

**CITY OF SONOMA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING OF  
Community Meeting Room, 177 First Street West  
October 10, 2013  
MINUTES**

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury that the agenda for this meeting was posted on Friday, October 4, 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: Comms. Edwards, Felder, Willers, Tippell, Henevald, Cribbs (Alter Roberson)  
Absent: Comm. Howarth  
Others Planning Director Goodison, Senior Planner Gjestland, Associate  
Present: 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. Edwards led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: None**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Comm. Edwards made a motion to approve the minutes of 7-18-13, Comm. Tippell seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 6-0 (Comm. Cribbs abstained).

Comm. Felder made a motion to approve the minutes of 8-8-13. Comm. Henevald seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0 ( Comms. Tippell and Cribbs abstained)

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Late mail was received regarding Item # 1.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA ORDER:** Item # 3 will be heard at the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

---

**Item #1 – Public Hearing - Consideration of a Use Permit to install a wireless telecommunications facility on the Sebastiani Winery site, including an 80-foot tall redwood monopine tower and fenced equipment shelter at 389 Fourth Street East. ATT cell tower..**

**Applicant/Property Owner: At&T/Foley Family Wines Inc.**

Associated Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing:**

Jason Osborne, representing AT&T, Petaluma resident, said the purpose of the request is to increase the capacity, reliability, and reception in downtown Sonoma. Alternative sites were considered but they do not provide adequate coverage.

Mike and Jennifer Palladini, 271 Wilking Way, oppose the location of the tower due to concerns about potential health impacts.

Jodi Ahrens, resident within the neighborhood, agrees and requested more information about health risks.

Lizzie Stuckey, 430 Lucca Ct., expressed opposition to the proposal and suggested additional neighborhood input from residents in the vicinity of the site.

Regina Baker, resident and AT & T customer applauds the company for adequate coverage and does not feel another cell tower is necessary, especially in light of the neighbor concerns that have been expressed.

John Dunning, neighbor, expressed disagreement with the previous statements for a variety of reasons primarily that technological advancements are beneficial. He supports the proposal.

Linda McGarr, 486 Lovall Valley Road, strongly believes that the proposal should have been denied at the staff level since she considers the tower to be a dangerous project. She does not support any additional cell towers in Sonoma since they would negatively impact residents, tourists and businesses. She has never had a problem with cell coverage does not support the proposed location. She is concerned about the health risks of electromagnetic fields. She urged the Commission to deny the application.

Cameron Stuckey, 430 Lucca Court, requested that AT&T do further due diligence to see if a cell tower in the proposed location is something that the community needs. He is concerned about the health impacts and wants AT&T to be a good neighbor.

The electrical engineer (Hammit and Edison) hired to evaluate the radio frequency stated that EMF levels associated with the proposed tower will comply with FCC standards and in fact will only amount to 1.2% of the allowed FCC limit.

Comm. Felder asked the engineer to make a comparison between microwaves and cell phones. The engineer estimated that emissions from phones are 1,600 times higher.

Comm. Edwards confirmed with the engineer his estimate of ten cell towers in Sonoma Valley area.

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Edwards is pleased to see that the applicants mitigated the proposal by reducing the height by 15 feet. He will support the proposal.

Comm. Felder agrees with Comm. Edwards and believes that the consultant is correct that cell phones emit more EMF emissions than the cell tower.

Comm. Tippell thinks the monopine tree will blend into the landscape, as was the case with the mono-pine at the high school. In his view, the health risks have been addressed at the Federal level and the proposal complies with applicable requirements. The Planning Commission cannot set its own standards in that area.

Comm. Willers concurred with his fellow Commissioners and stated that reducing the tower height is a positive gesture by the applicant.

Comm. Henevald is pleased with the change and supports the revised proposal.

Comm. Cribbs stated that he was a man of science and while he recognizes that people have concerns about EMF, in his view this issue has been fully investigated and the study provided with the application demonstrates compliance with the applicable limits. He does not feel the tower will be an eyesore and he appreciates the reduction in height.

Chair Roberson met with the applicants while they were revising the plan and appreciates the efforts to reduce the height of the tower.

Comm. Edwards made a motion to approve the application, subject to the conditions of approval. Comm. Henevald seconded. The motion was unanimously approved, 7-0.

---

**Item #2 – Public Hearing Consideration of a Use Permit to allow use of a commercial building as a vacation rental at 567 First Street East**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Terence and Melissa Redmond**

Comm. Edwards recused himself and left the room.

Senior Planner Gjestland presented staff's report.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing.**

Terence Redmond, applicant/property owner lives in San Francisco and has properties in Sonoma.

Comm. Henevald confirmed with the applicant that Beautiful Places, a vacation rental management company, would respond to issues within 24 hours.

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Cribbs is pleased with the improvements have been made to the building in the past, including the landscaping and the preservation of its architecture.

Comm. Tippell confirmed that the Conditions of Approval enforce the sign limitations on vacation rentals. He confirmed with the applicant that the existing commercial sign will be removed.

Comm. Tippell appreciated the house being converted back for residential use.

Comm. Willers stated that this is a perfect location for a vacation rental as a transition between residential uses and the more intense commercial uses on the south.

Comm. Henevald would like to ensure that nearby residents have a contact number in the event of problems or disturbances.

Comm. Cribbs estimated that there are only three property owners to notify.

Comm. Tippell agreed that this is a reasonable request.

Comm. Tippell made a motion to approve with the conditions of approval, as amended to require that a contact number be provided to adjoining residents on First Street East. Comm. Willers seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. 6-0. (Comm. Edwards recused.)

Comm. Edwards returned to the dais.

---

**Item # 3 – Public Hearing Consideration of an Exception to the fence height standards to allow over-height fencing within the front and street-side yard setbacks of a residential property at 639 Third Street West.**

Postponed.

---

**Item #4 – Public Hearing Consideration of a Use Permit and Parking Exception to establish a cooking school and café with a retail component and industry accommodation residential unit within an existing building at 599 Broadway.**

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

Senior Planner Gjestland presented staff's report.

Comm. Cribb asked about the use of the residential unit as a corporate guest quarters. Staff confirmed that there is no covered parking necessary because the nature of that use.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing.**

Bud Cope, Williams-Sonoma, has been involved in establishing all of the Williams Sonoma stores. This property will be unique in its small size, its curated offerings, and in the provision of a café and cooking school. In the restoration of this original store the goal is to preserve the historic characteristics.

Max Crome, project architect, reviewed photo renderings of the original store and images of the existing building. This building will not resemble a typical Williams-Sonoma store.

Comm. Edwards asked whether neighboring business owners had been consulted about the project. Mr. Cope stated that they had reached out to their neighbors, including fellow business owners and the postmaster.

Charlene Thomaslen, neighbor, owns a nearby rental property and fully supports the concept.

Oliver Trixel, resident, supports the project and envisions the store as a cultural center.

Patricia Cullinan, resident, also supports the concept, but is concerned with the limited parking.

Regina Baker, neighbor, is disappointed that the original plan described a small store and now it includes a culinary school/café component. This will have negative impacts on parking and traffic and she objects to those elements of the project.

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Henevald confirmed with the applicants that local chefs will be considered for the culinary school/café.

Comm. Felder is concerned with traffic congestion and parking. He would like to ensure that the amount of parking that is provided is adequate.

Comm. Henevald stated that improving access on First Street West will help, as right now there is no parking for any of the current uses on the site, which are of comparable intensity to what is proposed.

Comm. Willers believes that providing an adequate parking lot is the biggest issue, but in his view this is also about the appearance of the lot. He would like to see generous landscaping so that First Street West is enhanced. He suggested that permeable paving be considered.

Comm. Tippell agreed with Comm. Willers on the objective of improving the First Street West frontage.

Luke Wade, Project Architect, stated that while he would investigate options for a permeable surface, he understands that it cannot be gravel. He will collaborate with City staff on this issue going forward. In order to address the concern about adequate parking without diminishing the landscaped area, the applicants would agree to limit the number of students who may attend classes to 12.

Comm. Henevald expressed his appreciation for that gesture and stated that he welcomed the return of Williams-Sonoma.

Comms. Felder and Edwards agreed that it will be a wonderful addition to the area.

Comm. Roberson concurred and noted that he was surprised 13 years ago when there was no Williams-Sonoma in town given the history of the store. He would prefer a permeable parking surface and likes the garden feature. Planning Director Goodison confirmed that an asphalt parking surface an option but is not required. There are other surfaces that the applicant and the Design Review Committee can explore.

Comm. Henevald made a motion to approve the application with an amendment to the conditions of approval placing a limit of 12 students at the culinary school. Comm. Willers seconded. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

---

**Item # 5 - Study Session on a proposal to develop 11 apartments on a 1-acre site at 840 West Napa Street.**

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. Felder confirmed that 14 feet is an acceptable width to accommodate a fire truck, as long as the drive is one-way.

Comm. Henevald suggested that it might be an advantage to the property owner to have the units individually metered for water use.

Comm. Tippell confirmed that the reason the Design Review Commission (DRC) did not approve the demolition request was because they wanted to explore the feasibility of preserving the existing structure and possible incorporating it into the proposed development.

Comm. Edwards challenged the practicality of the proposed site ingress and egress. He did not believe that a one-way limitation the West Napa Street access would be respected.

**Chair Roberson opened the public hearing.**

Vic Conforti, Architect, conducted an additional public outreach meeting with the neighbors and he felt the neighbors were disappointed that the DRC did not approve the demolition of the residence. Originally, he supported the demolition, but after the DRC meeting he revised the plans to incorporate the residence into the proposed development. Keeping the residence has implications with respect to the width of the drive and its placement on the site that are not necessarily positive. The number of units was reduced from twelve to eleven, and the project will take the form of rental housing. With respect to the private drive, it may be better if the one-way segment is an exit on to West Napa Street rather than an entrance. He noted that the trash company would prefer to pick up the trash in a north to south direction. Because the existing residence is no longer proposed to be demolished he has designed the project to relate to the residence. Porches have been added to the sides of the two-story buildings to break up the wall area. The width of the individual driveways was not changed because the Development Code requires a ten foot width for residential parking, and he does not want to encourage residents to store personal items under the carport. The surrounding density is greater than that of the proposed project.

Comm. Edwards confirmed the property was on the market for at least two years and that the residence has not been occupied. He noted that the house is in poor condition and that it does not constitute a historic resource.

Wendy Byrd, neighbor, is concerned with traffic safety and the limitations on parking in the area. She is concerned with the project placing additional strain on City resources. She appreciates the feedback from others and the opportunity to speak.

Nick Paganini, neighbor, is concerned with losing privacy and light. He suggests moving the main drive to a different location. He also stated that the existing residence should be demolished as it is not a feature that contributes to the area.

Jessica Schorr, is concerned with traffic safety and would like the driveway to be placed on the west side of the property. She would like to have an on-site property manager.

Kathleen Laude, Sonoma Garden resident, feels that there have been some positive changes, but she recommends eliminating one of the buildings to provide greater setbacks.

Anthony Hass, adjoining property owner, does not find the existing house visually appealing and he feels it should be demolished as it causes problems for the site plan, especially with regard to the driveway placement.

Beryl Brooks, neighbor, is affected by the project and would like the driveway flipped since there is not enough of a buffer. She feels her concerns have not been fully addressed and the loss of privacy is one of the biggest issues.

Georgette Darcy, neighbor, stated that while she was heartened to hear that the driveway would be on the east side of the project, she can't rejoice because she feels for the Palm Court residents and hopes the Planning Commission will hear the neighbor comments regarding height, setbacks, and density.

Robin McCarthy, neighbor, stated that there are too many buildings in this small space and cannot envision the numerous construction impacts from this and other residential developments under review.

Vic Conforti has considered various alternatives and has confirmed with staff that the Design Review Committee has tabled the demolition permit application. He believes that they would revisit that question, based on the neighbor feedback that has been provided.

**Chair Roberson closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Edwards feels the residence should be demolished.

Comm. Tippell is comfortable with the density of the project and empathized that the existing home should not drive the land plan.

Comm. Willers agrees with Comm. Tippell that the existing residence should not drive the project. If the residence is demolished the site plan could be loosened up and allow more flexibility. Ten units would be the maximum number he could support on the site and the driveway should be two-way.

Comm. Felder does not think the plan is satisfactory in the current form. He suggested the following: demolishing the existing residence; increasing the number of one-story units, providing a two-way driveway, limiting the project to no more than ten units, and placing the driveway on the west side of the property.

Comm. Roberson does not want a loss of character in the community and is sympathetic with the plight of the neighbors while recognizing the property rights of owners. He feels the direction given is valuable and that the Commissioners consensus is to remove the house. He recommends additional public outreach as the design is refined.

---

**Item # 6 – Public Hearing – Consideration of amendments to Title 19 of the Sonoma Municipal Code to: 1) clarify provisions related to density bonuses and inclusionary housing; 2) modify provisions pertaining to use permit requirements for emergency shelters in the “P” zoning district; and, 3) establish a definition for “Agricultural Employee Housing.”**

Postponed.

---

**Issues Update:**

1. An appeal was filed for the Nicora Place project.
2. Commissioners are encouraged to visit the Valley Oaks affordable housing project.
3. The Mission Square project will be heard at the November 14th meeting
4. The Planning Commissioners Conference is December 7<sup>th</sup> sign up with Cristina.
5. Comm. Henevald notes that water levels are stable at Lake Mendocino.

**Comments from the Audience:** No Public Comments

Comm. Tippell made a motion to adjourn. Comm. Henevald seconded. The motion was approved 7-0.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 14, 2013.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on the 14th day of November, 2013.

Approved:

---

Cristina Morris, Administrative Assistant