

**CITY OF SONOMA
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
November 12, 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. Felder, Wellander, Heneveld, Roberson, Coleman, Roberson, McDonald (Alternate)

Absent:

Others

Present: Planning Director Goodison, 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. He reminded everyone to turn off cell phones and pagers. Comm. Cribb led the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: Ellen Fetty, representative of the St. Francis Place Homeowners Association, requested weekly updates on the status of the Sonoma County Housing Authority's site at 20269 Broadway. She would like the names of the prospective developers and contact numbers and clarification of the roles of the other agencies participation in the proposal for the development of the site with affordable housing.

Bob Mosher, neighbor, is concerned with traffic safety issues with an increase of the expected housing density for the site as well as the impact for property values. He agreed with Ellen Fetty that weekly dialogues on the progress is important so the neighbors can provide input.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve the minutes of August 13, 2015. Comm. Cribb seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted. (7-0).

CHANGES TO AGENDA ORDER: Item #4 was withdrawn at the request of the applicant.

CORRESPONDENCE: Late mail was received for Items 2, 4, and 5, along with a letter from Pierriette Duriez.

Item #1 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Music Venue License transfer to allow live music performances in conjunction with a new restaurant use at 122 West Napa Street.

Applicant/Property Owner: Tasca Tasca Inc./Linda & David Detert

Chair Willers recused due to a financial conflict of interest and left the room. Comm. McDonald (Alternate) came to the dais.

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Chair Felder opened the item to public comment.

Jason Santos, Restaurant Manager, said the new business proposes to operate with the same allowances as the current music license with no modifications to the hours of 7-10 pm, with a maximum of three days a week.

Comm. Felder asked whether Sunday afternoon performances were proposed. Jason Santos stated that they were not.

Chair Felder closed the item to public comment.

Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve the transfer of the Music Venue License to allow live music performances in conjunction with a new restaurant use at 122 West Napa Street. Comm. Heneveld seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted. (7-0)

Chair Willers returned to the dais.

Item #2 – Public Hearing – Year-end review of a seasonal outdoor food truck event (Food Truck Fridays) and an application for the 2016 outdoor food truck event for the Sebastiani Winery at 389 Fourth Street East.

Applicant/Property Owner: Sebastiani Winery/Foley Family Wines

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Chair Willers opened the item to public comment.

Thomas Power (433 Sonoma Ave. Santa Rosa), Special Events Manager/Sebastiani Winery, confirmed that all food trucks obtained City of Sonoma business licenses and Sonoma County Health department clearances.

Chair Willers closed the item to public comment.

Comm. Felder is pleased that the conditions of operating the seasonal outdoor food truck special event have been met, including the prohibition of generators, keeping the doors closed during music hours, and posting business licenses.

In response to a question from Comm. Roberson, staff reported that neighbors had made no calls for service or noise complaints during the Food Truck events, but there had been one noise complaint regarding a Friday music series event that was not on a Food Truck Friday. Staff attended 3 events and confirmed that all the conditions of approval were met.

Comm. Felder made a motion to receive the report on the 2015 series and to approve the application for the 2016 series, subject to the conditions of approval. Comm. Cribb seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted. (7-0)

Item #3 – Public Hearing – Consideration of an Exception to the fence height requirements to allow a 6-foot tall fence within the street side yard setback of a residential property at 597 Third Street East.

Applicant/Property Owner: Clifford Clark

Comm. Cribb recused due to a financial conflict of interest and left the room. Comm. McDonald (Alternate) came to the dais.

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Chair Willers opened the item to public comment.

Clifford Clark, homeowner, stated that the fence was proposed in order to provide additional privacy the back yard on a corner lot.

Chair Willers closed the item to public comment.

Comm. Roberson appreciated that the applicant asked for fence changes in advance instead of building and asking for a fence height exception later.

Comm. McDonald stated that while he supported the proposal in concept, he felt that it could be better integrated with the placement of the residence.

Comm. Wellander asked whether the large maple tree will be retained.

Clifford Clark, applicant, confirmed that the maple tree will be preserved.

Comm. Wellander stated that he had some concern regarding the view shed for the neighbor. He respected the goals of the applicant.

Chair Willers re-opened the item for public comment.

Dee Matthews, neighbor, said the existing hedge partially blocks the view. She has a good rapport with the applicant and is satisfied with the proposal.

Chair Willers closed the item for public comment.

Comm. Heneveld suggested bringing the fence back to align with the porch of the residence.

Chair Willers agreed with Comm. McDonald's comments and supported aligning the fence with the eave of the porch, which would result in a setback of approximately 15 feet.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the fence height Exception, with an amendment to the conditions of approval requiring that the fence setback be adjusted to align with eave of the porch. Comm. Heneveld seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted. (7-0)

Item #4 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Variance from the height standards for a detached pool house at 557 Fourth Street East.

Applicant/Property Owner: Strata AP/Martin & Alicia Herrick

The application was withdrawn by the applicant.

Item #5 – Study Session – Study session on a proposal to develop a 25-unit multi-family project on a 1.86-acre site at 870 Broadway

Applicant/Property Owner: Olympic Residential Group

Chair Willers recused due to proximity and left the room.

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Chair Felder opened the item to public comment.

Dan Diebold, the applicant, and Alex Seidel, the project architect reviewed the changes made to the proposal in response to the comments received at the previous study session.

Matt Howarth, neighbor/former Planning Commissioner, recommended smaller residential units since the intent for mixed use zoning sites is higher density workforce housing. He attended the developer-sponsored meeting last Thursday night.

Carol Marcus, resident, appreciated the applicant meeting with the neighbors and agreed with Matt Howarth's comments about not supporting the proposed use for the site. She is of the opinion that the developer should give something back to the City on this important site. She objected to the concept of "shared walls single family homes".

Patricia Cullinan, resident, is concerned that an urban development will detract from the character of the town since the Broadway corridor is listed on the State Register of Historic Districts.

Victor Conforti, local Architect/resident, opposed the proposed housing plan. He owns a building on Broadway and has designed many buildings in Sonoma over the years. He felt the proposal under consideration did not fit the criteria for a mixed-use zoning site and suggested that the developer should focus on more affordable housing in the range of 500-700 square foot units.

Michael Ross, neighbor, felt the described project did not meet the spirit of the mixed use zone and improvements to the number of units and size should be made. He recommended a workforce housing concept and more green space.

Kelso Barnett, resident/DRHPC Chairman, echoed the comments of the previous speakers and is disappointed with the proposal for the development for the site. He cited the following reasons: all residential housing units is not the intention for the mixed-use zone, deterioration of the cultural and historic significance of the site, product, units that are too large and too expensive, massive scale of buildings, no common good since there are no retail opportunities or jobs for residents.

Jack Wagner, resident, agreed with Matt Howarth and Kelso Barnett that workforce rental housing should be the main focus for the site development.

Chair Felder closed the item to public comment.

Comm. Roberson noted that it is an important and a tough project. When he thinks about the existing and future character of Broadway, one concern that comes to his mind is the noise complaints received from residents on Broadway, so he is concerned about developing this site with residential from that perspective. Another issue that occurred to him when he saw this project was to ask what happened to the stone wall? He appreciated that the earlier proposals proposed to re-use stone from the site. Then there is the question of the City's intention in designating this site for mixed use. In his view, the balance of the benefit seems to be leaning toward the developer, not the community. The site is visually prominent and how it is developed will be an important statement. He has concerns about an all-residential project with a 36-foot building height with a long face on the site. Just north of the site, building heights drop down. However, he is not one to say that the same building types used in the past must happen again. Architectural styles evolve, but this project feels visually intense. Having a project that will contribute to the vitality of Broadway is important and he is not sure how this project does that. In addition, he has some concern about the prospect vehicles cutting through the site. While the proposed project has many features that he likes, he is not sure it fully rises to the challenge of the site.

Comm. Cribb stated that the comments he made at the previous meeting have not been changed much by this revision. He remains concerned about the massing of the project, especially along Broadway. He regrets that there is no commercial component, but recognizes that this applicant does not wish to incorporate that element. In his view, the project needs to bring something to the community and in his view the City does not need more 2000 square-foot plus residences. He would prefer to see a greater variety in unit sizes, in particular a larger number of smaller units and preferably a higher density. Looking back to the four-story building centered on the site that was on the property historically, he felt that a similar approach, but in the form of high density housing, would work on the site today and would be viewed as acceptable by the community.

Comm. Wellander stated that he attended the neighborhood meeting hosted by the developer last week, which was helpful in getting a sense of where the project was heading. This is a challenging site and it is important not to get caught in the idea that anything would be better than what is there now. Broadway is boulevard and in that sense it lends itself to larger buildings, but the site also needs to be viewed in the context of nearby development. He appreciates many aspects of the current proposal including the fact it addresses parking demand realistically, in contrast to the mixed-use proposals, which were lacking in that regard. While he feels that the mini-plaza at the corner looks good, he is concerned that high school students might tend to hang out there. With regard to the specific uses, he goes back and forth in that mixed-use lends vitality, but the site may not be large enough to accommodate that concept. He agrees with comments that the project should provide a better mix of unit sizes. He wants to get the project right, but he feels that the current proposal needs to go further. He is concerned that the massing does not relate to the surrounding neighborhood.

Comm. Coleman stated that there is a visual rhythm to the Broadway corridor that blends residences and businesses. The site is prominent and has an interesting history. He could see the site being developed with a recreational facility that would benefit young people in the community. As with other Commissioners, he feels that the current proposal includes too many larger, three-bedroom units. He would like to see more two-bedroom units. He is concerned that the corner mini-plaza would be a magnet for high-school students. Visually, he does not feel that the project would blend in with its surroundings.

Comm. McDonald thanked the developer for returning and for making changes to the plan that responded to a number of comments received at the previous meeting. The circulation has improved and additional open space has been provided. While this is a better version of what the Commission saw at the previous meeting, he still has concerns about the interface of the units on Broadway and the existing historical homes elsewhere on Broadway. In his view, the massing on Broadway still needs to be scaled back, with three-story elements centered on the site. The project is still set too close to Broadway. He too feels that the mini-plaza on the corner is problematic. He would prefer a building presence on the corner. In his view, the townhomes feel too urban for this setting and the open spaces in the front of the buildings are too small as proposed. The dormer roofs do bring the massing down but there is nothing like that on Broadway and in his view the hipped roof approach used in the earlier plan is superior.

Comm. Heneveld concurred with Comm. McDonald that it is a nice look but not for the Broadway Corridor. The step-up approach to the townhomes results in too much height. He is concerned that people will park on the site frontage. He would like to see the taller buildings placed toward the back of the site, with a reduction in building heights along Broadway.

Chair Felder stated that he shared many of the views expressed by his fellow Commissioners. While there were a lot of problems with the previous mixed-use proposals, it seems that several members of the Planning Commission may not be ready to give up on that concept. Because the property has a mixed-use zoning it does present an opportunity for the development of smaller, more affordable units, which is a direction that needs to be pursued. It is clear that the Commission still has concerns about the massing of the units adjoining Broadway. The long townhome element so close to the street is problematic. He would prefer to see smaller units that are set further back from the street.

Planning Director Goodison stated that it would be useful to hear whether the Planning Commission would support a 100% residential project, assuming that it included a substantially greater component of smaller units and was responsive to the other concerns that had been expressed.

Comm. Roberson stated that there should be greater diversity in unit sizes and even a greater intensity, but with reduced height and greater setbacks on Broadway.

Chair Felder asked for a straw poll:

Comms. Heneveld, Roberson, McDonald, Cribb, Wellander, Felder, Coleman stated that, in principle, they could support a purely residential project for the site.

Dan Diebold, the applicant, thanked the Planning Commission for its input.

Chair Willers returned to the dais.

Issues Update:

Staff distributed an issues update memo to the Planning Commission.

Comments from the Audience: None

Comm. Roberson made a motion to adjourn. Comm. Felder seconded. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 10, 2015

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Sonoma Planning Commission on the 10th day of December, 2015

Approved:

Cristina Morris, Administrative Assistant