

**CITY OF SONOMA
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
September 8, 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. Wellander, Willers, Sek, Roberson, Coleman, Cribb

Absent: Comm. McDonald

Others Present: Planning Director Goodison, Associate Planner Atkins, 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. Roberson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: Jack Wagner, resident/City Council candidate, envisioned giving the Planning Commissioners a clearer direction to promote City's goals for the future of the community. He suggested a moratorium on vacation rentals should be considered in light of the current housing crisis.

Chair Felder noted that items #6 and #7 were postponed to the meeting on October 13th.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

CHANGES TO AGENDA ORDER: None

CORRESPONDENCE: Planning Director Goodison reviewed the correspondence received following the distribution of the agenda packet.

Item #1 – Consent Calendar – Request for a one-year extension to the Planning approvals allowing an 11-unit apartment development at 840 West Napa Street (Rabbitt Apartments)

Applicant/Property Owner: Victor Conforti, Architect/Michael Rabbitt

Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Comm. Willers seconded. The motion was approved 6-0, with Comm. Wellander abstaining.

Item 2 – Study Session – Study Session on a proposal to develop a 49-unit affordable rental housing project at 20269 Broadway.

Applicant/Property Owner: Satellite Affordable Housing Associates/Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Comm. Roberson asked about State law limiting the circumstances in which a jurisdiction may require a density reduction. Planning Director Goodison noted that a reduction in residential density may only be required when necessary to avoid a specific environmental impact and then only if there is no other alternative method of avoiding the impact.

Chair Felder opened the item for public comment.

Eve Stewart, Satellite Affordable Housing Associates (SAHA), is a Berkeley based non-profit that builds and manages affordable housing projects (including Valley Oaks). She described the project in detail and as well as the results from community outreach and the changes made to the site plan in response to that effort.

Bob Mosher, resident on Clay Street since 2004, is concerned with flooding at the corner of Clay Street and Broadway and with the PGE pressure release valves on the site. The engineering needs to account for potential flooding.

Fred Allebach, SAHA committee member, is pleased that 60% AMI is used to qualify tenants since it encompassed a large cross section of our population. He noted that the provision of work force housing supports the Climate 2020 action plan as fewer commuters will help reduce GHG emissions.

Gerrilee Fisher, resident, is concerned with traffic impacts. She disagreed with the notion that nurse practitioners would qualify for the project since current salaries exceed the maximum income allowed.

Lynn Fiske Watts, neighbor, opposes the density and massing of the buildings.

Kathy King, Executive Director/Sonoma Overnight Shelter, supported the affordable housing project.

Salvador Picazo Chavez, La Luz Executive Director, partnered with SAHA on their Valley Oaks project. He said housing is the biggest issue facing Sonoma Valley. He supports the project but is concerned with parking and traffic safety issues.

Frank Wines, resident, recommended a sound wall for a noise buffer between the project and existing residential housing. He suggested alternative parking in the Sonoma Valley High School parking lot.

Cindy Vrooman, resident since 1989, disagreed with the affordable housing demographic projections presented by SAHA.

Jack Wagner, resident, is pleased with the proposal and fully supported this type of affordable housing units in Sonoma. He requested exploring a local preference so the project is valued as a community resource and meets local housing needs.

Lynda Corrado, resident, supported the project. She used a music analogy to make the point that a variety of residents will be afforded an opportunity to live and work in Sonoma, which in her view is desirable.

Kevin Carruth, Michael Drive, supported La Luz's comments and recommended using the Hospital District boundary to delineate the local preference area.

Eric Pooler, 209 Clay Street, is concerned with traffic safety at the corner of Broadway and Clay Street, especially with respect to children and pedestrian crossings related to Train Town.

Terri Shore, Sonoma Valley resident/Greenbelt alliance representative, supported affordable housing projects as consistent with maintaining the rural landscape but had no specific comments on the project.

Larry Adams, neighbor, felt while the site plan was improved, many of the neighbors' concerns were glossed over or ignored. He projected a maximum of 205 residents instead of 110, as indicated by the developer, and is of the opinion that parking needs are grossly underestimated, which will result in parking on the street. He too was concerned about pedestrian safety issues, as well as parking and traffic. In his view, the density should be reduced.

Raj Iyer, 1230 Pickett Street, commended the Planning Commission for careful planning over the years. He stated that while he supported the changes made by SAHA to the site plan, more needs to be done. He strongly recommended the eligibility preferences be directed toward workers in the Sonoma and suggested that a senior component be included. He suggested that rigid tenant screening criteria be used to minimize recidivism and public safety issues. In his view a lower density would be more appropriate for the site.

Laura De Clerk, resident on Cooper Street, supported affordable housing units on the site, but has series concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety. She recommended the preparation of a full traffic study, including consideration of crosswalk improvements at Clay Street and Broadway.

Chair Felder closed the item for public comment.

Comm. Roberson questioned if an island for a pedestrian refuge was considered.

Planning Director Goodison responded that this concept was reviewed many years ago and could be revisited in the review of this project.

Comm. Willers asked about a parking needs analysis for car spaces. SAHA responded that it was willing to undertake a parking demand study of its various projects, but noted that those projects with access to public transportation would not be representative of conditions at the subject site.

Comm. Roberson said he received complaints about parking from neighbors in the Valley Oaks neighborhood over the years.

Comm. Coleman questioned if there is accountability for the resident parking.

Eve Stewart, SAHA, noted that tenants must register their cars and parking spaces are assigned.

Comm. Cribb respects the concerns expressed by neighbors and notes that environmental review will be required to address issues such as traffic. He supports moving the ingress/egress to Broadway. He felt the project would represent a significant step in meeting Sonoma's regional housing goals.

Comm. Sek supported the overall concept of the revised proposal and sympathized with the neighbor's concerns. She thanked the applicant for efforts made to mitigate negative impacts. She strongly recommended a parking needs analysis and asked about sewer capacity in the areas. She agreed with Fred Allebach that a local preference would reduce the carbon footprint.

Comm. Roberson is primarily concerned with mitigating issues, not where future tenants reside. He is pleased that affordable units for low income tenants are proposed and recognizes the need to provide a balance of housing types in the community. He recommended continued dialogue with the neighbors.

Comm. Willers appreciates the site plan improvements made in response to community input as the revised design is greatly improved. He suggested placing the community building on the Broadway frontage in order to reduce resident exposure to traffic noise and allow for an improved visual presence on Broadway. He hoped to maximize the number of parking spaces with the minimal amount of land. He is of the opinion that this project should not be burdened with solving the loading dock issue at The Lodge of Sonoma.

Comm. Wellander agreed with Comm. Willer's comments and supported the overall site plan. He supports smaller units to align with current trends. He applauded SAHA for incorporating the neighbor's comments and concurred with the request that they provide parking data from their other projects.

Comm. Coleman stressed the importance of solving the loading dock concerns expressed by the neighbors.

Comm. Roberson recommended that the corner building be architecturally interesting.

Chair Felder applauded the outreach efforts made with the neighbors. He felt there must be enough parking to support the density. He assured the public that there will be ongoing public forums to address parking, traffic safety, and the environment.

Item 3 – Discussion – Discussion of Junior Second Unit concept, including presentation by Lilypad Homes.

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report and thanked Commissioner Coleman for providing the contact with Lilypad Homes

Rachel F. Ginis, owner/Lilypad Homes, provided a comprehensive overview on the concept of junior second units.

Chair Felder opened the item for public comment.

No public comment.

Chair Felder closed the item for public comment.

After discussing the matter, the Planning Commission expressed support for the concept and directed staff to proceed with the preparation of a draft ordinance.

Item 4 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Use Permit to construct a detached garage with second floor guest room at 277 Fourth Street East.

Applicant: Sutton Suzuki Architects

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Chair Felder opened the item for public comment.

Elizabeth Suzuki, Sutton Suzuki Architects, reviewed the proposal, notion that the new two-story structure is low profile and complied with the FAR standards.

Chair Felder closed the item for public comment.

Comm. Willers made a motion to approve the Use Permit with conditions of approval for the construction of a new detached garage with second floor guest suite at 277 Fourth Street East. Comm. Roberson seconded. The motion was approved 7-0.

Item 5 – Public Hearing – Consideration of an Exception to the combined yard setback requirement for an addition to the residence at 423 Rosalie Drive.

Associate Planner presented staff's report.

Chair Felder opened the item for public comment.

Vince Dito, homeowner/applicant, was available to answer questions.

Chair Felder closed the item for public comment.

Comm. Cribb made a motion to approve the exception to the combined side yard setback requirements for an addition to the residence at 423 Rosalie Drive. Comm. Willers seconded. The motion was approved 7-0.

Issues Update: Planning Director Goodison reviewed the issues update report.

Comments from Commissioners: Chair Felder welcomed Comm. Roberson back.

Comm. Cribb questioned the number of items on the agenda since the meeting could have been too lengthy if Item #6 and #7 were not postponed.

Comments from the Audience: None.

Adjournment: Chair Felder adjourned the meeting at 9:41 p.m. to the next regular meeting. Comm. Roberson seconded. The meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 13, 2016.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Sonoma Planning Commission on the 13th day of October, 2016.

Approved:

Cristina Morris, Administrative Assistant