

**City of Sonoma  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
June 11, 2015**

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

**MINUTES**

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

**Roll Call:**

Present: Chair Willers, Comms. Heneveld, Cribb, Wellander, Roberson, Coleman, McDonald

Absent: Comm. Felder

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

Chair Willers 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. Heneveld led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** Karla Noyes, resident, is concerned with future developments negatively impacting our limited water resources.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Comm. Heneveld made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting on January 22, 2015. Comm. Cribb seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. (Comms. Wellander and Roberson abstained)

**CHANGES TO AGENDA ORDER:** None

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Late mail was received on Items #1 and #4, in addition to an Issues Update report prepared by staff.

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**Item #1 – Consideration of a Use Permit Amendment to allow an outdoor seating area for a coffee service trailer (Coffee & Coco) at 195 West Napa Street.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Rocio Fuentes/Northwest Dealerco Holdings LL**

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

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

Rocio Fuentes, applicant, explained that her business is not intended to be a drive through but she would like the option to offer repair service customers coffee while waiting for their cars to be repaired.

Comm. Roberson inquired about the fencing proposed.

The fence installer said the fence would be sturdy with the flexibility for people to go in and out. He would consult with the service station operator to ensure that it did not interfere with refueling.

Jennifer Tuffy, resident, frequented the coffee cart and supported the expansion. She valued the high level of customer service and was pleased to have a place to sit and drink a cup of coffee with her dog.

Scott Clyde, resident, enjoyed the convenience of the coffee cart location and expressed support for the application.

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

Comm. Roberson is concerned with the boundary/distinction between a coffee cart and café establishment.

Comm. Coleman is satisfied with the trailer and location.

Comm. Cribb discussed the proposal from a Use Permit perspective and recommended that DRHPC review be required for its design. He felt that the relationships between food trucks/ coffee carts and the neighboring businesses could be mutually beneficial, citing the El Coyote mobile food truck on Broadway as an example. He supported the use since it is not out of character for the environment and reasonable given the space.

Comm. McDonald stated that while he might be able to support a scaled-back proposal, he wanted to avoid having the use morph into a café. He confirmed with staff that a City Building permit and Sonoma County Health Department approval would be required.

Comm. Wellander supported the original application for a coffee cart with a few benches, as opposed to a café in this central location. In his view, the proposed seating was not visually compatible and would effectively transform the use into a cafe.

Comm. Heneveld agreed that the amount of seating should be reduced.

Comm. McDonald confirmed with staff that the Use Permit runs with the land not the individual/business entity and that the indoor seating ratio was applied with regard to the parking requirement.

Chair Willers supported some seats but is opposed to the intensity level of a café.

Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve four tables with eight seats, subject to conditions of approval, to include verifying that the seating area would not interfere with the fueling area for the gas station and requiring DRHPC review. Comm. Heneveld seconded. The motion was approved 6-1. Comm. Wellander opposed.

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**Item #2 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Temporary Use Permit to hold the annual zucchini car race outdoors on the grounds of the Sebastiani Winery on Friday, July 31, 2015 14 389 Fourth Street East.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Sonoma Valley Certified Farmers Market/Foley Family Wines, Inc.**

Senior Planner Gjestland presented staff's report.

Comm. Roberson confirmed with staff that this event has not been the subject of any complaints or compliance issues.

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

Gary Peter, President/Sonoma Valley Certified Farmers Market, supported staff's presentation and agreed with the proposed conditions of approval.

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

Commissioners expressed support for the event because there was no history of it negatively impacting the neighborhood.

Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve the Temporary Use Permit as submitted, subject to the recommended conditions. Comm. Cribb seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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**Item #3 – Consideration of a Use Permit to construct a new concrete foundation for a non-conforming detached garage on a residential property at 649 Second Street East.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: David Martineau/Mark Hoffman and Alexis deRaadt St. James**

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

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

Dave Martineau, General Contractor, acknowledged that some of the work done was not included in the original permit so the construction project ceased so that the required approvals could be obtained.

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

After a brief discussion, Comm. Cribb made a motion to approve the construction of a new concrete foundation for a non-conforming detached garage, subject to the conditions of approval. Comm. Heneveld seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved

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**Item #4 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Use Permit amendment and Parking Exception to allow the following uses associated with the Williams-Sonoma store and culinary center at 605 Broadway: 1) conversion of residential area to retail display of home furniture/furnishings; 2) outdoor retail display and other uses in the garden area: and, 3) special events.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Williams-Sonoma, Inc.**

Senior Planner Gjestland presented staff's report.

### **Chair Willers opened the item to public comment.**

Bud Cope, Senior VP Williams-Sonoma, apologized for the lapses that preceded this application. He explained that while the project was under construction, the company's vision for the property evolved. He hopes that the new proposal satisfies the concerns expressed by the Planning Commission at the last meeting and he wants to work with the Commission to ensure that the store has only positive impacts on the community.

Max Crome, Architect, Crome Architecture, stated that the staff summary was quite complete, so he would limit his comments to a few key points. He described the parking study and its findings, noting that 8 out of 9 employees are Sonoma residents. With the addition of the two leased off-site spaces, to be used by employees, they feel that the normal use of the building is accommodated. He noted that, in response to direction given at the previous meeting, the scope of the proposed events has been reduced.

With regard to valet parking for special events, Bud Cope noted that they are proposing to submit a valet parking plan for staff review and approval prior to each event.

Comm. Roberson confirmed with the architect that there is no written agreement in place with USPS to use the adjacent parking spaces during special events, that space was identified in the narrative as an example. On the issue of ADA access within the building, he confirmed that an access specialist had been retained in order to ensure that all requirements were met. Through this review, and in consultation with the Building Official, it was determined that an elevator would not be required since it is a historically significant building.

Comm. Wellander asked if the same valet service for the grand opening would be used. The applicant confirmed that a different service, Gilmore Valet is contracted.

Comm. Cribb confirmed with the applicant that many of the special events proposed are similar to the events at the other flagship stores, such as book signings and cooking classes; however, the larger scale events, such as the Chuck Williams birthday celebration, are unique to Sonoma. Comm. Cribb noted that the use of the post office has minimal impacts, as it is right next door to the site, but what other sites might be used for valet parking?

Jeff Gilmore, owner/operator Gilmore Valet (Sonoma resident since 1989), has worked four events for Williams-Sonoma. He has developed a good relationship with the USPS Postmaster and in conjunction with previous events she has previously given permission, on a case-by-case basis, to park cars at the north end of the parking lot during times when the Post Office is closed provided sufficient parking spaces are retained for Post Office box customers. For most larger events, the Post Office in conjunction with the store's on-site parking lot is sufficient. For a day event, a local church parking lot was used successfully for a previous event. More remote lots can be used in conjunction with a shuttle van.

Comm. Coleman confirmed that Williams-Sonoma is renting the back house behind the store to store furniture and supplies. Bud Cope confirmed that this was the case, but noted that they did not have a long-term lease on the property.

Chair Willers inquired about the future plans for proposed mid-sized and large special events at the store. The applicant identified the following examples: Chuck Williams birthday on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and a Thomas Keller (or other celebrity) book signings or special cooking classes. The district manager agreed with those examples and also noted that Williams-Sonoma could offer

team building events, such as with Nike or corporate visitors, as they (Williams-Sonoma) have the capability of offering private cooking classes.

Larry Barnett, 627 Fifth Street East, objected to the proposed changes to intensify the use of this site. He is of the opinion that nostalgia and marketing may have initially dictated the decision of Williams-Sonoma to return to Sonoma, but now the corporation is looking for a return on its investment. He felt that Williams-Sonoma was aware of the site limitations when they made their original application and asking for exceptions after the fact is unacceptable. In his view, using valet parking to accommodate an intensified use distorts the planning process. He feels an approval will set a bad precedent for other retailers to do the same and encouraged the Planning Commission to either deny the application or at most approve a maximum of three medium sized events per year.

Karla Noyes, resident, agreed with Mr. Barnett's comments that events at the site would have an adverse impact on traffic and parking.

Tom Rouse, resident, applauded the decision of Williams-Sonoma to return to Sonoma and feels they are a great asset to the community. They have been good stewards to date and their current proposal makes sense. He feels the valet parking proposal is a good idea and in his view parking options are available to accommodate the special events.

Donna Harrah, Solano Avenue, views the changes as positive as there is a potential to provide jobs for the youth in the community. Williams-Sonoma is bringing people to Sonoma and adding to its vitality. In her view they have responded well to the direction given by the Planning Commission at the previous meeting.

Regina Baker, neighbor, is disappointed with the implementation of the original proposal and the proposed changes. In her view, the proposed events will be a detriment to the neighborhood. She noted that the Post Office lot is not guaranteed and she questioned the validity of the parking survey.

David Eichar, 1110 Loma Court, is concerned that special events will have a negative impact on residents. He is disappointed that the upstairs space is not wheel-chair accessible and contended that the parking survey is flawed. He feels that the valet parking should be free and that more off street parking spaces should be provided for employees. He recommended that the application be denied with respect to additional events.

Mary Martinez, resident, referenced her letter. She is not satisfied with the 20% reduction in the number and scale of proposed events and concurred with the concerns expressed by Larry Barnett. She noted that any use permit will run with the land. She suggested that the identity and quality of life in Sonoma are being compromised. She said that converting retail to an event center on the heavily traveled Broadway corridor is not appropriate and code enforcement for each event is problematic.

Gene Mai, resident (First Street West), said that the City denied his request for five feet of red-curb marking on First Street West that would have improved sight distance from the Carneros Lofts driveway.

Will Honeyborne, resident, is concerned with the proposal for the mid- and large-sized events. In his view, it is not the right place. He noted that some will not use valet parking, which will result in parking impacts. He is also concerned about enforcement.

Doug Mile, architect and resident on Fifth Street East, stated that the store is one of the best establishments that has opened in Sonoma in a long time. They have restored what was a tear-down into a culinary arts center. The proposed level of events is appropriate to the site and its location on Broadway. Having the City review the valet parking on an event basis will ensure that that is adequate. The presence of the store is a great addition to Broadway and they have reduced the scale of the proposed events as requested by the Planning Commission.

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

Comm. Roberson stated that he was ambivalent about the proposal and looked forward to hearing from other Commissioners. He noted that, by way of example, the Williams-Sonoma grand opening was excessive with respect to crowding within the site. [The estimated attendance at that event was 120 persons.] There are limitations on what the space can accommodate. He appreciates the modifications that have been made in response to the previous direction. He is concerned about how disabled persons will be accommodated with the valet parking. On the other hand, that block has experienced a lot of business turnover. Having Williams-Sonoma there can be a positive for other businesses. The property has been revitalized and we want it to succeed. He is open to trying to make it work.

Comm. McDonald appreciates the renovation that has occurred and its contribution to the area. He is not satisfied that all issues are resolved in the current proposal but is willing to work with the applicant to reach a solution that works for all. He suggested that it may be desirable to have long-term parking agreements in place for special events. He noted that the parking analysis was done in the spring, but peak demand occurs in the summer. He would like to make sure that the applicant will keep the site and its surroundings clean with respect to potential trash from the take-out use. He wants to make sure that the proposal complies with ADA requirements. That said, he would like to give the applicant a chance, especially as the special events allowance would be reviewed after one year.

Comm. Cribb feels it is customary for a business to expect to make a profit. He sees value in Williams-Sonoma and in Chuck Williams as a prominent figure in the food industry to attract potential visitors to Sonoma. He compared the special events proposed on the subject property to Plaza events, which are far larger in scale and yet accommodated. He is of the opinion that some people are overstating the negative impacts associated with the proposal and stressed the importance of keeping the valet parking more fluid by allowing them to find sites as needed, with City staff review of the parking plan prior to each event. In his view, an evening event of up to 80 people is not excessive and can readily be accommodated, especially as many businesses in that area are closed.

Comm. Wellander is comfortable with a one-year trial period for special events as long as they manage them carefully and comply with the conditions. If during the trial period the impacts that some anticipate are manifested, the Commission may choose not to renew the use.

Comm. Coleman stated that he had reviewed the applicant's revised proposal carefully and was impressed with how they responded to the Planning Commission. In his view, the proposal will benefit the community and he is generally in support of it. He noted that the Post Office parking option has proved successful. They have done a great job on the renovation and he is confident that they will execute the proposed changes well and in a manner that respects the neighbors.

Comm. Roberson clarified with staff the elements of the application that represented a permanent change in use and those that were related special events and subject to a one-year trial period.

Comm. McDonald suggested a modification to Condition 2.E.

Comm. Heneveld expressed the view that the proposal before the Commission exceeded what he felt was appropriate for the property.

Chair Willers stated that he was disappointed with actions taken by Williams-Sonoma leading up to this application. Whether or not there was a deliberate intention to mislead, it reflects badly on Williams-Sonoma and he is not convinced that the current proposal would have been approved by the Planning Commission if it had been presented as such in the original application. He personally would not have voted for it. That said, in terms of the changes in the balance of uses, such as the outdoor retail display, it appears to function acceptably and parking appears to be adequate, especially given the mitigation that has been provided in response to the Commission direction at the previous meeting. Moving forward, he has great concern about the proposed event allowance. In his view, the findings to support events at the level requested cannot be made. These are corporate events, not community events. If an allowance for events is made, he believes it would be more manageable in terms of enforcement to define a single size limit for events, rather than having two classes of events (medium and large) as is currently proposed. The maximum size and the number of events should be reduced and Sundays should be kept free from events. In response to a question from Chair Willers, staff clarified that the total amount of parking in the Chase Bank parking lot appears adequate to support the two spaces that have been made available to Williams-Sonoma for additional employee parking.

Comm. Cribb disagreed with Chair Willers that the proposed type and scale of events were inappropriate. Third-party rentals are prohibited. It is not the nature of the events that are proposed that are problematic as these activities are directly related to their business. In his view, the main issue is parking, which what the Commission is looking at.

Comm. Roberson noted the book readings/author signings at Reader's Books as a point of comparison, where there may be as many as 60 people in attendance.

Chair Willers stated that he would like the Commission to address the permanent operational changes that have been proposed and the request for special events as separate motions. Comm. McDonald does not oppose a retail expansion indoors, as long as ADA requirements are met, but expressed some concern about the outdoor retail display.

The Commission reviewed the previous design that had been proposed for the outdoor area. After some discussion, the Commission reached a majority consensus that outdoor retail display of Williams-Sonoma products was an appropriate use.

Comm. Cribb made a motion to approve the use permit and parking exception for changes in the retail use of the building and the site, subject to conditions #1, 2 and 4, including the modification of condition of condition #2.E, to specify that two off-site spaces shall be provided, with the lease subject to staff review. Comm. McDonald seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Chair Willers, Comms. McDonald, Cribb, Wellander, Coleman; Noes: Comm. Heneveld (Comm. Roberson abstained). The motion was approved 5-1-1.

The Commission discussed whether the number and attendance allowed for special events should be scaled back further. Comm. Roberson stated that he viewed this as an experiment and he is willing to try it as proposed and see how the community reacts, knowing that it will be reviewed in one year and would be subject to additional conditions or termination at that time.

Comm. Wellander suggested that there be a limit of a single large event and fewer medium events, then let them prove themselves to be good neighbors during the trial period. If it works, then the numbers could be increased following the one-year review, based on neighborhood feedback.

Comm. Roberson stated that limiting them to one large event during the trial period would not provide enough data points for an evaluation.

In response to a question from Comm. McDonald, staff and the project architect confirmed that the building occupancy allowance exceeds the number of attendees that would be permitted in a large event.

Chair Willers stated that while he did have significant concerns regarding the proposed allowance for events, he agreed that if a trial period is granted, then a number of events should be allowed in order to facilitate evaluation. He feels that there should be a single maximum size, of between 40 and 80, with a single limit on the number of events, as this will simplify enforcement.

Comm. Coleman agreed that a trial period was appropriate and he felt that having two classes of events would allow them to experiment with different models.

Comm. Roberson stated he was comfortable with proceeding with the event definitions and limits as proposed. The Commission discussed possible amendments to the conditions, including a prohibition of events on Sunday, a 9:00 p.m. cut-off, and a prohibition on amplified music.

Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve a temporary use permit allowing events, with the event definitions and maximum number of events as proposed, with the following amendments to the conditions of approval: 1) prior notification of events by the applicant to any interested parties, and 2) medium and large events, as defined in the project narrative, shall be prohibited on Sunday. Comm. Wellander seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Comms. Roberson, Wellander, McDonald, Cribb; Noes: Comms. Heneveld, Coleman, and Chair Willers. The motion was approved 4-3.

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**Planning Director Goodison reported the following:**

Planning Director Goodison presented a summary update of current projects in Sonoma.

**Commissioner comments:** Comm. McDonald inquired about the EIR scoping review for the West Napa Street Sonoma hotel project scheduled for a Special Meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Comments from the Audience:** None

**Adjournment:** Comm. Heneveld made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:52 p.m. to the next meeting, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2015. Comm. Roberson seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes of June 11, 2015 were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Sonoma Planning Commission on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July 2015.

Approved:

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Cristina Morris, Administrative Assistant