

Town of Fairfax
Planning Commission Workshop Meeting
September 4, 2008
Fairfax Women's Club, 46 Park Road

ROLL CALL: Brannon Ketcham
Pamela Meigs
Shelby LaMotte
Terry Goyan
Peter Ramsey

Shelley Hamilton (arrived 7:40 pm)
Peter Lacques (arrived 7:40 pm)

Staff present: Planning Director, Ann Welsh
Senior Planner, Linda Neal
Amy Dunnigan, Minutes Clerk

CALL TO ORDER 7:30 pm

*These are summary minutes. A recorded copy can be obtained at the
Fairfax Town Hall, 142 Bolinas Road.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

M/S Goyan-Hamilton motioned to approve the agenda.

AYES: (4)

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments as no public was present.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Floor Area Ratio Sub-Committee members presented a progress report on FAR research. Commissioner Ketcham explained that the Town Council had requested the FAR be revisited at the Mayor's discretion. There had been approximately six FAR sub-committee meetings up until this date's meeting. In January 2008, a different FAR was provided for each slope. The idea behind it was to control hillside building developments. There had been discussion about having more stringent design guidelines rather than changing the FAR (for example, no single face grade higher than 20 feet) which would address depth to the structure. Fairfax's definition of FAR was just developed floor area. Other towns' FAR definitions included basements and vaulted ceilings/potential attic space. In many situations, Fairfax received proposals which pushed FAR to the limit. Commissioner Ketcham asked if the Planning Commission was comfortable with the existing FAR and possibly developing design guidelines on hillside development. Or he suggested, would a sliding scale based on slope be feasible? He also asked if DRB should look at the plans earlier on in the review process.

Chair Meigs liked the idea of DRB coming in first. Commissioner Goyan had concerns how the FAR was measured. Commissioner Ramsey asked about Corte Madera's FAR. Commissioner Goyan felt it was important to have

sliding scale based on slope. Planning Director Welsh felt it was intended to curb larger size structures, but the low size end was not looked at to see how the smaller dwellings would be impacted. Meetings were once a month (the next being Thursday, September 24, 2008) and Commissioners were welcome to email Planning Director Welsh with any information they would like to discuss.

ACTION: Planning Director Welsh would email the FAR material previously discussed to interested Commissioners to get them up-to-date.

Introduction of the draft Design Guidelines for the Mixed Use Overlay The Workshop was going to be held on September 27, 2008, so Chair Meigs was hoping to come back to the September 18, 2008 meeting with a general outline for the Council. Chair Meigs thought the map was excellent. She felt the character of the town and its retention should be emphasized more. Urban Design Features (page 12) were taken from other cities with similar areas according to Consultant Larry Kennings. Commissioner LaMotte stated plants which were more water intensive could be removed and more native plants could be added. Commissioner Lacques was concerned with language (page 5) regarding corporate franchise architecture and felt it should be stronger to maintain character. He felt instead of corporate franchise design (letter D) be changed to trade dress or trade mark elements. Landscaping as far as street trees (page 16), Commissioner Lacques wanted to omit pine trees specifically (broad leaf evergreens versus needle evergreens) and ginkgo trees. Consultant Kennings suggested making a list of prohibited trees. Commissioner LaMotte suggested looking at Petaluma's and Portola's tree and plant lists as they were both very good and focused on native plants. Commissioner Hamilton thought the wording on page 1 was very good, but felt ... encouraged creativity "within the perimeters of the town character" could be added. The purpose of the Mixed Use Overlay is to... may need the header removed as it left her asking what the purpose was. Commissioner Hamilton thought the pictures were great, but requested finding a better example than the 3-story, yellow building that was somewhat flat-planed and not set back enough. Consultant Kennings explained that the sign ordinance was very weak and signage was left out purposely. Commissioner Ketcham felt when thinking of Bolinas Road that there should be certain guidelines for window height. Consultant Kennings asked to look closely at the sustainability section to keep in line with the thinking of the town. Commissioner LaMotte thought the explanation of the Mixed Use Overlay Zone was excellent. The roof discussion (page 6, 1.9) felt heavy to her and Commissioner Ketcham added to label the picture as a bad example, so it was clearly explained. Chair Meigs reminded the Commission to look closely to the "shoulds" and the "shalls" when reviewing the document.

3. Consultant Larry Kennings discussed the Circulation Element of the General Plan. He explained that GPAC had looked at the existing General Plan and the Council hired a couple consultants other than himself to look at the Circulation Element. GPAC was offering nearly a year's worth of work for the Commission's review and comments and if it was ready, forward it to the Council and if it was not ready, send it back to GPAC. The Commission could review it, make suggestions, and pass it to Council. He explained the connectivity between the elements. Commissioner Hamilton felt prioritization would be a good way of handling the elements. Consultant Kennings agreed and felt that if the Commission found things that should be included, those

things should be added. He viewed the Circulation Element as a document for manual circulation and public safety. Consultant Kennings explained if an evacuation plan was specifically named, the Town would be liable. The town of Mill Valley had an evacuation plan. Commissioner Goyan intended to ask a fellow Commissioner at Mill Valley how their town had gotten around ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance. Chair Meigs asked Planning Director Welsh to look into Oakland's evacuation plan due to their fire history (Oakland Hills Fire). Chair Meigs suggested starting with the Intent Goals Policies and to review it and bring it to a Workshop. She asked other Commissioners if she was unable to make it to a GPAC meeting, if she could email other Commissioners to attend.

The Planning Department presented their Goals and Accomplishments for 2007-2008.

The Planning Department had issued a total of 92 permits and 5 permits for new construction. DRB had issued 9 permits. 13 solar permits were issued. 37 stop work orders were issued and 10 notices of violation were issued which took a lot of involvement from Staff were some of the accomplishments were mentioned. They received over 4000 calls per year. \$309,750 in revenue was planned for 2007, but they actually brought in \$350,000 and spent less than projected. Goals for 2008-2009 included working on the General Plan and Circulation Element and to update the current Housing Element, etc. Extending the Second Unit Amnesty to one year was one goal and increasing communication to the Fire Department. Updating online information and permit processing to streamline the process and reduce phone calls was another goal. Chair Meigs recognized how much work the Planning Department and Commission accomplished.

(THE TAPE CUT OUT AT 2:14:20)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5. The Minutes from the August 7, 2008 workshop meeting were reviewed and approved.

PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT and COMMISSIONER COMMENTS and REQUESTS

Chair Meigs and the Commission welcomed Commissioner Ramsey. Commissioner Ramsey provided his background

6. An extension of a one year period was discussed Second Unit Amnesty Program.

M/S motioned to adjourn the meeting at

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Dunnigan
Minutes Clerk