



City of Fort Bragg

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Meeting Minutes - Draft Planning Commission

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

6:00 PM

C.V. Starr Community Center,
300 S. Lincoln Street

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Hoyle called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present 5 - Chair Derek Hoyle, Commissioner Mark Hannon, Commissioner Stan Miklose, Vice Chair Teresa Rodriguez, and Commissioner Sage Statham

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of Minutes of November 12, 2014

A motion was made by Commissioner Miklose, seconded by Vice Chair Rodriguez, that the Minutes be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Chair Hoyle, Commissioner Hannon, Commissioner Miklose and Vice Chair Rodriguez

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Statham

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

Commissioner Statham arrived at 6:02 PM.

A. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Receive Report, Conduct Public Hearing, and Consider Approval of Variance 4-14 (VAR 4-14) for an Increase in the Height of a Sign at the Super 8 Motel at 888 South Main Street

Associate Planner O'Rourke summarized his staff report and gave a history of the Super 8 sign on Main Street, along with the reasons for the requested height increase from 6 feet to 9 feet. This would increase the total signage square footage from 42 SF to 66 SF, which is still below the 100 SF of signage allowed by the municipal code. O'Rourke explained the special circumstances involved in the application for variance, including the presence of a civic sign just in front of the property, the lack of street frontage on the existing building, and the width of the roadway at the sign location which makes it difficult for customers to see the current sign.

Chair Hoyle opened the public hearing at 6:06 PM.

Jone Lemos, attorney for applicant Noyo Vista Inc. was present with Ron Luzzi, representing the applicant. She complimented O'Rourke on his report, commenting that it is comprehensive and states the purpose of the request for variance, the most important reason being that the small sign is very hard for customers to see. Lemos requested that the Commissioners approve the planner's report and allow the variance.

Chair Hoyle closed the public hearing at 6:07 PM.

A motion was made by Commissioner Miklose, seconded by Chair Hoyle, that the variance be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chair Hoyle, Commissioner Hannon, Commissioner Miklose, Vice Chair Rodriguez and Commissioner Statham

B. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

1. Receive Report and Consider Approval of Sign Permit Application 29-14 (SA 29-14) for Understuff, 410 North Main Street

Community Development Director Jones presented the history of the signage at Understuff's former location on Franklin Street and outlined the proposed sign for the applicant's new store on Main Street. She said in case there was any opposition to the sign, she wanted the Planning Commission to make the decision on whether or not the sign was considered obscene. Jones read the Supreme Court's definition of "obscene," commenting that she did not find the new sign obscene and that the old sign had not received any objections.

Chair Hoyle said what he finds obscene is that someone might find the sign obscene. He noted that the sign adds character to our town and thanked the applicant for designing it.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Rodriguez, seconded by Commissioner Hannon, that this sign permit be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chair Hoyle, Commissioner Hannon, Commissioner Miklose, Vice Chair Rodriguez and Commissioner Statham

2. Discuss Updates to Planning Commission Bylaws

Planning Commission bylaws were discussed. Jones suggested a clarification to Bylaw III.L., to add that the applicants should be present at the hearing of their matter, unless they waive the right to be present stating by letter or email that they will not be present at the hearing. Jones will provide the appropriate language for this bylaw.

Chair Hoyle asked for an interpretation of Bylaw III.C. Jones explained that it gave commissioners an opportunity to pick a time to work on the General Plan. She mentioned that she generally receives direction from the City Manager, but is happy to take direction from the Planning Commission as well. General discussion was held on the Coastal General Plan and the Specific Plan for the Mill Site, with all Commissioners agreeing that they want to become more involved in the long-range planning of Fort Bragg. The Planning Commission agreed to establish a two-person ad hoc committee to review long-range plans and make recommendations to staff. Teresa Rodriguez and Sage Statham will be the Long Range Planning Ad Hoc Committee. The Planning Commission also directed staff to give a quarterly update to the Commission on all major projects and long-range planning activities.

Bylaw IV.F. requires all speakers before the Planning Commission to state their name and address. Commissioner Hannon's view is that he is more interested in hearing what the person has to say rather than knowing where they live. He pointed out that although a person may not live within City limits, they might have a business here or do business here. Chair Hoyle remarked that it is helpful to him to know if people live in Fort Bragg, particularly when they state they are for or against a project. Commissioner Rodriguez suggested having speakers state whether they live or work within City limits. Commissioner Statham suggested adding the word "may" to Bylaw IV.F., so that it reads, "and *may* give their name and address..."

Bylaw IV.G. was reviewed. It states that questions from the public or Commissioners should be directed through the Chair. Jones observed that because she cannot immediately answer questions or correct incorrect statements made by members of the public, sometimes it appears to audience members and viewers that those statements are factual. The commissioners discussed the importance of the Chair taking this bylaw seriously, and if questions are asked the Chair should request a response from staff. Commissioner Hannon said that in most cases, operating more casually is fine, but for more complicated or high profile matters, the Chair can follow the procedure established in Bylaw IV.G. so that all questions are directed through him or her. It was suggested that IV.G. be changed to read: "Questions from the public or Commissioners *may be directed through the Chair, at the Chair's request.*"

The Commissioners directed staff to amend the bylaws and submit them to the Planning Commission for approval at the last meeting in January 2015.

This matter was referred to staff.

MATTERS FROM CHAIR/COMMISSION/STAFF

Chair Hoyle asked for a report from the commissioners who attended the recent 31st Annual Planning Commissioners Conference at Sonoma State University. Commissioner Miklose reported that about 70 planners attended, some of whom were graduates of Sonoma State, a university known for producing quality planners. He said long-term planning was stressed, along with concern for health and environment, traffic, and how to effectively spend money on projects. Miklose said the health and welfare of the public has become the primary driving force in planning, and that is how cities should be looking at how to spend money. Commissioner Rodriguez found the conference a very valuable experience. She also said that health, traffic and the impact of business on residents were major talking points at the meeting. Chair Hoyle thanked them both for attending and said their attendance was very valuable to the Planning Commission.

Community Development Director Jones gave an update on the Chestnut Street and Coastal Trail projects.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hoyle adjourned the meeting at 6:50 PM.