6-0 with Commissioners Schultz, Tustin, Daly, Foster, Kasparowitz and Warner voting in favor.

Informational Items —

No action shall be taken on these items.

Assistant Director Khoury noted that two items from recent Planning Commission decisions are being appealed (101 Manor Place and 145 Bayona Drive) and that the Council extended the moratorium on medical marijuana facilities. He announced that the meeting for August 20, 2009 is cancelled and that the scheduled meeting for September 3 will likely be cancelled as well.

Subcommittee/Advisory Body Oral Reports — None

No action shall be taken on these items.

- Chairperson's Report None
- Planning Department Report None

Items Referred to Future Agendas — None

Adjournment — 9:10 P.M.

The next Planning Commission meeting will take place on August 20, 2009 in the City Council Chambers.

Any writing related to an agenda item for the open session of this meeting distributed to the Planning Commission less than 72 hours before this meeting is available for inspection at the City Planning Department, 809 Center Street, Room 107 or on the City's website www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us. These writings will also be available for review at the Planning Commission meeting in the public review binder at the rear of the Council Chambers.

APPEALS - Any person who believes that a final action of this advisory body has been taken in error may appeal that decision to the City Council. Appeals must be in writing, setting forth the nature of the action and the basis upon which the action is considered to be in error, and addressed to the City Council in care of the City Clerk.

Appeals must be received by the City Clerk within ten (10) calendar days following the date of the action from which such appeal is being taken. An appeal must be accompanied by a five hundred dollar (\$500) filing fee, unless the item involves a Coastal Permit that is appealable to the Coastal Commission, in which case there is no fee.