

**CITY OF SONOMA
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
January 14, 2016**

**Community Meeting Room, 177 First Street West, Sonoma, CA
MINUTES**

Chair Felder called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present: Chair Felder, Comms. Cribb, Wellander, Heneveld, Roberson, Coleman, Roberson, McDonald (Alternate)

Absent:

Others

Present: Planning Director Goodison, Administrative Assistant Morris

Chair Felder stated that no new items would be heard after 10:30 p.m. unless the Planning Commission so decides. Any decisions made by the Planning Commission can be appealed within 15 days to the City Council. He reminded everyone to turn off cell phones and pagers. Comm. Cribb led the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Comm. Cribb made a motion to approve the minutes of October 8, 2015. Comm. Roberson seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted. (Comms. Willers and Heneveld abstained). Comm. Willers made a motion to approve the minutes of December 10, 2015. Comm. Heneveld seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted.

CHANGES TO AGENDA ORDER: None.

CORRESPONDENCE: Late mail was received for Items 1 and 2 .

Item #1 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Use Permit to legalize an upper floor, detached guest room on a residential property at 344 Napa Road.

Applicant/Property Owner: Leonard Macedonio

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Chair Felder opened the item to public comment.

The applicant was not present.

Nora Marshall, neighbor, questioned whether there was enough outreach by the applicant to address outstanding neighborhood compatibility concerns. She is concerned with the many cars parked on the street associated with the residence, which negatively impact visibility.

Comm. Wellander confirmed with Nora Marshall that cars are not parked in the private driveway.

Chair Felder closed the item to public comment.

Comm. Cribb is disappointed that land use issues associated with the proposed guest room are not discussed in the neighbor correspondence. He felt that having a guest room was not an unreasonable request.

Comm. Willers is concerned that because the guest house would be over the garage instead of attached to the home, it lends itself to being used as an illegal rental, which has occurred in the past. He opposed the proposal and preferred that the garage be converted back to its original use.

Comms. Roberson and Coleman echoed Comm. Willer's comments and noted that that legalizing the guest room would add to the use of a property that is already the intensively used.

Comm. Coleman stated that he shared the concerns expressed by neighbors.

Chair Felder opposed the intensification of use because he saw no resolution of the outstanding traffic safety issues expressed by the neighbors.

Comm. Cribb expressed the concern that much of the opposition to the use permit is based on hearsay and perceptions rather than compatibility issues associated with a potential guestroom.

Comm. Wellander explained that his decision to oppose the application is based on the intensification of the use of the site.

Comm. Willers made a motion to deny the garage conversion. Comm. Roberson seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted 6-1 (Comm. Cribb dissenting).

Item #2 – Study Session- Study session on a proposed to develop a 25-unit multi-family project on a 1.86-acre site at 870 Broadway.

Applicant/Property Owner: Olympic Residential Group

Comm. Willers recused due to proximity and left the room. Comm. McDonald came to the dais.

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Chair Felder opened the item to public comment.

Alex Siebel, project architect/Olympic Residential Group, and Dan Diebel, Founder/Olympic Residential Group, reviewed the project concept and the changes made in response to previous comments.

Carol Marcus, resident, commended the commissioner's and developer's efforts to improve the project, but she does not support the revised proposal. In her opinion, there should be a majority of smaller unit sizes that would not necessitate three story buildings. She recommended that the inclusionary affordable units be spread among the different unit types.

Vic Conforti, resident, appreciated the developer responding to the comments expressed at the previous study sessions. He felt a separation in the buildings along the Broadway frontage will not be sufficiently apparent. He expressed concern that a significant portion of the site may be affected by the floodway along Nathanson Creek. He encouraged the developers to be sensitive to the historic contributors and guidelines in the Broadway Historic District.

Jamie Zukowski, neighbor, is primarily concerned with parking and preserving Nathanson Creek and she opposed granting any exceptions to the parking requirements.

Leslie Murphy, resident, appreciated the changes made by the developer.

Ms. Garcia, pre-school teacher/Flowery school, is an advocate for low income families and frequents the area daily. She is proud of the family friendly environment in Sonoma.

Matt Howarth, resident, met with the developer and felt a residential project could be appropriate for this mixed use zoned land along the Broadway corridor, but he continues to regret that the proposal does not include a commercial component. He appreciates the inclusionary affordable units for low/moderate income qualified tenants.

Kelso Barnett, resident, agreed with Carol Marcus and Matt Howarth's comments and questioned whether this proposal is the best use of the site.

Jack Wagner, resident, concurred with Kelso Barnett's comments and urged smaller units to accommodate single tenants.

Chair Felder closed the item to public comment.

Comm. Roberson noted that he met with the applicants. He stated that he appreciates the plan revisions based on the direction that has been given. However, he has a larger concern that the Mixed Use zoning designation may not allow for a 100% residential development and he would like this question to be resolved. In terms of the site plan, he feels that there should be greater separation between the buildings on the Broadway frontage. He appreciates the greater setback and reduced buildings heights along Broadway, but even at 27 feet, he wants to make sure that the massing of the buildings will fit in to the surroundings. He appreciates the use of underground parking, as that has led to improvements in the site plan. He is not convinced that the corner building . He noted that a lot of improvements had been made and the plan has gone in a good direction, but the mixed use question ends to be answered.

Comm. McDonald supported a 100% residential project. He stated that it seemed clear to him that the General Plan allowed for the option of 100% residential in the Mixed Use designation and he felt that the Development Code should be read in a manner consistent with that direction, since the General Plan is the guiding document. He applauded the developer for increasing the diversity of unit types. He noted that the Commission needed to find a balance between the community need for more affordable housing and the economic feasibility of the project. He is pleasantly surprised to see underground parking. He suggested that if the underground parking could be expanded, density could be further increased. He appreciated the increase in the building setbacks along Broadway and the reduced building heights, but agreed that it would be desirable to increase the separation of the buildings along the Broadway frontage. He preferred Option D and supported underground parking as long as it is in conformance with the floodplain regulations. He expressed some concern about the design of the loft building as it faced MacArthur Street. He felt that the façade of this building may need to be better articulated, with consideration of third-story setback.

Comm. Wellander bases his comments on the assumption that 100% residential is allowed in the mixed use zone, but he wants to ensure that this is the case. In terms of responsiveness to Commission comments, he feels that the higher density and greater diversity of unit types in Option D makes it superior. His concerns about massing have been lessened, but he does wish to see a massing study if the project proceeds through the review process. He appreciates the improvements made to the setbacks along Broadway, but he suggested that the two buildings should use different architectural styles rather than mimic each other, as he feels this is more consistent with conditions on Broadway. He expressed some concern about the elevation of the MacArthur loft buildings and he does not want it to feel like it turns its back to the street. He stated that the site plan has been improved and that open space is more inviting. Provided that a 100% residential project is allowable, he is open to seeing this concept proceed and be refined through the review process.

Comm. Cribb stated that while on a personal level he preferred the earlier concept, as it incorporated a commercial component, he wished to focus on the options that the applicants had put forward. Pending further discussion, he is inclined to believe that a 100% residential project is consistent in the Mixed Use zone. However, there is still a need for give and take, as in his view, Mixed Use development should engage the community. He feels that the project needs to incorporate some type of public component, such as the mini-plaza suggested in the previous iteration. Perhaps this could be accomplished by eliminating the corner building and intensifying the interior of the site. While it is too early to get into design details, he did like the use of stone for the Loft buildings. In his view, the building forms and massing seem consistent with the character of the area. He would like to see some form of quasi-public use in order to create a strong element of community engagement. In his view, that is the one big missing piece.

Comm. Heneveld agreed with many of the comments of Comms. McDonald and Roberson. He concurred that the potential flood zone issue need to be investigated. While the building heights have been reduced on Broadway, greater separation between the buildings would be desirable. In his view, smaller units are desirable. He supports the underground parking. He is concerned about the massing and appearance of the buildings adjoining MacArthur Street.

Comm. Coleman concurred with Comm. Roberson and he regrets that there is no commercial component. He stated that site is significant. He is concerned about the on-grade parking near Broadway and perhaps it could be located further to the east. He is also concerned with fire department access and the floodplain. He recommended more affordable housing opportunities. He asked about the design of the underground parking lot and noted that it would need to be properly vented.

Chair Felder commended the applicant/developer for increasing the density and diversifying the unit types, but he stated it was clear that more work was necessary based on site circumstances, and that any development would be held to the highest standards. He would prefer to see an even greater proportion of smaller units and that consideration should be given to further breaking up the massing of the building on Broadway. He wants to make sure that flood zone considerations have been addressed. All of that said, the site plan has made good progress. As the process moves forward, it would be desirable to see a model of the project in the context of its surroundings or perhaps story poles.

Dan Diebel appreciated the feedback offered from the study session. He said the project civil engineer, Adobe Associates, explored the flood zone setback for the proposal and the

requirements were met. He noted that no parking Exception was needed in either of the options presented and that none would be requested.

Comm. Willers returned to the dais.

Issues Update: Planning Director Goodison reported the following:

1. A special study session for the First Street East project at 216-254 First Street East/273-299 Second Street East will be held on January 28, 2016.
 2. Staff attended a Sonoma County meeting for the Affordable Housing site at Clay/Broadway. The developer, Satellite Affordable Housing Associates, was selected and recommendation will be made to the Board of Supervisors. There will be neighborhood and community outreach before a formal application is submitted.
 3. The Chateau/Sonoma Hotel Draft EIR will be available for public review shortly.
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Commissioners Comments:

Comm. Willers recommended placing a limitation on the number of study sessions allowed for a development project prior to an application.

Planning Director Goodison agreed the topic should be discussed. Study sessions are intended for broad contours of the project.

Comm. McDonald recommended more neighborhood meetings.

Comments from the Audience:

Matt Howarth, resident, suggested that story poles be incorporated into the planning review process for new developments.

Adjournment: Comm. Willers made a motion to adjourn. Comm. Roberson seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 11, 2016.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Sonoma Planning Commission on the 11th day of February, 2016.

Approved:

Cristina Morris, Administrative Assistant