

Town of Fairfax  
Planning Commission Meeting  
7:30PM, July 17, 2008  
Fairfax Women's Club, 46 Park Road

ROLL CALL: Brannon Ketcham  
Pamela Meigs  
Shelby LaMotte  
Peter Lacques  
Peter Goyan

Absent: Alec Hoffmann  
Shelley Hamilton

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

Chair Meigs asked that the Consent Item be removed from the Agenda and be placed as item number 1 under Public Hearings.

M/S Ketcham-LaMotte moved to remove the Agenda as amended.  
AYES: All (5)

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments.

#### CONSENT ITEMS

1.234 Tamalpais Road; Application # 08-36

There was some confusion whether a landscape plan must be included. Senior Planner Neal advised there was no requirement to submit a landscape plan. Senior Planner Neal advised with this particular application, there was an oak tree on the property and that the Commission could add "subject to staff review of a landscape plan" to the Conditions of Approval. The Commission discussed modifying the wording "recommending erosion resistant plants" for future applications, but to proceed with this application.

M/S LaMotte-Goyan motioned to approve Application # 08-36 with the condition that the plant material used for erosion control be native, low water use, have potential for screening in the appropriate areas and mask the top of the wall.

AYES: All (5)

Chair Meigs advised that any Public had 10 days to appeal the application and the application was available at Town Hall.

#### PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

2. 60 Scenic Road; Application #08-37  
Commissioner LaMotte recused herself.

M/S Ketcham-Lacques motioned to approve Application # 08-37, 60 Scenic Road per the submitted designs and staff report.

AYES: (4)

Recused: Lamotte (1)

Chair Meigs advised that any Public had 10 days to appeal the application and the application was available at Town Hall.

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Discussion of the Circulation Element of the General Plan, Introduction presentation by members of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC).

GPAC presented their Circulation Element

Diane Causey of GPAC advised they had been working on the Element for approximately one year and everyone at GPAC was comfortable, pleased and satisfied with the result. The traffic engineers and Consultant Kennings had helped.

Bruce Ackerman, GPAC said that no changes had been made to the bicycle/pedestrian plan as the Commission had last seen. The Circulation Element had 3 parts (1. Existing conditions. 2. Goals and policies in general except for section 3. 3. Addressed the Town Center element.) Mr. Ackerman advised their hope was to do the CEQA process on four elements simultaneously and that they housing, land use, circulation and Town Center. The Town Center would have a few changes, but basically the way it was. A suggestion for traffic being routed was being taken into account. They did several days of traffic counts morning and afternoon including SFDB and Nicasio Road simultaneously with numerous intersections in town. Regional traffic was people trying to avoid Highway 101 and construction trucks were a lot of the heavy traffic and he found it interesting and hopeful (for widening 101) and less traffic would possibly be seen. The traffic was a regional problem and not a local problem.

The map for the Town Center was designed using traffic modeling software. Carolyn Cole was enthusiastic that it would work. Claus Drive was on the north side of SFDB and there would actually be a traffic light there and also at both ends of the new intersection for Bank on through. Goal was to separate the traffic (Elsie through Bank) from the pedestrians and bicycles (Bolinus Road) and Ms. Cole felt it would work out with the proper signaling. Ms. Causey advised Claus/Broadway advised there line-of-sight issues and traffic issues and they looked at different ways to fix that issue. The traffic in the morning rush hour where traffic was backed up and also drove people over to Dominga it would help people if they could go up Elsie and Bank and stop once with cinked signalized intersections. Bolinas could be experimented with different configurations. Bolinas could be closed throughout the day except at rush hour, commute time. They never want a stage to be worse than it was currently. Cones could be put up to see what would work, but opening up Elsie and Bank first was the idea. Possibly making SFDB a right turn only off of Bolinas (8:23 pm) was a possible plan. Ms. Causey advised an extension of the parkade to create more public spaces and greenery and if Bank St was ever opened up as an alternative, more Town Center elements would open up.

Commissioner Ketcham asked if the alternatives were discussed through the charrettes and if all of the best elements were discussed. Ms. Causey mentioned a discussed roundabout through the parkade, but it brought up a lot of questions with bicyclists. Ms. Causey said it was keeping in the spirit of the town with single occupied vehicles by fostering a comfortable environment for pedestrian and bicycle activity. Parking was an issue and they were examining a lot of different alternatives. They did have a lot of choices, but they were not as viable so the proposal was what was before the Commission. Commissioner Ketcham felt it was a well thought out project and that there should be continuous dialogue. Circulation was discussed, but how much parking which encourages vehicle use he asked if the reduction of parking was discussed. Ms. Causey advised parking addition alternatives to the parkade could be re-striping parking spots would be sufficient enough. They had to be considerate to merchants and that retailers actually do better with parking. Commissioner Ketcham asked if there were more spaces being created in the proposal. Moving the roadway up closer to the ball field would create more parking area closer to Bolinas and possibly reconfiguring Mono Lot was an option. They had a lot of flexibility how to deal with parking and when they were closer to decisions, they would look more closely at alternatives. They wanted to be conceptual to maintain the flexibility of the plan. There would be many studies and they would arrive at the best possible decision. Another reason they did not discuss the alternatives, the plan element needed to be in agreement of each other and they kept in agreement with the Town Center element. The interviewed merchants and they did not like the idea of greening the parkade since 19 Broadway and other establishments with active nightlife needed parking. Mr. Ackerman said that the idea with Mono Lot could be crossed from Elsie (or one of the other continued names).

Chair Meigs asked through the whole process what the most contentious issues were where there was some disagreement. Ms. Causey said they got the message if there were any loss of parking spots and closing Bolinas was not riding very well. Mr. Ackerman said some people liked it, but some did not. At the Chamber of Commerce mixers, Mr.

Chris Lange had favored the smallest amount of adjustment and he thought that Ingrid Weiss's main thinking about the ambitious Town Center change, the merchants wanted something now. Street lights, benches and planting were considerations without losing any parking. GPAC provided some suggestions.

Chair Meigs' concern within the Circulation Element was if there was an evacuation plan included. Mr. Ackerman advised they were working on a safety element and Fire was involved. They shared Chair Meigs' concern with safety. Paula Schultz was on the board. How much politically could they get away with was a question. People would not be willing to give up their houses. If they could not contain the shape of the street, they could try to educate the public and gather together the different issues for Fairfax residents to know. Ms. Causey's understanding of the deaths in the Oakland Hills fire were that they were caused from people congesting the roadways in their vehicles and preventing Fire from responding appropriately. Ms. Causey mentioned that the Commission was welcome at GPAC meetings and they would be more than happy to work with the Commission to get them through the document.

Commissioner Lacques appreciated the thoughtful innovations of the document and liked the idea of possibly closing Bolinas. He asked faster, slower or about the same for Bolinas going one way out-of-town. Mr. Ackerman advised they thought it would be faster. Ms. Causey said it would help with Dominga as well. Mr. Ackerman felt the evening commute to Cascade would be about the same. He asked if a stop light was considered for Elsie and Bolinas Road and Mr. Ackerman advised he didn't see a light as an option. Commissioner Lacques felt that could be a potential bottleneck and preventing people from turning left onto Elsie as an option. Ms. Causey felt the no left turn was possibly a good consideration. She mentioned that stop lights are extremely expensive and especially if they are sinked. Bolinas being open one way in the morning at least would allow deliveries and delivery trucks would be able to pull into Mono Lot. Commissioner Lacques liked the parkade extension to the left. Mr. Ackerman advised it was not easy to see how to get out of the parkade. Commissioner Lacques thought a small park or green area was a great idea. Mr. Ackerman suggested the town would know a lot more over the next few years with the driving trend with the current increase of gas prices. The word needed to be gotten out possibly via the town's website. One business owner suggested making out a 2-page handout to increase the synergy.

Commissioner Goyan said as a bicyclist and pedestrian often in town, he would love to see the area in the parkade aligned. Planning Director Welsh advised that the Town received a grant for \$25,000 (8:55 pm) for looking at alternatives and a parkade study over the year.

Commissioner Ketcham kept hearing about preservation of parking, but advised the map did not breakdown easement, private, town and it would be great to have it compiled since preserving parking was not defined. Spaces that were counted were the currently striped spaces, but prior to the Center Boulevard work.

Mr. Ackerman advised there could have been some spaces traded with Mono Lot and Bolinas Road, but the Pavilion Lot would be a close second for changes.

Chair Meigs' consideration would be to do a 30-minute walk downtown to do a visual overview of the proposal and to come up with a couple of dates and send an email out. Chair Meigs also suggested a visual presentation with the size of the traffic element as the diagrams were currently small and intricate. She wanted to see some of the diagrams already in the packet larger. Planning Director Welsh was going to make sure everyone had a copy of the Town Center Element. A few changes were made to the Bolinas Road area and the Town Center Element at been revised. The Safety Element would be finished later.

Commissioner Ketcham asked what the next steps were (goal, responsibility, time frame). Planning Director Welsh advised the language in the beginning said Town Council was to assign the different responsibilities to Staff. (9:04 pm)

Chair Meigs said without the education of the downtown element and the concern about a lot of the blank spaces and the safety element. Planning Director Welsh advised that the consultant asked where the energy should be focused and it was reinforcing the concepts spelled out in the Town Center Element. The circulation element focused a lot on the downtown and she would talk to Paula Schultz as far as emergency evacuation.

Commissioner Ketcham energy, storm drainage, and communications (page 3) and those types of questions would be brought up and he asked if this Safety Element was where it would be addressed. Welsh advised that the wording was what it could be, but not necessarily what it would be. Commissioner Ketcham asked how the flow could be managed and focusing on the downtown made sense, but he wanted to make sure all of the potential issues would be addressed or say where they would be addressed in the future. There could be a few more questions that could be asked and maybe it was being done through the flood zone process, but the emergency access and other issues needed to be addressed. He asked why everything beyond page 48 was included if they did not need to approve it. The bicycle pedestrian plan said the document would be amended based on suggestions (i.e. evacuation routes) by the Commission and state a future study of high priority was needed. Any study needed to incorporate the elements and to articulate the issues and it was a good opportunity to do that.

Commissioner Lacques needed to read the element better and digest it since the statute was not stated. He suggested looking at issues that could be supplemented just to have in the record (9:27 pm).

Commissioner Goyan needed to be more familiar with the material and how it tied into other Elements that he had not seen yet and needed to know more about the state law requirements in case they are missing anything and that emergencies needed to be addressed. Striping, signage or issuing citations, it was critical as October hadn't started and it was one of the worst months for Fire.

Commissioner LaMotte said Diane Causey mentioned (goals page 25) and it had a lot of the wording of all the big picture ideas that seemed to be driving the philosophy of the Element. (9:30 pm)

Chair Meigs said with the size of the packet on bicycling, she was upset that there was no plan for safety. Safety should be first and a lot of money had gone into re-routing traffic, but (page 32) one of the goals prepare and distribute an evacuation map. She was not blaming anyone, but she was unsure what had happened to a plan the Fire Chief was working on. Planning Director Welsh said that the Fire Department may have a plan that Staff was unaware of. Chair Meigs asked if the bicycle plan was relatively congruent with the other plans (bicycle lanes going around curves, etc). Planning Director Welsh advised that the bicycle plan appeared and she was uninvolved. She had not reviewed the master plan herself yet. Chair Meigs requested the map on page 22 to be labeled with street names. She asked if there were public charrettes for the element. Planning Director Welsh said there could be a community forum, but reminded it was noticed tonight and no public was present.

Commissioner Ketcham felt CEQA would provide that public process. The reason for having a public forum was to gauge the level of concern. Commissioner Goyan felt the Mixed Use Overlay was being referenced with it going out and coming back. Planning Director Welsh was open to any suggestion to get the public involved. Commissioner LaMotte said if the Council members were not on board, the public's voice was not heard. Chair Meigs confirmed that state law required that the town had public meetings.

Planning Director Welsh said that Carolyn Cole was using the Municipal Code for the traffic impact study and included her recommendations to make it more up-to-date and to have a suggested review of traffic impacts and it was an addendum. It was something that Carolyn Cold wanted the town to consider adopting. The addendum could be removed as it was not part of the Circulation Element and considered at a later date.

The Circulation Element would be brought back to the August Workshop.

*ACTION:* Planning Director Welsh would speak with the Fire Chief about an evacuation element and the Commission would read through the Circulation Element carefully. Welsh would research what Council said for the bicycle/pedestrian section. Welsh would also look into the state regulation to see if the evacuation/safety plan was part of the Circulation Element.

4. Discussion of proposed revisions to the method for calculating when a project constitutes a 50% remodel.

Chair Meigs asked that the 50% remodel be moved to the August workshop.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The last line stating that the minutes were summary action minutes and a recorded copy was available were moved above Roll Call.

M/S Lacques-Ketcham motioned to approve as amended.

**COMMENTS and REQUESTS**

Commissioner Lacques requested someone fill in for him on August Tree Committee as he will be unavailable. Commissioner LaMotte said she would be happy to do it for him if her calendar permitted.

Chair Meigs asked if for the August 7 workshop if the Commission meet at 7 pm and end a little early to celebrate Commissioner Hoffmann's departure.

*ACTION:* Staff to prepare a resolution for Commissioner Hoffmann.

M/S Ketcham-Meigs motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 pm.

AYES: All (5)

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Dunnigan, Minutes Clerk