

**CITY OF SONOMA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING OF  
Community Meeting Room, 177 First Street West  
July 11, 2013  
MINUTES**

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury that the agenda for this meeting was posted on Friday, July 5, 2013, on the bulletin board outside the front of Sonoma City Hall, No. 1 the Plaza, Sonoma, California. Chair Roberson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Meeting Room, 177 First Street West.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Chair Roberson, Comms. Edwards, Henevald, Felder, Tippell, Howarth, Willers  
Absent:  
Others Present: Planning Director Goodison, Senior Planner Gjestland, Associate Planner Atkins, Administrative Assistant Morris

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

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: No Public Comments**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Comm. Felder made a motion to approve the minutes of June 13, 2013 with the changes noted. Comm. Edwards seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0. (Comm. Willers abstained)

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Late mail regarding Items #2 & # 5.

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**Item #1 – Public Hearing – Use Permit application to allow a Produce Stand for On-site Production of Produce on the property located at 730 West Spain Street.**

**Applicant/Property Owner:** Rachel Kohn Obut

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. Howarth confirmed with staff that there are no outstanding Public Works projects that might affect this proposal.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing.**

Rachel Kohn Obut applicant, stated that the neighbors support the farm stand.

Comm. Henevald confirmed with the applicant that there are no plans at this time to install a permanent structure.

Joe Cutler, local business owner, supports the produce stand.

Deirdre Sheerin, Sonoma Valley resident, stated that the produce stand is an integral part of the residents' enrichment activities at Sweetwater Spectrum (another opportunity to learn more about the impacts of adults with autism)

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Howarth expressed support for the use permit but since it will run in perpetuity with the land he asked whether it should first be allowed on a temporary basis.

Staff noted that there will only be one stand with a limitation on the hours. Any modifications to the use permit would be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Comm. Tippell made a motion to approve the use permit subject to the conditions of approval. Comm. Edwards seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

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**Item #2– Public Hearing – An Exception from the fence height standards to allow over height fencing within the front yard setback on the property located at 597 Este Madera Drive.**

**Applicant/Property Owner:** Alexandra Thomas

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing.**

Alexandra Thomas, applicant, stated that she attempted to contact all the neighbors within 500 feet and was under the impression that everyone supported the concept, although some had raised concerns about the type of materials that would be used and wanted to be sure that that the fence would blend into the neighborhood.

Adrian Martinez, project architect, stated that the main reason for the request is to provide more privacy. The bottom part of the header is seven feet that can be adjusted to the six foot maximum.

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Henevald's main concerns are the limited setback and the height of the fence based on the property elevation. He understands the problem with car headlights. He asked whether staff felt that the fence would create a sightline issue and staff noted that with the proposed setback, sightlines would not be affected for people backing out of the driveway.

Comm. Tippell commended the architect for working with a unique situation. He did not hear from the applicant that there is a security/safety issue as was previously mentioned by Comm. Henevald. It seemed to him that the main issues were the car headlights and the lack of privacy.

Comm. Willers agrees with the applicant that privacy has been compromised by the original layout of the subdivision. He agrees that the fence may mitigate some of the negative impacts of this two way street. He views this accommodation as an easy decision to make given the unique circumstances of the site.

Comm. Howarth agreed that the Planning Commission has been very reticent about approving fence height exceptions outside of corner lot conditions. He does not want to set precedent that we are approving the concept of compounds yet he recognizes that this is a unique situation and he sympathizes with the owner.

Comm. Felder concurred and commended the applicant for reaching out to the neighbors.

Comm. Roberson commented that his only concern is that the fence may protrude too much into the front setback but he agreed that there was a legitimate basis to approve an Exception in this instance.

Comm. Edwards made a motion to approve. Comm. Tippell seconded. The motion was approved 6-1, Comm. Henevald dissenting.

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**Item #3 – Public Hearing – Consideration of an Exception to the garage setback requirements in order to allow the conversion of an existing carport into a garage at 510 Denmark Street.**

**Applicant/Property Owner:** Paula Parks

**Comm. Felder recused due to proximity and left the room.**

Senior Planner Gjestland presented staff's report.

Comm. Henevald inquired about shear wall requirements and confirmed with staff that the garage design will match existing materials.

Comm. Howarth confirmed with staff that the garage setback requirements were adopted in 2003 with the Development Code.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing.**

Paula Parks, applicant, is requesting an Exception to enclose the carport primarily for security reasons. The owner says her garbage and recycling bins have been stolen from the carport in the past as well as items from her car. She has had to disclose this since the property is on the market and the lack of a secure garage is an issue for prospective buyers. The house next door, which was built at the same time as hers, has a garage and the neighbors support the plan.

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Tippell recognized the security and aesthetic concerns and expressed the view that the modification would be an improvement.

Comm. Howarth confirmed with staff that the proposed modifications would not require review by the Design Review Commission.

Comm. Willers supports converting the carport into a garage and noted that the structure would remain detached. However, he feels that there is a certain quality or lightness to the carport that could be preserved and maintained visually in the design of its conversion to a garage.

Comm. Willers made a motion to approve the Exception. Comm. Tippell seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 6-0, Comm. Felder recused.

**Comm. Felder returned to the Dais.**

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**Item #4 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Use Permit and Parking Exception for the Sonoma Valley Community Health Center to occupy a commercial building as a medical clinic/office at 19270 Sonoma Highway.**

**Applicant/Property Owner:** Sonoma Valley Community Health Center/Larry Wasserman

Senior Planner Gjestland presented staff's report.

Comm. Heneveld confirmed that the existing loading dock would be removed to accommodate additional parking spaces for the health center.

Comm. Tippell confirmed that bicycle parking would be located under the covered walkway adjacent to the building.

Comm. Howarth expressed concern about potential traffic impacts; inquiring about the number of vehicle trips the project could generate.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing.**

Cheryl Johnson, CEO of Sonoma Valley Community Health Center, noted the health center currently provide services out of three separate buildings on West Napa Street. The new location would consolidate all services under one roof and would be closer to the majority of the clientele they serve. It is anticipated this proximity will change how people come to the facility. Currently, they estimate 80% of patients come by car, the remainder by taxi, bus, drop-offs or Fish tickets.

With respect to traffic and parking, Ms. Johnson anticipates 47,000 visits per year, which equates to roughly 200 visits per day. Since the facility is open 8:30am to 8pm, the trips would be spread throughout the day. In addition, visits are less than two hours so the proposed 75 parking spaces should be sufficient. She does not feel the health center would add more traffic than the retail shopping center use approved for the site. The health center has been working toward a new facility for seven years she requests the commission's approval.

Comm. Tippell confirmed with Ms. Johnson that the health center currently operates out of three buildings with a combined area of 8,600 square feet and that most clients visit the facility from locations to the north.

Comm. Edwards confirmed with Ms. Johnson that the existing facility has about 30,000 visits per year, which would increase to 47,000 visits per year at the proposed facility.

Comm. Willers confirmed with Ms. Johnson that the peak hours for the health center are between 10am and 4pm.

Bob Mooney, project architect and designer, confirmed the loading dock would be eliminated or filled in to accommodate additional parking. He emphasized the building includes an unusable 3,000 square foot utility space and the proposed parking equals 4.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of building area, which is considered an acceptable level for health center uses. He noted bus stops are located at the Sonoma Highway frontage and that the building has long covered arcades on two sides providing lots of opportunity for bike parking.

Marc Schwager, Board member and patient of the Sonoma Valley Community Health Center, commended health center staff for doing an exceptional job serving 2,000 people per month at the current site, which has way less parking. He views this as an opportunity to provide a world class facility for residents and emphasized the importance of having the health center in the community.

Tom Anderson, speaking as a citizen and Board member of the Sonoma Valley Community Health Center, feels that the site is a good fit. He noted that relocation to this site would reduce vehicle trips on West Napa Street generated by their current facility. The proposal would put the facility closer to clientele being served and the bus stops on Sonoma Highway are also mitigating factors. He requested that the commission approve the application.

Maria, employee and client, commented on the new location being more convenient for clients. The facility will meet the growing demand for more affordable health care in Sonoma Valley.

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Planning Director Goodison advised the Planning Commission that, according to the ITE Trip Generation Manual, use of the building as a retail shopping would generate 684 daily vehicle trips versus 584 daily trips for the proposed medical center use.

Comm. Tippell would have liked more information on traffic generation included in the applicant's proposal. That said, he feels the bus stops on Sonoma Highway and the site's proximity to the population being served are mitigating factors. The new location would also lessen traffic on West Napa Street. He supports the project but 18 bicycle parking spaces should be provided.

Comm. Willers indicated that he did his own parking analysis and determined that clients would require 16-20 spaces per hour. Based on the employee count and floor plan, which identifies the number of exam rooms and dental chairs, he estimates that 55 people would be on the property every hour. Accordingly, the proposed 75 parking spaces seem reasonable. Comm. Willers also considered the ULA trip generation numbers, which are similar to the numbers stated by the project architect. So, the parking would be adequate for how this health center intends to use the space. Traffic into town would also be lessened and the intersection of West Napa Street and Fourth Street West where the health center currently operates is not good. All of these circumstances allow for him to make an Exception to the parking requirements for the project.

Comm. Edwards stated this is a no brainer. There's a need for the health center and he prefers this use of the site over another shopping center.

Comm. Howarth feels his questions about traffic have been adequately addressed through the discussion but he would like a traffic analysis included in future items. He is in support of the proposal.

Comm. Felder concurred. It seems to be an appropriate use for the property.

Comm. Heneveld stated that 18 bicycle spaces should be required.

Chair Roberson feels that 75 parking spaces should be more than sufficient for the use.

Comm. Edwards made a motion to approve the Use Permit and Parking Exception, subject to the conditions of approval prepared by staff with an additional condition requiring 18 bicycle parking spaces on site. Comm. Willers seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 7-0.

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**Item #5 – Discussion – Consideration of amendments to the Development Code establishing definitions and zoning regulations for wine tasting facilities.**

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing.**

Danny Faye, Envolve, discussed some concerns of his peers about placing further restrictions on the wine tasting rooms. He is of the opinion that all businesses are in compliance with all regulations.

Erik James, Erik James Tasting Room, feels it is not necessary to make any changes for the wine tasting facilities. He is comfortable with the atmosphere of the tasting rooms and the interactions with the community.

Robert Idell, resident and attorney representing the wine growers association indicated that the County is struggling with the same issues. Jurisdictions are trying to prevent winery tasting rooms from becoming restaurants since they often times are directly linked. He is of the opinion that the Planning Commission is not acting as an adjudicatory body when proposing this type of legislation-guidelines. He suggests more study on the subject in a roundtable.

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Willers agreed with Planning Director Goodison that there is not necessarily going to be a limit on the number of tasting rooms around the Plaza, but in his view, the Development Code does not address wine tasting adequately and the rules and definitions that govern such uses need to be clarified.

Comm. Edwards likes the concept of people buying a bottle of wine and then taking it to a local restaurant. He recognizes and respects the role of wine and wine tasting in the community. However, he is concerned that in some cases wine tasting facilities are functioning more like bars and this is occurring without any form of use permit review, which is a requirement that does apply to bars and restaurants.

Comm. Howarth agreed with Planning Director Goodison that this process is not punitive. There is not a clear definition of wine tasting rooms in the Development Code and, in his view that needs to be addressed.

Comm. Roberson sees a range of uses that are quite broad with all proposals being evaluated by the Development Code for these land use decisions. He appreciates the turnout tonight and says that the intent is not to discriminate against certain businesses developing around the

Plaza. The goal is it has a graduated definition that will be acceptable under which wine businesses can successfully operate.

Comm. Tippell agreed that this discussion has been productive, especially with the participation of representatives from the wine tasting community. He would like to see that dialog continue.

Comm. Howarth asked whether a representative from the Alcohol and Beverage Control Board might be available to attend a follow-up meeting.

Planning Director Goodison will arrange an ad-hoc meeting with representatives of the wine tasting community, two members of the Planning Commission, and the Police Chief.

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**Issues Update:**

1. Comm. Willers was re-appointed as the alternate and will interview for the vacant Planning Commissioner position.
2. Special Planning Commission meeting on 7/18/13 to discuss the Mission Square project.
3. Comm. Henevald notes County-wide water concerns.
4. Comm. Tippell will not attend the 8/8/13 meeting.
5. The Hotel petition is certified and the City Council may adopt, schedule an election, or authorize an impact analysis.

**Comments from the Audience:** No public comments.

Comm. Edwards made a motion to adjourn. Comm. Henevald seconded. The motion was unanimously approved, 7-0.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 8, 2013.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2013.

Approved:

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Cristina Morris, Administrative Assistant