

**Strawberry Design Review Board**  
118 E. Strawberry Drive, Mill Valley, CA 94941  
Strawberry Recreation Center Gymnasium  
**December 7, 2015**

## **SUMMARY**

### **I. The meeting was called to order at 7:33pm**

Members present were:

Julie Brown

Penna Omega

Barbara Rowe

Joe Sherer

Isis Spinola-Schwartz, Chair

Approximately 300+ people were in attendance.

### **II. Open Time:**

Due to length of agenda and later opportunity for speakers, no open time was held.

### **III. Open Time:**

1. Approval of Minutes November 16, 2015: Joe Sherer moved to approve the minutes as written. Julie Brown seconded the motion.

Vote:

Brown – yes

Omega - yes

Rowe – yes

Sherer – yes

Spinola-Schwartz – yes

Copy of minutes will be sent to county Planning Dept and to SDRB.

### **IV. Agenda Item – Seminary Development**

**Applicant** – North Coast Land Holdings, LLC, 2350 Kerner Blvd.  
Suite 360, San Rafael, CA 94901

**Planner** –Jeremy Tjerian

**Recommendation** - Application Incomplete.

Request the following and bring back to SDRB for review:

- 1) **Applicant must submit an Amendment to the Strawberry Community Plan detailing how project affects the entire community. Provide a narrative detailing what is proposed and**

how it differs from what is existing today and how applicant plans to address the extent of those differences.

- 2) Provide clarification in specific detail of all Parcel Maps provided.
- 3) Provide Traffic Management Plan.
- 4) Present more information about the impact 500-1000 day students will have along with residences. Show the different usages at all times of day/week with overlaps of multiple users and functions, including parking for school auditorium and gym.
- 5) Provide an updated Biological Assessment (submitted assessment is 5 years old).
- 6) Provide a comparison of existing housing total square footage versus proposed 304 unit square footage.
- 7) Provide clarification of calculation of units/acre without underwater acreage. Showing density plans for each parcel.

**Planner Jeremy Tejirian** explained the process and phases:

1. Initial Review – Dec. 7, 2015 – Is the information adequate to understand the full project?
2. Impact Analysis – Environmental Impact Report (EIR)  
A full study from outside consultant: traffic, biological, etc.  
Public meeting on what should be considered.  
Consultant prepares draft report.  
Public reviews and comments on report.
3. Merits – the decision-making phase  
Project goes to the Planning Commission.  
Public can comment at meeting.  
Planning Commission sends recommendations to Board of Supervisors. Public speaks at Bd. of Sups meetings.  
Bd. of Sups makes decision.

**SDRB Chair Isis Spinola-Schwartz** explained process for the meeting for public comment.

**Architect Mark Cavagnero** presented the project with a power-point presentation. His comments included reference to the 1982 Strawberry Community Plan and the 1984 Seminary Master Plan, remodeling existing buildings, replacing same number of entitled living units (rentals), including

meeting current ADA requirements and adding 60 affordable units of which 24 are for seniors, residential parking underground, 2.47 units/acre, 75% of site open space (20% more than currently) and Traffic Management Plan in process.

### **Speakers – Groups**

Representatives from groups had 5 minutes to speak  
5 people spoke. Comments included:

**Branson School Chair of Board of Trustees-** looking forward to being a good neighbor and giving back to and working with community. Faculty, alumni, board members, and administrators in the audience. Ross experience proves their track record. Willing to provide Traffic management plan.

**Seminary Neighbors Association- Chris Skelton- Attorney**  
Spoke to need for Strawberry Community Plan Amendment and new Master Plan for Seminary. Issues with Traffic report deficiencies. Recommended a new community based process for Seminary project.

**Scott Hockstrouser- Environmental Planning Consultant**  
Applicant needs to engage with the entire community in a Community Plan Amendment. Suggested that the DRB request the Board of Supervisors to appoint Steering Committee including: key representatives of the community and the application as well as regional representatives of areas effected by the project plan. Include meetings and workshops allowing for public involvement to work together toward Community Plan Amendment – similar to 1984 Community Plan Amendment process. Proposal requires a new Master plan due to subdivision into 10 separate parcels which will each require individual zoning analysis and use requirements. Traffic Report issues- analysis did not include the intensity or frequency of use for two of the upper playing fields.

**Strawberry Community Association- Chuck Ballinger**  
Majority of new housing provided will not be affordable- current units are 100% affordable. One for one residential unit proposal does not add up- existing units at Seminary average 490 sf and the new average proposed are three times that size.

Alex Kypriades presented the Board members with a copy of the Strawberry Visioning Plan conducted by Kate Sears' office in 2014. Vision Plan highlighted concerns over traffic and land use and affirmed the elements of 1984 Community Plan. Suggested SDRB panel use it to understand the community goals that are still relevant from the Community Plan today.

**De Silva Island HOA- Taylor Safford**

The 64 families of De Silva Island, support a community based Plan Amendment process. The project as proposed is too intense for Strawberry.

**Strawberry Cove HOA Renton Rolph** – 72 units on Seminary Drive neighbors to Seminary, have never had 700 cars commuting. Have enjoyed light traffic with the exception of Frontage Road - which is a nightmare. Suggest Branson consider a considerable boarding population to offset the commuters.

**Speakers – Individuals**

Individuals had 3 minutes to speak.

Twenty-one (21) people spoke. Comments included:

**Traffic concerns** –narrowness of roads, divided lanes and steep slopes of E. Strawberry Dr., lack of sidewalks, current Frontage road congestion, current Blithedale Ave congestion, flooding condition at Seminary exit, restricted access to Seminary, elementary school traffic, 101 impact to all county wide traffic, impact to cities of Mill Valley and Tiburon, lack of proposed Traffic Management Plan, Belvedere Place project traffic plan deficiencies, flawed traffic study in proposal not taking into consideration current conditions, use of hypothetical traffic conditions in lieu of real time assessments, isolated site setting, deficient access for commuter school, safety concerns for students (walking and biking to elementary and middle schools), residents and tourists.

**Calls for New Master Plan-** commuter school v. residential seminary, high school population v. college population, impact of athletics, performances, and rentals on traffic, increased hours of activity to nights and weekend events, dorm rooms do not equal condominiums, ability to limit school size, lack of benefit local community, Project planners lack of engagement with community, safety issues, traffic changes, inappropriate place for a high school due to site setting.

**Calls for Amendment to the Community Plan-** Conflict of student housing v. market rate housing, exponential impact of proposed change of use on greater community, traffic impact conflict, change from self contained seminary to commuter school, creation of new parcels each requiring zoning designation, complaints from Community Groups of lack of transparency and meaningful efforts to engage the community in the issues they raised in their meetings, absence of larger scale community meetings, requests to re-engage in open and meaningful way to make project better through community based approach.

**Two Letters were presented-**

– Ray McDevitt presented SDRB panel with letter from County Planning Dept dated 4/29/11 re: Hart/Marin proposal in which County deemed that project incompatible with Strawberry Community Plan for its “major shift” from student to market rate housing. McDevitt urged the SDRB to declare this Project incomplete for the same lack of compliance with the SCP.

-Bruce Corcoran presented the Board with a letter documenting concerns with applicants submitted Traffic Report. Lack of consultation with both County and Cal Trans in preparing report. Concerns with accuracy of computer modeling tools utilized in the report – which are ineffective for closely spaced intersections prevalent in Strawberry.

**Design Review Board Questions and Comments-**

Joe Scherer

- 1) Tree removals –please explain removal of 391 trees
- 2) How did you determine College students are the same as high school students?
- 3) Where is the Traffic Management Plan mentioned?
- 4) Can you clarify designated Parking for concurrent events with 1200 sf auditorium and 1000 sf gymnasium.
- 5) Please respond to the Goals of the Community Plan, page 2 which notes highest priority to adding “detached single family homes”.
- 6) If you would like to make an argument for “physical constraints” preventing detached single family homes under the Strawberry Community Plan then you should make it and present that to the community, I do not see it here.

- 7) Hopefully you will hear the comments from the community and make a change. Do something that is responsive.
- 8) You sound surprised that someone might think you'd come back later and change the square footage. But that is precisely what is happening here. The 1984 Community Plan was very specific and you are asking for changes to it.

Julie Brown

- 9) We need clarification of Tentative Parcel map – ownership, use and density per parcel for all 10 parcels. Removing sf under water.
- 10) Please provide Comparison of residential square footage current and proposed (new sf average is 1800 per unit)
- 11) How does project respond to multiple conflicts with Strawberry Community Plan? – for example rental versus ownership of residential property.
- 12) The 300 units of housing have always served the educational institution on this property and your proposal is to peel them off for a very different purpose.
- 13) The project does not take into account the multiplier of impact of your proposal or concerns from the community.
- 14) You are getting feedback from the community and do not seem to be responding. Presenting the same concept over and over without modification from the feedback is not getting you where you need to be.

Isis Spinoza Schwartz

- 15) Master Plan Amendment is requested for the project but, Community Plan applies. Proposed is exponential change in student population – some Seminary students are abroad.
- 16) What is the comparison of seminary graduate school to commuter high school?
- 17) Number of units proposed – what is the impact to the land use pattern to the seminary area. Not only are there more units, but the improvements to them will result in increased impact.
- 18) Traffic management including parking for arrival /departure from school weekdays and events on nights and weekends is needed.

- 19) Please provide an overlay of parking for residential and school using Activities Schedule 9 for 600 students to paint a realistic picture of what is proposed so that we can speak to the impact on the community.
- 20) We are hearing that meetings with Community Groups have not resulted in actual changes to plans from concerns expressed. No significant community outreach has occurred. While the Vision Plan was more limited, the 1984 Community Plan was very involved and had significant input from the community. I do not see the engagement prior to submitting this massive project. Where are the workshops and charrets? How do you propose to engage the community?
- 21) The project does not address the Bently Holdings project which it should.

Penna Omega

- 22) What is the maximum capacity of Strawberry Point Elementary School? Where will the new residential population would attend school?
- 23) A 200 square foot dorm is not the same as a 1500 sf apartment.
- 24) Herring Dr, East Strawberry and Reed have no sidewalks, how will new residents get to school?

Barabara Rowe

- 25) Largest concern is traffic. The Traffic Management Plan is an important next step.

Applicant Responses:

SWA Landscape Architects Over 700 trees within vicinity of construction. Of 391 trees to be removed 61 trees are protected (virtually all coast live oaks), 240 are monterey pines. Additional 49 oaks may be impacted by construction. The proposal exceeds 3 to 1 replacement (county requirement) of *protected* trees.

Mark Cavanero There will be 400 parking spaces. The field and gym are for school use during the day. The auditorium has seating for 1200. When needed for special events, there will be valet (double) parking on campus. Residential streets will not be used for parking. Traffic Management plan is being worked on. No date yet for when it

will be complete or what the proposed solutions might be. Branson is not ready to commit to a plan. There is no question this is critical. Small group discussions of neighbors were held during past months. Cavanero(MC) emphasized the attempt to adhere 1982 Master Plan in providing housing for families. Did not make any distinction between rental or for sale housing. The SCP Goals state that where physical constraints dictate, attached units are permitted. Housing is clustered to increase open space. Various size rental units are planned for families. Applicant does not have but will get exact total square footage numbers of residential units current and proposed.

Ray McDevitt asked MC how he came to the 2.47 units per acre he cited for the project. MC replied that they took the total acreage of 148 divided by 304 units. MC acknowledged they did include 22-25 underwater acres. McDevitt stated that a significant portion of the land is occupied by the school which is not included. McDevitt stated land is subdivided into 10 separate parcels with two primarily being developed for residential. He noted the largest parcel, Lot 10, has 250 units clustered onto one parcel of 33 acres which when recalculated has a density over of 8 units per acre. MC did not have an answer.

In response to questions regarding public schools. MC asserted that 211 units existing at GGBTS already contain families with kids attending schools. The total new units will be 304 of which 60 are designated for seniors. New total of 240 of the proposed new units will have families which is only a small increase from 211.

Not one resident in the audience spoke in favor of the project. One audience member made the final comment asking, "What do we want if not Branson? The property will be developed. What might be alternatives? Remember what happened with the efforts of George Lucas. I have a question for Branson/Developer, during this long process, how will the property be used, rented out as is? and maintained?"

Jeremy Tejerian advised Board to clarify that the project is incomplete by voting so.

**Motion:** Joe Sherer made the motion to deem the application incomplete and ask for more information to be brought back to the Board:

- 1) **Applicant must submit an amendment to the Strawberry Community Plan detailing how project affects the entire community. Provide a narrative detailing what is proposed and how it differs from what is existing today and Applicant plans to address the extent of those differences.**
- 2) **Clarification in specific detail of all Parcel Maps provided.**
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**Vote:**

Julie Brown - yes  
 Penna Omega - yes  
 Barbara Rowe- abstain  
 Joe Sherer - yes  
 Isis Spinola-Schwartz, Chair - yes

**V. Meeting adjourned at 10:00pm.**

Minutes provided by Barbara Rowe and Julie Brown.

Strawberry Design Review Board meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 7:00pm at the Strawberry Recreation Center on the first floor. Agenda is available several days before meeting at:

<http://www.marincounty.org/depts/cd/divisions/planning/boards-commissions-and-public-hearings/drb/strawberry-drb>

If there are no agenda items scheduled, meeting will be cancelled.