

**CITY OF CALISTOGA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, July 25, 2012  
5:30 PM  
Calistoga Community Center  
1307 Washington St., Calistoga, CA

Chairman Jeff Manfredi  
Vice Chairman Paul Coates  
Commissioner Carol Bush  
Commissioner Nicholas Kite  
Commissioner Walter Kusener

**“California Courts have consistently upheld that development is a privilege, not a right.”**

Among the most cited cases for this proposition are Associated Home Builders, Inc. v. City of Walnut Creek, 4 Cal.3d633 (1971) (no right to subdivide), and Trent Meredith, Inc. v. City of Oxnard, 114 Cal. App. 3d 317 (1981) (development is a privilege).

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:31 p.m.**

**A. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairman Jeff Manfredi, Vice Chairman Paul Coates, Commissioners Carol Bush, Nick Kite and Walter Kusener. **Absent:** None. **Staff Present:** Ken MacNab, Planning and Building Manager.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA**

**MOVED** by Commissioner Bush, seconded by Chairman Manfredi, to approve the meeting agenda of July 25, 2012.

The motion carried with the following vote:

- AYES: (5) Manfredi, Coates, Bush, Kite, Kusener
- NOES: (0)
- ABSTENTIONS: (0)
- ABSENT: (0)

**E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairman Manfredi noted communication received from Larry Kromann.

**F. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOVED** by Vice Chairman Coates, seconded by Chairman Manfredi, to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 11, 2012 as provided.

The motion carried with the following vote:

- AYES: (5) Manfredi, Coates, Bush, Kite, Kusener
- NOES: (0)
- ABSTENTIONS: (0)
- ABSENT: (0)

**G. TOUR OF INSPECTION**

None.

**H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

**I. NEW BUSINESS**

1. **CALISTOGA AFFORDABLE HOUSING (CDR 2012-02):** Review of conceptual plans to construct an 18-unit affordable housing project located at 611 Washington Street (APN 011-260-027) within the "R-3", Residential/Professional Office Zoning District. The applicant is Calistoga Affordable Housing on behalf of the property owner, Charles Gonzalez.

**Vice Chairman Coates** recused himself from this item because his business is located within 300 feet of the subject site.

**Planning Manager MacNab** gave the staff report.

**Larry Kromann**, President, Calistoga Affordable Housing, Inc. (Applicant). Mr. Kromann read correspondence submitted into the record.

**Eric Haesloop**, 1660 Bush Street, San Francisco (Project Architect). Mr. Haesloop presented the project, discussing in detail the various interests, issues and objectives that were considered in the design of the project.

**Chairman Manfredi** asked how it was determined to make the project 18 units. **Mr. Haesloop** responded that the initial target was 20 units and that 20 units was just too much for the site.

**Chairman Manfredi** asked Mr. Haesloop what his experience was with tandem parking. **Mr. Haesloop** responded that his experience is context

based and stated that tandem parking works in denser areas where people are used to it. Mr. Haesloop stated it's not an ideal situation but is workable.

**Chairman Manfredi** asked for clarification on the stairwells between units.

**Chairman Manfredi** asked Mr. Haesloop if he has worked with modular units before. **Mr. Haesloop** stated he has not worked with modular units before but has friends who have.

**Commissioner Kite** asked if consideration was given to arranging the units with tandem parking to allow drive through access. **Mr. Haesloop** stated that drive through access would work if they could have access to the driveway on the Shaw [adjoining] property.

**Commissioner Kite** commented on the large "tarmac" [paved] areas on both the Shaw property and the subject site.

**Mr. Haesloop** discussed design treatments that could be incorporated to minimize the "tarmac" effect.

**Chairman Manfredi** asked for clarification on how garbage service will be accommodated by the site plan.

**Commissioner Kusener** asked if garbage collection would occur once or twice a week.

**Commissioner Kusener** commented that the garbage collection area was too close to the picnic area and suggested relocation more towards the front of the site to eliminate the need for garbage trucks to drive through the site.

**Commissioner Kusener** expressed the following concerns: (1) the central aisle looks like an alleyway; (2) safety of children playing in the alleyway; (3) the density of the project; and (4) a shortage of parking.

**Commissioner Kusener** asked Mr. Haesloop if there are any ADA issues with the project. **Mr. Haesloop** responded that the project will provide ADA accessible units and will be in compliance with ADA requirements.

**Commissioner Kusener** asked if consideration had been given to using the roofs of the units to provide additional outdoor space for residents. **Mr. Haesloop** responded that roof gardens are great but very expensive to provide.

**Commissioner Kusener** asked for clarification on the size of the proposed porch spaces and whether the size would really accommodate usable space.

**Commissioner Kite** asked if the porch roofs would be impermeable.

**Commissioner Kite** expressed concern that the porches would become cluttered with storage of personal belongings. **Mr. Haesloop** acknowledged this concern and said that it is a management issue. **Mr. Haesloop** also noted that the porches have shutter enclosures.

**Chairman Manfredi** commented that the use of porches for storage is an issue in Calistoga, noting instances where porches have been covered/enclosed with blue tarps.

**Commissioner Bush** asked what the height of the three story structure is. **Mr. Haesloop** responded that the height was approximately 27 feet and explained why.

**Commissioner Bush** asked for confirmation that the smallest unit is a two bedroom and that there will be a manager on site.

**Chairman Manfredi** polled the Planning Commission on question of whether the project warranted rezoning to PD.

**Planning Manager MacNab** informed the Commission that the applicant does have the option of seeking "concessions" [exceptions] from the City's zoning requirements under the State's density bonus law and that staff's preference would be to accommodate zoning exceptions through the PD zoning process rather than through the State's density bonus law.

**Commissioner Kite** asked Planning Manager MacNab to remind the Commission when application of PD zoning is appropriate. **Planning Manager MacNab** responded that PD zoning is appropriate when it accommodates an exceptional site plan and/or results in some other public benefit.

**Commissioner Kusener** asked for clarification on what "net usable land" is. **Planning Manager MacNab** responded that net usable land is the amount of site area remaining after land dedications for public uses (such as streets) have been subtracted.

**Commissioner Kusener** asked for confirmation that the proposed density is allowable under the General Plan and zoning. **Planning Manager MacNab** confirmed that it was.

**Commissioner Kite** asked if the exceptions needed to accommodate the project as proposed could be granted through a variance process. **Planning Manager MacNab** stated that they could but would require a finding that there is a physical feature unique to the property that prevents compliance with the base zoning district standards. Mr. MacNab stated that he did not know if the necessary findings for approval of a variance could be made.

**Commissioner Kite** stated he believes affordable housing does provide a sufficient basis for granting a PD zoning district.

**Chairman Manfredi** stated that he supported the PD zoning approach and believes it is warranted. No objections to using the PD zoning approach were stated by other Commissioners.

**Chairman Manfredi** invited public comment on the project.

**Deiter Deiss**, 3000 Palisades Road. Mr. Deiss made the following comments regarding the proposed project:

- Suggested that the applicant consider flipping the buildings so that the three-story structures were on the south side of the property and the two story structures were on the north side. This would allow for greater exposure of the existing Oak tree on the north side of the property.
- Encouraged the applicant to explore the possibility of creating parking access on the outer edge of the property to decompress the feel of the central corridor area.
- Commended the applicant use of architectural massing to break up the building mass.
- Encouraged the applicant and staff to view the project in the context of the whole lower Washington Street area – not just one site – and to consider mixed use development.

Mr. Deiss expressed concern that the project as designed would turn the area into an area of “have nots”.

**Scott Sherber**, owner of property at Anna and Washington. Mr. Sherber concurred with comments that it is important for this project to be designed in consideration of the greater area. Mr. Sherber stated his opinion that this will be a defining project for the area. As proposed, Mr. Sherber does not believe the project will encourage future investment in the area. Mr.

Sherber stated he thought the height of the project should be reduced and the number of units should be reduced.

**Chairman Manfredi** brought the project back to the Commission for individual Commissioner comments.

**Commissioner Kusener** stated he agrees with Mr. Deiss's comments.

**Commissioner Kusener** believes the "stacking" issue is something that needs to be addressed. Mr. Kusener also expressed concern about the density of the project, use of the outdoor areas for storage and the lack of on-site parking.

**Commissioner Kusener** asked the architect for clarification on whether each unit would have its own storage area.

**Commissioner Kite** stated he likes the false-fronts and use of porches to break up the massing and provision of a recreational area near the river.

**Commissioner Kite** stated he did not like that the focal point of the project is the parking lot. Mr. Kite encouraged the applicant to consider ways to make the central area a more community-oriented space – possibly by providing access to parking along the edge of the site or by staggering the building footprints to break up the building plane.

**Commissioner Bush** concurred with Commissioner Kite's comment to consider looking at making the central area more of a community space and not an area for cars. Ms. Bush also encouraged consideration of moving the trash enclosure more towards the front of the project site.

**Chairman Manfredi** stated that he generally concurs with the comments made by other Commissioners. Mr. Manfredi stated that he thought the project was too dense and expressed concern about there being an insufficient amount of parking on site.

**Chairman Manfredi** responded to the request from Larry Kromann to comment on defining the small town concept. Mr. Manfredi noted that the Urban Design Plan envisions the lower Washington area as an area of mixed use development and stated he would like the applicant to consider a mixed use project.

**Chairman Manfredi** reiterated his concern about the density of the project, noting that the density is driving many of the design concerns that the Commission has.

**Mr. Kromann** responded to the comments on density by informing the Commission that 18 units is the minimum number of units needed to make the project financially feasible. Mr. Kromann speculated that the challenge of making higher density projects work is probably the reason why Calistoga hasn't had more affordable housing projects.

**Mr. Kromann** noted that the Commission's concern about parking could be resolved if all of the units had "tuck under" parking.

**Commissioner Kusener** noted Mr. Kromann's comments on the financial challenges of the project and commented on the City's impact fees. Mr. Kusener asked if the City's fees are negotiable.

**Mr. Kromann** noted that they are seeking a Development Agreement with the City and hope to be able to negotiate payment of impact fees.

**Mr. Kromann** stated that the density of the project could be lowered if there was funding to offset the costs. Mr. Kromann noted that the availability of funding through federal, state and local sources is in decline.

**Commissioner Kusener** asked about the benefits of going to two three story structures.

**Mr. Kromann** responded that it would solve the parking problem and that it would allow provision of more common area in the central portion of the project site. Mr. Kromann also stated two three-story buildings would also have financial benefits.

**Commissioner Kusener** suggested that staff look at ways be creative in moving this project forward.

**Planning Manager MacNab** asked the project architect if, in light of the Commission's comments, a "garden apartment" design approach work for the site.

**Mr. Haesloop** responded that this design approach was considered and explained that two access corridors along the edges of the project site significantly diminishes the amount of space left for a central common area.

**Chairman Manfredi** asked the hypothetical question that if the City was able to waive impact fees could the density of the project be reduced to 12 to 14 units. **Mr. Kromann** stated that such a reduction only gets the project half way in bridging the funding gap that would be created if the density was reduced.

**Chairman Manfredi** acknowledged the need for housing in the community but that there is only so much you can do with the property. Mr. Manfredi suggested that the application explore impact fee discussions with the City.

**Chairman Manfredi** reiterated his support of comments encouraging consideration of a mixed use project.

**Mr. Kromann** stated that CAH is not a for-profit developer and is not in a position to be able to subsidize commercial space.

**Mr. Deiss** suggested that the Commission should set design criteria requiring a safe space for children to play in. Mr. Deiss also suggested a design treatment that would place some of the parking partially or wholly below grade.

**Chairman Manfredi** polled the Commission on the question of whether the project should be required to dedicate an easement for future construction of a bike path along the Napa River. The consensus of the Commission was that an easement should be dedicated.

**Commissioner Bush** stated that there is a need for affordable housing and recognized the challenges. Ms. Bush stated that collaboration will be needed.

**J. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS**

None.

**K. COMMENTS/PROJECT STATUS**

**Planning Manager MacNab** noted that staff has provided the Planning Commission with updated copies of the Land Use, Community Identity and Circulation Elements of the General Plan.

**Planning Manager MacNab** announced that the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting of August 8, 2012 was going to be cancelled.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED** by Chairman Manfredi, seconded by Commissioner Bush, to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission on August 22, 2012.

The motion carried with the following vote:



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- AYES: (4) Manfredi, Bush, Kite, Kusener
- NOES: (0)
- ABSTENTIONS: (0)
- ABSENT: (1) Coates

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:04 p.m.**

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Ken MacNab,  
Planning Commission Secretary