

MINUTES
CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
March 13, 2019

A. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Vice Chair Tim Wilkes, Alissa McNair, Scott Cooper.
Absent: Chair Paul Coates, Walter Abernathy (excused). Staff present: Planning and Building Director Lynn Goldberg, Senior Planner Zach Tusinger.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA

The meeting agenda of March 13, 2019 was adopted as presented.

E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

None

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes Approval: Draft minutes for the February 27, 2019 meeting

The consent calendar was adopted as presented.

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. CAMi Wine Tasting – Use Permit UP 2019-6: Consideration of a use permit application to allow wine tasting at 1333 B Lincoln Avenue

Senior Planner Tusinger presented the staff report. He noted that the proposed wine tasting would be a component of an art gallery and olive oil business, and recommended approval of the use permit.

In response to a question from **Commissioner McNair**, Mr. Tusinger confirmed that condition of approval #3 was properly worded.

Vice Chair Wilkes opened the public hearing.

Laurie Shelton, applicant, presented an inspiration board representing her proposed business. She reviewed her background in art and noted that she is a longtime local resident. She plans on painting the building a bright white, with black trim and flowering window boxes. The inside will be completely white in order to highlight the art. She will keep the rent at a reasonable rate for the other tenant in the building. She hopes to have the business open seven days a week.

Commissioner Cooper appreciates the effort she's putting into the building.

In response to questions, Ms. Shelton said that she will only be pouring her own limited-production wines. The business will primarily be an art gallery.

Vice Chair Wilkes reminded the applicant that the Commission was only considering her use permit application, and that she needs to work with staff on any changes to the exterior of the building.

Vice Chair Wilkes closed the public hearing.

Commissioner McNair appreciates that the business will be primarily an art gallery, with wine tasting as a secondary use. She encouraged the applicant to keep the business open daily.

Vice Chair Wilkes supports approval of the use permit, since the business will primarily be a gallery that happens to pour wine.

A motion by **Commissioner Cooper** and seconded by **Vice Chair Wilkes** to adopt a resolution approving Use Permit UP 2019-6 was approved unanimously.

- 2. Calistoga Distillery – Conceptual Design Review CDR 2019-1:** Review of a conceptual design review application for development of a distillery, bar, brewery and accompanying design changes for an existing building at 1345 Lincoln Avenue and an adjacent vacant parcel

Senior Planner Tusinger presented the staff report, noting that the applicants propose to seismically retrofit the building in a completely-interior manner. If the project moves forward, staff will confirm access to the vacant property at the rear, as well as infrastructure demands and requirements. In response to questions from **Vice Chair Wilkes**, Mr. Tusinger replied that some in-lieu parking spaces were purchased for the site in the past, and the proposed uses would actually reduce the parking demand.

Vice Chair Wilkes opened the public hearing.

John Hardesty, applicant, is a former Calistoga resident. As CEO of Hundred Acre Wine Group, he prides himself on authentic work. He appreciates the design of the subject building and its place in Calistoga's history, and plans to avoid the shotcrete approach to retrofitting it. The project will be a showpiece for Calistoga, with brass distillery equipment, and activate the alley by reopening the bricked-up windows. He wants to keep the rear parcel as open as possible and tie into the future Sharpsteen Plaza. He hopes to preserve the existing palm tree. The operation will be a long-term use that is authentic to Calistoga.

Neil Ginty, William Duff Architects (WDA), presented an overview of the project site and the proposed uses. He displayed layout alternatives for a potential future brewery building on the now-vacant parcel. Their firm has experience with the seismic retrofit of other historic buildings.

David Plotkin, WDA, believes there is an agreement with the City that provides access from Washington Street to the vacant parcel.

Mark Young, former co-owner of Brannan's Grill, is excited about the project. It would be a positive addition to the town by providing something of great interest to visitors.

Penelope Worsham, Calistoga resident, is concerned about empty storefronts downtown and the proliferation of wine tasting rooms. She thinks we're losing the town's uniqueness and is concerned about inebriated visitors. She wonders what the Commission's vision is for the town. It needs to remain special.

Andrew Wild, Lake Street, thinks the project would be a great asset for the town. Unfortunately, the former retail uses in the building need to vacate the premises regardless of the proposed project because of the required retrofit. He is familiar with operations worldwide that are similar to the proposal and they are very successful. The tasting garden would be a positive addition.

Jeff Feeney, realtor for the property's sale, noted that the subject building is iconic and the project will bring people to the downtown because it will create an experience that can't be achieved on-line. This would be an anchor for the downtown and encourage other businesses to locate there.

Commissioner Mc Nair is relieved to hear that more of the building's original façade would be preserved by the project. In terms of the type of retail that would occupy the front of the building, she would like to see something similar to the businesses that are vacating the building. She strongly encouraged the applicant to provide on-site parking rather than pay an in-lieu fee. She pointed out the opportunity for possible enhancement of the building's southern façade, because the adjoining building there will be demolished, or possible incorporation of the future vacant parcel into the project.

John Hardesty doesn't know what type of business will occupy the retail space; they may sell their own products there. It's a placeholder at this point, but whatever ends up there would complement the other proposed uses. He noted that the copper stills will be handmade pieces of art fabricated in Kentucky. He understands the project will need to make infrastructure improvements.

Commissioner Cooper appreciates the applicant's enthusiasm and the impressive design and engineering team he has assembled. He urged them to be mindful of potential noise impacts associated with late hours of operation and consider how potential special events would be handled. He is happy that they are seeking input from the Commission at the project's conceptual stage.

Vice Chair Wilkes hopes the project's retail component is more substantial than shot glasses. The project site is a very unique property in close proximity to the river and future pedestrian bridge, with a potential connection to the future plaza. He encourages the applicant to keep the potential brewery building close to Washington Street and face it toward the river. He supports enhancement of the alley as a way to draw people to the back of the site. Regarding public concern about additional downtown tasting rooms, he acknowledges that it is an ongoing concern and anticipates a time when there will not be support for future tasting rooms. However, downtown businesses can't rely solely on the local community because many households have limited incomes.

In response to questions from **Vice Chair Wilkes**, Mr. Hardesty explained that the brewing system would be the same as the one used at Calistoga Inn, which doesn't produce any odors. The distillery discharge would be 40 feet high and the odors would not be detectable outside. The only noise generated by the project would be from trucks; there would be none associated with the operations themselves.

Penelope Worsham agrees that many residents can't afford to patronize downtown businesses. There have also been negative impacts to the downtown's economy from the 2017 fires. She is concerned about whether there is an adequate water supply for the proposed project.

Vice Chair Wilkes noted that the water supply for the project will be evaluated as part of the formal application and closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Wilkes encouraged the project to move forward. He is happy that the shotcrete approach to the building retrofit will be avoided.

Mr. Hardesty noted that not only will the building be preserved, it will be enhanced. They have been looking for a distillery location for 10 years and have finally found one.

H. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS

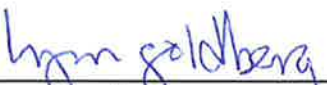
None

I. DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Goldberg advised the Commission that agenda packets would now be available three days earlier than has been the past practice, consistent with the new City Council schedule.

J. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.



Lynn Goldberg, Secretary