



City of Sebastopol
Incorporated 1902
Planning Department
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PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF: **May 11, 2021**

APPROVED MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF May 11, 2021

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The notice of the meeting was posted on May 06, 2021.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Fritz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Fritz read a statement on meeting protocols.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Fritz, Vice Chair Oetinger, and Commissioners
Fernandez, and Kelley
Absent: Commissioner Douch (excused)
Commissioner Lindenbusch (excused)
Staff: Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 27, 2021

Commissioner Fernandez moved to approve the minutes as submitted.

Vice Chair Oetinger seconded the motion.

VOTE:

AYES: Chair Fritz, Vice Chair Oetinger, and Commissioners Fernandez, and Kelley
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioners Douch and Lindenbusch

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA: None

5. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None

6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS OR PRESENTATION(S):

A. MIDPEN HOUSING PRESENTATION – MidPen Housing was the developer for the teacher housing project in San Francisco’s Sunset District. Ali Gaylord, Director of Housing Development – North Bay, will present.

Director Svanstrom provided an introduction.

Ali Gaylord presented.

The Commission asked questions of Ms. Gaylord.

Chair Fritz opened public comment.

Director Svanstrom shared the following question that she received through Zoom chat: I understand that seeking low-income tax credit funds is very competitive, maybe 300% over prescribed. How do you work around this issue on planning your project?

Ms. Gaylord responded:

Well, it is highly oversubscribed, the low-income housing tax credit, and there really is not a way to plan around it, it is something that we must go in and compete for throughout the state. Particularly interesting and wonky in California is the way that you access a portion of the low-income housing tax credit is through tax exempt bonds, and taxes and bonds are allocated to each state based on per capita limits. In 2019, California hit its annual limit and now those bonds that did not used to be competitive are competitive, and that is how you access the credit. We have no kind of over-the-counter tax credit, or way to finance our projects. Everything now must compete. Bonds are oversubscribed about 3:1 statewide and in the Bay Area 7:1. It is very competitive and can delay projects for a very long time. We have already submitted one application for our tax credits earlier this year, which is kind of the last piece of funding that we need. We will be submitting another one in two weeks. It is kind of luck of the draw. We can have projects sitting and waiting for that last piece of funding for a long time.

Kari Svanstrom commented:

I am curious to know how a City would start the conversation with the school district or a nonprofit housing developer? How does that process get started? Can you talk a little bit about that?

Ms. Gaylord responded:

Understanding the market and understanding if there are educators that need this housing, I assume there would be, so I think that is a good place to start. If the school district is having issues retaining and attracting educators, they would probably be open to having some of those conversations of how this can be alleviated and is providing housing a way that they would want to. I think bringing an affordable housing developer into the conversation would be helpful because then you can start talking about some of the constrains, identifying sites potentially, and the City and the school district could also potentially identify sites first and do an RFP like San Francisco did. I think just understanding the need is where the conversation would start and understanding what kind of resources might be available in the community.

Director Svanstrom shared the following question that she received through Zoom chat: You mentioned that in focus groups laundry was important. Are there options that have washer/dryers in the unit?

Ms. Gaylord responded:

We did not have washers and dryers in the units. It is a five-story building and we have a laundry room on two different floors. It is more common for us to do the common laundry room than it is for individual laundry and it give the ability to have more storage space and space in the unit. We rent the equipment and maintain the equipment. It is our more typical way of doing things. The equipment that we use are all high efficiency and low water use too.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Fritz closed public comment.

The Commission asked additional questions of Ms. Gaylord.

Chair Fritz thanked Ms. Gaylord for her time and presentation this evening and concluded the item.

Ms. Gaylord thanked the Commission for the opportunity to present and answer questions.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

She and Commissioner Fernandez attended the last Public Arts Committee meetings to present the Ives Pool mural project concept. At some point, the Public Arts Committee will form a subcommittee to which they have asked me to participate, and I have agreed. That subcommittee will consider what kind nature of murals to affix to the fence at Ives Pool. That is where it stands, I kind of put that on the backburner, but still on the list. Commissioner Fernandez and I are planning to meet next Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. in the park to talk about the next steps. I have a few ideas of things that might coordinate well with the asphalt removal and replacement project and that if we can work with Superintendent Del Prete to decide what should be done at that time, then he can implement that if it works with him, his budget, and needs. If not with his budget, maybe we can find the money for those things. I think our next step would be to try to complete things that coordinate with the pavement removal and replacement in the area where it is going to occur.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

We are looking into and gathering information, I think I mentioned this as the last meeting, regarding Ives Park. We are trying to get some background information so we can be as prepared as possible. Director Svanstrom will be involved. It has to do with daylighting the creek at Ives Park. There are some opportunities for funding with it. I have just enough information to not have any details. We hope to have more information on this at our next meeting. Back to the Public Arts Committee, it was an interesting meeting. Vice Chair Oetinger was so well organized, she had measurements and pictures, and basically handed it over to them. The Public Arts Committee really seemed to appreciate that. Hopefully, the Public Arts Committee will move forward with it. There is a question of whether they want to paint the slats, or there are also companies that you can send a painting or a picture and then they will print the whole image on the slats, so they were not sure how they wanted to proceed with that, but they are certainly open to it.

They had questions about going through the trouble and the timing of the Master Plan and I assured them that that is not close yet. Vice Chair Oetinger did good work.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

I also thought that there was more interest in not spray painting the existing surface, which is what the original, reduce, reuse, recycle, idea was. There is some interest in involving schools or the community in a series of murals or multiple murals that children could participate in, or the community could participate in, and said all those details are things they would want to look at. I do not think they have completely ruled out all the concepts. I think that the Public Arts Committee, as it is composed right now, is more interested in something that is painted by hand that involves children and the community. Also, I thought there was some mention of leaning towards promoting the pool with pool themed images, especially if it were up on Willow Street. I think people were just thinking about their vague ideas. As time goes on, and if they are on the subcommittee, I think the best idea will be formulated out of working with the group.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

The manager of Ives Pool was in attendance and he also agreed to be on the subcommittee. It would be helpful to get his input.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Thank you, Vice Chair Oetinger for the background information on creek daylighting. I had a scoping meeting today with the engineering firm that we are looking to use for that study, the hydrology, and the creek design, and they did have a lot of questions. I told them that I would ask the Commission to think specifically about how you envision the creek being daylighted, and with natural banks, and things like that. Are there projects in the area, or that you know of, that you envision that environment being? There are a lot of different ways of doing it, but they thought it would be helpful to get a sense of what the Commission is thinking. If you know of something right now, I would love to hear it and pass it on to them, if not, you could think about it and send me an email with any thoughts you might have. They said that that would be helpful as they are putting together their scoping and getting started on the project. In terms of the environments, they want to do something that is appropriate to the area as well. We will be looking at that in terms of the landscape, what that feel is. We are getting started on those two studies.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

There is information and I think it is important to have a presentation with the individual that we mentioned at the previous meeting, which we are working on, she was going to talk about and show examples of other projects that they have done. Some even seemed to be impossible, very challenging, but they were able to get through it. I think that is a helpful starting point to see what is possible, what is their history, their background, so it is not something new that they are just doing, and that they benefit the community.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

I am curious, how far along are you with the group that you are working with, Director Svanstrom? Has a contract been signed?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

The meeting was to discuss the project scope of work for the City to review. Nothing has been contracted at this point. Suggested that she talk with Vice Chair Oetinger about the referral offline.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Having a presentation of some different ideas might help the Commission give some feedback. I cannot think of any examples off the top of my head of places where I have seen restored creeks. I know there is a Santa Rosa Creek that they put the greenway along in downtown Santa Rosa, and that is an example, but that is about the only one I can think of. My initial two cents are that I would like to make the creek somewhat accessible. I would not want to see a dense riparian woodland passing through there. You would not be able to see or get near the creek if that were the case. Part of the opportunity at Ives Park and the think that I have mentioned before which always frustrated me is that we have this nice, kind of grassy area, which is the only kind of naturalized part of the creek, and we have fenced it off so people cannot get close to the creek. I would like to see some opportunities to get closer to this moving body of water that runs year-round. That is my two cents for what I would like to see, but I would like to see some examples of creek freeing projects, both before and after.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

Right now, our Master Plan talks about taking areas of the creek that are open and covering over them to give us more space and that is kind of a tradeoff. I think we should think about that, because that would be a change if we did not want to do that. I like the space, but I can see both sides. I think we should be thinking about that. Director Svanstrom, would the Council have to approve any contract first?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

If it is under a certain dollar limit, then it would not need to go to Council as it is already in the approved budget for this year. The budget is allocated so as long as it is within budget, which is below the threshold that needs to go to Council.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

Okay. Especially if it came with private funding, it would be a lot less. Thank you very much, Director Svanstrom, I will be in touch with you.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

With regards to the Climate Action Subcommittee, they do have a meeting tomorrow at 3:30 p.m. and they have a variety of things on their agenda. I will mention that the open seats are still being advertised for. The information and application are available on the City's website.

Paul Fritz, Chair

It sounds like the design review subcommittee is starting up soon so I may have something to report at our next Commission meeting.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

The design guideline subcommittee will be meeting next Wednesday, 5/19.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

I report on the Zero Waste Subcommittee. Vice Chair Oetinger and I spoke about this before. I offered to step in as a representative from the Commission for Zero Waste. I am going to do that. I went to my first meeting, trying to catch up, a lot to listen to. The biggest item they are working on is what is called SB 1383, which is coming up in 2022, and it has to do with cities having plans for composting and recapturing food, and a whole list of items that the subcommittee is looking to get ahead of. That is kind of the main thrust right now. There are two Councilmembers on the subcommittee as well as the City Manager. We will agendize the appointment for our next meeting so that I can be

officially appointed and then I can vote. I will have a lot more information next time. It is a good group, they are quite busy, and ambitious, there is a lot of stuff going on.

Director Svanstrom noted that that would be placed on the next Commission agenda.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Fritz concluded this item.

8. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Svanstrom provided updates.

The Commission asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Along with the summit tomorrow, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. I will be conducting a workshop on working from home successfully. It is a workshop that you have to register for. If you are interested, I can give you the link.

10. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Fritz adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.