



City of Petaluma, CA

City Council Chambers

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Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, October 26, 2021 – 07:00 PM

Regular Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Potter opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Heidi Bauer, Scott Alonso, Sandi Potter, Blake Hooper, Amy Rider, Rick Whisman, and D'Lynda Fischer.

ABSENT: None

Chair Potter noted the changes to the agenda.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines stated that the Floodway Rezoning item 8A is being continued to a date uncertain and noted the rules for giving public comment on the item.

Commissioner Alonso asked staff if a motion is necessary.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines responded.

City Attorney Eric Danly added that the item is technically no longer on tonight's agenda and a motion is not necessary.

Chair Potter summarized to clarify.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Commission will hear public comments only on matters over which it has jurisdiction. There will be no Committee/Commission discussion or action. The Chair will allot no more than three

minutes to any individual. If more than three persons wish to speak, their time will be allotted so that the total amount of time allocated to this agenda item will be 15 minutes.

■ Written Public Comments Flood Way Parcels 10.10.21 - 10.25.21.pdf

Chair Potter opened the General Public Comment period.

Taryn Obaid stated that she was glad about the additional time and hard thinking regarding Floodway Rezoning proposal. She stated that the timing of the recent storm will help City leaders realize that the neighborhood flooding is a big deal, and it will only get worse with climate change.

Veronica Olsen noticed that the Spirit Living proposal will be back on a future Commission agenda. She stated that this proposed development is not consistent with the General Plan because it does not incorporate mixed use. She asked how this project will serve the surrounding areas, considering that this elder care use is self-contained.

Susan Kirks noted a quote from by Vice Mayor Barnacle. "We must change the way we live". She suggested that the Commissioners use courage to cut through the process that will serve the Petaluma citizens and to look at the opportunities to provide change and enhance the natural resources.

Jerry Wilkinson stated that changes to the River Floodway is a very bad idea and should be rejected. He noted that climate change and sea level rise is here, and the Petaluma River is directly related.

Maira Sullivan stated that she has serious concerns about using the current General Plan maps, using outdated and unreliable FEMA maps, and not considering climate change. She noted that Gina Benedetti-Petnic and other staff have acknowledged their inaccuracies. And felt that there is a risk of a developers race to submit applications before new modeling is used. In addition, she stated that she will pursue grand jury review if the concerns are not taken seriously and will not pay for uninsured losses. She suggested that staff wait for the maps to be updated with the new General Plan.

Beverly Alexander stated that she supports Maira Sullivan's comments. She indicated she would be upset to see people closing their eyes and use outdated information, costing the City a lot of money. She suggested that the Commission listen to the comments and not approve projects using old information in a changing world.

The General Public Comment period was closed.

4. COMMITTEE COMMENT

A. Council Liaison – D'Lynda Fischer

Council Member Fischer had nothing to report but was happy to have won the Cool City Challenge which granted Petaluma \$1 million to assist with Carbon Neutrality by 2030.

B. Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee – Blake Hooper

hooper. concerns. presentation. general plan.

C. Tree Advisory Committee – Rick Whisman

Commissioner Whisman provided his Committee Report.

D. Other Committee Comment

Chair Potter asked about the VMT Committee meeting scheduled for next week.

Commissioner Alonso provided comments and asked about future hybrid public meetings.

City Attorney Eric Danly responded noting the complex situation of public meetings at this time.

Chair Potter provided her comments.

Commissioner Hooper provided his comments saying that the City should take it's time with the reopening.

City Attorney Eric Danly responded.

5. STAFF COMMENT

A. Planning Manager's Report

Interim CD Director Heather Hines provided her Director's Report.

Commissioner Alonso asked for additional information about the Spirit Living proposal slated for the next Commission meeting.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines responded.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes for the meetings of Tuesday, September 14, 2021.

September 14 draft PC Minutes

Chair Potter asked Commissioners if there were any edits to the draft minutes.

Commissioner Alonso abstained from the approval.

The minutes were approved as submitted.

7. PRESENTATION

A. Releaf Petaluma - Receive a presentation on Releaf Petaluma's efforts to plant 10,000 trees.

Releaf Petaluma 10,000 Tree Presentation 10-26-2021

Chair Potter introduced the item.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines introduced Wendy Jacobs, representative from Releaf Petaluma.

Wendy Jacobs provided her presentation.

Commissioners provided their comments.

Wendy Jacobs responded.

Commissioner Whisman provided his comments.

Commissioner Hooper asked a question of Ms. Jacobs.

Wendy Jacobs responded.

Chair Potter opened the public comment period.

Veronica Olsen felt that the presentation was inspiring and liked the idea of cross departmental interactions. She recommended to plant in a forest canopy style to emulate nature.

Susan Kirks was glad that Ms. Jacobs mentioned biodiversity in order to create habitat for creatures and noted that it is good to be thoughtful while deciding where trees are planted. he suggested that wildlife corridors be considered to provide a proper balance. She also suggested that recycled water use should be openly discussed.

Beverly Alexander noted some specific trees that should be used for the City's future tree canopy because they are adaptable and would provide shelter for native wildlife. She suggested that the City needs to look at how to keep older trees healthy because they capture much more carbon than newer trees.

Stephanie Sanchez complimented Wendy on her presentation and liked that she gave examples of what needs to be preserved. She suggested that the City should be open to using fruit trees because many provide food for birds. She stated that she lives in the Payran District and would like to see more trees in that neighborhood.

Taryn Obaid thanked Wendy for her excellent work and noted her thorough discovery and research in Petaluma's unique situation, saying that the highest return on investment is much needed.

Chair Potter closed public comment.

Chair Potter closed the item.

B. General Plan Update - Receive and Discuss Existing Conditions Reports to guide Policy Development as part of the General Plan Update.

Staff Report

Attachment 1 Existing Conditions Summary Presentation

Chair Potter opened the item.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines introduced the item and presented the staff report.

Consultant Ron Whitmore Raimi + Associates provided his presentation.

Chair Potter offered suggestions for continuing the presentation

Consultant Ron Whitmore Raimi + Associates continued. Interim CD Director Heather Hines presented next steps.

Chair Potter provided some initial comments.

Chair Potter opened the item to questions from Commissioners.

Council Member Fischer asked about the comment submission process.

Chair Potter offered suggestions on how to comment.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines responded.

Council Member Fischer asked questions of staff.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines and Chair Potter responded.

Commissioner Hooper asked questions of staff.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines responded.

Commissioner Alonso provided his comments.

Council Member Fischer asked questions of staff.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines and Ron Whitmore, Raimi + Associates responded.

Vice Chair Bauer asked questions of staff.

Ron Whitmore, Raimi + Associates responded.

Chair Potter asked a clarifying question of staff.

Council Member Fischer provided an additional comment.

Interim CD Director Heather Hines responded.

Commissioner Hooper provided his comments.

Commissioner Alonso provided additional comments.

Commissioner Whisman provided his comments.

Commissioner Rider provided comments.

Chair Potter opened the public comment period.

Phil Martien suggested to take this opportunity to create a designated auto free Downtown zone. This would create a more livable, sustainable community and move in the direction of carbon neutrality.

Susan Kirks made some suggestions to the existing conditions reports regarding open space and biological resources current policies. She noted that the unclear priorities and current policies have created an unhealthy situation for community groups to compete for funding sources. She also noted that there needs to be more weight behind the biology resources reports and policies since, in the past, the Planning Commissioners and their decisions appear to be very weak.

Taryn Obaid provided suggestions for changes to the existing conditions report. She noted that Petaluma's Native American history was lacking and should be honored. She noted that the report had left out that the Petaluma River is currently very polluted. She would like to see a map the greater ecosystem of wetlands added. She had additional suggestions for adding information about noise pollution, housing areas based on income level, maps of trees based on size, underground electric wires. In addition, she was concerned about the information on hotel growth.

Veronica Olsen noted some areas of the report and staff report that should be modified because the language made it difficult to determine if statements were existing conditions or proposed as an alternative for the future. The report mentioned wildfires as being an issue and she felt that they are not an issue in Petaluma. The regulatory setting was an area that could be highlighted in the report focusing on the housing element law and affordable housing programs. In addition, she felt that the ecological resources section needed to be fine-tuned to determine what really has or hasn't happened.

David Powers noted the importance of showing a baseline of the extent of the urban tree canopy and stated that all of the future priorities in the existing conditions report intersect with the urban tree canopy. He also stated that development projects can assist with increasing the tree canopy.

Chair Potter closed the public comment period.

Council Member Fischer provided additional comments.

Chair Potter closed the item.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Floodway Rezoning. Zoning Map Amendments to bring floodway zoning boundaries into compliance with corresponding land use designations in the Petaluma General Plan 2025 and Floodway mapping as shown on the adopted Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps. (Continued from September 14, 2021 meeting)

The item was continued to a date uncertain. No motion was made.

9. ADJOURN

Next Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, November 9, 2021. The meeting was closed at 9:28 PM.