

# MINUTES

## CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION

April 22, 2015

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

### A. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Chair Jeff Manfredi, Vice Chair Carol Bush, and Commissioners Scott Cooper, Paul Coates, Tim Wilkes. Absent: None. Staff present: Planning & Building Director Lynn Goldberg, Senior Planner Erik Lundquist.

### B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

### D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA

The meeting agenda of April 22, 2015 was accepted as presented.

### E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

None.

### F. CONSENT CALENDAR

#### 1. Commission Minutes

The March 25, 2015 minutes were unanimously adopted as presented.

### G. PUBLIC HEARINGS

#### 1. **George Caravas Setback Variance VA 2015-2:** Consideration of a variance to enlarge and replace an existing pump house 5 feet 6 inches from the front property line at 2309 Grant Street

**Senior Planner Lundquist** presented the staff report for the item. The property owner has constructed a 10-foot high, 144 square-foot replacement pump house and water tank storage shed within the property's required front yard setback without the proper authorization. He has requested approval of a variance to the 20-foot setback requirement to reduce it to 5 feet, 6 inches. Staff recommends denial of the request because there is insufficient factual basis to support the mandatory findings for approval.

**Chair Manfredi** opened the public hearing.

**George Caravas**, applicant, explained the purpose of the subject structure. The existing well head cannot be relocated and constructing a separate structure for the water storage tank would be impractical. He was unaware of the setback requirement. In response to questions from **Commissioner Wilkes**, Mr. Caravas stated that he was unaware that he needed a building permit for the structure. He is building it himself and has pulled permits for all of the other improvements on

his property. His goal is to put everything under one roof so he won't have to maintain two buildings and it is more attractive to have just one structure. He is also trying to screen the structure from view.

**Chair Manfredi** closed the public hearing.

**Commissioner Coates** observed that the structure could be put almost anywhere on the property and it was not allowed by the City's regulations in the front yard setback to begin with.

**Commissioner Wilkes** opined that the applicant is asking for forgiveness, not permission. He agrees with Commissioner Coates that it is not necessary for the holding tank to be located in the same location as the well head; there are numerous examples throughout the community of holding tanks located separately from the well head structure. The variance findings that the Commission has to make are required by the State. If the Commission were to grant this variance without sufficient support from the findings, it would have to grant it to the next applicant. He cannot find sufficient reason for granting the variance, since the hardship was created by the applicant.

**Commissioner Cooper** recognized the effort and cost of relocating the structure, and that a different location may not be as aesthetically pleasing, but that concern doesn't trump the Municipal Code's requirements.

**Chair Manfredi** reminded the Commission that it cannot consider cost as a consideration in acting on variance applications.

A motion by **Commissioner Wilkes** to deny the variance application was seconded by **Vice Chair Bush** and approved unanimously. Planning and Building Director Goldberg advised the applicant of his right to appeal the Commission's decision to the City Council within 10 days.

- 2. Rancho de Calistoga Setback Variance VA 2015-1 & Design Review DR 2015-1:** Consideration of a variance to construct a new clubhouse office and social hall within the required 30-foot front yard setback at 2412 Foothill Boulevard, and a design review request for the construction of the new structures

**Vice Chair Bush** stated that she had to recuse herself from acting on the applications because her residence is within 500 feet of the subject property and left the meeting.

**Mr. Lundquist** presented the staff report for the item. A variance is requested to allow portions of the proposed buildings to be located within the required 30-foot front yard setback, specifically a 17-foot setback at the southeastern corner of the social hall wing and 24-foot 6-inch setback from the southeastern corner of the office wing. Because Cedar Street functions more as a private roadway and has a rural character, setbacks of 15 to 20 feet would be appropriate. As such, staff agrees with the project proponents and finds that the unique circumstances and the site constraints justify the requested variance. The project otherwise conforms with the Zoning Code's development regulations. The design elements

of the new structures are internally compatible, unlike the existing buildings, and Staff believes the proposed palette of colors, textures and materials is attractive and compatible with the existing development and the neighborhood.

In response to question from **Commissioner Wilkes**, Mr. Lundquist responded that the property between the mobile home park and Foothill Boulevard is a separate parcel. It's zoned R-2, which allows single-family and duplex dwellings, and the City has not received any applications for its development to date.

**Chair Manfredi** opened the public hearing.

**Dean Moser**, representing HCA Management Co., explained that they would like to update the park's facilities and create a more pleasant environment for the park residents by providing such features as better amplified sound, large screen TVs and an exercise room. They will be using local contractors for the project.

**Nir Pearlson**, project architect, noted that City staff had been very accessible and helpful throughout the application and review process. He believes that there is compatibility between the City's mission statement and the project. It will be an asset to the residents as well as the city by presenting an attractive face to the public. Their design priorities were minimizing impacts on the site's trees, existing infrastructure and neighboring residents; and providing a public walkway with some protection for pedestrians. The design reflects vernacular forms and materials common to Calistoga. The color palette is not flashy. They also wanted to create buffers between the buildings and the street, and screen the private pool and spa area with buildings instead of a large fence.

**Commissioner Wilkes** complimented the project's composition. The layout maintains the same building orientation to the street as the Pond House and makes it more of a compound by knitting the buildings together. He supports the setback variance, especially because if the average building setbacks were calculated, they would exceed the minimum requirement. However, the Pond House and manager's house use warm colors that differ from the proposed cool colors for the new structures. He suggested that the architect team work with staff to revise them to be more compatible, with the final colors selected prior to building permit issuance. He is also concerned about the proposed use of the ledge stone style, since the vast majority of stone in the community is rubble stone, with some river rock. Mr. Pearlson stated that he would be amendable to working with staff to select appropriate colors and style of stone. Mr. Lundquist suggested that they could be brought to the Commission for review if any concerns arise during the selection of the final colors and stone.

**Chair Manfredi** closed the public hearing.

**Commissioner Coates** agreed with Commissioner Wilkes' comments. He is happy to see the park being upgraded.

**Commissioner Cooper** expressed support for the team effort by the applicant and staff.

**Chair Manfredi** likes the compound look and the public view from Foothill Boulevard that will be created.

A motion by **Chair Manfredi** to adopt a resolution approving Design Review DR 2015-1 and Variance 2015-1, was seconded by **Commissioner Cooper** and approved unanimously with the following additional design review condition:

Prior to building permit issuance, the proposed exterior colors and materials shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning and Building Department. The colors shall be harmonious with the adjoining structures and an appropriate style of stone shall be used.

#### **H. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS**

None.

#### **I. DIRECTOR REPORT**

Mr. Lundquist informed the Commission that he is in the process of addressing the concerns expressed by Commissioner Cooper at the last meeting regarding the condition of the property near the intersection of Wappo and Grant.

Planning & Building Director Goldberg requested that the Commission cancel its May 13th meeting due to a lack of items that are ready for its consideration, and the Commission concurred.

#### **J. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

  
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Lynn Goldberg, Secretary