

Fw: two important issues for today's joint meeting

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Petaluma is in a drought. There are many programs and incentives to help you conserve water! Learn more [HERE](#).

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From: [REDACTED]**Sent:** Tuesday, June 13, 2023 8:56 AM**To:** Kevin McDonnell <kevin-mcd@comcast.net>; Ellis, Evelyn <eellis@cityofpetaluma.org>; -- City Clerk <CityClerk@cityofpetaluma.org>; Petaluma Planning <petalumaplanning@cityofpetaluma.org>; Kendall Sawyer <ksawyer@cityofpetaluma.org>**Subject:** two important issues for today's joint meeting

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June 12, 2023

To Mayor, City Council members, Planning Commission, Historical Committee,

There are two important issues to consider: one is a zoning overlay and height variance for the historic downtown. The other is a hotel at the corner of Petaluma Boulevard and B street.

That corner is an important site. We cannot get this wrong with a hotel that lacks in beauty. Modern architecture often states that form follows function: any cube can work as a hotel, any pipe can serve as a fountain, or any box with wheels is a car.

Is Petaluma worthy of only a generic designed hotel that could be located in any town in the state? Or might we deserve a hotel that adds a positive note and doesn't diminish our historical ambiance? I'm not against a hotel at this location, but anyone can see that the aesthetics of the currently proposed design do not fit the area.

Most of our historic downtown is composed of 2-3 story buildings. Why is someone proposing an overlay zoning variance allowing 6 stories in this area? You must realize that our historic downtown will be changed forever. **Is there a hidden agenda?** Does the city plan to build high-rise complexes all over downtown if the Overlay is voted in? I'm aware the builder is talking about the towers of the nearby Catholic church as being a reason why the hotel should be 6 stories, but surely anyone can tell the difference between an enormous block-style cube building of 6 stories and two bell-towers that have been there for almost 100 years?

From what I've read, our City wants the tax money that flows from a hotel. Why couldn't a new hotel be designed in a style that complements our historic downtown, maybe with elements of our wonderful iron-front buildings or the Carnegie Library? The historic downtown is on the National Register of Historic Places – why wouldn't we want a new hotel that looks like it belongs here?

Earlier, the Hotel developer said the hotel would “blend past and present” and be “an iconic hotel that blends seamlessly into the fabric of their neighborhood”. Actually, it certainly doesn't blend seamlessly into the existing historic downtown. Why would anyone even consider building a hotel that doesn't continue the architectural historical design of the downtown? (perhaps the community might consider a 5-story hotel if it had an appropriate architectural design.)

Let's quote from an article in Current Affairs by Adrian Rennix and Nathan J Robinson: "Architecture's abandonment of the principle of "aesthetic coherence" is creating serious damage to ancient cityscapes. The belief that "buildings should look like their times" rather than "buildings should look like the buildings in the place where they are being built" leads toward a hodge-podge, with all the benefits that come from a distinct and orderly local style being destroyed by a few buildings that undermine the coherence of the whole"

“Fans of Brutalism—the blocky-industrial-concrete school of architecture—are quick to emphasize that these buildings tell it like it is, as if this somehow excused the fact that they look, at best, dreary, and, at worst, like the headquarters of some kind of post-apocalyptic totalitarian dictatorship.

Rather, instead of recreating the exact *look* of traditional architecture, one should be trying to recreate the *feeling* that these old buildings give their viewers.”

Is it possible to develop a downtown hotel that does not exceed 4 stories, include adequate parking for all rooms, host a desirable rooftop restaurant, and consist of an architectural design that relates to the historic downtown building? Let's find someone to design a hotel that Petaluma should have, not what someone can build cheaply. A hotel with a more appropriate design will still bring tax dollars to the coffers of City Hall.

Thank you for reading this.

Sincerely,

 Petaluma CA