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PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING OF: April 26, 2016
SEBASTOPOL YOUTH ANNEX
425 MORRIS STREET

APPROVED MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF April 26, 2016

SEBASTOPOL YOUTH ANNEX
425 MORRIS STREET

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The notice of the meeting was posted on April 21, 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Please turn off all cell phones and pagers during the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Doyle called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present:	Chair Doyle and Commissioners Douch, Pinto, Fernandez, Fritz and Jacob
Absent:	Vice Chair Kelley (excused)
Staff:	Kenyon Webster, Planning Director Rebecca Mansour, Planning Technician

3. APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES of: April 12, 2016

Commissioner Pinto made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Commissioner Fritz seconded the motion.

AYES:	Chair Doyle and Commissioners Pinto, Fernandez, Fritz and Jacob
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	Commissioner Douch

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA - This is for items *not* on the agenda, but that are related to the responsibilities of the Planning Commission or City Council. The Commission and Council receive any such comments, but under law, may not act on them. If there are a large number of persons wishing to speak under this item, speaking time may be reduced to less than 3 minutes, or if there is more than 15 minutes of testimony, the item may be moved to the end of the meeting to allow agendized business to be conducted.

There were none.

5. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: There were none.

Commissioner Jacob asked a question of staff.

6. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Update on Future Agendas, Action of Other Boards and City Council)

Director Webster provided the following update:

- At the last City Council meeting, the Council:
  - Approved funding for design of the Local Streets Bike Path.
  - Heard the Village Park/Tomodachi Park Annexation matter. The Council agreed with the Commission that it was appropriate to move ahead with annexation and deferred, for the time being, the question of density that was raised by the Commission.
- At the next City Council meeting, the Council will:
  - Hear the appeal of the KOWS radio antenna Use Permit that was approved by the Planning Commission in February.
  - Review the mandatory Zoning Ordinance amendments pursuant to the adopted Housing Element that the Commission recently reviewed.
- At the City Council meeting in mid-May, the Council:
  - Will hear from a potential affordable housing operator who has come forward and is interested in possibly taking over management of the mobile home park and in integrating some affordable mobile homes into it.
- Traffic issues due to CVS construction have begun. Their work is expected to take about a month. In addition, construction of the Highway 12 Bridge will soon become more active which will add to our traffic woes.
- The Planning Commission meeting of May 10th may be cancelled.

The Commission had no questions for staff.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR (PUBLIC HEARING IF REQUESTED): None

8. PUBLIC HEARING:

A. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT/REZONE APPLICATION: This is an application submitted by Jerry and Ganelle Dippe' requesting approval to convert one parcel from High Density Residential to Office at 7765 Bodega Avenue. The parcel is zoned RM-H: High Density Multiple Family Residential but is currently home to a building with several medical offices, which is the historical use of the site. The medical office use is a legal 'Nonconforming Use,' which limits the site to only medical uses. The application does not propose any new development. Rezoning the parcel as O: Office would allow a variety of

office uses, as well as some retail and service uses. The City Council will consider the application for final action at a future meeting, following Planning Commission review.

Director Webster presented the staff report.

The Commission asked questions of Director Webster.

Chair Doyle asked if the applicant wished to make a presentation.

The applicant, Jerry Dippe', gave a brief presentation and was available for questions.

The Commission asked questions of Mr. Dippe'.

Chair Doyle opened the Public Hearing.

Hearing none, Chair Doyle closed the Public Hearing and brought it back to the Commission for discussion.

Commissioner Pinto expressed being in support of this request.

Commissioner Jacob commented:

- The request makes sense.
- Even though this would be creating an island in a higher density area, he expressed having no issue with the request because it is relatively close to other office-type uses.

The Commission asked additional questions of staff.

Chair Doyle commented that spot zoning is generally not desirable.

Commissioner Douch expressed having no comment.

Commissioner Fritz commented:

- Agreed that spot zoning was generally not desirable.
- It may be appropriate to change the designations of other parcels in the area.
- Expressed having no problem with this request.

Commissioner Fernandez commented:

- Expressed being in favor of this application.
- This designation may be especially useful with senior housing nearby.

Chair Douch commented:

- Expressed being in favor of the request as well.
- Would be willing to either grant approval of this request or to loosen up the interpretations to allow any office use as a non-conforming use until the General Plan update is finalized.

Commissioner Douch made a motion to approve the application as submitted.

Commissioner Jacob seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Doyle and Commissioners Pinto, Fernandez, Fritz, Douch and Jacob

NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. PRELIMINARY REVIEW – This is an application for preliminary review of a proposed mixed-use hotel at 6828 Depot Street and a parking structure at 6826 and 6824 Depot Street. 6828 Depot Street is currently home to Sebastopol Tractor. 6826 and 6824 Depot Street are currently vacant lots. The project involves the development of a 65-room hotel, which will consist of multiple buildings, ranging from two to four stories with a height of 50 feet at its highest elevation. The hotel will contain the following elements: a lobby and reception area, retail space, artist-maker studios, restaurant, bar, lounge, wellness center, public courtyard, private gardens, outdoor rooftop decks, meeting rooms, and various other hotel amenities. This is an advisory review only; the applicant may consider filing a Use Permit application, which would return for formal Public Hearing at a future date.

Director Webster presented the staff report.

Chair Doyle outlined the process for tonight's discussion. Topics to address include; height, number of stories, number of guest rooms, parking scheme, alcohol use permit and design review.

The Commission asked questions of Director Webster.

Commissioner Jacob requested that staff show how this project relates to the draft General Plan as the process moves further along.

Director Webster responded in the affirmative.

Chair Doyle recalled that during review of a different hotel use, a hotel is not considered a residential use.

Director Webster responded that there are different code previsions around different issues. For example, in the parking regulations hotels are classified as a commercial use. In terms of flood protection, hotels are considered a residential use.

Chair Doyle commented that hotels are separately defined in our Zoning Ordinance.

Director Webster responded in the affirmative and commented that that was something that should be cleaned up because typically transient accommodations include hotels.

Chair Doyle commented that the reason he was pointing this out was because the draft General Plan states in Action LU 7c that the Zoning Code shall be revised to allow building heights up to four stories/50 feet in the Downtown Core if residential uses are on any of the upper stories, and that in order for it to apply to this project, as written, a hotel would need to be considered a residential use.

Director Webster commented that that was good identification of an issue.

The Commission asked additional questions of Director Webster.

Chair Doyle asked if the applicant wished to make a presentation.

Project architect, Daniel Simons, gave a presentation and was available for questions.

The Commission asked questions of Mr. Simons as well as others who were involved with the project.

Chair Doyle opened the Public Hearing.

Michael Carnacchi, Sebastopol resident and business owner, commented:

- Asked for an explanation of what the 100-year floodplain is.
- Questioned Sebastopol's ability to sustain a high-end hotel with retail component when we already have numerous retail turnovers and several unrented properties.
- Questioned what would happen to Sebastopol if the project were found to be unsustainable.
- Asked if ensuring safe pedestrian crossings at Laguna Parkway, Petaluma Avenue and McKinley Street would be part of this project.
- The open access looks really great but in reality, the decibel levels from the traffic at the intersection of two main highways will be very high and diesel smoke and other automotive pollutants will fill that open space.
- Healdsburg doesn't have the same feel as Sebastopol does.
- Sebastopol is an active, tightknit community.
- Owns a business on Main Street.
- This project will likely attract customers and be good for his business as a custom boot maker.
- Expressed feeling mixed on this project.

Ila Benavidez-Heaster, 7777 Bodega Avenue, commented:

- Attended the DRB meeting where they conducted preliminary review on this project.
- Liked the model and felt that it was quite beautiful.
- This project feels very monolithic.
- Inclusion of a hostel component is important.
- Loves that the applicant is incorporating the town and its citizens.
- A public even space would be a nice addition as well.
- This project is intriguing as is the process.

Ray Blazer, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- Attended their first public outreach meeting.
- This project is far from the energy and sense of Sebastopol.
- This project is very masculine.
- This project is lacking feminine, creative, gutsy, colorful energy. A visual that can be found all over Sebastopol.
- This project feels like it's another world set into the middle of our town.
- Urged the Commission to consider what aesthetics fit into the core of Sebastopol from what is being offered.
- The Commission should hear from Sebastian with the Village Building Convergence to get more feedback on what the community is sharing as far as material use, more rounded edges, and more connection.
- Appreciates the tiered system of buildings.
- This project does not coincide with the progressive, soft nature of Sebastopol.
- Thanked the Commission for their time.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Doyle closed the Public Hearing and brought it back to the Commission for discussion.

Commissioner Fernandez asked if questions raised during the Public Hearing could be addressed.

Chair Doyle responded in the affirmative.

Director Webster and the applicants responded to questions raised during the Public Hearing.

The Commission asked additional questions of the applicants.

Chair Doyle asked to hear from the Commission on parking and circulation.

Chair Doyle commented that a turnout for the valet should be placed on the applicant's property because there isn't enough room to have it on Brown Street, as it is currently a two-way system.

Commissioner Fernandez commented that it might make sense to have a taller parking structure.

Commissioner Jacob questioned the benefit of leaving Brown Street as a two-way system.

Director Webster commented that they could ask the traffic study to consider turning Brown Street into a one-way system.

The Commission and applicants agreed that that was worth looking into.

Commissioner Fritz commented:

- Appreciates the parking structure.
- Would much rather see eighty-eight cars in the footprint of the parking garage rather than surface parked.
- Encourages exploration of turning Brown Street into a one-way system.
- Appreciates that the applicant will be making a lot of streetscape improvements all around the block.
- Interested in having a crosswalk connection between the entrance off Petaluma Avenue and the Plaza, as people will want to cross there.
- Agreed with Chair Doyle's comment on a turnout for the valet being placed on the applicant's property if Brown Street is to remain a two-way system.
- A turnout for the valet would not be needed if Brown Street were to change to a one-way system.
- Appreciates the site plan and believed that it would be a very inviting space.
- The Commission as well as the community in general appreciates very much the applicant's preliminary effort.

Commissioner Douch commented:

- Concurred with Commissioner Fritz.
- Agreed on turning Brown Street into a one-way system, and on providing a crosswalk at the entrance off of Petaluma Avenue.
- Appreciates the community outreach and preliminary effort as well.
- So far, so good.

Chair Doyle commented:

- Conversion of Brown Street to a one-way system should definitely be looked at; it may or may not be a good idea.
- Agreed that conversion of Brown Street to a one-way system seems like a good idea, as it would give the applicant valet space and additional on-street parking.

The Commission asked additional questions of Director Webster.

Commissioner Jacob questioned imposing street and sidewalk improvements for properties outside of the project on the applicant by the City.

Director Webster commented that there are a number of issues to talk about, some of which may need cooperation from other property owners, which may or may not be forthcoming. He noted that the City could impose improvements like those mentioned by Commissioner Jacob when it's a significant development project.

Commissioner Fritz commented that he appreciates the desire to close sidewalk gaps, etc., however, it is onerous to put improvements outside of the project on the applicant.

Chair Doyle and Commissioner Fernandez agreed.

The Commission asked additional questions of the applicants.

Chair Doyle asked to hear from the Commission on siting.

Commissioner Jacob commented:

- Development of the big, concrete space along Petaluma Avenue, near the restaurant, is very important because it will be an asset but only if done correctly.
- Understood pulling the buildings away to give the street trees room on Petaluma Avenue.
- For the wider sidewalk along Petaluma Avenue, retail and/or food vendor kiosks might be a good solution to explore.
- Liked the flow overall, felt that it was good use of the block and expressed being very supportive of everything he'd seen thus far.

Chair Doyle commented:

- Really likes it.
- This is an exciting project.
- The siting, the layout, the interior courtyard, and the private space for the pool for the hotel all make sense.
- It would be great to get the pool 2' above the floodplain.
- The public, conceptual beer garden space is great.
- Expressed being puzzled by the primary façade, which to him, runs along Petaluma Avenue.
- The corner of McKinley Avenue and Petaluma Avenue will be a primary focal point.
- The project should address the plaza more.
- The buildings along Petaluma Avenue should be parallel with Petaluma Avenue.
- Questioned why the restaurant building is skewed from the frontage.
- If the face of the building was parallel with Petaluma Avenue, and the corner became sort of chamfer shaped at the entrance to the restaurant, the corner of McKinley Avenue and Petaluma Avenue would become much softer and more welcoming.
- The corner of McKinley Avenue and Petaluma Avenue is currently unresolved.

Commissioner Fernandez commented:

- The area near the corner of McKinley Avenue and Petaluma Avenue would be a great place for an art piece or fountain.
- Expressed a concern with the walkthrough from Brown Street to Petaluma Avenue because people may wind up jaywalking due to where it meets with Petaluma Avenue and the proximity to a crosswalk.
- Appreciates the flow of the site.
- Likes the idea of kiosks, benches and other amenities to close gaps a bit.
- Wide sidewalks may lend to street fair type things and would not necessarily be too barren.

Commissioner Douch commented:

- Appreciates straightening of retail spaces
- It may be better to fill the gap between the buildings at the southwest corner.
- The layout of the site is great.
- Somewhat agreed about the parallel nature of the restaurant area while understanding that the applicant was still trying to figure that out.

Commissioner Fritz commented:

- Agreed with much of what had been said.
- Appreciates stronger line along Petaluma Avenue.
- Echoed comment on the gap between the buildings at the southwest corner.
- Questioned the right angle for the restaurant.
- It's important to have a fairly strong streetwall.
- The layout makes a lot of sense.
- A 65-room hotel will bring positive energy to Sebastopol.
- This project will lend to the continued vitality of both Main Street and The Barlow.

Commissioner Fernandez commented:

- Questioned parking availability for people attending special events at the hotel.
- The Barlow has an event space, however, it is unaffordable and therefor inaccessible.
- Hopes that this event space will be reasonably priced and accessible for the community.

Chair Doyle asked to hear from the Commission on parking.

The Commission agreed that the parking structure was a good idea and had no additional comments at this time.

Chair Doyle asked to hear from the Commission on height and the number of stories.

The Commission expressed being in support of the height and number of stories as proposed.

Chair Doyle asked to hear from the Commission on the number of rooms.

The Commission expressed having no concern with the proposed number of rooms.

Chair Doyle asked to hear from the Commission on Design, Architecture and any other general comments that they'd not yet made.

Commissioner Pinto commented:

- Expressed being amazed at the job the applicant had done thus far.
- By including spaces for makers and a hostel, the applicant has managed to tap into the soul of Sebastopol.
- The layout is nice.
- Loves about 85% of the proposal.
- The part that he did not particularly care for was the feeling of the exterior treatment as it felt strong and harsh.
- This project will make quite a statement.
- Expressed being open to the proposal.
- Expressed being very supportive of the project.
- Thanked the applicants for their work.
- This project will become quite an asset to this community.

Commissioner Jacob commented:

- Expressed being in support of what he's seen so far.
- This is a great project.
- Likes the look of the project.
- Wished the applicant well.
- Hopes for a supportive process with collective problem solving by the Commission and Design Review Board.

Chair Doyle commented:

- Really likes the site plan.
- Would like the frontage to address Petaluma Avenue more formally.
- Does not like the gable pitch with a plain standing seam metal roof on the restaurant building.
- Likes the collection of buildings.
- Appreciates the effort involved in making the buildings look individual and different and perhaps like they weren't all built at the same time.
- The gabled building sticks out as being inconsistent with everything else.
- A strong element is necessary at the corner of McKinley Avenue and Petaluma Avenue.
- The variety of exterior materials is nice, but may be too much.
- There is a little too much rust for his taste.
- Really likes the project.
- Expressed being very excited about this project.
- This project will be a great asset.

Commissioner Fernandez commented:

- Likes the variety.
- Expressed being unsure about the materials.
- Agrees with comments about the building at the corner of McKinley Avenue and Petaluma Avenue not fitting in with the rest of the project.
- Really likes the foliage.
- Appreciates the preliminary process and the community outreach that has occurred thus far.
- Excited about this project.
- Appreciates the open mindedness of the applicant throughout this process.

Commissioner Douch commented:

- Expressed being excited about this project.

- As somebody who previously served on the Design Review Board, it's refreshing and easier to review when an architect and applicant team comes forward with a proposal that they believe it because they can demonstrate how it will succeed.
- When reading the measure of responses from the Design Review Board and Planning Commission the response to the architecture is positive.
- It's important that the applicant team not be too quick to throw out a component that is important to them while going through this process.
- This is a great project for this location.
- Echoes some of the comments expressed, specifically about the design.

Commissioner Fritz commented:

- Likes the architecture.
- Appreciates the variety of materials.
- Reiterated the comment about appreciating the effort involved in making the buildings look individual and different and perhaps like they weren't all built at the same time.
- Expressed some concern with the gabled building.
- The applicant has done a great job thus far.
- Looks forward to the complete application.

Commissioner Jacob commented that this project would provide a great opportunity for some monumental public art.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Doyle thanked the applicants on behalf of the Commission for bringing their application forward and looked forward to its return.

The applicant team thanked the Commission for their feedback.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

A. 2015 LEVEL OF SERVICE REPORT, providing information on water, wastewater, parks, residential development and other topics.

There were no questions or comments on the LOS Report.

11. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Doyle adjourned the meeting at 9:51 p.m. to the next regular meeting of the Commission. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sebastopol Youth Annex, 425 Morris Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kenyon Webster
Planning Director