

## MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor & Council  
From: Mike Healy & Karen Nau  
Date: August 28, 2023  
Re: September 11 Meeting – Story Poles

At our August 7 meeting staff advised that they would not be preparing a staff report for this item, which was continued to our September 11 meeting. In light of that, we are taking the liberty of providing some background information.

### 1. Story Poles are Authorized by Adopted Council Policy.

A “Resolution of the City Council of Petaluma Establishing a Policy for Proper Installation of Story Poles for Selected Development Projects” was adopted unanimously in 2005. See attached. The key provision is Section II(A), which provides:

A. Require developers and property owners to place story poles at the site of future construction when deemed appropriate by the reviewing authority. For the purpose of this policy the reviewing authority may be the Community Development Department staff, the Planning Commission, the Site Plan and Architectural Review Committee (SPARC) or the City Council.

Accordingly, story poles can be required if they are “deemed appropriate” by the city council.

### 2. Story Poles Have Been Required for Proposed Developments in Petaluma in the Past.

The most recent example where story poles were required was a small infill residential development on Sunnyslope Road near Smith Drive. See attached photo. A neighboring property owner reports: “I am so incredibly thankful that story poles were required for the Aspect project installed on Sunnyslope behind our street. I think the project is better today because of it.”

### 3. Story Poles are Feasible for the Proposed Appellation Hotel.

The proposed Appellation Hotel would be 68 feet 10 inches in height. A leading contractor specializing in story poles advises that story poles at that height are quite feasible, and has provided a photograph of a story pole installation it did at a height of 64 feet. See attached.

#### Attachments

1. Agenda Request Memo.
2. Resolution No. 2005-200 N.C.S.
3. Photograph of story poles installed on Sunnyslope Road, 2018.
4. Web page of California Story Poles.
5. Photograph of 64 foot tall story pole installation by California Story Poles.

RECEIVED

JUL 18 2023

CITY CLERK

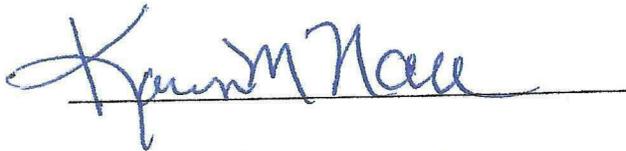
MEMORANDUM

To: Kendall Sawyer  
cc: Peggy Flynn  
Subject: Agenda Request

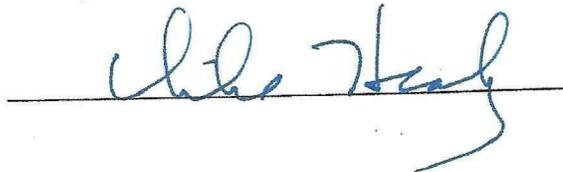
Pursuant to Rule II(A)(3) of the Council's Rules, Policies and Procedures, the undersigned hereby request that the following item be added to the agenda for the August 7, 2023 regular meeting of the Petaluma City Council and Petaluma Community Development Successor Agency:

Discussion and possible direction to require placement of story poles at the site of the hotel proposed at the corner of B Street and Petaluma Blvd. South.

Dated: July 27, 2023.

  
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Dated: July 28, 2023.

  
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Resolution No. 2005-200 N.C.S.  
of the City of Petaluma, California

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF PETALUMA  
ESTABLISHING A POLICY FOR PROPER INSTALLATION OF STORY POLES FOR  
SELECTED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

**WHEREAS**, IN 2004 THE Planning Commission and the Site Plan and Architectural Committee (SPARC) developed and adopted a policy regarding the proper procedure to install story poles for selected development projects; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City Council expressed a desire to adopt a story pole policy that would be the officially recognized policy and procedure for the installation of story poles in the City of Petaluma.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council hereby establishes a policy for the installation of story poles related to selected development projects. Specifically, the Council directs as follows:

**POLICY ON THE PLACEMENT OF STORY POLES**

**I. PURPOSE**

To allow reviewing bodies and the public an opportunity to evaluate the potential visual effects of new development prior to construction.

**II. POLICY**

A. Require developers and property owners to place story poles at the site of future construction when deemed appropriate by the reviewing authority. For the purpose of this policy the reviewing authority may be the Community Development Department staff, the Planning Commission, the Site Plan and Architectural Review Committee (SPARC) or the City Council.

B. The poles shall be placed in a manner, which accurately depicts a proposed structure(s) location, mass, bulk, height, and other relevant information prior to action on a development application.

**III. PROCEDURE**

A. A development application for construction, requiring a discretionary action is received by the City for processing.

B. The Community Development Department staff shall discuss with the applicant the potential need to place story poles on the property prior to

action on the development application. If requested, a copy of this administrative policy will be provided to the applicant.

- C. The need for, and the placement of, story poles shall be as determined by the Community Development Department.
- D. This procedure does not prevent the Planning Commission, the Site Plan and Architectural Review Committee or the City Council from also directing the placement of story poles if deemed necessary.
- E. The information depicted by the placement of story poles may include, but not be limited to illustrating: the location, height, bulk, massing, finish floor height, grading and tree removal of proposed construction when viewed from the adjacent neighborhood or properties and in some instances, such as with hillside development, a large area of the community.
- F. In order to illustrate the information determined necessary by the reviewing authority, story pole placement may be as simple as placing several wooden poles at the perimeter of the proposed structure or a more complex arrangement of poles that may be connected by construction barrier tape or similar material to illustrate the full massing of the structure. Additional information corresponding to a handout described below may be required such as placing markings on the poles to note finish grade, finish floor height, parapet or eave height and maximum height of roof. The structure's footprint shall be outlined on the ground in chalk, tape or similar distinctive material.
- G. A reduced size (no larger than 11" x 17") story pole plan handout shall be provided to City staff to be distributed to the reviewing authority. The plan shall include adequate information to illustrate the orientation of the poles by a numbering system with corresponding numbers to those placed on the story poles. A simple roof plan outline shall be included. A legend shall be included which provides a graphic representation of a story pole with color or other markings to clearly demonstrate information such as finish grade, finished floor height, parapet or eave height and maximum height of roof.
- H. Once the story poles are in place, the poles shall be numbered and the applicant shall photograph the property in question to document the location of the poles from various vantage points as agreed to by the City. The photographs will serve as part of the record for visual assessment of the project.
- I. The applicant shall install the story poles and provide all required information at least 14 days prior to consideration by the reviewing authority. Staff will provide notice to the appropriate reviewing authority(ies) of the date story poles are to be placed at a project site. The required mailed public notice shall indicate when the story poles

will be in place and that a site plan handout, as described in G above, is available at the Community Development Department.

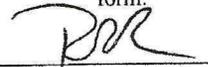
- J. A free standing informational sign, 4 feet by 8 feet shall be erected in a clearly visible and publicly accessible location on the project site at the time of story pole placement. The sign board shall be posted with an enlarged copy of the legal notice or other descriptive narrative, legible from a reasonable distance, and similarly sized site plan of the proposed project. Depending on the size of the project site, additional sign boards may be required at the discretion of the Community Development Department staff. Signs will be constructed with a clear plastic overlay to protect the posted information from the elements.

Under the power and authority conferred upon this Council by the Charter of said City.

**REFERENCE:**

I hereby certify the foregoing Resolution was introduced and adopted by the Council of the City of Petaluma at a Regular meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of November, 2005, by the following vote:

Approved as to  
form:



City Attorney

**AYES:**

Canevaro, Mayor Glass, Healy, Nau, Torliatt

**NOES:**

None

**ABSENT:**

Vice Mayor Harris, O'Brien

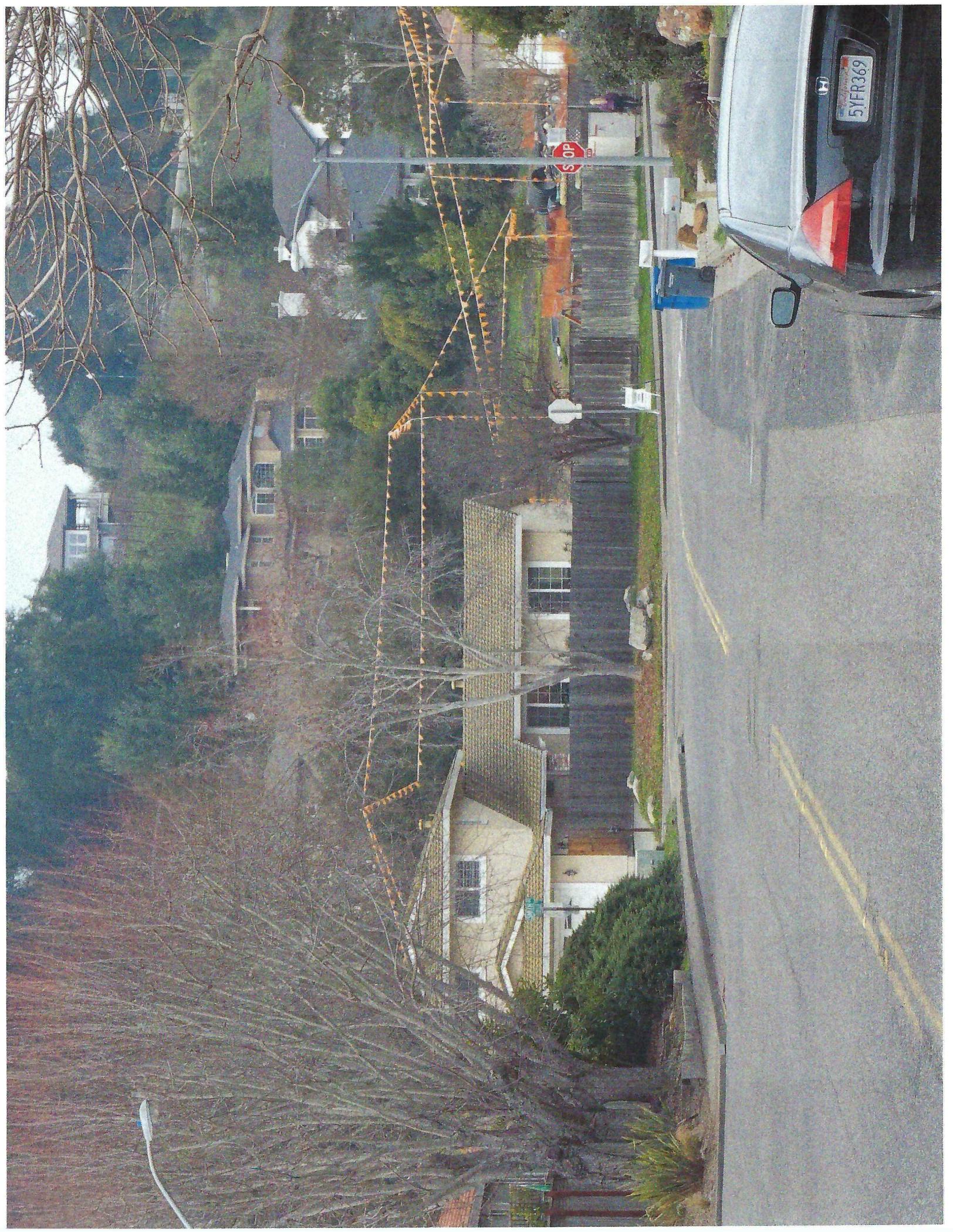
**ABSTAIN:**

None

**ATTEST:**

  
City Clerk

  
Mayor

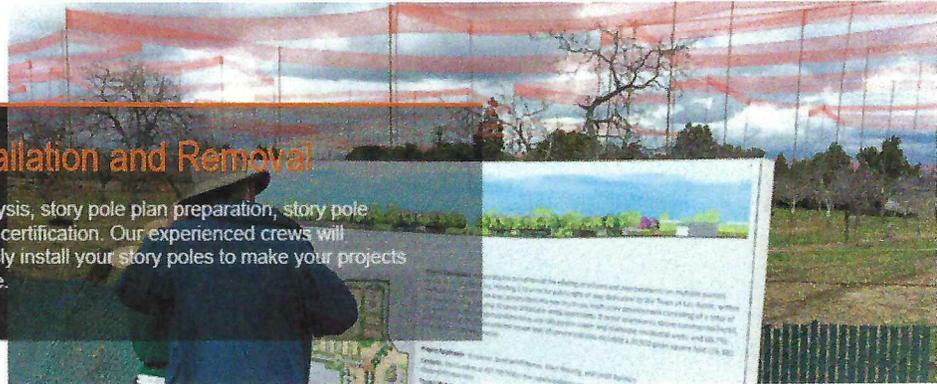


5YFR369

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The requirement to erect story poles to depict the general size, massing, and scale of a project during the design review process has become increasingly popular for proposed development in areas with view preservation concerns. Once final elevations for proposed ridge lines are established, a framework of poles is erected and connected with a band of construction mesh. When completed the story poles create an accurate silhouette of the proposed project and give a good indication of the size, scale, and massing of the project to follow.

### Services

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- Story Pole Survey / Layout Services
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- Vacant Property Installation - Second Story Installations
- Story Pole Certification Letter Coordination with Owners Consultants / Land Surveyor
- View Corridors, Scenic Corridor, Community Review Planning Department Review
- HOA's - Homeowner's Association - Board of Architectural Review Board (ARB)
- View Protection Ordinances and Guidelines
- View Protection Ordinance - Protection of Views
- Design Revisions - Adjustments to Story Poles - Story Pole Requirements

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