

Fairfax Town Council Minutes  
Special Meeting  
Fairfax Women's Club  
Saturday, January 12, 2008, at 9:00 a.m.

**COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:** Larry Bragman  
Susan Brandborg  
Mary Ann Maggiore  
Lew Tremaine  
David Weinsoff

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michael Rock, Town Manager  
Ann Welsh, Planning Director  
Ian Roth, Finance Director  
Judy Anderson, Town Clerk

Mayor Maggiore called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

M/S, Tremaine/Weinsoff, Motion to approve the agenda and the affidavit of posting.

AYES: All

Open Time

No speakers came forward.

Discussion with Catlin Properties regarding ideas for former Albertson's site and Fair-Anselm property

Mayor Maggiore introduced the topic and stated that two representatives from Catlin Properties, the property management company leasing the Center from the current owners, were present to hear from residents and to discuss ideas for the possible future uses of the vacant Albertson's grocery store and the Fair-Anselm Shopping Center. The representatives, Cole Sullivan and Chip Fuller, led a discussion of the property and possible future uses. They reported that they had entered into a contract with the current owners, that they were considering purchasing the property; that they had a ground lease with the rights to manage the property, and that they were planning to buy the fee title later. They stated that the meeting gave them an opportunity to receive input from the public and to have an exchange of ideas. They further stated that they didn't want to go forward without getting public input. The following speakers came forward with suggestions: Frank Gonzalez, Ingrid Weiss, Art Chartock, Kim Baenisch, Michael Rex, Sam Perry, Pamela Meigs, Bill Appleton, Niccolo Caldararo, Valeri Hood, Mike Rogers, Gina Nichols, Jenny Marshall, Chris Lang, Sean Aguilar, Rose Taber, John Reed, and Kelly (owner of Pancho Villa's Restaurant).

Some of the ideas put forward by the speakers were:

To make the Albertson's building into a skating rink for family entertainment and to provide a safe activity for local teens

To make the entry to Town more attractive  
Creation of affordable housing that would encourage non-motorized transportation  
Open up the property to the creek  
To retain the charm and architectural style of the Town  
Encourage “green” businesses  
Incorporate the Marin Town and Country Club property into planning process  
Include restrooms and showers for bicyclists  
Keep the shops and restaurants small  
Plan for a healthy community that is pedestrian-oriented  
Include recreation and small scale housing  
Live theater with space for artists, possible center to teach art to children for the many  
artists and writers in town  
Concern expressed about density and development by the creek  
As the gateway to Fairfax, a positive statement needed  
Make it green, sustainable and beautiful to attract young people to Town  
Make it modest, low profile  
No chain stores  
Create a digital and media technology center like George Lucas or a media college  
around a restaurant like Pixar  
Concern expressed about absentee landlords  
Get away from the use of anchor stores and develop an “eco-village” like Japan  
Something unique  
Traffic impact concerns in already congested area  
Make the area safer for bicyclists  
Trader Joe’s  
Recreation and learning center at Marin Town and Country Club  
An opportunity to make something happen  
Pool tables and a place to hang out for teens, roller rink or ice skating rink  
Keep Java Hut  
Keep all the parking for bicyclists on the weekends, bathrooms would keep bicyclists in  
town longer  
Use the charrette process to get a consensus and to use public input  
Performing Arts Center/Community Center could serve a lot of purposes  
Don’t be afraid of change

George Bianchini, owner of Broadway Video, stated that he had owned his business for 22 years; that he had grown up in Fairfax and San Anselmo; that his business had lost \$200,000 since Albertson’s had closed; and that he was ready to leave because of the raised rent that made his square-footage price way overpriced.

Mike Altman, Iron Springs Brew Pub, stated that his business was an anchor tenant at the Fair-Anselm Plaza with a lease about to expire. He stated that he was being forced out of business with rent that had doubled and with not knowing what was going to happen at the site. He ascertained that Catlin was not in control of the rent for the tenants but would be in forty to sixty days.

In response to the input from the public, Mr. Sullivan stated that Catlin had office buildings and shopping centers across the country; that they held properties long-term; that Mr. Fuller lived in Marin; that Catlin had a property management department; that they didn’t want to be absentee landlords; that tenant retention was critical; that they welcomed the charrette process; that they were considering every option from keeping

the property “as is” to total redevelopment of the property and were expecting something in between the two extremes; that Catlin was becoming green; that they were interested in solar power and green tenants; that they were interested in reducing traffic and encouraging pedestrians and bicycles; that they had to make money and would not be giving the property to the Town; that they could create meeting places and opportunities for recreational uses, but had to be able to offset the costs; that the existing building was over the creek and the creek was eroding; that the visual asset of the creek could be included in the planning; that they hadn’t thought of incorporating Marin Town and Country Club and had more than they could handle with Fair-Anselm; that towns were organic and that they grew or withered and died but could not remain static; that the property was underutilized; asked for suggestions on what services the Town needed for economic use that would reduce automobile traffic; noted that there was no drugstore in Fairfax; that they intended to design something that was homogenous with the Town; and that they were excited about the possibilities for improvements at the site.

#### Future Planning: Non-motorized transit/green issues – How to accomplish goals

The Town Council discussed future planning to incorporate non-motorized transportation and sustainable/green policies. Some of the items discussed as part of the accomplishment of these goals were: the update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan; the \$150,000 study of an East-West Corridor bike and pedestrian plan in partnership with San Anselmo and San Rafael that could include feasibility of a trolley system; the introduction of a policy resolution to include bike and pedestrian planning in capital improvement projects; the possibility of a fleet of bikes to be used by the public at no cost; the promotion of the use of flex time and telecommuting; support for Senator Migden’s legislation to mandate 9/80 and flex schedules for organizations of over 50 employees; support for Assemblyman Huffman’s Neighborhood Electric Vehicle legislation; advocacy for staggered start times for local schools; traffic calming possibilities to promote safety for pedestrians and bicyclists; and the upgrading of sidewalks and curb cuts for pedestrians.

Michael Rex and Architect Allan Nichol described a proposed trolley transit system that would run on electricity connected to a single overhead wire on tracks that would be built into the road and would flow with car traffic. They stated that they were currently seeking funding for an engineering study to get the plan rolling and that a trolley system would fit in with the goals of the Town since half of Marin’s greenhouse gases were produced by automobiles and a trolley system would get people out of their cars.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.