

Town of Fairfax Planning Commission Workshop Minutes
Fairfax Youth Center
Thursday, February 4, 2010

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Terry Goyan
Shelley Hamilton
Brannon Ketcham, Chair
Peter Lacques
Shelby LaMotte
Pam Meigs
Peter Ramsay

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Moore, Planning Director
Larry Kennings, Consultant
Joanne O’Hehir, Minutes-Secretary

Call to Order

Chair Ketcham called the evening to order at 7.15 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

M/S Goyan/Lacques, Motion to approve the agenda with the presentation and discussion item on the Model Green Building Ordinance to be the first item heard.

AYES: All

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

There was no one present from the public to speak.

Discussion Items

1. Presentation and discussion of the Model Green Building Ordinance

Planning Director Moore introduced the Power Point presentation on the Green Model Building Ordinance. He noted that the ordinance had been created by a subcommittee of the Marin Climate and Energy Task Force of which he had become an executive member.

Mr. Moore explained the meaning of Marin Green BERST (Building, Energy, Retrofit and Solar Transformation), which was a collaboration of Marin towns, cities and the County to help adopt green building regulations for new construction and remodeling and to encourage existing buildings to become more energy efficient.

Mr. Moore began the presentation. He noted that new large buildings would need to adhere to more stringent regulations than other kinds of buildings.

General discussion between staff and the commissioners took place on how remodeling would be affected.

Discussions also took occurred on the rating system and costs of implementation.

Mr. Moore noted that, if Fairfax adopted a version of the ordinance, it would need to be approved by the California Energy Commission.

2. Nomination and selection of one to two Commissioners to participate in a GPAC subcommittee that will be created to draft the Conservation Element.

Chair Ketcham reported on the GPAC (General Plan Advisory Committee) meeting he attended. He noted that a Conservation Element had not yet been formulated but that the members of GPAC were enthusiastic. Chair Ketcham discussed the need for two commissioners to be elected to form a subcommittee, along with members of GPAC, to put together the Conservation Element for discussion by the Planning Commission.

Planning Director Moore noted that all the elements had been started with the exception of the Conservation Element.

General discussion on the expedition of a Conservation Element took place. Mr. Moore suggested that a subcommittee could meet for a weekend retreat, perhaps, to put the element together.

Commissioners LaMotte and Meigs volunteered to join the subcommittee.

General discussion took place on the possibility of suspending workshop meetings in order to spend time on subcommittee meetings.

3. Continued consideration of the Draft Safety Element of the General Plan; including preliminary review of the draft chapter four "Community Preparedness Section" - Language for Policies and Programs (attached).

Chair Ketcham reported that he and Commissioner LaMotte had met to discuss and amend the Fire Hazards section of the Draft Safety Element. He discussed map issues and those parts of the Element they believed would be better suited under the Preparedness section.

General discussion took place on the Fire Forum that had been held the previous Saturday, January 30, 2010.

General discussion on the way forward took place. Chair Ketcham proposed that the Commissioners completed discussions on the Fire Hazard section tonight, to which there was general agreement.

General consensus was reached under Policy ESE-3.2 that “Consistent with Open Space and Conservation Element Goals” should be replaced with “See Open Space Element and Conservation Element”.

General discussion took place on Program ESE-3.2.1. Commissioner LaMotte noted that plants that thrived in the area were flammable.

In Program ESE-3.2.1, ESE-3.2.2 and ESE-3.2.3, the Planning and Building Department were added under “Responsibility”. The Public Works Department was added under “Responsibility” for ESE-3.2.3.

In Program ESE-3.2.4, under “Responsibility”, Sustainable Fairfax was removed, and the Planning and Building Department and Public Works Department were added in its place.

The Planning Commissioners discussed whether or not a Fire Hazard Abatement District should be established under Program ESE-3.2.5. There was general consensus that further discussion would be necessary.

Under Program ESE-3.2.6, “Scotch” was removed because Commissioner Goyan noted that not all broom that grew was of the Scotch variety.

Under Program ESE-3.2.7, a minor change was made to the wording and Fairfax Volunteers was added under “Responsibility”. The Planning and Building Department and Public Works Department were added to “Responsibility” and “ongoing” was added to “Schedule”.

Under Program ESE-3.2.8, the Town Engineer and Public Works Department were added to “Responsibility”.

Chair Ketcham explained the reasons that the subcommittee had proposed eliminating Policy ESE-3.3. He said that the Town did not have the authority to exempt homeowners from property tax assessments.

General discussion took place about whether Program ESE-3.4 was better suited under the chapter on Preparedness. A minor amendment was made, but there was general agreement that it should remain under the Fire Section.

Following discussion, the Commissioners agreed with the subcommittee that a new program concerning the prioritization of fire access upgrades should be added.

Minor amendments were made to Program ESE-3.4.2 and ESE-3.4.3.

In Program ESE-3.4.6, the Ross Valley Fire Department and the Public Works Department were added under “Responsibility”.

Program ESE-3.4.7, “Develop and” was added before “Enforce street signage....”

Program ESE-3.4.9 was amended to read “.....and emergency vehicle access when considering development proposals in wildland-urban interface.....”

Program ESE-3.4.10: There was general agreement with the subcommittee’s suggestion that this policy would be better suited under the Preparedness section.

Policy ESE-3.5: There was general agreement with the subcommittee’s suggestion that this policy would be better suited under the Preparedness section.

Minor amendments were made to Policy ESE-3.6.

Minor amendments were made to Program ESE-3.6.3 and the Fairfax Volunteers were added under “Responsibility”.

A new program was added to Policy ESE-3.6.

Policy ESE 3.7 and Program ESE-3.7.1 were removed following new information gathered from the Fire Forum which the Commissioners believed made them redundant.

Discussion took place with regard to whether the Fire Department Code’s “substantial remodel” should be used in Program ESE-3.8.3 or the Town Code’s “50% remodel”. It was generally agreed that “substantial remodel” should remain because the Fire Code takes precedence over the Town Code, although the Commissioners agreed that it should be revisited.

In Program ESE-3.8.4, “regardless of distance from fire station” was removed.

Following discussion on Program ESE-3.8.7, it was generally agreed that this program was redundant and should be removed.

In Program ESE-3.8.10, the Design Review Board was added under “Responsibility”.

There was general agreement with the subcommittee’s suggestion that Program ESE-3.9 should be moved to the Preparedness section.

Following discussion between staff and the commissioners, Consultant Kennings agreed to write the introduction to Section 4 on Preparedness. It was noted that a local hazard mitigation document would be needed in the appendix.

Planning Director’s Report

Planning Director Moore noted that there was nothing pressing for the regular meeting of February 18. He therefore proposed canceling the meeting, to which there was general agreement.

Mr. Moore said he would e-mail a periodical to the Commissioners which he thought would be of interest to them and he noted a website, “Planitizen.org”, where progressive planning articles could be found.

Approval of the Minutes

4. Minutes from January 7, 2010, workshop meeting

M/S, Goyan/Meigs, Motion to approve the minutes of January 7, 2010.

AYES: All

Commissioner Comments and Requests

Commissioner Goyan said he would e-mail the City of Davis’ Light Pollution Ordinance, which Planning Director Moore said he had not received.

Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting at 10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne O’Hehir