

CITY OF CALISTOGA

STAFF REPORT

TO: CHAIRMAN MANFREDI AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: ERIK V. LUNDQUIST, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 12, 2009

SUBJECT: ENCHANTED RESORTS – CONCEPTUAL DESIGN REVIEW (CDR 2009-01)

1 **REQUEST:**

2
3 Conceptual Design Review of the Enchanted Resort Project located on an 88 acre property at 411
4 Foothill Boulevard (APNs 011-310-031 through 011-310-041 and 011-310-044; 011-320-007;
5 011-320-039 through 011-320-069) within the Rural Residential Hillside General Plan Land Use
6 Designation and Zoning District.

7
8 **PURPOSE OF REVIEW:**

9
10 The Conceptual Design Review process provides an opportunity for a property owner or
11 developer to receive feedback on a development concept prior to submitting a formal
12 development application. The scope of Conceptual Design Review encompasses all aspects of a
13 project and allows for identification and discussion of potential issues at the earliest stage in the
14 development process. It is the City's expectation that the property owner will use the feedback
15 received through this process as guidance when preparing the formal development application.

16
17 Upon completion of this review, staff will be presenting this conceptual design to the City
18 Council for review to determine the desire to process a Development Agreement for this proposal
19 and its potential elements. Should the City Council express interest, staff will then provide the
20 applicant with a final letter indicating the steps necessary to submit a formal application. This
21 should provide the applicant with sufficient information to begin the processing of this project.
22 Please note that should this project move through the formal review process, additional
23 opportunity for review, comment and application of any specific conditions or requirements will
24 be provided.

25
26 **INTRODUCTION AND PROPERTY HISTORY:**

27
28 The Diamond Hills Estates Subdivision is an undeveloped residential hillside subdivision located
29 on approximately 88 acres southeasterly of Foothill Boulevard and includes 35 residential lots as
30 well as 21 acres of open space/forest preserve on 6 separate parcels.

31
32 On January 19, 1993 the Council adopted Resolution No. 93-2 certifying the Environmental
33 Impact Report (EIR) for the Diamond Hills Estates project. On March 2, 1993, the City Council

34 adopted Resolution No. 93-18 approving Vesting Tentative Map. On March 16, 1993, the City
35 Council adopted Ordinance No. 492 adopting a Development Agreement for the Diamond Hills
36 Estates project. Over ten years later, on March 1, 2005 the City Council adopted Resolution
37 2005-018 approving the Final Map for the Diamond Hills Estates Subdivision and authorized the
38 City Engineer to record the Final Map upon receiving the necessary securities for the subdivision
39 improvements. Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Subdivision Improvement Agreement
40 the public improvements must be complete by March of 2010.

41
42 During the time period that the residential subdivision was being pursued, the developer was also
43 pursuing an amendment to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to allow a resort on the
44 property. On January 12, 1996 a General Plan Amendment (GPA 1996-01) was received
45 requesting to designate a portion of the property with a Visitor Accommodation (VA) Overlay
46 Designation. On April 1, 1997 the City Council awarded a contract to Impact Sciences Inc. to
47 prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for a General Plan text and map
48 amendment presented by the developer at the time (Rodney Friedrich, Charles Shinnamon, Peter
49 Riechers and Anthony Granatelli).

50
51 The contract with Impact Sciences Inc was valid for a period of only one year ending on April 15,
52 1998. In the process of initiating work on the SEIR it became evident that additional information
53 was necessary to ensure a comprehensive study of the project's effects on the environment. More
54 specific information was required to ensure that the environmental review not only included the
55 General Plan text and map amendment, but also a more defined development proposal. The
56 applicants began preparing massing studies to determine the visual impact of buildings, in
57 addition to preparing more detailed information on hydrology, existing trees, grading and other
58 issues. As a result of holding the environmental work in abeyance while the technical studies
59 were being completed by the applicants, the time limit of the City's contract with Impact Sciences
60 Inc. expired. While the City Council was open to extending the contract a resolution and new
61 contract was never brought back for consideration. As such, no further actions were taken on the
62 SEIR.

63
64 Although nothing further was done with regards to the SEIR, it appears that discussions to
65 include a Planned Development (PD) Overlay designation over a portion of the site were
66 considered in 2001/2002 during the General Plan update. However, since the project description
67 was not clearly defined a re-designation of the property was not supported and the property
68 remained within the Rural Residential – Hillside land use designation, as it is today.

69
70 **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

71
72 Over the past several years the property owner (Enchanted Resorts, Inc.) has conducted a
73 comprehensive study and market analysis in order to clearly define the resort concept on the
74 property. As presented, the conceptual project now proposes to amend the residential subdivision
75 to accommodate 13 home sites, a resort hotel with 36 cottages featuring 110 hotel units, a
76 restaurant, a ballroom, spa facilities, a fitness center, and an adult pool, and a residence club
77 featuring 20 homes which offers buyers an undivided fee-simple interest in a specific property, as
78 well as, access to a residence club. A complete project description can be found in the *Enchanted*
79 *Resorts – Proposed Resort Development* brochure and *Program Summary* found in Attachment 1
80 and 2 of this Report.

83
84 **DISCUSSION AND PROJECT APPROVALS:**
85

86 The Enchanted Resorts Project will have substantial benefits to the community provided the
87 appropriate balance is achieved and it is kept within the community’s perspective. The
88 Enchanted Resort Development offers a potential boost to the economy, with development of the
89 resort would bring new jobs, revenues, and recreational opportunities.
90

91 However, if the resort is not done in an appropriate manner these proposed uses may contrast
92 greatly in scale and nature from our traditional small-town rural character. Therefore, careful
93 planning and design are essential if the resort is to attract visitors and harmonize with the
94 community. The challenge will be to guide the development in a manner that limits undesirable
95 effects on existing infrastructure, sensitive critical areas, resource uses, and rural uses and
96 community character.
97

98 As such, the Planning Commission should carefully consider the following:
99

- 100 1. Is a resort a reasonable use on this property? If so, is the proposed intensity and
101 density appropriate for the property?
102 2. Is the project of a scale that is harmonious with Calistoga’s character?
103 3. Does the proposal promote the unique character and ambiance of Calistoga and
104 enhance the Entry Corridor?
105 4. Does the proposal present high quality design and materials to ensure compatibility
106 with the surround properties and hillside?
107 5. What are the environmental issues that may be applicable to this project?
108

109 This initial input from the Planning Commission is critical since it will be forwarded to the City
110 Council for their consideration. With the input from the Planning Commission, the City Council
111 will determine whether or not the project has merit and warrants a Development Agreement.
112 Ultimately, should the City Council find that the project has merit a Memorandum of
113 Understanding (MOU) may be executed reflecting Council's intention to enter into a
114 Development Agreement and define the process for the developer to seek formal approval.
115

116 The formal approval process will likely include the Planning Commission and the City Council’s
117 consideration of the following:

- 118 • A Development Agreement; and
119 • A General Plan Amendment to include the property within the Planned Development
120 Overlay District; and
121 • A Rezone to establish a Planned Development District; and
122 • A Text Amendment to establish Planned Development Zoning District Regulations; and
123 • A Preliminary and Final Development Plan (includes Conditional Use Permit & Design
124 Review); and
125 • An Amending Map (Tentative & Final).
126

127 It should be noted that the above requests will likely be processed concurrently, unless
128 determined during the negotiations of the MOU that some entitlements such as the Final
129 Development Plan for particular buildings or components of the project may be phased within the
130 terms of an approved Development Agreement.
131

132

133

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

134

135

136

137

138

139

140

141

142

The project will be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will likely require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) commencing with the Notice of Preparation and determination of scope of the EIR upon the input from the public and public agencies (federal, state and local), including the Planning Commission and City Council. In the early stages of this project the Planning Commission may wish to consider potential project alternatives, mitigation measures, and any potential significant effects on the environmental of the potential project.

143

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

144

145

To date, no written comments have been received on this application.

146

147

RECOMMENDATION:

148

149

150

151

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the conceptual plan and program, receive comments from the applicant and the public, and provide preliminary comments to the applicant and staff on the following as well as other issues of commission concern.

152

153

154

155

156

157

158

159

160

161

1. Is a resort a reasonable use on this property? If so, is the proposed intensity and density appropriate for the property?
2. Is the project of a scale that is harmonious with Calistoga's character?
3. Does the proposal promote the unique character and ambiance of Calistoga and enhance the Entry Corridor?
4. Does the proposal present high quality design and materials to ensure compatibility with the surround properties?
5. What are the environmental issues that may be applicable to this project?

162

163

164

165

It should be noted that the Planning Commission comments received during conceptual design review are advisory only and should not be considered by the Applicant to be requirements or an endorsement of the project until a complete application is considered through the formal review process.

166

167

ATTACHMENTS:

168

169

170

171

172

1. Enchanted Resorts – Proposed Resort Development Brochure received June 25, 2009
2. Enchanted Resorts – Program Summary
3. Sample Architectural Imagery Boards
4. Conceptual Site Plans (Overall Property and Resort Zone)