

DRAFT Town of Fairfax Planning Commission minutes
Workshop Meeting
Fairfax Women's Club
Thursday, December 4, 2008

Call to Order/Roll Call:

COMMISSIONER'S PRESENT: Pam Meigs (Chair)
Shelley Hamilton
Peter Lacques
Shelby LaMotte
Peter Ramsay

STAFF PRESENT: Larry Kennings, Interim Planning Director
Joanne O'Hehir, Minutes-Secretary

Approval of Agenda

M/S, Meigs/Ramsey, Motion to change the order of the Agenda, beginning with Item c.
Renewed discussion of Draft Tree Ordinance, and approve the Agenda.

Ayes: All

Open time None.

Renewed discussion of Draft Tree Ordinance. Commissioners requested to prepare three questions regarding Ordinnace for discussion

Chair Meigs reported that she and Commissioner Ramsey met with Interim Planning Director Kennings to discuss the Draft Tree Ordinance, when they held a telephone conference with Consultant Ray..... Ms. Meigs stated that they had incorporated Commissioner LaMotte's suggestions into the Draft Ordinance.

Commissioner Lacques noted that a new section had been added to improve the standards for an arborist report, regarding evidence and findings, which he discussed. He said that changes were made to the definition of a heritage tree, which he discussed.

Lacques said he would suggest the report be required alongside the arborist report. General discussion took place amongst the Commissioners.

Chair Meigs discussed emergency tree removal.

The Commissioners discussed the professionals who would be considered qualified arborists to provide reports.

Further discussion on other changes to the Draft Ordinance took place, and it was agreed that three Commissioners would suffice as a quorum for Design Review Board.

Chair Meigs and Commissioner Lacques discussed heritage trees and the diameter of a non-heritage tree that would need a permit for removal. In response to Commissioner Lacques, the Chair said a permit would be necessary to remove a tree which would not require discussion by the Tree Committee, but that the cost would be lower.

General discussion commenced on tree removal for solar access.

Discussion took place on 3:1 replacement of trees, which Mr. Kennings noted was standard amongst many Marin cities and the County. The Commissioners also discussed replacement in relation to defensible space, in addition to the wording for the replacement of trees that would be removed due to sudden oak death. Mr. Kennings noted that the County is specific regarding the species of trees that could not be planted.

Discussion on fees and fines took place, and it was generally agreed that the fines were fairly low. No changes were made.

General discussion followed on a decision being overruled by the fire Department, and Commissioner Lacques noted that the Ordinance pertained only to the process of tree removal.

Commissioner Lacques excused himself from the meeting at 8.23pm, and Commissioner Hamilton joined the meeting.

Continued discussion of the Circulation element of the General Plan, beginning with Section Two. Critical items for discussion: Closing of Bolinas Road, use of Else-Bank-Claus as primary circulation route.

Chair Meigs stated that she was not in favor of closing Bolinas Road for reasons she explained. General discussion commenced on the Committee's recommendations to close the road, which Commissioner Ramsey supported for reasons he explained.

Commissioner Hamilton discussed the suggestion that Bolinas become a one-way street, and it was agreed by Commissioners LaMotte and Ramsey that experimentation would be in order.

Ms. LaMotte discussed road closure further, and Commissioner Hamilton addressed the difficulties that would be encountered. Discussion took place on the costs involved and the changes that would be necessary for traffic circulation. It was agreed that the plan would need to be phased.

Chair Meigs stated that community support would be necessary, and general discussion ensued.

Mr. Kennings suggested that if the conceptual plan before the Commissioners was acceptable, then cost implications should be sought from the Public Works and Planning Departments, with which the Commissioners were in agreement.

It was also agreed that staff input would then be sought after obtaining costs, and visual examples provided of similar plans that had been successfully implemented by small towns.

Chair Meigs expressed concern that traffic from Cascade would be affected if Bolinas were closed, and Mr. Kennings noted that the Traffic Consultant reported that it would be more efficient.

In response to Commissioner LaMotte, Mr. Kennings suggested that the Fire Department should review the plan in relation to emergency evacuation.

Chair Meigs discussed her concern that shop keepers would not support the plan. It was agreed that the Chamber of Commerce would be invited to the next workshop.

General discussion on parking took place and timescales for implementing the plan. The Commissioners agreed that input should be sought from the Police and Fire Departments regarding the closure of Bolinas Road.

General discussion took place on the Town Center element in relation to the closure of Bolinas Road. The Chair will discuss the matter with the Mayor.

Continued Discussion of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Review of BPAC minutes.

Interim Planning Director Kennings suggested that the Bicycle Plan should be an addendum to the Circulation Element, rather than be part of the Element, to give it relevance.

Discussion of the BPAC minutes followed, and Mr. Kennings clarified certain aspects for the Commissioners.

Chair Meigs said that safety and enforcement were priorities, and that there should be more traffic law enforcement for bicyclists. She suggested that the item on education be moved to the front of the Bicycle Plan. General discussion on enforcement followed.

Commissioner Hamilton requested a fact sheet on the proposed changes to the downtown area to educate the public.

General discussion on the way forward followed, and the Commissioners agreed that Section 2 would be discussed at the next workshop meeting.

Approval of the Minutes of December 8, 2008

M/S, Lamotte/Lacques, Motion to approve the Minutes of November 8, 2008.

Ayes: All

Commissioner Comments and Requests

Chair Meigs reminded the Commissioners that an attorney would be available to attend public meetings on request.

Discussion on forthcoming meetings followed.

M/S, Hamilton/LaMotte, Motion to change the date of the next Planning Commission Workshop Meeting to January 8, 2009, and the next Regular Planning Commission Meeting to January 15, 2009.

Ayes: All

The meeting was adjourned at 10pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Joanne O'Hehir, Minutes-Clerk