

MARIN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
APRIL 7, 2003
Marin County Civic Center, Room #328 - San Rafael, California

Commissioners Present: Ray Buddie
Allan Berland
Ross Herbertson
Don Dickenson
Jo Julin
Hank Barner
Steve Thompson

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Alex Hinds, Agency Director
Michele Rodriguez, Principal Planner
Alexandra Morales, Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved on: **APRIL 21, 2003**

Convened at 1:00 p.m.
Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

1. ROUTINE TRANSACTIONS:

- a. M/s Barner/Julin, and passed unanimously of those present, to incorporate Staff Report into Minutes. Motion passed 6/0 (Commissioner Berland not present).
- b. Continuances: None.
- c. Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2003 (Items 5A/5B – Dickens Subdivision)

Mark and Brent Dickens asked for clarification with regards to FAR calculations and building envelope configuration.

Commissioners Julin, Berland, and Barner agreed that significant changes to the conditions of approval were made after the public hearing portion of the agenda had been closed. Therefore, they expressed interest in reconsidering their action if at all possible. County Counsel David Saltzman advised them that while clarification of the conditions could be made, the Commission was not in the position of revising the conditions in response to the applicant's objections or reconsidering their action since the Planning Commission had issued a final decision on the project on February 24th. Furthermore, Agency Director Hinds noted that the applicants had other options, i.e., proceed with their appeal to the Board of Supervisors or withdraw their application and resubmit a revised proposal.

After staff, County Counsel, and the Commission discussed this matter, it was clarified that FAR calculations should exclude the Arbor Court easement and that the building envelope in Lot 5 was conditioned as approved by the Commission. Therefore, should the applicants object to the Commission's action, they could either proceed with their appeal or withdraw their application and resubmit a new proposal.

M/s Dickenson/Thompson to approve the minutes with modification to Condition 3(I) to clarify that the Arbor Court easement will be excluded from FAR calculations. Motion passed 6/0/1 (Commissioner Buddie abstained).

2. COMMUNICATIONS

The Commission acknowledged additional correspondence from Mark and Brent Dickens, as well as samples of Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors Minutes.

3. DIRECTOR'S ORAL REPORT

- a. Planning Commission Protocol

Agency Director Hinds informed the Commission that a new format for Planning Commission minutes would be explored.

- b. Presentation on the Countywide Plan Update Key Trends, Issues and Strategies Report – Built Environment

Agency Director Hinds stated that the purpose of this workshop was to discuss the Built Environment section of the report. Comments were as follows:

Transportation

Commissioner Herbertson questioned whether the proposed transportation strategies would result in a workable transportation system. Agency Director Hinds stated that if the policies were well-executed the transportation system could improve.

Commissioner Buddie suggested including a peak hour trip breakdown and possible suggestions as to how to handle peak hour traffic.

Commissioner Thompson asked whether the number of trips coming into Marin during peak hour were people coming to work in Marin. He also commented that if the projection of trips per household over a 30 year period only increased by 12% that it was a remarkably small change.

Commissioner Dickenson commented on the following: 1) inconsistencies within the document, i.e., Page 78, under "Opposing Views", sections (a) and (b); 2) the need for more than a single mechanism to secure additional transit funding (Page 79); 3) the use of vehicle sales tax for roadway improvements; 4) the implied lack of an intra-Marin bus system when one does exist (Page 85); 5) the idea that the Golden Gate Bridge toll increase could be used to market bus service to San Francisco commuters was questionable; 6) proposed bus service cuts not being addressed (86); 7) rail possibly being part of a multimodal system (Page 87); 8) the assertion that there will be a ferry terminal at San Quentin ignores other possible locations (Page 88); 9) the lack of a clear definition of what transit connections between tourists means (Page 88); 10) replacement of a freeway lane with a train monorail (Page 88); 11) the appropriateness of including comments regarding development in flood plain areas under the transportation section (Page 89); and 12) the feasibility of providing tax credits for home offices (Page 90).

Agency Director Hinds clarified that even though all strategies were listed in the report, it did not mean that there was unanimous consensus on all of them or that they all would be included in the Countywide Plan.

Energy

Commissioner Dickenson noted Page 93 questioning the accuracy of the statement that although the size of houses was increasing, there were fewer people in each household.

Commissioner Barner suggested exploring the notion of thermostats for water heaters.

Commissioner Thompson suggested exploring removal from the marketplace highly inefficient water heaters in the North Bay area.

Housing

Commissioner Dickenson commented on the following: 1) the relationship between the Housing Element and the Countywide Plan; 2) the high cost of housing rather than the lack of workforce housing is causing employers and employees to leave the county (Page 101); 3) accuracy of the statement that low rental vacancy rates make rental housing hard to find (Page 101); 4) reference should be to use of underutilized Church lands for affordable housing (Page 102); 5) integration of the recommendations for the St. Vincent's and Silveira lands into the Countywide Plan in light of the City of San Rafael's decision not to annex the property is questionable (Page 102); 6) the need to include reference to the new State law regarding second units (Page 102); 7) considering transfer of development rights for affordable housing near jobs and transit when down zoning (Page 103); and 8) what advantages would be gained by having consistency of fee schedules amongst jurisdictions (Page 106).

Community Design

Commissioner Barner commented on the lack of reference to Novato's urban growth boundary.

Commissioner Dickenson commented on the following: 1) the importance of maintaining diversity in residential neighborhoods (Page 110); 2) working with the Congestion Management Agency rather than the Countywide Planning Agency in developing a Master Plan to remove interjurisdictional barriers (Page 113); 3) maintaining coherent urban boundaries to retain a pattern of compact towns and villages in the Marin countryside (Page 113); 4) questioned the reality of increasing density by 20% by 2020 (Page 113); and 5) increasing the number of pedestrians and bicyclists by 50% by 2020 (Page 118).

Commissioner Barner noted that underground parking facilities were not always feasible in Marin County given the water table. He also noted that placing housing on top of a shopping center could result in significant visual impacts.

Commissioner Thompson pointed out that the diversity desired by Commissioner Dickenson was quickly disappearing through the redevelopment of small houses in areas where traditionally smaller houses were the pattern on smaller lots. Investigating methods to restrict this practice would be a great step toward retaining the desired diversity in neighborhoods and the stock of smaller and therefore more affordable housing choices. Size may be the only way to create or retain affordable housing.

Community Facilities

Commissioner Barner commented on the need to address the need for helipad and use of watercraft in case of emergencies.

Commissioner Dickenson commented on the following: 1) conflicting statements regarding the operational flexibility of desalination (Page 128); 2) more emphasis should be given to the reclamation of sewage effluent (Page 129); 3) the actual need for Las Gallinas Sanitary District to expand is dependent upon the future of the St. Vincent's and Silveira property (Page 131); 4) accuracy regarding the merger of the San Rafael Elementary and the San Rafael High School Districts (Page 142); 5) whether it is realistic to propose that the county create smaller neighborhood schools (Page 142); 6) modifying the Coastal Plan to address rather than be consistent with current issues and trends in the coastal area (Page 150); and 7) recreational uses in the Bayfront Conservation Zone should be consistent with environmental constraints (Page 151).

Community Development

No Commissioners' comments.

Staff concluded the presentation by stating that a final meeting will be held in April 21, 2003 to discuss socio economic issues. On May 5, 2003, next steps in the process and review of Countywide Plan scenarios will be the topics of discussion.

c. Update on the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance

Agency Director Hinds presented a brief update on the status of Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, stating that the following recommendations are being made: reducing the threshold for inclusionary housing requirements from 10 to 2 units; increasing inclusionary housing unit requirements from

15% to 20%; and allowing alternative means for compliance. With regards to housing units generated by commercial development, he stated that 20% of the total number of new units will be required to be low and moderate income. The preferred alternative will be to provide said housing on-site or near the commercial establishment as much as possible. However, alternative off-site locations will be considered. It is anticipated that the ordinance will be finalized in the near future, as well as the Housing Element.

4. TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION ON ITEMS NOT ON TODAY'S AGENDA

None.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 10, 2003

M/s Julin/Berland, and passed unanimously, to approve the Minutes of March 10, with the exception of Item 6, as modified. Motion passed 7/0.

6. UPDATE ON BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ACTIONS

March 25, 2003: Walder Appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of the Hedlund Design Review denied.

7. FUTURE AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEMS, FIELD TRIPS