

**MINUTES**  
**CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**May 13, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.**

1       **Chair Coates** reads a special message concerning the conduct of the meeting in  
2 accordance with special precautions and provisions related to COVID-19.

3       **A. ROLL CALL**

4       Commissioners present: Paul Coates, Tim Wilkes, Alissa McNair, Doug Allan, Scott  
5 Cooper. Absent: None. Staff present: Planning and Building Director Zach Tusinger,  
6 City Clerk Kendall Rose Granucci, Permit Technician Claudia Aceves.

7       **B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

8       **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

9       None

10       **D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA**

11       The meeting agenda of May 13, 2020 was adopted as presented.

12       **E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

13       One email was received regarding each of the agendized items. They are available  
14 on the website, to the public in the back of the room, and have been provided to  
15 each of the Planning Commissioners.

16       **F. CONSENT CALENDAR**

- 17       1. **Minutes Approval:** Draft minutes for the February 26, 2020 meeting

          The Consent Calendar was adopted as presented.

18       **G. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 19       1. **1207 Silver Street Parcel Map – PM 2020-2:** Consideration of a parcel map to  
20 divide the property at 1207 Silver Street into two parcels. **Vice Chair Wilkes**  
21 announces a conflict and an abstention due to proximity and leaves the meeting.

22       Director Tusinger presents the staff report, providing a summary of the  
23 application. He notes a variance was previously approved by the Planning  
24 Commission to allow this parcel map application to proceed. Normal conditions  
25 are attached to the draft resolution. He notes that the Council would have to  
26 grant a waiver to the undergrounding of utilities condition in order for that  
27 condition to be dropped.

28       The applicant, **Teresa Butler** is present for the meeting and is asked by **Chair**  
29 **Coates** if she wants to come up and address the Commission. She shakes her  
30 head no. Chair Coates says everyone is familiar with the request and asks for a  
31 motion.

33 A motion by **Commissioner Cooper** to adopt a resolution approving the parcel  
34 map is seconded by **Commissioner McNair** and approved unanimously 4-0  
35 (Wilkes recusal).

36 2. **Dr. Wilkinson's Resort Modifications – UP 2020-3 and DR 2020-1:**  
37 Consideration of use permit and design review applications to add five guest  
38 rooms and make architectural modifications to an existing resort at 1507 Lincoln  
39 Avenue

40 Director Tusinger presents the staff report. He reviewed the previous entitlement  
41 from last year and explained the changes being made under the current request.  
42 He noted that the construction fence that has gone up at the property is allowed  
43 as a grading permit has been issued for the project, but that it is important to  
44 understand that the grading permit is not dependent on the requested  
45 entitlements being requested now.

46 **Chair Coates** asks the applicant to come to the microphone and speak. **Jim**  
47 **Cowee**, introduces himself as the representative of the applicant. **Maki Bara**  
48 from the applicant team is also present via Zoom. He appreciates working with  
49 Calistoga's staff. **Maki Bara** thanks the Commission for facilitating this meeting.  
50 She believes the changes they are proposing are also very appropriate for  
51 COVID-19 related reasons. Cash flow is very challenging for them right now. As  
52 they have become more familiar with the property, they have found ways to add  
53 more value to the property by adding rooms and creating a better food and  
54 beverage experience. She notes that **Jim Cowee** is the first person to make a  
55 business trip for their team since COVID-19, having travelled to Calistoga from  
56 Colorado.

57 In response to **Chair Coates'** query for questions, **Commissioner McNair** asks  
58 if the changes will require the removal of additional trees. **Jim Cowee** indicates  
59 that no additional trees are intended to be removed.

60 **Vice Chair Wilkes** asks if the classic car shown on the plans would happen to be  
61 the Wilkinson's old Buick. **Jim Cowee and Maki Bara** indicate that it is an astute  
62 question and they intend to replicate that and pay homage to create a mood.  
63 Vice Chair Wilkes believes this is a great idea.

64 **Chair Coates** makes a follow up comment to **Commissioner McNair's** question  
65 about trees. He notes that sometimes applicants will show nice pictures at  
66 Planning Commission, but then what gets built is somewhat underwhelming. It is  
67 high on the Commission's priority list that the landscaping look good and be done  
68 the way it is presented. **Maki Bara** indicates that trees are very important to them  
69 and they understand the significance of existing and new trees on the site. All  
70 new trees that are planted will be mature.

71 **Commissioner Allan** notes that modular buildings look good in the drawings but  
72 are concerned about their execution. The materials and details will be important.  
73 **Maki Bara** indicates that the food & beverage buildings are important to their

74            ambiance and brand proposition. **Commissioner Allan** asks about the public  
75            comment related to the hazards related to the adjacent softball field. Director  
76            Tusinger notes he shared the comment with the applicant. **Jim Cowee** indicates  
77            they were aware of the issue and wanted to observe the true nature of the  
78            problem before deciding on what steps to take. **Commissioner Cooper** doesn't  
79            think the Commission needs a Condition of Approval related to it. **Commissioner**  
80            **Allan** is ok with that approach.

81            **Commissioner Allan** appreciates the way the plans have changed and adapted.  
82            **Chair Coates** asks for public comments. There are none. **Vice Chair Wilkes**  
83            comments that he believes the modular buildings will be executed well. He also  
84            believes the softball field issue is the responsibility of the school district to  
85            address. **Chair Coates** agrees. He closes the public hearing.

86            A motion by **Commissioner McNair** to adopt a resolution approving the use  
87            permit and design review is seconded by **Commissioner Cooper** and approved  
88            5-0.

## 89    **H. GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

90            1. **LED Sign Permit:** Consideration of a sign permit application to replace the  
91            existing monument sign with a new monument sign featuring LED price displays,  
92            at the 76 Gas Station at 1202 Foothill Boulevard. The proposal also includes new  
93            orange paint to accompany the branding and sign changes.

94            Director Tusinger provides a brief staff report and presentation and highlights the  
95            General Plan policies that are relevant to this proposal as it is located in the  
96            Lincoln/Foothill Gateway. The Zoning Code does not directly address LED  
97            lighting, but notes that neon and illuminated signs require Planning Commission  
98            review and approval.

99            **Chair Coates** asks the applicant to speak. **Tom Vincent** addresses the  
100           Commission on behalf of the applicant. He is in the image and branding group for  
101           76. The whole company is in the process of going back to their retro branding  
102           with the orange color scheme. All 76 stations are being changed to the new retro  
103           branding. He believes the LED digits are better than the manual backlit prices.  
104           They are open to different colors (white or red) for the LEDs. He is happy to  
105           answer questions. He also directly addresses the opposition email and believes  
106           only flashing signs are prohibited. He does not believe the approval of the LED  
107           prices would set a dangerous precedent.

108           **Commissioner McNair** notes that there are a couple of significant LED signs in  
109           town on the school district properties, but they are outside the City's jurisdictional  
110           authority. **Vice Chair Wilkes** notes he is very familiar with them. **Commissioner**  
111           **McNair** says that the school signs are bright and move. She is happy that the 76  
112           proposal does not move or flash. **Tom Vincent** says that at night, the logo on  
113           their sign is backlit.

114 **Commissioner Wilkes** asks if the LEDs could be manually dimmer. **Tom**  
115 **Vincent indicates** it may be possible, but that it would be difficult.

116 **Commissioner Allan** indicates he agrees with the email regarding this setting a  
117 precedent. Other communities mandate more muted designs, signs, and lighting.  
118 He also recognizes that businesses sometimes need a fresh coat of paint, but he  
119 has concerns related to the orange paint. This is marquee corner in Calistoga.

120 In response, **Tom Vincent** says that he believes that the ARCO at the other end  
121 of town does not present a good image for Calistoga. He believes their station  
122 will look much better and more understated. **Commissioner Cooper** has no  
123 problem with the design overall but does not like the LED prices. In response  
124 **Tom Vincent** says that they could keep the manual backlit digits and not do the  
125 LEDs. He would very much like approval of everything else that is being  
126 proposed.

127 **Vice Chair Wilkes** says that he is concerned about the LEDs, the lack of control  
128 associated with them, and the potential for them to be bad. He would be in  
129 support of everything else. **Chair Coates** says he does not recall any LED lights  
130 in Saint Helena either. He does not want a bunch of LED lights in front of other  
131 buildings and businesses in downtown Calistoga and he does not want this to set  
132 a precedent to allow that to happen. He is fine with the rest of the proposal. **Vice**  
133 **Chair Wilkes** remembers the discussion around Hydro's neon signs. They  
134 turned out okay, but this is different. He also lives across the street from the  
135 school's LED sign and knows the problems associated with it. **Tom Vincent**  
136 clarifies that the Commission is only concerned with the LED prices, not LED  
137 bulbs that backlight the internally lit logo. The Commissioners confirm that is  
138 correct.

139 A motion to approve the sign permit with the added and modified condition that  
140 there be no LED price displays and that the internally illuminated logo will retain  
141 the same brightness as the existing sign, and specifically eliminating draft  
142 conditions 8, 9, 10, and 11 by **Vice Chair Wilkes** is seconded by **Commissioner**  
143 **Cooper** and approved unanimously 5-0.

#### 144 **I. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS**

145 **Vice Chair Wilkes** wonders if there is any thought to amending the sign code as it  
146 relates to LED lighting. In response Director Tusinger notes he would like to work on  
147 a sign code update this year if time allows. **Chair Coates** thanks Director Tusinger  
148 and the rest of City staff for assisting with this unique meeting.

#### 149 **J. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

150 Director Tusinger indicates that there are likely to be agenda items ready for the May  
151 27, 2020 meeting. He also indicated that the meeting would likely be held in the  
152 same format for COVID-related reasons, and likely would be that way for a while.

153 He is hoping to bring some other items to the Commission this summer including a  
154 code cleanup proposal related to accessory structure setbacks.

155 Director Tusinger reports that due to COVID, he was working with other up-valley  
156 Planning Departments to develop specific protocols and flexibility for restaurants and  
157 other businesses to temporarily expand outdoors.

158 **K. ADJOURNMENT**

159 The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm.

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Zach Tusinger, Secretary

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