

RESOLUTION NO. PC -2021

RESOLUTION OF THE FORT BRAGG PLANNING COMMISSION FOR APPROVAL OF USE PERMIT 4-21 (UP 4-21) & SIGN PERMIT 13-21 (SP 13-21) FOR THE OPERATION OF A FORMULA BUSINESS HOTEL AND NEW SIGN AT 250 SOUTH MAIN STREET

WHEREAS, Manish Bhatt (“Applicant”) submitted an application for a Formula Business Use Permit and Sign Permit to operate a formula hotel; and

WHEREAS, the Project is located at 250 South Main Street (APN 008-172-02) in the General Commercial (CG) zoning district, and

WHEREAS, the Project is subject to the Fort Bragg Inland General Plan and Inland Land Use and Development Code (ILUDC); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on December 15, 2021, to consider the Project and take public testimony; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), the Project is Categorically Exempt per 15301(a) existing facilities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Fort Bragg Planning Commission, based on the entirety of the record before it, which includes without limitation, CEQA, Public Resources Code §21000, et seq. and the CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations §15000, et seq.; the Fort Bragg General Plan; the Fort Bragg Inland Land Use and Development Code; the Project applications; and public testimony submitted as part of the Planning Commission’s special meeting of December 15, 2021, and Planning Commission deliberations; the Planning Commission of the City of Fort Bragg hereby finds as follows:

General & Use Permit Findings

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct and made a part of this Resolution;
2. The documents and other material constituting the record for these proceedings are located at the Community Development Department;
3. The proposed project is consistent with the purpose and intent of the zoning district, as well as all other provisions of the General Plan, Inland Land Use and Development Code (ILUDC) and the Fort Bragg Municipal Code in general;
The proposed hotel does not conflict with any applicable General Plan goal, policy, or program and is not related to any specific plan. The use is consistent with the General Plan with Use Permit approval. The ILUDC classifies and regulates the uses of land and structures within City limits. The proposed project is considered Lodging – Hotel or Motel, which is an allowable land use with Use Permit approval in the General Commercial zoning district. The General Commercial zone is intended to support a wide range of service-related uses, which hospitality is a part of. With use permit approval, the applicant shall comply with this finding.

4. The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the proposed activity are compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity;
The Ebb Tide Lodge has operated as a hotel for the past 60 years in this location. The applicants are not proposing any expansions of use and would maintain similar operations as a hotel. Hotels are found throughout the General Commercial zone and are expected in that zone. As the hotel is already built out and has operated/will continue to operate in a similar manner, the use will be compatible with existing and future land uses.
5. The site is physically suitable in terms of design, location, shape, size, operating characteristics, and the provision of public and emergency vehicle (e.g., fire and medical) access and public services and utilities (e.g., fire protection, police protection, potable water, schools, solid waste collection and disposal, storm drainage, wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal, etc.), to ensure that the type, density, and intensity of use being proposed would not endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare, or be materially injurious to the improvements, persons, property, or uses in the vicinity and zoning district in which the property is located;
The site is already built out and no changes are proposed which would substantially affect design, location, shape, size, operating characteristics, access of emergency vehicles, and related public services. Due to existing operating characteristics, the proposed project would not endanger the interests listed above.
6. The project complies with Specific Use Regulations established for the project;
See formula business and sign findings analysis below.

The proposed use complies with any findings required by §18.22.030 (Commercial District Land Uses and Permit Requirements).

- a. The uses generally require larger display and/or storage areas;
The proposed project involves larger amounts of storage in order to serve customers as described in the staff report dated December 15, 2021.
 - b. The use is not dependent on heavy customer traffic per square foot.
The proposed use has a peak usage of customer per square foot that is not indicative of heavy customer traffic as describe in the staff report dated December 15, 2021.
7. For the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project was found to be exempt under Section 15301(a) – Existing Facilities.

Formula Business Findings

1. The commercial establishment will add to, rather than detract from, the overall economic and cultural vitality of the City;
The proposed rebranding of this hotel compliments rather than detracts from the overall economic and cultural vitality of the City as described in the staff report dated December 15, 2021.

2. The commercial establishment will not result in an over-concentration of formula business establishments in its immediate vicinity or in the City as a whole;
The project does not result in an over-concentration of formula business for lodging in the area or in the City as a whole. The proposed formula hotel is a considerable distance from another formula hotel and a majority of hotels in the City are non-formulaic as described in the project staff report, dated December 15, 2021.
3. The commercial establishment will complement existing businesses;
Many businesses in the City of Fort Bragg are geared towards tourism, meaning local business and lodging options are reliant on each other to bring tourists to the Mendocino Coast. Tourism generates sales for nearby local retail and service businesses. The Baymont's central location, proximity to other businesses, services, and attractions would allow the tourism industry to support and complement existing businesses. Based on analysis herein and the project staff report dated December 15, the project shall comply with finding three.
4. The commercial establishment will promote diversity and variety to assure a balanced mix of commercial uses to serve both resident and visitor populations;
The General Commercial zone is intended to support a variety of commercial uses. The General Commercial zone already has a healthy mix of services such as grocery stores, restaurants, cinemas, and lodging. The Baymont Inn is renovating an existing hotel so it will not change the diversity or variety in the area/zone. The CG zone is intended to support hotels, which in turn supports visitor populations. As well, there is a reasonable balance of formula hotels and non-formula hotels.

As a hotel, lodging may be associated with service resident populations by providing lodging for visiting family members of residents. By ensuring visitor serving accommodations available in the City including a wide array of both unique and familiar lodging options, visiting family members of residents will have variety available to suit their preferences and make they're stay comfortable. Based on analysis herein, the project shall comply with finding four.

5. The commercial establishment has been designed to preserve and enhance the City's small town character; and
Small town character is generally defined through a variety of factors like preservation of existing use and buildings, infilling existing urban centers, and creating a cohesive sense of place. Because the remoteness of Fort Bragg is one of its greatest assets, assuring a range of traveler accommodations exist visitors of all walks of life can experience the one-of-a-kind character Fort Bragg has to offer. The Ebb Tide Lodge generally detracted from instead of reflecting the vision for preserving and enhancing the City's destination reputation. The Baymont Inn would be maintaining and continuing the longstanding use of a hotel in place of the Ebb Tide Lodge. The proposed changes to formula use by Baymont will revitalize a dilapidated structure in a way that preserves and enhances the commercial character of town.

6. The commercial establishment's exterior design limits "formula" architectural, sign and other components;

The applicants are not proposing any changes to the architecture and the proposed sign is the only exterior formulaic feature. The applicant has remained flexible with the sign to limit formulaic features while still being able to maintain brand recognition. The sign has changed through staff review from a white illuminated cabinet pole sign to a dark blue, opaque with illuminated lettering sign mounted on the existing sign frame. These revisions have allowed the sign to blend with the site and surrounding area.

In terms of other components such as décor, hotel rooms generally all have a similar room layout. There are no specific features in the room that differentiate it as a formulaic hotel compared to other hotels in the City. Due to the minimal additions of formulaic features, the applicants will comply with this finding.

7. The commercial establishment's exterior design integrates existing community architectural design features.

The proposed formula business does not intend to make and exterior changes to the existing structure. The proposed sign would maintain some of the original features of the original as described by the project staff report, dated December 15, 2021.

Sign Permit Findings

1. The proposed signs do not exceed the standards of §§ 18.38.070 (Zoning District Sign Standards) and 18.38.080 (Standards for Specific Sign Types), and are of the minimum size and height necessary to enable pedestrians and motorists to readily identify the facility or site from a sufficient distance to safely and conveniently access the facility or site;

The existing Ebb Tide Lodge sign is a nonconforming sign due to its height. The following special condition shall allow the project to comply with this finding:

Special Condition #1: Prior to submittal of building permits, the applicant shall revise their sign plan to show the proposed bracket and roof cover at the top of the sign to be 14' in height.

2. That the placement of the sign on the site is appropriate for the height and area of a freestanding or projecting sign;

With Special Condition #1, the sign shall comply with this finding.

3. That a flush or projecting sign relates to the architectural design of the structure. Signs that cover windows, or that spill over natural boundaries, and/or cover architectural features shall be discouraged;

This finding is not applicable to the proposed sign.

4. The proposed signs do not unreasonably block the sight lines of existing signs on adjacent properties;

There are no signs of adjacent properties located near the existing/proposed sign. Therefore, it will not block site lines of signs on adjacent properties.

5. The placement and size of the sign will not impair pedestrian or vehicular safety; *The exiting sign location will not change and is located out of the public right of way and sightlines. Therefore, it will not impair pedestrian and vehicular safety.*

6. The design, height, location, and size of the signs are visually complementary and compatible with the scale and architectural style of the primary structures on the site, any prominent natural features on the site, and structures and prominent natural features on adjacent properties on the same street; *The proposed sign would match existing colors on site (blue, gray, and white) and compliment the building. There are no prominent natural features on site or adjacent on the same street that the sign would conflict with or block, allowing compliance with this finding.*

7. The proposed signs are in substantial conformance with the design criteria in § 18.38.060(E) (Design criteria for signs) and the Citywide Design Guidelines for signs; *The proposed sign is in substantial conformance of the design criteria listed in 18.38.060 or the design guidelines. The proposed sign has been designed by professionals, will have a similar scale to the site, will use durable materials, uses a brief symbol and has high legibility, uses illuminated lettering rather than a cabinet, is placed near the entrance of the site, has a non-reflective finish, and will be placed perpendicular to the street.*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and adoption.

The above and foregoing Resolution was introduced by _____, seconded by _____, and passed and adopted at a special meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Fort Bragg held on the 15th day of December 2021, by the following vote:

**AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:
RECUSED:**

Jeremy Logan, Chair

ATTEST:

Sarah Peters, Administrative Assistant