

# MINUTES

## CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION

June 12, 2013

1 The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

2 **A. ROLL CALL**

3 Commissioners present: Chairman Jeff Manfredi, Vice Chairman Paul Coates,  
4 Walter Kusener, Carol Bush, Scott Cooper. Staff present: Planning & Building  
5 Director Lynn Goldberg, Senior Planner Erik Lundquist.

6 **B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

7 **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

8 There were no public comments.

9 **D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA**

10 On a motion by **Commissioner Bush** and seconded by **Vice Chairman Coates**,  
11 the meeting agenda of June 12, 2013 was unanimously adopted as presented.

12 **E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

13 None.

14 **F. CONSENT CALENDAR**

15 1. Minutes for the May 22, 2013 Planning Commission meeting

16 A motion by **Commissioner Bush** and seconded by **Chairman Manfredi**,  
17 to approve the May 22, 2013 Minutes, as presented, carried unanimously.

18 **G. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

19 1. **CALISTOGA FAMILY APARTMENTS (VA 2013-04, CUP 2013-03 & DR**  
20 **2013-04):** Consideration of a variance application to allow reduced front  
21 and street centerline setbacks, and conditional use permit and design  
22 review applications for a 56-unit apartment complex at 1715 Washington  
23 Street

24 **Senior Planner Lundquist** presented the staff report and provided an  
25 overview of the project. He noted that the variance for the Washington  
26 Street centerline setback would actually be 40 feet instead of 42 feet. He  
27 recommended adoption of the project's mitigated negative declaration of  
28 environmental impact and approval of the variance, use permit and design  
29 review applications.

30 **Chairman Manfredi** opened the public hearing.

31 **Justin Hardt**, Corporation for Better Housing, thanked staff for its  
32 assistance with this project. The final project design responds to the  
33 Commission's comments on the preliminary design, including the

34 provision of adequate parking and the elimination of the access gate. The  
35 project is unique in terms of its amenity-rich location near schools, Logvy  
36 Park and the downtown. It would redevelop a blighted site and remove  
37 toxic materials from the existing building. They would likely build 48 units  
38 initially so that they can secure funding immediately, reserving the ability  
39 to construct the remaining 8 units at a later date. Construction would begin  
40 at the beginning of 2014, with occupancy at the end of that year. They are  
41 anticipating building a LEED Platinum development. They are also  
42 pursuing a U.S. Department of Energy's Builders Challenge recognition for  
43 energy efficiency, and incorporating water conservation measures and  
44 solar energy generation into the project. He reviewed the company's  
45 history and the projects it has developed. The company will manage the  
46 project and will not sell it. There will be an on-site manager, assistant  
47 manager and maintenance staff. A regional manager will visit the project  
48 on a weekly basis. They will provide resident services, including after-  
49 school homework clubs and classes, to engage the residents on-site and  
50 build a feeling of community. He presented a color rendering of a building,  
51 as well as color and material samples. Each unit will be provided with  
52 appliances, including refrigerators and dishwashers, and granite  
53 countertops. In response to a question from **Chairman Manfredi**, he  
54 reviewed the proposed riparian enhancement zone, in which they will  
55 remove dead, decaying and non-native trees and shrubbery, and replace  
56 it with suitable vegetation. They have been working with Fish and Wildlife  
57 on the plan.

58 **Jim Barnes** thinks it looks like a beautiful project. He asked whether it  
59 was the company's policy to use local contractors and sub-contractors  
60 when possible.

61 **Henrietta Steinrueck**, 1613 Washington, asked whether any studies had  
62 been done on the project's impacts on traffic and wildlife.

63 **Pat Samoun**, 1417 Lake, doesn't feel the project fits into the design of the  
64 neighborhood and that it isn't compatible with the single-family residences  
65 in the vicinity. It will be right up on the street. She is concerned about the  
66 addition of the project traffic and that it will be nuisance to the park. The  
67 density is too high. Air pollution will increase because of the increased  
68 traffic. The affordable housing in the neighborhood is not well maintained  
69 and there is no one to call when there is a problem. She also wonders if  
70 the developer is going to use local contractors.

71 **Joseph Schneider**, 1311 Gold Street, thinks the project is appropriate for  
72 the neighborhood. However, he is concerned about the density and the  
73 number of vehicles and residents that the project would generate. He  
74 questions whether post-construction run-off will actually be the same as  
75 pre-construction, since the amount of impervious surface will increase. He  
76 hopes that the project is required to preserve and protect the trees. He

77 would like to see peer review of the final arborist report. There is no  
78 identification of the arborist's qualifications number in the project arborist  
79 report. The proposed use of sycamore trees is not appropriate because  
80 that species is susceptible to disease. He doesn't believe the riparian  
81 enhancement will be allowed by Fish & Wildlife or County Flood Control.

82 **Alain Samoun**, Lake Street, would like to know if the project will be for  
83 renters or owners, and what the rents or prices will be.

84 **Chairman Manfredi** closed the public hearing and asked for questions  
85 from the Commission.

86 **Commissioner Kusener** asked if there would be involvement from  
87 tenants as to how the project will be managed. There will be issues with  
88 so many people living on site. It's important that the tenants feel there is  
89 an interest in their welfare.

90 **Ben Lingo**, President of Corporation for Better Housing, responded that  
91 they have tenant councils at many of their projects, and they will offer it at  
92 this one. The units will be affordable for 55 years. This project may provide  
93 the impetus for other apartment projects in town to upgrade. He explained  
94 how rents are determined and how they will change over time. The units  
95 will be designated for families that earn between 30 to 60% of area  
96 median income, with incomes ranging from \$24,000 to \$48,000. The rents  
97 will depend on family and unit size. The applicants are required to go  
98 through a stringent application process, including income, background and  
99 criminal checks. A wrought-iron fence will be constructed around the  
100 project periphery.

101 **Commissioner Kusener** asked if there is an opportunity to provide a  
102 bridge over the river between the project and the elementary school to  
103 reduce traffic. He would like to see a cooperative approach among all the  
104 parties.

105 **Mr. Lundquist** explained that the bridge is not included in the General  
106 Plan as a future connection. A potential connection to Gold Street was  
107 discussed and it may occur in the future. At this time there is no  
108 requirement of the project except for the dedication of a pathway  
109 easement along the river, consistent with the General Plan. Once the  
110 easements are acquired, sections of pathway will be constructed.

111 **Mr. Lingo** advised that they had pursued the idea of a bridge with Fish &  
112 Wildlife, but they had received a negative response. However, they are  
113 committed to constructing the off-site sidewalk and crosswalks to promote  
114 walking to school.

115 **Chairman Manfredi** concurred that the bridge is a great idea, but the  
116 same question came up during preparation of the Logvy Park master plan,  
117 and Fish & Wildlife was not supportive of the idea.

118 **Commissioner Cooper** noted that only a small portion of the project  
119 faces onto Washington Street; most of the project faces Logvy Park and  
120 the river. He asked if it would be possible to plant additional trees along  
121 the project's western property line to enhance the visual buffer. The  
122 project's commitment to the LEED program will minimize pollution. It's  
123 good to have input of a local arborist that is familiar with species that are  
124 appropriate. He can't think of a better use of the site.

125 **Mr. Lingo** stated that he is agreeable to planting additional trees if there is  
126 adequate room. They are seeking LEED Platinum status, which is the  
127 highest level. He has no problem with peer review by a local arborist prior  
128 to building permit. The property is zoned for the intended use, and the  
129 project is far below the maximum allowable density. The site is a very  
130 walkable location, which will reduce vehicle traffic. Potential traffic impacts  
131 were studied as part of the project's environmental review. It is very rare  
132 for tenant families to own two cars, based on his experience with their  
133 other projects. The project management can organize supervised walking  
134 trips to the school for school-age tenants to avoid unnecessary car trips.

135 **Commissioner Bush** asked if staff had checked the developer's  
136 references for maintenance and management. **Mr. Lundquist** responded  
137 that he had checked with the City of Oakley, where the developer has  
138 several projects, and staff there gave a stellar reference. **Commissioner**  
139 **Bush** noted that it is very dark at night in the project vicinity. She  
140 encouraged the provision of sufficient project lighting for safety. She likes  
141 the idea of softening the project's street frontage with as much greenery  
142 as possible. She encouraged the use of local contractors by the  
143 developer. She thinks it is a great project, in a wonderful location for  
144 families.

145 **Vice-Chairman Coates** believes that having live-in management is critical  
146 and will help minimize potential noise and safety problems. He supports  
147 the idea of getting input from a local arborist. Drainage retention on the  
148 project site isn't a concern because of the stringent regulations. It is  
149 encouraging that the company has never sold a project. The project is a  
150 huge benefit to the community and is certainly needed. He's not crazy  
151 about the proposed yellow and red colors.

152 **Chairman Manfredi** asked Mr. Lingo to respond to questions posed by  
153 the public.

154 **Mr. Lingo** stated that in terms of the project's potential impacts on wildlife,  
155 there has been a biological and wetlands study for the project, and  
156 impacts have been addressed as far as possible.

157 **Mr. Lundquist** clarified that the estimated project vehicle trips in the  
158 report had been double-counted and the number of trips will actually be  
159 half that number. In terms of levels of service at intersections, they are

160 operating at LOS A, and the project will not reduce the levels to an  
161 unacceptable level, so mitigation is not needed. He reviewed the  
162 measures that are being taken to facilitate pedestrian traffic, which is  
163 another important type of traffic. A letter was submitted by Caltrans,  
164 stating a concern with project impacts on regional intersections; however,  
165 the City has made a determination that traffic impacts are not to be  
166 addressed at those intersections.

167 **Chairman Manfredi** asked about the number of potential project residents  
168 and the rents that will be charged. **Mr. Lingo** replied that there will be  
169 approximately 160 residents, based on industry standards. Rents will  
170 range from \$450 to \$1250 per month. They will change based on numbers  
171 provided by the County and are roughly tied to CPI changes. He hopes  
172 that any concerns after occupancy are directed to the on-site manager.  
173 There will be a long waiting list for this project, and bad tenants will be  
174 evicted. In their experience, the tenants are grateful to live in good  
175 housing with amenities at affordable rents, so they are unlikely to cause  
176 problems. The project colors echo a Craftsman feel and the look of Solage  
177 Resort. He is confident they will look nice and be appealing. They go in  
178 and out of style and will change over time.

179 **Chairman Manfredi** noted that the project's lot coverage is very low and  
180 substantially below what is allowed. It is not front-loaded and four stories  
181 high on Washington. He asked about the developer's policy regarding the  
182 use of local contractors.

183 **Mr. Lingo** noted that they attempted to blend the project's design in with  
184 the neighborhood. They aren't trying to cram in as many units as possible.  
185 They primarily use one general contractor that they have worked with  
186 extensively, but will use as many local sub-contractors and local building  
187 suppliers as possible.

188 **Chairman Manfredi** suggested that a condition be added requiring the  
189 project's final arborist report and recommendations to be peer reviewed.

190 **Mr. Lundquist** suggested that a condition be added to use an appropriate  
191 tree species instead of sycamore. The project's riparian enhancement will  
192 be subject to Fish & Wildlife review through a 1600 permit; he therefore is  
193 very confident that it will be done appropriately.

194 **Chairman Manfredi** would like to add conditions to add more landscape  
195 screening on Washington Street, require a supervisor for children walking  
196 to school, and use lighting that minimizes impacts on the night sky.

197 In response to a question from **Commissioner Kusener**, Mr. Lingo  
198 responded that they are not planning to designate visitor parking because  
199 the project is sufficiently parked. They will assign some if it proves to be  
200 necessary in the future. He doesn't believe that off-site parking will be a  
201 problem.

202 **Commissioner Kusener** agrees that the proposed yellow color is too  
203 bright and would like something softer. He asked how the project will help  
204 the City meet its affordable housing requirements and whether drainage  
205 will adequately be addressed by the project design.

206 **Mr. Lingo** believes that with greenery and shadowing, the colors won't be  
207 as bright as shown on the renderings.

208 **Mr. Lundquist** explained that the project will meet the city's lower-income  
209 housing need, but the City still needs to address moderate and above-  
210 moderate housing needs. On-site retention will meter it out run-off at the  
211 same flow at the same point of discharge into the river. The applicant has  
212 requested the ability to construct 48 units initially. Therefore, revised  
213 wording for condition of approval No. 1 has been distributed to the  
214 Commission that reflects the option of constructing fewer units if required  
215 by project funding, with construction of the remaining units deferred to a  
216 possible second phase. He suggests adding a prohibition against using  
217 sycamores to condition No. 11. He will continue to work with the applicant  
218 on colors.

219 A motion by **Commissioner Bush** and seconded by **Commissioner**  
220 **Kusener** to adopt a resolution adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration,  
221 finding that with the inclusion of mitigation measures, the project will not  
222 have a significant adverse impact on the environment, carried  
223 unanimously.

224 A motion by **Vice Chairman Coates** and seconded by **Commissioner**  
225 **Bush** to adopt a resolution approving variance, conditional use permit and  
226 design review applications allowing a 56-unit apartment complex located  
227 at 1715 Washington Street, as amended, carried unanimously.

228 **Henrietta Steinrueck** believes that none of the concerns expressed by  
229 the public at the meeting have been adequately addressed. She is  
230 concerned about children crossing the street; there are many hazards,  
231 including speeding cars on the street. She is concerned about how many  
232 people will live in the project and how many cars there will be. There will  
233 be many more than the applicant says and there will be no way of  
234 guaranteeing that there will be the number that the applicant suggests.

235 **Mr. Lundquist** believes that Ms. Steinrueck misunderstands the sidewalk  
236 and crosswalk improvements that will be constructed by the project, which  
237 will actually improve safety. He offered to meet with her after the meeting  
238 to explain them.

239 **H. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS**

240 None.

241

242 **I. DIRECTOR REPORT**

243 Planning Director Goldberg advised the Commission that a community meeting  
244 will be held on June 20th on the draft right to farm ordinance, which will be heard  
245 by the Commission in July.

246 **J. ADJOURNMENT**

247 On a motion by Chairman Manfredi and seconded by Commissioner Bush, the  
248 Commission unanimously adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m. to June 26, 2013.

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Lynn Goldberg  
Planning Commission Secretary