

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
June 16, 2009
7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers*
1017 Middlefield Rd
Redwood City, CA
Ph: 650-780-7233
Accessible to Disabled

APPROVED

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioner Borgens, Commissioner Cronin, Commissioner Gee, Commissioner Holt, Commissioner Seybert, Commissioner Smith, and Chair Radcliffe

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Principal Planner Passanisi, Assistant City Attorney Aranda, Planning Manager Ekas, Planning Secretary Mateo

GUESTS: Lisa Brownfield – Hogle-Ireland

PROCEEDINGS RECORDED: For further information not contained in this draft of the written minutes, an audio cassette and DVD recording of the entire meeting is available for listening or purchase at the Planning office, located in City Hall, Redwood City.

AGENDA POSTED: Copies of the Agenda for this meeting are posted at City Hall on the Friday prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

1. ROLL CALL

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

M/S (Seybert/Holt) to approve the minutes of April 21, 2009 as submitted

Motion Passed 6-0 (Borgens Abstain)

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR: None

5. HISTORIC RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HRAC) INTERVIEWS

Joseph Aranda, Assistant City Attorney, updated the Commission regarding honoring a member of the board with an emeritus status and what this entailed. An emeritus is an honorary position and holds with it no voting rights.

Commissioner Seybert asked if Dee Eva, a member of the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) who had been given the emeritus status, was aware that this precluded her from holding any voting rights.

Commissioner Holt stated it was her understanding that Ms. Eva understood she had no voting rights with her emeritus status. Ms. Eva's interest was in continuing her history work.

Mr. Aranda stated this was much the same as any instance when a citizen wished to volunteer time to the City. The person can continue to work in their interest area as long as the committee or those in charge accept their time offered.

Commissioner Holt noted Ms. Eva was interested in how this affected her continued fundraising efforts since she wished to note to the public that these efforts were with regard to the HRAC.

Mr. Aranda stated as long as she worked on authorized activities it was fine to speak on behalf of the HRAC regarding her work.

Commissioner Seybert suggested this be agendaized for the coming week's meeting.

Commissioner Gee noted his preference was to make sure the emeritus candidate was clear on all the issues raised above. He suggested Ms. Eva acknowledge this in writing.

M/S (Gee/Seybert) to continue this item to the June 23, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting

Motion Passed 7-0

6. REVIEW OF DRAFT ELEMENTS OF THE NEW GENERAL PLAN

Lisa Brownfield, of Hogle-Ireland, gave a PowerPoint on the following:

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Redwood City New General Plan – Draft General Plan – Built Environment Element: *Historic Resources Economic Development Infrastructure*

Meeting Objectives

-Updates

- General Plan Covers
- Chamber Member Comment/Econ Dev

-Review Draft Sections of the Built Environment Element

-Respond to Questions

-Receive Comments

Review

- Policy Focus
- Forward text and editing changes to Tom Passanisi
- Review Log

General Plan Elements

- Introduction
- Built Environment

- Housing
- Building Community
- Public Safety
- Natural Resources
- Implementation Matrix
- Glossary

Built Environment

- Vision
- Land Use/Urban Form
- Circulation
- Economic Development
- Historic Resources
- Infrastructure

Economic Development Element – Built Environment: Economic Development-Vision

- **Diverse and healthy economy** blending traditional industries, high technology & emerging businesses in an entrepreneurial setting that supports culturally diverse employees and residents.
- **Housing** opportunities
- Regionally integrated **transportation network**
- Equal **access to education, childcare & health care**
- A **workforce with appropriate education and skills**
- A **land use plan** ensuring opportunities for economic growth while sustaining a quality of life
- An awareness that RWC's geographic **Peninsula location provides a competitive advantage in attracting businesses**

Built Environment: Economic Development – Including a pie-chart for the Distribution of Redwood City Employment by Industry Cluster, 2006

-Issues:

- **Increased industrial and office space demand** based on the knowledge-based and health care clusters or local markets.
 - Demand for small floor-plate buildings
 - Concentrate new office development in Downtown, Redwood Shores to capitalize on RWC advantage
- **Port is unique regional asset** generating jobs at many skill levels. Surrounding lands must be designated for Port-dependent/industrial uses.
- **Growth to occur in Life Sciences industries.** RWC poised to attract those firms at beginning stages.
- **Retail vacancies decrease and rental rates increases as Downtown residential and office construction occurs.** Allows for additional focus areas development opportunities.

Built Environment: Economic Development – w/color-coded map

-Striving and maintaining a diverse, healthy economy

- Improve infrastructure and facilities in target areas

- Long term partnerships/programs facilitating business recruitment/retention/expansion
- Minimize land use conflicts for industrial and Port uses
- Create Economic Development Strategy
- Identify and market appropriate development/redevelopment sites

Built Environment: Economic Development – w/color photos

-Promote Downtown as housing, employment, retail, and entertainment center.

- Encourage mixed-use and office space
- Improve design features (plazas, spaces), conduct special events
- Create transit-oriented/pedestrian-oriented focus for future development
- Allow for shared and/or public parking

Built Environment: Economic Development – w/three-column chart of Redwood City Employers, 2006 including an Employer column, Industry column, and Employees (August 2006) column.

-Maintain skilled adaptable workforce.

- Promote workforce investment policies matching job requirements with workforce skills
- Support industries that provided range of jobs at living wages
- Encourage support services to help employees succeed including child care, and health care

Built Environment: Economic Development – w/pie-charting graphic of the Estimated General Fund Revenue by Category, FY 2008-2010

-Maintain City's Fiscal Health

- Focus economic development activities towards RWC economy
- Strive for balanced budget through diversified, stable, long-term economic basis
- Study sales tax trends to identify important sectors
- Create sense of place to attract employers
- Be responsive to small business development. Pursue small scale strategic plans such as incubators, Main Street USA

Commissioner Seybert suggested Staff include reference points to better delineate the role between housing developments, land use and economic development in the General Plan. He noted housing should also be mentioned in the areas of discussion on maintaining a skilled and adaptable workforce. He suggested a policy be included regarding maintaining reserve funding in the section speaking to balancing the City's budget.

Commissioner Holt suggested more information be included on how the City would implement their plan of hiring local residents for local businesses.

Commissioner Smith stated a better understanding was needed on how the City could attract businesses to the area and how this factored out in sales tax revenues versus money the City will spend on improving infrastructure for these businesses. He noted the importance of a diversification of businesses in staving off lay-offs and mergers.

Commissioner Gee noted the philosophical nature of the General Plan which is written as a vision statement for where the City is headed versus where it is today. He noted

the importance of making sure the City regains any losses while they also move forward. He suggested footnoting the data within the plan in such a way that it is evident that this is the data they were working with at the time they drafted the plan. He noted, for instance, there is a lag time between when jobs are lost and when the impact of these losses is evident. His additional comments included the difficult nature of understanding the plan where items cross-crossed in and out of the different element areas. For instance, they needed to be clear in ways that certain elements intersected such as in how workforce development has a tie-in with the educational elements in the plan.

Commissioner Seybert asked if there will be a topical index to the document which would help with the cross-referencing issue.

Ms. Brownfield stated typically indexes were not utilized in General Plan documentation. Typically, there are parenthetical references guiding the reader to where they will see more on a topic in another element of the plan. She noted she would ask her word processing staff if this was something they might reasonably pursue in the document.

Commissioner Gee noted cross-referencing within the General Plan had been discussed over the last several years. Draft and version dates were also suggested as a helpful additive as they move through the drafting process.

Chair Radcliffe noted the importance of further study regarding transit connections between Caltrain and the employment zones of Redwood Shores and Seaport. She noted there were more employment zones than those so far mentioned.

Ms. Brownfield continued her PowerPoint with the following:

Historic Resources – w/black and white historical drawings and photos

-Vision: Ensure that change harmonizes with existing development to preserve the historic character of our older neighborhoods.

Built Environment: Historic Resources – w/historical map and forefather photo

-Issues

- Maintain comprehensive historic resources inventory – State and national criteria
- Continued historic resources survey to account for buildings that become 50 years old, development patterns
- Additional historic districts identification and evaluation
- Develop historic context and survey to understand RWC assets
- Balance historic preservation, new development, and environmental review

Built Environment: Historic Resources – w/black & white historical photography

-Identify, study, document historic resources

- Detailed Strategy for ongoing survey and identification – National Register, CA Register, State Historical building code, Certified Local Government
- Citywide narrative context for resources
- Maintain Historic Resources Inventory

Built Environment: Historic Resources – w/map of Historic Districts

-Protect, preserve, restore, rehabilitate, and/or enhance historic resources

- Protect historic resources

- Preserve landmark structures and sites
- Encourage retention or adaptive reuse
- Consider landmark relocation to vacant site within landmark district
- Provide property owner incentives
- Allow compatible development
- Permit removal of noncontributing elements be replaced by compatible, historically appropriate element/structures

Built Environment: Historic Resources – w/vintage black & white and current color photography

-Establish public education programs & activities about RWC history and historic resources

- Foster civic/neighborhood pride & sense of identity based on cultural and historic resources including Redwood Creek
- Advocate preservation and rehabilitation of historically significant properties/structures
- Work w/other historic preservation groups
- Continue to offer National Trust Historic Preservation Month activities
- Develop historic walking programs: markers, plaques, maps

Built Environment: Historic Resources - w/black & white vintage photo

-Emphasize & showcase historic resources and unique character of Downtown

- Encourage uses generating pedestrian activity within Downtown historic commercial districts & landmarks
- Encourage resources & sites to be rehabbed or reused in historically compatible manner
- Ensure infrastructure (signs, streetscape) respect historic character
- Re-establish public awareness of Redwood Creek within Downtown

Commissioner Seybert suggested the utilization of volunteers when doing the inventory of the City's historic resources. Careful wording over areas being compatible, as well as the definition of the term, was also suggested.

Commissioner Holt thanked the Historic Resources Advisory Committee for their time and efforts which included extra meetings beyond their usual meeting schedule.

Jim Gernand, Vice-Chair of the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC), stated Committee had indeed gone over items carefully and thoroughly. He noted the Committee was pleased to have been part of the process. The special meetings brought additional focus with brainstorming sessions on how to identify the goals and policies for the HRAC.

Commissioner Gee noted the importance of including landscapes in their designation of historical elements of the City. He asked if there was any possibility of tying in the Historic Building Code for registered or eligible properties in that regard.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nita Spangler, Redwood City resident, noted she had read the Historic Element of the draft General Plan. She did not agree with most of what she read. She suggested ways

to more accurately represent and protect the City's historical aspects. She stressed the Historical Resource element was just as important as all the other elements in the General Plan.

Built Environment - Infrastructure

- Water Storage & Distribution
- Storm Drainage & Flood Control
- Energy Communications & Information Technology
- Solid Waste & Recycling

Built Environment: Infrastructure

-Provide safe, reliable water storage and distribution system

- Improve system's life cycle and level of service
- Maintain adequate fire flow
- Design & locate new facilities in manner that minimizes visual and environmental impacts
- Use monitoring and maintenance programs to minimize system leaks
- Complete a Water Master Plan

Built Environment: Infrastructure

-Provide adequate, reliable wastewater collection and treatment facilities

- Maintain adequate treatment capacity
- Minimize groundwater infiltration and inflow into the system
- Explore options to reduce peak wet weather flow
- Conduct system maintenance programs
- Consider completely Sewer Master Plan

Built Environment: Infrastructure

-Reduce pollution from storm water runoff into creeks and Bay

- Encourage site landscape design that minimize surface runoff and retain/detain storm-water runoff
- Promote creek maintenance and "daylighting"
- Conduct water pollution outreach
- Support creek maintenance volunteer programs

Built Environment: Infrastructure

-Support high quality, environmentally sound energy distribution systems

- Support renewable energy and low emission power sources
- Accommodate alternative energy infrastructure
- Protect and maintain underground high-pressure gas pipelines

Built Environment: Infrastructure

-Advocate for high-quality communication technologies

- Support efforts to develop improved communications while minimizing aesthetic and environmental impacts
- New buildings designed to accommodate wireless communication equipment
- Support Wireless Silicon Valley project

Built Environment: Infrastructure

-Preserve community aesthetics while providing for utility needs

- Underground utilities as appropriate
- Permit new freestanding telecommunications towers when there are no feasible alternatives

Built Environment: Infrastructure

-Minimize solid waste volume entering regional landfills

- Meet/exceed State landfill diversion mandates
- Promote green building practices for building demolition and construction practices and materials
- Develop Green Building Ordinance
- New development required to incorporate recyclable materials collection facilities
- Support the retention/expansion of businesses involved in recycling materials
- RWC take leading role in waste reduction through recycling/composting, purchasing recycled materials
- Promote public and private recycling programs and education

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Commissioner Holt asked whether recycled water should be included in the Built Environment and Infrastructure sections.

Ms. Brownfield stated recycled water was included within the Natural Resources materials. The Engineering Department advised that recycled water also be included in the infrastructure materials as well. She noted Staff would move it from one spot to the other until they ultimately figured out where it fit best.

Commissioner Seybert noted there was a reasonably sized section about flood control in the draft plan including policies, goals and program discussions. However, he noted there was nothing with regard to flood prevention or reduction in areas of the City which were known to be prone to such problems. He noted there were also areas outside the City's sphere of influence which played a role in the City's flood conditions and problems. He stated the Creek Setback Ordinance should be included in materials about storm water runoff and creeks since this was the original purpose of this Ordinance. He suggested the criss-cross referencing of recycled water in the Infrastructure areas of the plan as well as in the Natural Resource aspects of the plan.

Commissioner Cronin agreed about the inclusion of recycled water in both the Infrastructure and Natural Resources elements. He noted gray water, or non-industrial wastewater, was an additional recycled water source.

Commissioner Smith concurred on keeping the issue of recycled water at the forefront of the plan in applicable areas. He agreed with the importance of active and vocal PG&E customers which would encourage the company on their continuing efforts. However, he noted the public should look for other ways, other than relying on PG&E's efforts, to expand solar power and other technologies throughout the City. He spoke on building conformance issues and the Green Building standards. He noted the fiscal importance of energy reduction measures within the City.

Commissioner Borgens noted the Friendly Acres neighborhood area was one area of the City where flooding occurred regularly and not just during the rainy season.

Commissioner Seybert suggested inclusion of some wording regarding future developments and their participation in flood planning.

Ms. Brownfield stated this could be added.

Chair Radcliffe noted part of the flooding problem was also in respect to what some of the neighboring cities are doing or not doing.

Commissioner Borgens gave the example of Atherton Creek which also flows into the City. This creek comes in just sort of the tide gate and empties also into the City's channel. She agreed on the importance of considering other City's efforts and effects on Redwood City's flood planning.

Commissioner Gee noted the importance of including information regarding alternative energy components in that any large property owner should be encouraged to consider solar purchase power agreements (PPAs). He stressed the importance of Cordilleras Creek as a watershed within the City, although privately owned. He suggested inclusion of measures to encourage and fund property owners' maintenance of the creek. He stated wording in the General Plan regarding the soon-to-be adopted Green Building Ordinance should suggest that the City meet and/or beat its components.

Commissioner Smith stated it was also important to note that many homes in the area did not come under the anticipated Green Building Ordinance. It was important to provide financial incentives as well as find funding for owners of older buildings in order that they, too, have the opportunity to work toward more Green practices.

Ms. Brownfield continued with her PowerPoint to include:

Planning Commission Study Sessions

- June 23: Joint Session w/HHCC
- July 7: Built Environment (Land Use/Urban Form, Circulation)
- July 21: Building Community

Public Hearings

- Planning Commission – Anticipated August 4, August 11 or 18, October 13
- City Council – Anticipated September (Study Session), October

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Puccinelli, Syufy, East Bayshore resident, spoke on economic development. Overall, she felt the draft General Plan did well to focus on the importance of jobs, housing and how this contributes to the economic vitality of the City. She noted the number of Redwood City employees who live outside the City. She stressed that no market rate apartments have been built within the City since 2002 in keeping with the demand.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Borgens spoke on her attendance at a recent HRAC meeting. She commended the Committee on their intentions to make the right decisions for the historical feel of Redwood City.

Chair Radcliffe suggested an update from the HRAC was appropriate at this time.

Commissioner Holt noted they had just spent the last meeting in lengthy discussion over windows in the Stambaugh Heller neighborhood. This was one of the biggest projects that the Committee was undertaking at this time. The Historical Resource section of the new General Plan had also been taking much of the Committee's time. The Committee was now working on serving, walking the neighborhoods West of El Camino with a focus on the historic resources and districts in and around the downtown area. She noted there were conflicts, however, in that several of the Committee members live within 200-feet of many of the different areas under their discussions.

Mr. Passanisi noted he, the Chair and the Vice-Chair met with representatives of the school district for feedback on population projections and also on the education section of the Building Community Chapter of the General Plan. Key messages on the discussion included the need for formal childcare in the schools. There was currently limited space for daycare. Funding options were discussed. Discussions were held on how to use schools as mixed-use facilities in and around the downtown area.

Commissioner Gee agreed a good discussion was held with the school district. However, not all the school district representatives could attend. He reiterated discussions were held on population projections, land use, capital needs for childcare, school impact fees and other funding mechanisms for additional childcare space.

7. UPDATE ON GENERAL PLAN

Mrs. Ekas noted the New Realities and New Choices free event scheduled for June 20th from 9-3pm. This would be an in-depth discussion with multiple speakers on the Grand Boulevard Initiative. She gave an update of the planning process thus. She noted a new project submittal had also been received for a three-lot subdivision and annexation on Edgewood Road which would require a Planning Commission review. Tentative maps, a Planned Development Permit and a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review and the Mitigated Negative Declaration. She noted some Planning staff members had recently attended a conference for American Institute of Certified Planners, picked up additional credits towards keeping their certifications, and learned a great deal.

Mr. Passanisi stated the date for the Finger Avenue Appeal had been set for the City Council on August 3, 2009.

Chair Radcliffe noted she would not be attending the July 21st meeting.

M/S (Seybert/Borgens) to adjourn at 8:47 p.m.