

**MINUTES**  
**CALISTOGA PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**March 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom**

**Chair Cooper** called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He read a special message concerning the conduct of the virtual meeting in accordance with provisions related to COVID-19.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present: Chair Scott Cooper, Vice Chair Wilkes, Commissioners Doug Allan (present for item G2), Rick Kaiser, and Michael Vaughn. Staff present: Planning and Building Director Jeff Mitchem, Associate Planner Samantha Thomas and Planning Secretary Claudia Aceves.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**D. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA**

The meeting agenda was adopted as presented.

**E. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

**Associate Planner Thomas** reports that three comments were received for the Housing Element item, which were provided to Commissioners and posted on the city website.

**F. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the February 23, 2022 meeting.**

The consent calendar was adopted unanimously.

**G. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**1. 504 Washington Street Painting Studio – Use Permit UP 2022-4:** Consideration of a use permit application to allow the establishment of a painting studio within an existing 1,050 square foot industrial space at 504 Washington Street (APN 011-260-001). This proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines.

**Associate Planner Thomas** presents the staff report noting that the proposed painting studio is in the existing 2,800 square foot industrial space that previously housed Glen Pope’s woodworking shop with the neighboring 1,700 square foot space being occupied by Mark and Michiko’s glass blowing studio approved by the Planning Commission in September 2021. Thomas notes that when that use permit was approved, staff indicated that Mark and Michiko had an agreement to sublet the rear part of the building with intent to be used by a low impact user, which would also

require PC approval for a use permit. She describes the painting studio proposal, including the low impact planned uses, staffing, and hours of operation, adding that no renovations are proposed and provides the floorplan with storage location.

**Chair Cooper** comments that a painting studio is a good fit for this property and asks the applicant, **Marie Bourget**, if she lives in town.

**Ms. Bourget** responds that she moved to St. Helena a year ago and has been looking for a studio space since.

**Chair Cooper** opens the public comments. After none are received, he closes the public comment.

A motion by **Chair Cooper** that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution approving Use Permit UP 2022-4 for a paint studio within an existing 2,800 square foot industrial space at 504 Washington Street is seconded by **Vice Chair Wilkes** and approved unanimously (4-0).

**2. Public Review Draft Housing Element:** Staff briefing on Calistoga's 6th Cycle Housing Element Update. The Public Review Draft of the 2023-2031 Housing Element (DHE) has been published for community comment. The document can be accessed via the City's News webpage at:

<https://www.ci.calistoga.ca.us/Home/Components/News/News/5401/698>.

Two versions of the document are available – a “track changed” version of the Goals, Policies, Programs indicating changes from the existing housing element (2014-2022) and the full updated version (2023-2031).

**Recommended Action:** Receive presentation, ask questions of staff and consultant, and hold public hearing.

**Director Mitchem** presents the Housing Element update outlining the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), community outreach, criteria, housing element contents, fair housing factors, site selection, housing goals, policies and actions and the next steps. He indicates that for the sixth RHNA cycle, the city must demonstrate that there are suitable sites for 155 units, which includes a 30 percent buffer. He explains the criteria for new housing and the fair housing factors, including policies to diversify housing types, public-private funding partnerships, and areas to regulate and deregulate, and describes the site selection process. He goes over the housing goals, including provision of adequate housing sites, equal housing opportunity, and preservation of existing housing among other goals. He says that the next steps are for the Planning Commission to recommend that City Council direct staff to submit this to HCD for 90-day review, noting that this does not conclude the opportunity for community engagement. He also provides a matrix document as a tool for commissioners to track comments, questions, or concerns.

**Vice Chair Wilkes** comments that it appears the city's growth management policies are going away, and Director Mitchem responds that the growth management ordinance is suspended from 2020-2025 by implementation of SB 330.

**Vice Chair Wilkes** comments that he has some line-by-line questions he'd like to address separate with Director Mitchem and he responds that he wants to initiate a dialogue with each commissioner and wants to use the matrix as a tool unless they want to discuss during public hearing as part of the record.

**Vice Chair Wilkes** notes that there was no language on bikes in any of the policies presented and suggests that language be added. He comments that there should also be more discussion around energy conservation. He asks for a clear definition of what a small rural town character is and what it means in terms of physical development and planning for infrastructure. Lastly, he comments that in the policies against housing discrimination, there was no mention of gender, and he believes it's a critical time for that to be incorporated.

**Commissioner Allan** comments that there needs to be more focus on moderate level priced housing, as there is a lot of focus on low income and a lot of existing high-income housing and wants more discussion on the missing middle. He also comments on the number of seemingly abandoned or dilapidated homes that have been unoccupied for years and wonders how to address that issue.

**Chair Cooper** seconds Commissioner Allan's concerns over of the number of non-occupied homes.

**Commissioner Allan** comments that he appreciates the two juxtaposing public comments received where one commenter believed Calistoga is full. He disagreed with that comment, adding that every American has a right to property and does not agree with the attitude that Calistoga is full and not allow others the opportunity to live here. He says that on the other end was the comment from a local teacher that expressed frustration about not having housing available to accommodate that type of profession and wants to use it as motivation to ensure the city meets moderate priced housing.

**Chair Cooper** adds that high fuel costs could create a situation where people can no longer commute to work.

**Director Mitchem** says that they are great points and says the document has opportunity to be picked at, noting that at the end of the process amendments to Title 17 would begin to be compliant.

**Commissioner Vaughn** agrees with Commissioner Allan that it would be hard to maintain the city without solid housing available for teachers, firefighters, etc.

**Commissioner Kaiser** mirrors the previous comments and thinks this is a great opportunity to focus on all the housing needs and the direction the city should take to create a diverse community.

**Chair Cooper** asks if there is a forecast to when the city could be fully developed and what happens after that.

**Director Mitchem** suggests that vertical living would be the only option, but for the foreseeable future based on staff analysis and site suitability there is plenty of room to grow.

**Commissioner Allan** adds that the solution to the problem Chair Cooper poses is not to just stop developing, as some people say. He adds that maybe there is a line to be drawn in terms of housing, but in his opinion, there is a lot more to do to keep the community healthy and sustainable.

**Commissioner Vaughn** agrees with Commissioner Allan.

**Chair Cooper** asks what the possibility is of reducing the mobile home park age bracket and Director Mitchem responds it is highly regulated and out of the city's hands to a large degree, but it's a good analogue to apply similar policies to housing typology.

**Chair Cooper** opens the public comments. After none are received, he closes the public comment.

A motion by **Chair Cooper** to make a recommendation to city council that they direct staff to submit to HCD for a 90-day review is seconded by **Commissioner Kaiser** is approved unanimously (5-0).

## H. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**Director Mitchem** gives a farewell to Associate Planner Thomas who is leaving her job at the city.

## I. MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSIONERS

**Vice Chair Wilkes** in reaction to the Housing Element presentation asks staff to research what tools or methods other communities have used to reduce or regulate the number of second homes.

**Commissioner Allan** asks to add unoccupied homes as well.

**Commissioner Kaiser** suggests incentivizing second homeowners to put the homes to better use.

**Vice Chair Wilkes** says he thinks a good starting point is finding out the tools that exist that may be utilized.

**Commissioner Allan** says that he disagrees with incentivizing homeowners.

**Director Mitchem** says that this is an analysis that has already begun.

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion from **Chair Cooper** that is adopted unanimously (5-0), the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

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Claudia Aceves, Secretary