

**CITY OF SONOMA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
October 9, 2014**

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

**MINUTES**

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

**Roll Call:**

Present: Chair Tippell, Comms. Felder, Howarth, Edwards, Heneveld, Roberson, Willers, Comm. Cribb (Alternate)

Absent: None

Others

Present: Planning Director Goodison, Associate Planner Atkins, Administrative Assistant Morris

Chair Tippell 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. Comm. Edwards led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** Karla Noyes, Sonoma Valley resident, reduced her household's water consumption since implementing water conservation methods and challenged others to do the same. She requested that no new water hookups are given for new construction projects and is concerned with salt-water intrusion in the groundwater basin.

Fred Allebach, resident, agreed with Ms. Noyes's comments, stating that although more people are conserving water, there are competing interests that override their efforts when property owners are granted new water hookups for construction projects. That said, he recognizes that property owners have certain rights.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Comm. Edwards made a motion to approve the minutes of August 14, 2014. Comm. Roberson seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA ORDER:**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Late mail was received on Items #1, 2 (updated conditions of approval), and #3 (revised site plan), as well as a save-the-date flyer for the annual Planning Commissioner's conference.

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**Item #1 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Use Permit amendment to allow a single-family residence to be operated as a bed and breakfast at 837 Fourth Street East.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Maria Lobanovsky**

Item # 1 was withdrawn and removed from the Agenda at the request of the applicant.

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**Item #2 – Public Hearing- Review of 840 West Napa Street Apartments, an 11-unit residential apartment development including consideration of environmental review and a Use Permit at 840 West Napa Street.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Victor Conforti, Architect/ Mike Rabbitt**

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. Willers confirmed with staff that red curbing is required on West Spain Street and that there are no internal setback inconsistencies because the application does not entail the subdivision of the property.

**Chair Tippell opened the item to public comment.**

Victor Conforti, project architect, reviewed the proposal.

Comm. Heneveld confirmed with Mr. Conforti that the apartments would be served with submeters.

Mary Jane Stolte, resident, (Sonoma Park Condominiums), appreciates the changes to the project but remains concerned with traffic impacts and the allowance for more water hookups during this serious drought.

David Eichar, Sonoma Valley resident, suggested that residential housing should be a priority over vacation rentals in Sonoma.

Fred Allebach, resident, is satisfied with the socio-economic benefits of the project. He asked whether new wells could be drilled on the site.

Planning Director Goodison noted that the County issues well permits and no conditions may be attached to well permits under State law.

Mr. Conforti anticipated that traffic generated from the development would be limited, given the small size of the project, and that traffic generation relative to West Spain Street would be further reduced in that the project includes access to West Napa Street.

Mike Rabbitt, property owner, stated that he would consult with his Civil Engineer about grey water use in response to a question that was raised.

**Chair Tippell closed the item to public comment.**

Comm. Felder is satisfied that his concerns, as raised in the earlier study sessions, have been addressed and he supports the project.

Comm. Willers applauded the applicant for proposing an apartment development, as this type of housing is greatly needed in Sonoma. He encouraged the use of greywater.

Comm. Roberson supports the project but is concerned about pedestrian and traffic safety along Highway 12.

Chair Tippell encouraged the City to explore adding a new crosswalk at the intersection of West Napa Street and Sonoma Highway. He recommended no turf in the front yards since it consumes an excessive amount of water.

Comm. Tippell made a motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, including an amendment to prohibiting grass in the front yards. Comm. Howarth seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted.

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**Item #3 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Use Permit and Planned Development Permit to construct a 7- unit Planned Development at 800 West Spain Street.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Ed Routhier, Caymus Capital LLC**

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Tippell opened the item to public comment.**

Doug Hilberman, project architect, reviewed the proposal and discussed how the Planning Commission's feedback from the earlier study session had been addressed in the revised site plan. In addition, Mr. Hilberman submitted an alternative site plan (option B) for the Planning Commission to consider that does not include an internal sidewalk.

**Chair Tippell opened the item to public comment.**

Mike Winslow, adjoining neighbor, expressed his concern that when the home was demolished it was negligent not to notify and prepare the neighbors.

Karla Noyes, resident, liked the presentation but inquired why renewable energy was not mentioned.

Ed Routhier, Caymus Capital, encountered many challenges with the site. A cultural resource study was prepared and the property is cleared for development.

**Chair Tippell closed the item to public comment.**

Chair Tippell noted that he had met with the applicant on site. He agreed that the historic significance of the home had been lost due to its decay under the previous ownership.

Comm. Edwards was pleased with the changes made and supported option B, which does not include an internal sidewalk.

Comm. Roberson appreciated the design concept and the accommodations made by the applicant but is concerned with ingress/egress from the driveway. He has not heard any objections from the neighbors.

Comm. Howarth preferred option B, presented by the applicant, because a 14-foot wide driveway would be difficult to maneuver. He appreciated that the applicant had reduced the FAR and lot coverage. Overall he supports the changes. The PUD is a benefit to the community because the residences are of a higher quality in design.

Comm. Willers felt the project is very constrained for a single family development and he struggles to make the findings. In his view, the use of detached structures creates constraints and setback problems that can only be addressed by eliminating a unit.

Comm. Felder concurred with Comm. Willers and he is not satisfied with the configuration of the homes.

Chair Tippell said although he did not attend the previous Study Session for the project he read all the reports. He liked the design of the units and supported the project based on its appropriate density and architectural style.

Comms. Edwards and Roberson expressed support for the proposal.

Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve the Planned Development Permit, Tentative Map, and Use Permit, subject to the conditions of approval, based on site option "B". Comm. Edwards seconded. The motion was adopted 4-3. Comms. Felder, Willers, and Heneveld opposed.

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**Item #4 –Study Session – Preliminary review of a proposal to develop a mixed-use project (Sonoma Gateway Commons), including a retail food market, boutique hotel, apartments, general store, existing gas station, and associated parking at 870 and 899 Broadway.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Bull Stockwell Allen Architects/Sonoma Gateway Commons LP and Stu Lambert Inc.**

Comm. Willers recused due to proximity and left the room. Comm. Cribb (Alternate) went to the dais.

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Owen Smith, representing the property owner, and Mike Pattison and John Ontkian, project architects, reviewed the proposal.

Karla Noyes, resident, is concerned about potential creek flooding on the site and feels that the floor area ratio allowed in the Mixed Use zone is excessive. She questioned the practicality of the valet parking concept.

David Eicher, resident, stated that while he liked many elements of the project, including the marketplace component, he feels that the size is excessive and suggested a reduction in the number of hotel rooms. In his view, the proposal for three-story development is unlike anything in that area of Broadway. He questioned how parking would be reserved for residents of the apartments.

Chair Tippell is pleased with the inclusion of bicycle parking.

Comm. Edwards questioned where the employees of the culinary promenade would park.

Carol Marcus, resident, stated that the proposal did not respect the letter or the spirit of the General Plan's Mixed Use designation, especially with respect to 899 Broadway. In her view, the proposal over-develops both sites and does not provide sufficient parking. Given the proposed hours of the culinary center, the parking associated for that component will not be

available for off-hours use as guest parking. She feels that the project is out-of-scale with its surroundings and wants to see a site plan that depicts development in the vicinity of the project.

Pam Goldman, resident, inquired if the retail would also include fabrication of goods on site.

Tom Anderson, resident, appreciated the earlier outreach to the community conducted by the applicants. In his opinion, it was a constructive exchange of information and ideas, which has led to a solid project concept. To address parking issues and the use of the 899 Broadway site, he suggested that the concept of underground parking be explored.

Bill Blum, Manager of MacArthur Place felt that the concept of valet parking for the hotel presented operational challenges, as in his experience some guests would not want to make use of that service. He asked whether there would be a kitchen as a component of the hotel.

Ann Barry, resident, stated that while there are many encouraging features of the project, she is concerned with public safety because of the traffic generated in relation to nearby schools.

Katie Bailey, resident, does not agree with the extended hours proposed for the culinary promenade and does not support the proposed parking lot at 899 Broadway. She would not want to see the size of the existing service station increased.

Suzie Hart, general manager of the Sonoma Lodge is pleased with the initial plan and supports more housing affordable to those who work in Sonoma.

**At 10:50 p.m., Comm. Roberson suggested that Item #5 be postponed to the November meeting. Chair Tippell concurred.**

Comm. Heneveld questioned the locations for trash bins and times for deliveries.

Chair Tippell favored the overall concept of the plan and he could actually support an increase in the size of the market building. However, there are significant parking and site design issues that he felt could best be addressed through underground parking and he would like to see that explored, while recognizing that it would be expensive.

Comm. Howarth noted that relative to the "Ox-bow" concept that it has been compared to, the market is rather small and he asked whether it might be too small.

Comm. Roberson stated that while he liked the overall mix of uses and the proposed architectural approach, he envisioned parking conflicts and suggested that underground parking be explored. He does not oppose expanding the area of the Culinary Promenade. He noted that the proposed parking lot at 899 Broadway plays into an east-side/west-side conflict that is not desirable in his view.

Comm. Felder agreed that many aspects of the project are positive, but he also has significant reservations. He stated that there is a long way to go with respect to parking issues and that while he likes the architectural approach, he is concerned that three-story development may be too massive and he would need to be convinced that the scale is appropriate.

Comm. Cribb concurred with many of the observations of that have been made. Right now, the 899 Broadway site is a negative element in the project and it needs to be made a positive element. He likes the architectural approach and would be open to a larger culinary building. He appreciates the preservation of the service station and wants to see its scale maintained.

Comm. Edwards agreed that the service station is an interesting building. He would not want the size of the culinary building to increase, as that could lead to its use as an event center, which would lead to even more traffic and parking issues. Neighbor support for this project will disappear if it leads to parking impacts on residential streets, He concurs with many of the remarks of his fellow commissioners.

Comm. Howarth agrees with the comments about the 899 Broadway site. It needs to become a positive component of the project, not an after-thought. While he likes the overall mix of uses within the proposal, he notes that the Mixed Use zone applies to both sites. He agrees that the applicants should evaluate underground parking as the current concept falls short in that area. He is also concerned about building mass and height. While a height of 36 feet may be allowed, it is not a given. Care needs to be taken to make sure that the project fits with its surroundings.

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**Item # 5 – Discussion – Update on regulations concerning vacation rentals and bed and breakfast inns, including a discussion of a possible allowance for limited, single-room rentals.**

This item was continued to the meeting of November 13, 2014.

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**Issues Update: Planning Director Goodison reported the following:**

1. Len Tillem's vacation rental appeal will be heard by the City Council on October 20<sup>th</sup>.
2. A special meeting will be held with the Traffic Safety Committee and the Planning Commission on the Circulation Element update.

**Comments from the Audience:** None

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 13, 2014.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes of October 9, 2014 were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Sonoma Planning Commission on the 13th day of November, 2014.

Approved:

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Cristina Morris, Administrative Assistant