



City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 8, 2005

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chair John Jostes called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Vice-Chair John Jostes

Commissioners, Charmaine Jacobs, Stella Larson, Bill Mahan, George C. Myers and Harwood A. White, Jr.

Absent:

Chair Jonathan Maguire

STAFF PRESENT:

Jan Hubbell, Senior Planner

Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst

Irma Unzueta, Project Planner

Stephen P. Wiley, Assistant City Attorney

Deborah J. Bush, Acting Planning Commission Secretary

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

A. Requests for continuances, withdrawals, postponements, or addition of ex-agenda items.

B. Announcements and appeals.

Jan Hubbell, Senior Planner, announced that Renee Brooke has accepted a position within the City's Housing & Redevelopment Division, as a Redevelopment Specialist. Congratulations to Renee Brooke!

Stella Larson announced she would be stepping down for the item, as her husband is an employee of Cottage Health System.

C. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING(S):

APPLICATION OF KEN MARSHALL, AGENT FOR COTTAGE HEALTH SYSTEM, PROPERTY OWNER, 601 E. MICHELTORENA STREET, APNS: 027-270-016, 027-270-017, 027-270-018, 027-270-019 AND 027-270-030, C-O/R-2, MEDICAL OFFICE AND TWO FAMILY RESIDENCE ZONES, GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: MAJOR PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL/MEDICAL CENTER AND RESIDENTIAL: 12 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE (MST2003-00827)

The proposed Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital Foundation Workforce Housing Project would remove the existing St. Francis Hospital complex, including the main hospital, convent, central plant, and other ancillary structures, totaling approximately 189,000 square feet, and replace them with 115 residential condominiums that would cover 5.94 acres of the 7.39 acre site. The proposed mix of residential unit types is as follows: 10 one-bedroom units (approximately 704 square feet each), 65 two-bedroom units (approximately 1,154 – 1,240 square feet each), and 40 three bedroom units (approximately 1,306 – 1,480 square feet each). 81 of the units (70%) would be sold to Cottage Hospital employees at prices within the City's structure for affordable units and 34 units (30%) would be sold at market rates. Within the remaining 1.45 acres, the existing elderly care facility, Villa Riviera, would remain, but the parcel containing it would be adjusted to a size of approximately 31,500 square feet. The remaining lands zoned R-2, Two Family Residential, would be re-configured into three (3) lots of approximately 10,500 square feet each and the two existing residences on these R-2 parcels would be demolished in the process. Although these R-2 lots have the potential for two residences on each lot, for a total of six residences, no development is proposed at this time.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared for this project and is available for review and comment. The EIR evaluates issues related to air quality, hazardous materials, noise, solid waste, transportation/circulation/parking, and water quality. The City of Santa Barbara encourages the public to provide written comments on this and other projects. *The public comment period for this Draft EIR ended September 23, 2005.*

Case Planner: Irma Unzueta, Project Planner
Email: iunzueta@santabarbaraca.gov

Stephen P. Wiley, Assistant City Attorney, arrived at 6:07p.m.

Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst,

Irma Unzueta, Project Planner, provided a brief description of the project and an overview of the environmental conclusions of the draft EIR.

Ron Werft, CEO, Cottage Health System, briefly commented on the proposed project, stating that SBCH has concerns regarding the DEIR traffic data and conclusions. Mr. Werft also stated that the SBCH workforce housing project is a model project and will be a test of Santa Barbara's will

Public comment opened at 6:20 p.m.

The following people made comments on the Draft EIR:

Eric Kelley, neighbor, encourages the City of Santa Barbara to “re-use” the building.

Tom Ostwald, neighbor, stated that he is concerned with the parking and would like to see a reduction in the number of units or expansion of the project area to allow for more on-site parking.

Tom Lee stated that the DEIR assumption that all SBCH employees work 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. hours is incorrect, as well as that employees will not take advantage of the shuttle. Therefore, the traffic analysis is overstated. He recommended that the DEIR and underlying assumptions be carefully examined.

Helen Paul does not understand how SBCH can remove and/or evict people from their homes upon leaving employment with the hospital or retiring. Ms. Paul questioned if the EIR covers the displacement of people from their homes.

Jason Larson expressed that the workforce housing projects will not negatively impact the community. Mr. Larson believes that the shuttle will be used.

Molly Kellogg Gusman stated that workforce housing project is essential to house emergency health workers living in the City in case of a major disaster. Disagrees that all trips to SBCH will travel through the Mission/Bath intersection; there are many alternative routes.

Joan Marshall stated that she believes the building could be salvaged and re-used, and the possibility of the continued use of the building should be studied. She is concerned with the health of the children and other sensitive receptors during construction due to diesel fuel, dust, etc.

Rozella Sanderson expressed concern with the impact demolition of the hospital will have on air quality and health. She is afraid she will be affected by the contamination from the demolition debris. She would like the building to remain and to be converted into condominiums.

Sharon Lezotte believes that the DEIR overstates the traffic impacts.

Jeffrey Cypress, Bungalow Haven Neighborhood Association, suggested that there will be environmental havoc due to the demolition and debris from the building and the EIR should examine a new alternative.

Joe Rution stated that he is in accordance with the Bungalow Haven Neighborhood Association’s comments; the existing St. Francis Medical Center buildings should be kept and re-used.

Dee Duncan read a letter submitted by Mary Louise Days, which stated that the destruction and redevelopment of the site would seem to deny and negate its importance to the community and to the Lower Riviera neighborhood. Requested that careful study be given to issues of historical

significance, adaptability of existing structures, traffic, neighborhood compatibility and health and safety.

John McKinney stated that the draft EIR fails to discuss the setting, population, etc., of the Bungalow Haven Neighborhood. It is missing specifics and is flawed in a number of areas. The document fails to address adequate issues related to air quality, vibration, baseline traffic counts, health effects, and the historic significance of St. Francis. Stated that there is an appearance of conflict of interest due to the Historian's relationship to Cottage Health Systems. The adaptive re-use of St. Francis should strongly be taken into consideration.

Steven Dowty stated that re-use of the existing building is environmentally superior and more detailed analysis should be performed. The building is well designed and built to meet high construction standards. Requested additional structural analysis of existing building. Feels that demolition of the building is not environmentally sound.

Cheri Rae, Bungalow Haven Neighborhood, stated that she had the opportunity to meet with adaptive re-use specialist, Donovan Rypkema. Mr. Rypkema's opinion is that the building is solid with a large potential for re-use. The massive demolition will result in air quality, construction noise, solid waste, hazardous materials, transportation, circulation and parking, and water quality impacts that have not been adequately analyzed by the draft EIR. The adaptive re-use will avoid direct health impacts to the neighborhood and will avoid other environmental impacts.

John Sells cannot imagine impacts being as bad as the County Bowl. Project impacts cannot be worse than when St. Francis Hospital was in operation. Stated that re-use of the existing buildings will also result in environmental impacts.

Robin Dawson supports providing affordable housing to SBCH employees. Believes traffic impacts have been overstated in DEIR, because shifts are not during peak hours and this was not considered. Indicated that she would use shuttle.

Judy Mckee read a letter by Danae Liechti, which stated that she is saddened by plans to tear down St. Francis and rebuild residential units. The building is a part of Santa Barbara history. Expressed concerns with the potential noise level during construction and any toxic fumes which may be emitted into the air.

Stephen Fountain expressed concern regarding air quality, hazardous waste and noise and ground vibration impacts. Concerned that the report only acknowledges vibration impacts on properties that are within 50 feet of the project site and recommended that the distance be revised to 100 feet from property line. Also recommended that effects on old historic homes be evaluated. Mr. Fountain urges the Commission to reconsider the environmental impact the demolition will have on the neighborhood.

Penny Phillips expressed concern regarding EIR inconsistencies with length of construction period. She is concerned with noise, pollution, and the impact the debris will have on the entire neighborhood. The adaptive re-use program should be taken into consideration which would be a

win-win solution for all those involved. Ms. Phillips does not see anything in the EIR which states how asbestos will be monitored. Urged the Commission to reconsider the demolition of the building.

Georgia Tracy supports the neighbors request to save the building and expressed concern regarding construction impacts of the project.

Sydney Siemens is in favor of re-using the building. The number of parking spaces and the parking configuration is not sufficient to accommodate all of the vehicles, which could potentially result from the project.

Larry Gurstein stated that he is opposed to the project. He has suggested that each Commissioner drive down Alta Vista Street; no one has been "calmed" by the traffic project. Suggested three or four locations be used by SBCH throughout the City to provide housing. Does not believe shuttle will mitigate traffic impact.

Naomi Kovacs, Citizens Planning Association, stated that she is in support of the adaptive re-use of the onsite buildings for new residences. This would avoid health and environmental impacts and traffic impacts. Density of project is inconsistent and not compatible with neighborhood.

Mitch Rosenbaum stated that traffic impacts are inaccurate because analysis did not consider employee shifts. Believes that shuttle will be used heavily.

Jan Winfield expressed concerns that the EIR does not take into consideration Villa Rivera and the conditional use permit that prohibits access from Grand Avenue.

Bill Cottingham supports views of Cheri Rae and Steve Dowty. Supports workforce housing. Finds adaptive re-use concept very compelling and recommends that the DEIR should study more thoroughly. Street parking is currently a problem and he does not believe there will be a sufficient number of parking spaces available. Historic impact conclusion seems wrong. Believes the building is significant and draft document lacks analysis of effect on Bungalow Haven Neighborhood.

The public hearing was closed at 7:36 p.m.

During the discussion, the Commissioners either individually or collectively with regards to the scope of the EIR:

1. Asked who decides whether the project objectives are or are not achieved. DEIR should provide additional information on how objectives are, or are not, being met; especially economic objectives.
2. Stated there is a compelling argument from the neighborhood for adaptive re-use. The DEIR should include more information to provide a better understanding and clarity of this concept.

3. Concerned about solid waste analysis in DEIR. Believes demolition/construction waste impact is Class I. Would like the DEIR to include discussion regarding County solid waste threshold.
4. MMRP needs to explain better how the project is going to enforce use of state of the art construction equipment.
5. EIR does not effectively address noise impacts. Would like to see a contour map showing several distances of significance for these three impact areas.
6. Asked what “avoiding local neighborhood streets” means for construction traffic mitigation.
7. Thanked the members of the public for their participation.
8. Indicated that the debate has been distilled to new construction vs. adaptive re-use of the existing facility. Commented that the Commission never imagined the dominant building would be demolished as part of the future project. Asked if there is a sensible combination where the main building could be saved and the remainder demolished. Include more analysis in DEIR on this alternative.
9. The 50-foot consideration of potential vibration impacts to the neighbors should be extended to 100-feet.
10. The shuttle is the core traffic mitigation for the project. Asked that there be a thorough presentation of how the shuttle will operate, what it will accurately be able to provide, and a clear commitment to its implementation.
11. The demolition of the building goes against the Green building objectives by the City. Stated that if the project were to move forward, it should have strong “green-building” efforts. Suggested 100% solar use and stated that our community needs to be a more sustainable community.
12. Restudy the traffic numbers, especially shift schedules of the employees. Re-look at adequacy of parking without impacts to on-street parking. Re-look at parking requirement for project.
13. Questioned the validity of the historic report for the building. Does not believe a plaque is sufficient mitigation of historic impacts. Suggested a display case that shows the life and development of the hospital and the surrounding neighborhood similar to the one at Paseo Nuevo.
14. Questioned if health impacts are considered to be an environmental impact. How do we monitor? Health impacts should be addressed more fully.
15. Suggested that the applicant work closely with Staff on issues of public concern.
16. Stated that the EIR does not provide a clear picture that the impacts have been mitigated. Need assurance that impacts will be mitigated and that mitigation measures will work. It has not addressed cumulative impacts which will result from the demolition process.
17. Would like the EIR to provide historical traffic counts on streets around hospital.
18. Would like to see quantitative analysis of impact reduction on table 8.5-1.

19. Expressed support for affordable housing that meets needs of healthcare employees.

Ms. Shelton clarified that objectives for the project would be reviewed by the Planning Commission, Staff, input from the applicant and then final decision will be made.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

- A. Committee and Liaison Reports.

None were given.

- B. Review of the decisions of the Modification Hearing Officer in accordance with SBMC §28.92.026.

None were requested.

- C. Action on the review and consideration of the items listed in I.B.2. of this Agenda.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Jostes adjourned the meeting at 8:10p.m.

Submitted by,

Deborah J. Bush, Acting Planning Commission Secretary