

Planning Commission: November 17, 1999 Summary

DRAFT Minutes of Special Planning Commission Meeting

The meeting began at 7:10pm.

Planning Commissioners Present: Boverhuis, Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, Poschman (left at 8:45), Wengraf, Wrenn (7:15)

Planning Commissioners Absent: McCamant, Noguera

Staff Present: Haney-Owens, Caplan, Landau, Caronna, Murphy, Grube, Al-Hadithy, Douglas, Rucker

PUBLIC COMMENT

Pamela Sivola stated her concern regarding the Harrison Street Playing Fields project. She stated that the area is not suited for a playing field due to poor air quality caused by the 880 freeway, a railroad, and adjacent industrial uses. She stated that the area is noisy and dirty and has been designated the worst asthma area in Berkeley.

- Commissioner Wengraf asked for the source of the asthma statistic and Sivola stated that it is Contained in Attachment #2 to the 11/17/99 staff report.
- L.A. Wood stated his concerns regarding the Harrison Street project. He stated that the proposed mitigation measures will be insufficient. He provided a handout that he stated outlines the actual mitigation needs of the project.
- Nathan French, member of Friends of a Berkeley Skatepark, stated that he has worked on the Harrison project for several years. He stated that he is aware of the air quality risks but believes that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, given that youth in Berkeley need a place for recreational activities.
- Doug Fielding stated that the air-quality issue must be kept in perspective, given many fields are built near freeways and socio-economic factors play a part in asthma statistics. He noted that there are few alternative locations for such a use.
- Kate Obenour of Friends of a Berkeley Skatepark stated that many Berkeley children have been involved in the development of the Harrison Street project and would be very disappointed to see it abandoned.
- Commissioner Wengraf asked Obenour if she is afraid of the health risks to her children.
- Obenour stated that she is more afraid to allow her children to play in the street than to use a recreational facility at the proposed Harrison Street location.

ORDER OF AGENDA - The order of the agenda was not changed.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Commissioner Capitelli stated that there was a General Plan workshop on citizen participation at the November 10th Planning Commission meeting and that the General Plan Subcommittee intends to present a report regarding the process for completing the New Century Plan to the Planning Commission.

COUNCIL ACTIONS

- Staff Haney-Owens stated that the Marina Plan concept was approved by the Council at its November 9th meeting.

FUTURE AGENDAS

- Commissioner Bronstein stated that the discussion of the Zoning Ordinance amendment related to transitional housing for victims of domestic violence will be deferred until such time that the requested staff work has been completed.
- Commissioner Wengraf stated that the Workshop on Small Businesses in Berkeley will take place on February 3, 2000.

2220 SACRAMENTO STREET: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO INCLUSIONARY AGREEMENT: PUBLIC HEARING

- Staff Grube presented the report and recommended that the Commission adopt the proposed amendment.
- MSC (Poschman/Wengraf) to open public hearing. The motion carried. Ayes: Boverhuis, Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: McCamant, Noguera.
- Don Lindeman of Berkeley Co-housing discussed the cost overruns related to the resale agreement.
- MSC (Poschman/Wengraf) to close public hearing. The motion carried. Ayes: Boverhuis, Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: McCamant, Noguera.
- MSC (Wrenn/Wengraf) to approve the proposed Amendment to the Agreement and Declaration. The motion carried. Ayes: Boverhuis, Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: McCamant, Noguera.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY'S NEW CENTURY PLAN

- UC Berkeley Planning Staff Judy Chess and Heather Hood gave a presentation regarding the public engagement process for the New Century Plan.
- Commissioner Bronstein asked in what way UC will provide outreach to the community regarding this project.
- Chess replied that consultants will present issues to the community at meetings and receive comments.
- Bronstein asked how this project will be presented to the recently formed University Relations Commission.
- Chess replied that UC intends to work with the Planning Commission and other relevant Commissions with respect to the New Century Plan.
- Bronstein asked why Tilden Park was given so much emphasis in the presentation.

- Chess replied that the consultants have been impressed by the open space access offered by Tilden Park's proximity to the campus.
- Commissioner Wrenn asked what the SAFER program is.
- Chess replied that the project is intended to address University buildings which are in need of seismic retrofitting.
- Wrenn asked what the end date is for the University Long Range Development Plan.
- Chess replied that it is 2005.
- Commissioner Capitelli asked whether the New Century Plan might become a "facilities enlargement program." He also asked how many square feet of development the campus has, how many people are employed by the campus, and how many people actually frequent the campus.
- UC staff agreed to provide this information.
- Commissioner Wrenn raised the issue of "Tidal Wave II" which anticipates a major influx of new students to the UC system over the next 10-15 years.
- Chess replied that the scope of the plan will need to acknowledge the expected wave of Baby Boomer children.

INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE HARRISON STREET PLAYING FIELDS

- Lisa Caronna, Director of the Parks and Waterfront Department presented the project and related environmental concerns.
- Commissioner Capitelli asked about the status of the land.
- Staff Weldon Rucker replied that University owns the land and that the City will, in December, seek City Council approval for the purchase of the land.
- Commissioner Bronstein referred to the Laboratory Glass Apparatus, Inc. letter that asks whether nearby businesses will be impacted by the presence of children.
- Commissioner Wengraf raised the issue of whether the presence of children in the Harrison Fields would be different from the presence of children in Albany Village with respect to air quality issues.
- Al-Hadithy replied that the air quality impacts would be the same.
- Commissioner Wengraf asked if companies in the area use toxic substances.
- Al-Hadithy stated that several businesses in the area use such substances.
- Commissioner Boverhuis asked what gases Atlas Welding uses.
- Al-Hadithy replied that they use several, but in small amounts.
- Commissioner Poschman asked what levels of toxic storage are considered hazardous.
- Al-Hadithy replied that it depends upon the substance.
- Commissioner Bronstein asked for staff comment on the idea of using security guards.
- Staff Caronna replied that there would be a free phone on site, but not recreation staff.
- Staff Murphy stated that the site will have fences and specific points of entry.
- Commissioner Bronstein asked about traffic levels in the area.
- Murphy replied that there are mostly truck deliveries and that the majority of these occur when children are in school.
- MSC (Wrenn/Bronstein) that staff meet with representatives of local businesses to address the concerns of these businesses. The motion carried. Ayes: Boverhuis, Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: McCamant, Noguera.
- Director Caronna stated that the city intends to break ground in March and have the park ready in the Fall.
- Commissioner Poschman stated that a skate park in San Mateo had recently been closed.

- Staff Caronna said staff would look into it.
- Kate Obenour listed several successful skate parks.
- Commissioner Wrenn stated that environmental issues should be taken seriously and that the City should address sources of pollution, such as auto use.

TRANSPORTATION FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES (TLC) CAPITAL FUNDING PROPOSALS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

- Staff Haney-Owens presented a grant opportunity offered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and encouraged the Commission to recommend that the Council provide matching funds for a South Shattuck streetscape improvement project and development of the Bowditch/Eastern Campus bike path.
- Staff Caplan stated that the Adeline Street project, funded under the same grant program last year, set a good precedent for the South Shattuck project. He stated that no trees will be removed from Shattuck and a number of streetscape improvements would be made. He stated that the city has hired an urban design consultant to assist with the project. He stated that a report must be submitted to Council by December 16, and that the Council will have to approve an 11.5% funding match.
- Staff Landau discussed the criteria for grant awards, including promoting walkability and transit, community development, and internal community mobility. He stated that Berkeley has a good chance of obtaining the grant money.
- Commissioner Wrenn asked whether the South Shattuck project and the Bowditch/Eastern Campus Bike path project require separate applications.
- Staff Landau replied that they do.
- Commissioner Capitelli stated that moving the Bike Boulevard to College Avenue is a bad idea.
- Staff Landau stated that the Bike Boulevard would travel along College Avenue for only a short distance.
- Commissioner Bronstein asked what the role of the Commission would be in the South Shattuck project.
- Staff Caplan replied that the Planning Commission would be the lead agency.
- Commissioner Capitelli asked when the grant would be awarded.
- Staff Landau replied that it would be awarded in March.
- MSC (Bronstein/Wengraf) to recommend that the Council apply for funds for improvements on South Shattuck, and (as a co-sponsor with the University) funds for the Bowditch/Eastern Campus Bike path. The motion carried. Ayes: Boverhuis, Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: McCamant, Noguera, Poschman.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Commissioner Wengraf referred to information item #11 and asked to have her name added to the Demolition Definition Subcommittee.
- Wengraf asked about the status of the Alta Bates Project and Staff Haney-Owens stated that because the hospital has elected to pursue a use permit instead of a development agreement, the Planning Commission will no longer be in a lead role.
- Commissioner Capitelli stated that the Alta Bates Subcommittee should be disbanded, given the change in the Hospitals land use entitlement application.
- Commissioner Capitelli asked whether the Marina Plan Subcommittee is still relevant.
- Staff replied that it is.
- Capitelli asked about the status of the Southside Plan.
- Staff Haney-Owens stated that the Draft Southside Plan will be published in January, after

which the Commission and UC representatives will meet to discuss it.

- Wrenn stated that the General Plan must precede the Southside Plan.
- Commissioner Capitelli stated that he anticipates the need for a Zoning List Referral Subcommittee.
- Commissioner Boverhuis asked about the role of the Independent Small Business Subcommittee.
- Capitelli replied that the Independent Small Business Subcommittee will seek to develop community support for small businesses. He also stated that the subcommittee should develop an institution to support and sustain small businesses.
- Commissioner Wrenn recommended acknowledging Commissioner Boverhuis as a liaison to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety Task Force.

Staff Haney-Owens stated that the Park and Recreation and Waterfront Commissions have established subcommittees to develop the Aquatic Park Master Plan and that the Planning Commission will be asked to take a more active role in the planning process.

- Commissioner Wengraf asked who the lead agency would be.
- Haney-Owens replied that the Planning Commission will be the lead agency with respect to the land use components of the Plan, and that the project will be discussed at the December 8th Planning Commission meeting.

Adjournment at 9:10 p.m.