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Final Annotated Agenda Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Joint Meeting with Parks & Recreation

October 24, 2006
Afternoon Session Only
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Planning Commission
Leon Garden, Chair
Willard McCrone, Vice-Chair
Paul W. Davis
Toynette Bryant
Luis Osorio
David Stocker
Ralph Widmar
Parks & Recreation Commission
Mike Marotta, Chair
David Canepa
Jeni Cooney
Debra Laughton
Dennis McCarthy, Vice Chair
Suzanne Menendez-Herbst
Susan Woodward

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Garden called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Planning Commissioners Bryant, Davis, Garden, Osorio, Stocker, Widmar

Parks & Recreation Commissioners Canepa, Laughton, Menendez-Herbst, Woodward

Commissioners Absent: McCrone, Cooney, Marotta, McCarthy

Staff Present:

Community Development Director Bill Wojtkowski, Plans and Engineering Director Bill Reichmuth, Recreation & Community Services Director Kay Russo, Senior Planner Rick Marvin, City Engineer Tom Reeves, Traffic Engineer Richard Deal, Administrative Assistant Teresa Nash, Recording Secretary Terry Lebda

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 26, 2006
October 10, 2006

ACTION: Approved as submitted. 6-0-1 (Absent – McCrone)

MOTION:

On a motion by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Osorio, the Planning Commission Annotated Agendas of September 26, 2006 and October 10, 2006 were approved as submitted. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES:	6	COMMISSIONERS:	Bryant, Davis, Garden, Osorio, Stocker, Widmar
NOES:	0	COMMISSIONERS:	None.
ABSENT:	1	COMMISSIONERS:	McCrone

PUBLIC COMMENTS

PUBLIC COMMENTS allows the public to speak for a maximum of three minutes on any subject, which is not on the agenda. Any person or group desiring to bring an item to the attention of the Planning Commission may do so by addressing the Commission during Public Comments or by addressing a letter of explanation to: Community Development Director, City Hall, Monterey CA 93940. The appropriate staff person will contact the sender concerning the details. Note: Public Comments are taken during the afternoon session and continued at the evening session. Individuals may choose to speak once for up to three minutes at either session, but not both.

None.

REVIEW OF AFTERNOON AGENDA AND CONSENT ITEMS

REVIEW OF AGENDA AND CONSENT ITEMS are to review those items recommended for approval on consent, or recommended to be continued, tabled or withdrawn, etc. CONSENT ITEMS consists of those items which are routine and for which a staff recommendation has been prepared. A member of the public or a Commissioner may request that an item recommended for approval on consent be heard on the regular agenda for further discussion.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

PUBLIC APPEARANCE items are reports on non-routine issues that might stimulate public discussion, but that do not require formal noticing as public hearings. You are welcome to offer your comments after being recognized by the Chair. The Chair may limit the time each speaker is allocated.

1. City Council Referral - East Del Monte Priority B Land Use Evaluation

Action: Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission received a presentation on Del Monte Avenue widening and its relationship to Window-on-the-Bay Priority Area "B", accepted public input and provided staff direction. No decisions were made at this meeting. The land use alternatives that warrant more study will be evaluated by staff for recommendation to the Commissions at a future meeting.

Staff Presentation/Commissioners Questions:

Rick Marvin and Richard Deal presented the staff report and answered Commissioners' questions.

Public Comments:

Barbara Bass Evans, Save Our Waterfront Committee, said that the top priority is to acquire the property and to do a Master Plan. She said the CEQA analysis is 15 years old, the project should be reviewed as a whole process including the light rail concept and that the economics and use should protect the coastal economy. Sharon Dwight, resident, said that the highest priority is the park and being park-serving, that fencing with the light rail would change Window on the Bay, there is a need for parking, but not a sea of parking, restrooms are needed and a secured structure for beach maintenance equipment, and there should be no commercial use until the Master Plan is resolved. Bob Evans, President of New Monterey Neighborhood Association, said that there is a need for a Master Plan to see how this concept will affect the entire area from Seaside to the tunnel and how it affects merging traffic, rail, and pedestrians on the Recreation Trail.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Canepa said that he agrees with what the public said and that it is important to see the whole picture starting from the entrance to the City at English Avenue and building up to the Window on the Bay. Commissioner Menendez-Herbst said that the traffic will get worse and she loves the idea of a light rail because she remembers the old train. She said this is a good starting plan but there is a lot of work to do and acquiring the property is the number one priority. Commissioner Laughton said that her concerns are to protect the Recreation Trail and restrooms are needed in the area. She said that there are plans for a gazebo in the Master Plan, the City should continue with the idea of a place to perform weddings, parking needs to be provided, safety is a concern, and the Recreation Trail should be away from the road. Commissioner Woodward said that the gazebo and wedding park should be established, the Recreation Trail should be expanded to allow more walking and strolling area as Pacific Grove provides, and the light rail fence would need to be aesthetically pleasant.

Commissioner Stocker said that he does not like the idea of the light rail and fence taking up waterfront and turning Window on the Bay into a parking lot; rather, he would like to see the train stop at Fort Ord and bus people from there. He said the City needs to buy the land in front of the townhouses and realign the Recreation Trail and that it may be possible to build residential on the east end of the property and the wedding gazebo on the downtown side of the park as revenue sources. He said that there are many missing elements.

Commissioner Davis said that he sees this project as more of an urban design issue and asked if there is a way to redirect traffic away from the area such as coming in at Monterey Peninsula College? He said that a 60-foot parcel is difficult to develop for any type of project. Commissioner Osorio said the City needs a comprehensive plan that takes into consideration the entire area, whether the City wants light rail or rapid transit and where should it be located. He said he would like to see examples of how other cities are building transit systems so that we can better translate the concept into our area. He said this is a great chance to consider mixed-use opportunities with recreational oriented commercial shops opened onto the Recreation Trail and moderate-income apartments upstairs. Commissioner Widmar said, if the decision is made to go with rapid transit, then the City needs to contemplate how to get to the other areas of Monterey from that point. He said that he wants to preserve the feeling of entering an older town and walking to other places, he wants to keep the area more in tune with recreational and leisure activities without a train rolling by, and the concept needs to be designed in context with Monterey. He agreed that the train should stop at Ft. Ord with a smaller mode of transportation connecting to Monterey. He said there should be incremental improvements on Del Monte to reduce collisions, he can not see six lanes, and suggested that perhaps the train should go on the median. Commissioner Bryant said the logical place for a light rail system to stop is either in Seaside or between Palo Verde Avenue and Casa Verde Way. She said the City's priority should be to acquire the property and convert it into recreational uses. She says a light rail with fences located at the Window on the Bay is not a good idea and the EIR should have a current traffic study addendum. She said the City should reconsider closing off Ocean and Park Avenues, but in the interim, she said the City needs to get creative to stop collisions in the stretch between Palo Verde to El Estero. Commissioner Garden said that he agreed the immediate need is to acquire the Del Monte property and he would want to see a Master Plan rather than a widening project. He said he would like to see some transportation alternatives and he wants to see people get out of their cars.

Mr. Wojtkowski said that the rail service is a long-term project and the Council referral to the Commission is what to do with the excess land. He said that in early 2007 staff will revisit this item and bring to the Commission the alternatives TAMC has for the entire length of Del Monte Avenue. Mr. Reichmuth said that TAMC is working on an alternative analysis for light rail or bus rapid transit from Castroville to Contra Costa between Seaside and Sand City, but that there are opportunities and constraints. He said TAMC is not considering the type of rail operated by VTA (Valley Transportation Authority), rather a light rail or bus rapid transit that is small, quiet and clean—a type of trolley with steel wheels. He said that he expects the alternatives analysis to be done this year and can return to the Commission next year to review the alternatives.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioners may ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement or make a brief report on his or her activities. In addition, the Commission may provide a referral to staff or other resources for factual information, request staff to report back to the body at a subsequent meeting concerning any City matter, or direct staff to place a request to agendaize a matter of business on a future agenda (G.C. 54954.2).

2. Response to Commissioners' Comments at October 10, 2006 meeting—Report Received.

New Comments:

- Commissioner Widmar said that he was alerted to concerns by the Oak Grove Neighborhood that a house is in the midst of a remodel using odd materials and building a concrete garage as an accessory structure. Mr. Wojtkowski said that the difference is that one-story, detached garages, that are not historic or potentially historic, are not reviewed by staff. He said that he will pass this concern on to the Historic Preservation Commission.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Community Development Director's report supplies information on activities or announcements. He may also ask for clarification or direction regarding scheduling of Commission meetings and study sessions.

3. Director's Report—Report Received.

- Mr. Wojtkowski said that staff will keep the Commission posted on the Community Development and Public Works reorganization and that the Code Enforcement Officer is now under Housing Division on interim bases.
- Regarding the November 14, 2006 Planning Commission Agenda, staff will send it out early next week.
- Mr. Wojtkowski informed the Commission that Bill Fell recently underwent surgery but is now at home and doing well.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Leon Garden, Chair

Bill Wojtkowski, Secretary

Respectfully Submitted, Terry Lebda
Recording Secretary
Planning Commission