

MINUTES
CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
March 27, 2019

A. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Chair Paul Coates, Vice Chair Tim Wilkes, Scott Cooper, Walter Abernathy. Absent: Alissa McNair. 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 27, 2019 was adopted as presented.

E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

None

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes Approval: Draft minutes for the March 13, 2019 meeting

The consent calendar was adopted as presented.

G. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Variance VA 2019-1: Setback variances for proposed carport at 1606 Fair Way

Senior Planner Tusinger presented the staff report and reviewed the basis for making the required findings for approval. He noted the extremely small size of the subject property and that the applicant has provided written support for the request from surrounding property owners.

Chair Coates opened the public hearing.

Steve Hardison, applicant, reiterated that the proposed variance has support from adjoining property owners, as well as the owner across the street.

Commissioner Cooper appreciates the outreach to the neighbors.

In response to questions from **Vice Chair Wilkes**, Mr. Hardison confirmed that the carport posts will be three feet from the property line. The existing concrete drive strips will be replaced with grasscrete and the driveway will be realigned as necessary.

Steve Rasmussen, neighbor across the street, related that the owners are very conscientious about maintaining their property and improving its appearance. The carport will further enhance the corner of Lake and Fair Way, and he strongly supports their application.

Chair Coates closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Wilkes believes that the proposed carport location preserves the intent of the reverse corner lot by keeping the area visually open. Forty percent of the current lot coverage appears to be occupied by the front porch, which is a design feature that is actively encouraged.

Commissioner Cooper thinks that the application is a classic use of a variance and the basis for approving it is very clear.

A motion by **Commissioner Cooper** and seconded by **Commissioner Abernathy** to adopt a resolution approving Variance VA 2019-1 was approved unanimously.

H. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

1. **Discussion Item:** Clarification of lot coverage exception provisions for accessory structures

Senior Planner Tusinger presented a PowerPoint presentation that included relevant Zoning Code provisions and illustrations of accessory structures. He summarized internal code conflicts and asked the Commission for direction on several items.

Vice Chair Wilkes observed that detached accessory structures can be fully enclosed, such as an accessory dwelling unit. For smaller lots in the city, the thirty percent lot coverage limit is very limiting. In many cities, the maximum lot coverage is forty or fifty percent. Just allowing additional coverage would facilitate development of smaller lots. If we're encouraging front porches, they should be exempted from the coverage. He supports increasing lot coverage across the board, with different coverage standards for smaller and larger lots. He suggests using 7,200 square feet as the parcel threshold size, since it's common in the downtown core. More-open structures should be accommodated. California's climate can accommodate outside and inside living, and both areas should be designed in an integrated way so it can all be used. He suggests defining "open" as 50% +1 of a building's perimeter.

Chair Coates noted that parcels in other parts of the Bay Area are very small, but large accessory structures such as patio covers are allowed in order to optimize their use. We should allow additional lot coverage if the accessory structures are open in appearance. He supports using a sliding scale based on lot size. He also supports continuing to allow staff reviews of certain additional lot coverage requests, with required public notification of requests for a higher increment - perhaps five percent and five percent.

Vice Chair Wilkes thinks that notification should be limited to just the abutting neighboring property owners, those who share common property lines. It's not necessary to notify everyone within 300 feet because they're not affected by additional lot coverage. Very small lots should be allowed fifty percent base lot coverage. Greater coverage might avoid two-story homes. We need to be

responsive to the residential design guidelines and do anything we can to implement them.

Commissioner Cooper agrees with both commissioners' comments. There is a good track record in Calistoga of attractive property improvements and he thinks an increase in permitted lot coverage would be beneficial.

Michael Atkins, 1606 Fair Way, loves his small house more than his big house. He thinks the Commission is headed down the right path trying to make the small lots work.

I. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Abernathy noted that the last downtown parking study was done in 1988. It concluded that during the summers and on weekend, demand exceeded supply. One analysis said demand was exceeded by 3:1. He thinks we need an updated parking study regarding supply and demand, and how to monitor the parking situation going forward. The City has accepted in-lieu fees in order to provide additional parking, and could possibly use the in-lieu parking fund to pay for a study.

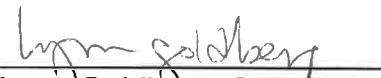
Chair Coates agreed that a downtown parking study should be pursued to identify the easiest solutions to our biggest problem.

J. DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Goldberg recommended that the Commission cancel the April 10th meeting due to a lack of agenda items, and the Commission concurred.

K. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.


Lynn Goldberg, Secretary

