

**MINUTES**  
**CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**July 22, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.**

1       **Chair Coates** called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. He read a special message  
2 concerning the conduct of the virtual meeting in accordance with provisions related  
3 to COVID-19.

4       **A. ROLL CALL**

5       Commissioners present: Chair Paul Coates, Vice Chair Tim Wilkes, Scott Cooper,  
6 Alissa McNair, and Doug Allan. Staff present: Planning and Building Director Zach  
7 Tusinger, Permit Technician Claudia Aceves, City Clerk Kendall Rose Granucci.

8       **B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

9       **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

10       None

11       **D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA**

12       The meeting agenda was adopted as presented.

13       **E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

14       Director Tusinger indicated that many emails had been received regarding the  
15 second public hearing item. Copies of all the communications are available online  
16 and copies are available to the public in the back of the room. All the Commissioners  
17 have received copies of the correspondence.

18       **F. CONSENT CALENDAR**

- 19       1. **Minutes Approval:** Draft minutes for the June 24, 2020 meeting

          The Consent Calendar was adopted as presented.

20       **G. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 21       1. **4 Arch Way Setbacks VA 2020-1:** Consideration of a variance application to  
22 allow a two-foot reduction in setbacks for an inground pool at 4 Arch Way (APN  
23 011-072-003). This proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental  
24 Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15305 of the CEQA Guidelines.

25       Director Tusinger presents the staff report, providing a summary of the  
26 application. He mentions that the applicant purchased the home with the  
27 intention of building a pool; however, there is a city public sewer easement that  
28 runs through the middle of the backyard, which is why the requested 2-foot  
29 variance is needed. Director Tusinger says the applicant is also required to  
30 comply with the city's tree ordinance. He adds that the city's Building Official  
31 reviewed the application and there were no issues with the pool being four feet  
32 from the property line and there was notice provided to the neighbors in the area.

34 The applicant, **Eric Blasen** is present for the meeting and is asked by **Chair**  
35 **Coates** if he wants to address the Commission. The applicant says he worked on  
36 finding the best spot for the pool after learning there was a sewer main and  
37 determined the proposed location is best for staying away from trees and the  
38 sewer easement.

39 **Vice Chair Wilkes** asks for clarification that the pool equipment complies with  
40 the setbacks. Director Tusinger says it does and there is no variance request for  
41 the pool equipment.

42 A motion by **Vice Chair Wilkes** to adopt a resolution approving VA 2020-1 is  
43 seconded by **Commissioner McNair** and approved unanimously.

- 44 2. **Brannan Center DR 2020-3, UP 2020-4, and VA 2020-2:** Consideration of  
45 design review, use permit, and variance applications to allow a community center  
46 use at 1407 3rd Street, to review and permit a renovation and expansion of the  
47 existing building, and to allow an approximately one foot height variance for a  
48 proposed wall (APNs 011-202-016 and 011-202-007). This proposed action is  
49 exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Sections  
50 15301, 15303, and 15305 of the CEQA Guidelines.

51 **Chair Coates** and **Vice Chair Wilkes** recuse themselves due to conflict of  
52 interest. They leave the meeting in their capacity as Commissioners, though **Vice**  
53 **Chair Wilkes** remains in his capacity as part of the applicant team for the project.  
54 **Commissioner McNair** nominates **Commissioner Cooper** to take over as  
55 Acting Chair for the remainder of the meeting, seconded by **Commissioner**  
56 **Allan**.

57 Director Tusinger presents the staff report. He provides background on the  
58 building and notes that the property had undergone significant changes in 1905  
59 and 1945. He adds that the building was red tagged a few years ago, which limits  
60 the usage and now requires a significant investment to bring the building up to  
61 code and describes the proposed use for the event spaces. He notes that an  
62 issue arose with the vision triangle, which requires a 30-foot vision corner cutoff  
63 area. A field test was conducted and it was determined that the terrace does not  
64 impinge on the vision triangle. He addresses the variance request for the terrace,  
65 parking lot re-configuration, landscaping, privacy fence and lighting. He also  
66 mentions the potential conditions of approval, including event time cutoffs, noise  
67 ordinance compliance, limitations on frequency of large events and other  
68 conditions.

69 **Commissioner Allan** questions why the beer and wine was not directly  
70 addressed in the report and Director Tusinger responds that it is not explicitly  
71 listed in the code as something that needs approval through the Planning  
72 Commission and anyone can go to ABC for alcohol use, though subsequent City  
73 approvals could be required depending upon the subject license type.

74 **Commissioner Cooper** asks Director Tusinger about kitchen use restrictions.  
75 Tusinger said the applicants are planning full commercial grade kitchen in the  
76 basement needed for catering events. He says that the applicant initially  
77 proposed making it the official home of a caterer, but that it is not a permitted use  
78 in the zoning district. Staff recommended not allowing using the kitchen on a full  
79 time basis and that it only be used to serve the property itself.

80 **Commissioner Cooper** opens the public hearing and offers the applicant an  
81 opportunity to speak.

82 Applicant representative **Edward Kozel**, member of the Brannan Center non-  
83 profit board, thanks the Commission, Calistoga residents, and organizations for  
84 supporting the project and explains how the project got started. He comments on  
85 how the building will benefit the community and describes the components and  
86 elements of the new facility and how it will function. **Mr. Kozel** introduce **Helen**  
87 **Archerd**.

88 **Helen Archerd**, a member of the Presbyterian Church for over 60 years, notes  
89 that there is a lot of excitement about the project and she is very supportive of it.

90 Acting as an attendee and representative of the applicant team, **Tim Wilkes** says  
91 he is available to answer any questions related to the architecture.

92 **Commissioner McNair** asks from the applicants to hear about the minimum  
93 number of larger events that are required to make the project viable.

94 **Mr. Kozel** says events are a difficult concept because of the different sizes of  
95 them and the frequency of them. He says it will be a learning process during the  
96 first year on how to logistically manage those events and the facility.

97 **Commissioner Allan** asks about how they will prioritize the event center.

98 **Mr. Kozel** responds that the church has a contractual right to use the facility and  
99 has not yet entered into any contracts with any organizations. He said there is a  
100 desire to serve the functions of the church and for performing arts.

101 **Commissioner Allan** asks how they propose to handle alcohol serving at  
102 events.

103 **Mr. Kozel** responds that the natural events to have alcohol would be adult  
104 oriented events or on a case by case basis. **Commissioner Allan** asks for  
105 clarification that they would not be getting a liquor license and **Mr. Kozel** said  
106 they would only ask permission to serve alcohol based on the event.

107 **Commissioner Cooper** asks how they will approach doing sound tests. Director  
108 Tusinger said they can test decibels at the property lines and the commissioners  
109 can add conditions about monitoring sound levels should they so choose. He  
110 notes the applicants have to comply with the noise ordinance and if there are  
111 complaints, those would be a good indicator of noise issues.

112 **Mr. Kozel** responds to noise concerns and says there are specific provisions in  
113 the plans to address noise. **Mr. Wilkes** says that previously when there were

114 complaints directed at usage of the church, the group had opened doors and  
115 windows. He said they will install a new HVAC system, which will allow them to  
116 keep doors and windows closed. He added the current sanctuary and mezzanine  
117 area windows will be retrofitted with sound deterrent glass. He explains they  
118 have tested sound and are mitigating it.

119 **Commissioner Cooper** asks the applicant to expand on addressing parking  
120 concerns. **Mr. Wilkes** responds that the existing church was able to add a 50  
121 percent increase in spots in the existing lot and formally came to agreement with  
122 the school district to use Calistoga Elementary School parking. They also  
123 account for the police department public parking lot, all totaling 112 spaces.

124 **Commissioner Cooper** asks about having a full-time manager on site and **Mr.**  
125 **Wilkes** says there will be someone full-time on site.

126 **Commissioner Allan** questions about the fundraising necessary to build the  
127 facility. **Mr. Kozel** responds that they need a minimum of 5 million dollars and  
128 currently have 2 million dollars committed to the project, but haven't started the  
129 formal fundraising. **Commissioner Allan** then asks about an endowment and  
130 **Mr. Kozel** says that the plan is to raise an endowment as well as construction  
131 funds.

132 **Commissioner Cooper** refers to staff about the possibility of initially reducing  
133 the number of allowed events to start for noise reasons and then reviewing and  
134 increasing them at a later date. Director Tusinger says that use permits can go  
135 back to the Commission for modification to either add or loosen restrictions.

136 **Commissioner Cooper** opens the public hearing.

137 **Mary Hastings** expresses concern over the early ending hours for events and  
138 believes that based on the sound modifications that will be made, it is reasonable  
139 to have some events go until 11 or later. She is disappointed that there would  
140 need to be a permit for the terrace to be used and thinks that is too restrictive.

141 **Norene Moses**, a neighbor on 4th Street, says she appreciates efforts to  
142 mitigate noise inside, but says she'd prefer to prohibit any amplified music  
143 outside. She is surprised about the idea of a fence for noise mitigation and does  
144 not think it is adequate. She believes local organizations should have event  
145 priority.

146 **David Moon-Wainwright**, previous pastor of the Presbyterian congregation,  
147 comments on the use permit. He says the congregation's uses should not fall  
148 under the use permit, as it is already the purpose of the building.

149 **Jeffrey Stambor**, resident at 1406 Fourth St., said he's seen the church as being  
150 an exemplary neighbor for the last 30 years and has observed the decline of the  
151 property. He says the community center use is the ideal solution to the problem  
152 and is looking forward to hearing live music, but concerned about the number of  
153 large events and the number of public versus private events for a neighborhood  
154 setting. Addressing Mrs. Hastings' event end time comment, he said it will

155 already take an hour for the noise to diminish after the formal end time of an  
156 event. He is overall supportive of the project.

157 **Donna Higgins**, neighbor on Fourth St., thanks the applicant for the sidewalk  
158 vision triangle experiment and asks if there will be a red curb so cars can't park  
159 at the crosswalk. She is concerned about the number of large events that will  
160 take place, but has no problem with the small events.

161 **John Benson**, next door neighbor at 1419 Third St., says he is happy about this  
162 project and fully supportive. He is ok with the fence idea and an 11 p.m. end time  
163 for events.

164 **Bob Silva** is concerned about parking and clogging Third St. because he  
165 believes street parking is already an issue. He is also concerned with property  
166 value and an ending time of 11 p.m.

167 **Commissioner Allan** asks for clarification about needing a use permit to use  
168 terrace space. Director Tusinger says as long as they're complying with noise  
169 ordinance, they can have free rein of the terrace with live acoustical music, but  
170 no amplified music.

171 **Commissioner Allan** comments that he believes the uses of the congregation  
172 are a valid concern and wants to know how they can define a public versus  
173 private event. He believes there will be more demand than they can have events.

174 **Commissioner McNair** comments about living across the street from the high  
175 school where a lot of activity occurs, many of which are minor events. She  
176 believes some larger events are okay due to the benefit to the community and  
177 acknowledges that all the events will not be large. She adds she is happy to  
178 support the project.

179 **Commissioner Cooper** notes that the school district's superintendent requested  
180 that the schools be exempt from the limitations of events.

181 **Commissioner Allan** responded it would be challenging to define school events  
182 at that time. Director Tusinger said that in determining the number of events of  
183 different categories and types, it would be difficult to monitor from a city  
184 standpoint.

185 **Commissioner Allan** responds to comments on ending times and says he  
186 believes 10 p.m. is a good ending and **Commissioner Cooper** and **McNair**  
187 agree.

188 **Commissioner McNair** asks about the idea of building in an automatic review of  
189 the Use Permit to allay neighborhood concerns.

190 **Mr. Kozel** says donors want to know their support is going to be realized and  
191 believes the limits that are proposed are reasonable and a good starting point.

192 **Commissioner Cooper** comments that the project team is capable of policing  
193 themselves and listening to the community and that commissioners should avoid  
194 a mandated review. **Commissioner Allan** agrees and adds that from his

195 perspective the applicant has been responsive to comments and there is  
196 compromise and collaboration.

197 A motion by **Commissioner McNair** that the Planning Commission adopt a  
198 resolution approving UP 2020-4, DR 2020-3 and VA 2020-2 with existing  
199 conditions as drafted is seconded by **Commissioner Allan and** was approved  
200 unanimously (3-0, with Chair Coates, and Vice Chair Wilkes absent).

201 **H. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS**

202 None

203 **J. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

204 Director Tusinger reports that there is a full slate of other projects and discussion  
205 items coming up for Commissioners. He projects the Commission will operate via  
206 Zoom for a while and encourages public input. He says Commissioners can  
207 probably expect to have both August meetings.

208 **K. ADJOURNMENT**

209 The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

---

Claudia Aceves, Secretary