

**CITY OF SONOMA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
May 14, 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, Felder, Coleman, McDonald (Alternate)

Absent:

Others Present: Planning Director Goodison, Stormwater Compliance Specialist, 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. Cribb led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Willers stated that Item #2 will not be heard tonight.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** David Cook, resident/Mayor of Sonoma, thanked all the commissioners for their community involvement and wished them well.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve the Minutes of April 9, 2015. Comm. Cribb seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. (Comms. Felder and McDonald abstained).

**CHANGES TO AGENDA ORDER:** None

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Late Mail was received on Items # 5 fence height requirements and Item # 2 is continued to the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting at the request of the applicant.

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**Item #1 –** Consideration of an Exception to the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standards to construct a replacement sunroom at the back of a residence at 422 York Court.

**Applicant/Property Owner: Amy Flores**

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Comm. Heneveld confirmed with staff that it was permitted in 1977.

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

Amy Flores, applicant, said the sunroom was one of the main selling features when she purchased the home. She spoke to neighbors and there was no opposition.

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

Comms. Felder and Cribb supported the sunroom since it improved the property and there is no negative impact to the neighbors.

Chair Willers is concerned with the modification since he felt allowing enclosures as solid buildings, based on FAR, is not the same as an enclosed built in space. His main concern is that there are many similar properties and this should not be the basis for allowing this modification. Although he recognized that the lot coverage is low on the site, he opposed the conversion of open carports to solid buildings.

Comm. Cribb made a motion to approve the application subject to the conditions of approval. Comm. Felder seconded. Ayes: Comms. Cribb, Felder, Wellander, Roberson Noes: Chair Willers, Comms. Heneveld and Coleman. The motion was approved 4-3.

**Item #2 –Public Hearing – 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 L.L.**

Item #2 is postponed to the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting at the request of the applicant.

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**Item #3 – Public Hearing – Consideration of a Use Permit to allow an existing residence to be operated as a vacation rental at 289 First Street East.**

**Applicant/Property Owner: Benchmark- Hoover L.L.C./City of Sonoma**

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

Comm. Roberson questioned if parking will be allowed on the dead end access road.

Planning Director Goodison will verify if parking for the vacation rental will be permitted in this area. The primary issue is making the findings to support a parking exception. The Development Code was amended to allow vacation rentals in the Park zone.

Comm. Cribb confirmed with staff that tandem parking is an option within the request for the parking exception. He recognized that although the property is not listed on the State Registry it is a locally significant historic resource. The property reverts back to the City in 20 years and the future use has to be within the limitations of the bequest; park or memorial.

Chair Willers inquired about a disabled parking space.

Comm. Heneveld confirmed that ADA upgrades were triggered with the major interior renovation.

Comm. Felder confirmed with Planning Director Goodison that the 20 year lease has no extension provision and that the rental payments will assist the City in making future improvements.

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

Sid Hoover, applicant, is pleased to operate a vacation rental and staff supported the change in use.

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

The Commissioners are satisfied that the project conformed to the Development Code and the terms of the bequest to the City of Sonoma.

Chair Willers felt that a second parking space is important given the vacation rental occupancy.

Comm. Roberson made a motion to approve a Use Permit for the vacation rental as submitted. Chair Willers seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

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**Item # 4 –Discussion– Consideration of an amendment to the Development Code as it pertains to the City’s legal authority and ability to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit 2013-001-DWQ, a permit regulating discharges of storm water runoff from the City’s storm drains to waters of the United States.**

Chris Pegg, Stormwater Compliance Specialist presented staff’s report.

He explained the background leading up to tonight’s discussion about amending the Development Code. The following are the changes proposed:

1. Modify open space requirements to promote development that provides open spaces with beneficial storm water and groundwater recharge impacts. (SMC 19.38.010 & 19.40.080)
2. Modify screening requirements for trash enclosures to better prevent stormwater pollution. (SMC 19.40.100)
3. Modify off-site parking requirements to close a loophole that may be exploited to reduce stormwater mitigation requirements for some development projects. (SMC 19.48.030)
4. Modify discretionary review requirements for wheel stops in parking lots when parking areas are adjacent to landscaped areas and drainage is directed to the landscaped area. (SMC 19.48.070)
5. Modify subdivision requirements to protect natural channels from a process called “hydro modification” whereby the shape and size of a natural channel is altered when it conveys increased flows due to storm drain improvements. (SMC 19.62.140)
6. Modify subdivision requirements to require off-site improvements if off-site storm water impacts to abutting properties cannot be mitigated on-site. (SMC 19.62.140)

Comm. Wellander asked about the pros and cons of the amendment and the changes to regulations for curbs in parking lots. .

Stormwater Compliance Specialist Pegg said a goal of the review was to identify unnecessary impediments for Developers. He identified the requirement for continuous curbs in parking lots to be in conflict with new requirements for parking lot drainage to be routed into landscaped areas before discharging to the storm drain system.

Planning Director Goodison noted that the design standard of the code addressed wheel stops and curbing.

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

Robert McDonald, resident/Commissioner, supported the new standards proposed and suggested that Public Works review stormwater and conservation measures during the Use Permit application process. He recommended that restaurant parking lots have grease traps.

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

Planning Director Goodison stated that Stormwater Compliance Specialist Pegg routinely visits construction sites to review stormwater mitigation measures. He responds to complaints from residents and commercial business owners and receives calls from Sonoma County Public Health.

Comm. Roberson encouraged residents to take advantage of the City's turf rebate program and is satisfied that the City is combining water conservation and stormwater efforts.

**Item #5 –Discussion – Review of possible changes to fence height regulations, including new permit requirements and penalties for illegal construction.**

Planning Director Goodison presented staff's report.

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

Patricia Cullinan, is disappointed that many fence companies continue to ignore the fencing regulations in Sonoma even though the rules are readily available.

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

Comm. Roberson is frustrated with contractors not following the height limits for fences.

Chair Willers recommended adjusting the fence ordinance and recommended an "over the counter" administrative review for fences. He is of the opinion that local fence companies should pay fines for building non-compliant fences.

The Commissioners felt there should be stricter enforcement and consequences for owners and fencing contractors that build non-compliant fences.

Comm. Coleman favored more accountability from the contractors.

Planning Director Goodison clarified that a building permit is not a prohibition for constructing a higher fence but fencing installers must meet the standards.

The consensus from the commissioners is for more oversight regarding fences with the potential for an administrative permit review before construction.

Comm. Wellander confirmed with staff that Planning Commission and Design Review and Historic Preservation review is required for decorative fences.

**Planning Director Goodison reported the following:**

The Chateau/Sonoma Hotel proposal initial study is underway and the Commission will review the scope of the EIR at a future meeting.

Staff is scheduled to meet with a new project manager for the mixed use development site at the corner of Broadway and East MacArthur Street.

**Commissioner comments:** None

**Comments from the Audience:** None

**Adjournment:** Chair Willers adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m. to the next meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 11, 2015.

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

Approved:

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Cristina Morris, Administrative Assistant