

FW: Riverfront Spirit Living Planning Commission, July 25, 2023

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Tue 7/25/2023 8:17 AM

To: Orozco, Uriel uorozco@cityofpetaluma.org

1 attachments (7 MB)

Riverfront 2014.pdf

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From: Veronica Olsen [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, July 24, 2023 10:34 PM

To: Cader Thompson, Janice jcaderthompson@cityofpetaluma.org ; [REDACTED] ; Hooper, Blake

[REDACTED] ; Kevin Kelly [REDACTED] ; roger mcerlane [REDACTED] ;

Darren Racusen [REDACTED] ; City Clerk

<CityClerk@cityofpetaluma.org>

Subject: Riverfront Spirit Living Planning Commission, July 25, 2023

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Dear Councilperson Cader-Thompson and Planning Commission,

Riverfront: Will it become a "15-minute neighborhood"?

Riverfront mixed-use development was approved in 2014 by the city council. Many of the community amenities have yet to be implemented, eroding much of the intended functions of this area.

Intended Community Amenities (see attached pictures from Riverfront_2014)

- Street trees – throughout
- Benches throughout
- Active ground floors and sidewalks (The hotel has no interaction with the street, except the lobby/entrance)

- Central Green "Focal point of the project" – (Cemented with a few trees and benches)
- 3.5-acre river park along the south side of the development
- Boat dock/house
- Public path network
- Robust transit service

City Council – Riverfront Approval 2014

<https://cityofpetaluma.primegov.com/Portal/Meeting?meetingTemplateId=5826>

Riverfront/Spirit Living

The Riverfront Mixed-Use project intended the core area around the "Central Green" (Spirit Living Lot 5 & 6) to be activated by street-level retail/commercial uses for "walkable, interconnected neighborhoods."

Spirit Living is essentially **single-use**, catering to private, fee-paying clients.

- As stated in the 07/25/23 staff report, ground floor spaces are for residents. "The planned bistro, bar, lounge, and lobby, while intended for the residents of the building and their guests, will add vitality to the pedestrian experience." As a "private space," the neighborhood or outside visitors would not be walking in or towards this facility.
- The Spirit Living project offers stand-alone apartments with kitchens and bathrooms on floors 3 and 4. Unfortunately, this project does not provide essential components of independent living, such as outdoor gardens, recreational areas, and outdoor seating. The lack of other amenities, such as a corner store or community center, may result in older residents staying indoors or driving elsewhere.
- This design could create a lively street level and allow adaptive uses. David Baker, a bay area architect, writes about creating vibrant, active streets through design.

<https://www.dbarchitect.com/press/activating-edges-how-create-lively-active-streets-common-edge>

- The architecture is attempting to fit into the look and feel of the neighboring hotel, which, according to a community survey, is the least favorite building in Petaluma. This site is in a critical location and will set the tone of this neighborhood and "central green."
- Where are organic elements such as green walls, trees and shrubs?

Questions/Additional Comments

- The staff report 07/25/23 states that the purchase of Lots 5 & 6 is in negotiation. What is the applicant's intention for Lot 6 to sell? To develop? Would a second proposal for

housing and an active ground floor be pursued?

- If comments are "non-binding" in the past two Study Sessions with the applicant and the Planning Commission, why is reference made both in the staff report and the Resolution by staff for the 07-25 meeting that the Planning Commission supports Residential Care Facility for the Elderly as a use, even though it is not allowed in the SmartCode? Would not a vote be required to determine this?
- Caufield Bridge (page 5, Fig 4, 07/25/23 staff report): This project will result in increased traffic and potential high speeds going through the core of this neighborhood on Caufield Lane. If there is nothing in the design to slow traffic down, like street trees, sidewalk and ground-floor activity this could be another car-centric zone, unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians.

Thanks for your attention.

Best,

Veronica Olsen