

MINUTES
CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION
August 25, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom

1 **Chair Cooper** called the meeting to order at 5:30 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 Scott Cooper, Vice Chair Tim Wilkes, Commissioners
6 Alissa McNair, and Doug Allan. Commissioners absent: Jack Berquist. Staff present:
7 Planning Director Zach Tusinger, Associate Planner Samantha Thomas and Planning
8 Secretary Claudia Aceves.

9 **B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

10 **C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

11 None.

12 **D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA**

13 The meeting agenda was adopted as presented.

14 **E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

15 Director Tusinger reports there was one email related to item G1, which was
16 forwarded to commissioners and posted on the website.

17 **F. CONSENT CALENDAR**

18 1. **Approval of Draft Minutes from the August 11, 2021 meeting.**

19 The consent calendar was adopted unanimously.

20 **G. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

21 1. **1514 Washington Street – Design Review DR 2020-2:**

22 Consideration of a design review application for the construction of a 3-unit apartment
23 and related improvements at 1514 Washington Street (APN 011-202-011). This
24 proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act
25 (CEQA) under Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines.

26 **Recommended Action:** Open public hearing and continue item to a date certain.

27 Director Tusinger comments that after the legal notice went out, the decision was
28 made by staff and the applicant to push the item to a different date, not yet confirmed.
29 He notes that the commission must legally open the public hearing and receive
30 comments.

31 **Donna Higgins** asks commissioners to look into the corner lot setbacks based on the
32 plans. She shares her concerns over the proposed open space, trash can location,
33 parking, and lack of privacy to neighboring homes from upstairs balcony.

34 **Jeffrey Stambor**, next door neighbor, comments that there were some considerations
35 agreed upon by the applicant to receive his support and wants to ensure that those
36 considerations are included in the plans, including fence height, lighting, and planting.

37 **Norene Moses** shares her concerns with the project, noting street congestion,
38 insufficient parking, and lack of privacy.

39 **Director Tusinger** confirms that any further correspondence will be included in a later
40 agenda packet and that the public hearing will be re-noticed.

41 **Chair Cooper** asks if people can go to city hall to review the proposed plans and
42 **Director Tusinger** confirms.

43 **Ms. Higgins** asks that people have more than three minutes to comment when the
44 item returns, and **Chair Cooper** advises that three minutes is the rule and written
45 comments are also welcome.

46 A motion by **Vice Chair Wilkes** that DR 2020-2 be continued to a date to be
47 determined and that a public hearing remain open until then is seconded by
48 **Commissioner McNair** and approved unanimously (4-0).

49 **2. 1890 Mora Avenue PG&E Utility Shed – Variance VA 2021-1:**

50 Consideration of a variance request to allow a reduction in the required minimum front
51 yard setback from 20 feet to 11 feet and 7 ½ inches in order to accommodate a utility
52 shed determined by PG&E to be the only suitable location on the property at 1890
53 Mora Avenue (APN 011-022-003). This proposed action is exempt from the California
54 Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines.

55 Planner Thomas presents the staff report noting that the property is zoned rural
56 residential with an active vineyard. She says the property previously contained a high
57 voltage primary service next to the existing driveway which terminated at the power
58 panel on a pre-existing outbuilding maintained by PG&E. She adds that the property
59 owner intended to have PG&E bury the power line, but PG&E determined it wasn't
60 possible and the only feasible location was the edge of the vineyard in the northern
61 corner of the property within the front setback. The applicant is seeking a variance to
62 reduce the setback of a PG&E equipment utility shed by approximately eight feet
63 noting that it is the minimum variance to alleviate the hardship and the minimum size
64 needed to safely support PG&E equipment.

65 **Vice Chair Wilkes** comments that the building is 50 percent complete and done
66 without a building permit and Director Tusinger says the project was red tagged and

67 received a stop work order, and if approved will require a building permit even though
68 it is under 120 square feet (as there is electrical, and plumbing involved).

69 The applicant and architect, **Eric Beckstrom**, comments that he did not realize it did
70 not meet setbacks where he drew the shed noting it is the only place the PG&E
71 equipment can go.

72 **Vice Chair Wilkes** says he does not have any issues with the application in general
73 because it is a property right granted to neighbors in the immediate vicinity but
74 wonders why Mr. Beckstrom didn't apply for a permit.

75 **Mr. Beckstrom** responds he has never pulled a permit for a structure less than 120
76 square feet however Director Tusinger confirms it is required because it includes
77 electrical.

78 **Chair Cooper** comments that a few steps were skipped, and it shouldn't happen
79 again.

80 **Commissioner McNair** says she understands that PG&E is not easy to work with,
81 but as an architect, also understands the importance of site planning.

82 A motion by **Vice Chair Wilkes** that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution
83 approving variance VA 2021-1 approving a variance for a PG&E utility shed is
84 seconded by **Commissioner McNair** and approved unanimously (4-0).

85 **H. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS**

86 Commissioner McNair mentions the possibility of a discussion regarding long-term
87 parking and temporary uses of parklets before the June expiration of the
88 Temporary Support and Recovery Program.

89 **I. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

90 **Director Tusinger** reports that there will be a meeting on September 8 and there
91 is a possibility for the second meeting in September, too.

92 **J. ADJOURNMENT**

93 On a motion from **Chair Cooper** that is adopted unanimously (4-0), the meeting was
94 adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Claudia Aceves, Secretary