



City of Santa Barbara

De La Guerra Plaza Revitalization
Advisory Committee

MINUTES SPECIAL MEETING JANUARY 23, 2020

1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Room 15, City Hall
735 Anacapa Street
SantaBarbaraCA.gov

MEMBERS

City Council
Kristen Sneddon *Chair*
Meagan Harmon

Planning Commission
Lesley Wiscomb *Vice Chair*
Jay Higgins

Historic Landmarks
Commission
Michael Drury
Julio Juan Veyna

Parks and Recreation
Commission
Beebe Longstreet
Roger Perry

Santa Barbara Certified
Farmers' Market
Sam Edelman

Santa Barbara Trust for
Historic Preservation
Anne Petersen, Ph.D.

ALTERNATE MEMBERS:

None

STAFF:

Brad Hess, Principal Project Manager
Sara Iza, Senior Planner
Phil Davis, Engineering Technician

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Wiscomb opened the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Lesley Wiscomb; Michael Drury; Julio Juan Veyna; Roger Perry; Meagan Harmon*; Jay Higgins; Sam Edelman; and Anne Petersen, Ph.D.

Absent: Kristen Sneddon** and Beebe Longstreet**

*Video In

**Arrived immediately after roll call

STAFF PRESENT

Jill Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director
Brad Hess, Principal Project Manager
Sara Iza, Senior Planner
Nicole Hernandez, Associate Planner/Urban Historian
Phil Davis, Engineering Technician

INVITED SPEAKERS

Lief McKay, RRM Design Group
Debbie Lagomarcino Rudd, RRM Design Group

II. **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

None

III. **SUBJECT ITEMS**

A. **Welcome New Committee Members & Introductions**

Meagan Harmon replaced Jason Dominguez as member from City Council. Jay Higgins replaced Mike Jordan as member from Planning Commission.

B. **Purpose of Advisory Committee**

Chair Sneddon briefly summarized purpose for newest committee members.

C. **De La Guerra Plaza (Plaza) Concept Options**

Mr. Hess provided the context for the meeting with an analogy of prioritizing the most important issues into the plan first. The three primary elements are historical context and sensitivity to the setting, flexibility within the design to accommodate multiple uses, and parking within the Plaza. Mr. Hess summarized the guiding design elements in three levels of priority from highest priority to least high priority. The goal of the meeting is understanding the Committee's perspective on the approximate number of parking spaces that balances out the use and need in order to inform the design. Mr. McKay then presented several parking option layouts which address the parking/vehicular access and circulation. Mr. McKay noted that today's goal is not necessarily to select one specific parking layout option, instead the presentation should initiate discussion amongst the Committee on the most preferred way to progress with design. The following topics summarize the Committee's opinions and perspectives discussed during the meeting.

[See Staff Report – RRM's Presentation: Concept Design Discussion](#)

De La Guerra Plaza (Loop) Parking and Traffic

Multiple concepts were considered such as a modified version of "parking option 4 – current layout" without the inner Loop parking spaces, and the concept of angled parking spaces. The Committee considered retaining parking in the Plaza due to suspected City Hall business and Downtown businesses' demands, most notably Starbucks and Blenders in the Grass. However, the Committee eventually agreed that the removal of parking increased the range of design possibilities. Therefore, the Committee agreed to continue with design without parking in the loop/u-shaped portion of the Plaza.

De La Guerra Street Parking and Traffic

The Committee had more varying opinions regarding retaining or removing parking from State Street to Anacapa Street due to the estimated parking and loading demands by businesses on De La Guerra Street. They discussed retaining parking for City Hall and De La Guerra Street businesses' demand and for peak holiday shopping season. However, all new parking options did not include parking spaces in front of Casa De La Guerra to better connect it to the rest of the Plaza. Removal of parking and vehicle traffic circulation was also considered due to the current vehicle turning restrictions onto State

Street and heavy pedestrian traffic. Moreover, permanently closing the street could further increase design possibilities of the Plaza. After hearing all arguments, the Committee requested that staff further study in depth, additional parking options (angled, parallel, or combination) and circulation options (one way, two way, or closed) of De La Guerra Street using the current parking and traffic circulation demand.

Vehicle Access

Given the dissenting views from closing De La Guerra Street, keeping it open, to keeping it open for limited, scheduled times, the Committee advised that design should address access for businesses' loading and delivery needs as well as regular trash pickups.

Historic Features

Committee re-emphasized that the design of the entire Plaza should implement materials that reflect historic features of the Plaza.

One Level Surface

Committee agreed to eliminate curbs within the Plaza to make the Plaza more conducive to a pedestrian only area.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Parking

Although not required in the Plaza or in the street, the Committee desired a design that accommodated ADA parking spaces either on De La Guerra Street, if the street is to remain open in the design, or in the City Hall parking lot.

City Hall Parking

Modify the existing City Hall parking lot to accommodate parking spaces for the public with City Hall business and implement a parking arrangement for City Hall staff parking spaces within one of the City parking structures. Currently, the City Hall parking lot is only for City Hall staff from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on the weekdays.

Closing Plaza for Events

Closing the entire Plaza consisting of the Loop and De Le Guerra Street, would allow for a wide range of community events to take place Downtown. Closure would also be conducive to the setup of the Saturday Farmers' Market, should it decide to relocate to the Plaza. Design can approach closing the Plaza temporarily by installing retractable bollards at each end of De La Guerra Street at State Street and Anacapa Street. Events hosted in the Plaza should foster a family atmosphere and space for attendees.

Eliminating Lawn

Committee agreed to not keep the grass lawn in the design, due to maintenance efforts and the City's Landscape Design Standards for water conservation policy of 2008.

Alternative Design Approach

Instead of focusing on limiting or maintaining the parking spaces, the Committee desired that the design should start with a "blank slate" and focus on a pedestrian only plaza. They desired to prioritize design for City needs i.e. needs of the public, rather than current businesses.

D. Next Steps in Process

Staff summarized direction from the Committee for next steps to proceed with design.

- Reached a consensus of having no parking within the Plaza from Casa De La Guerra to the Santa Barbara News-Press building.
- Staff to study different parking and circulation options for De La Guerra Street.
- Reached a consensus of eliminating curbs within the Plaza.
- Reached a consensus of eliminating the grass lawn within the Plaza.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments from members of the public pertaining to items on the agenda or on any subject within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee. Due to time constraints, each person is limited to two minutes.

Public comment opened and the following individuals spoke:

1. Mr. Dylan Wylde spoke and appreciated the Committee's perspective on making the space pedestrian only and was encouraged as a farmer that the plan could accommodate the Farmers' Market.
2. Ms. Katie Grassini spoke about the needs of her customers and estimated approximately 25 percent of them ask about parking. She emphasized a need for pickup and drop-off parking, citing the instances when customers haul heavy cases of wine to their vehicles. She has concerns if the closest loading area/parking would be at Anacapa Street. Parking closer to her business is a benefit.
3. Mr. Dennis Thompson, a local architect, affirmed the Committee's direction of no parking and having a large flat surface as a starting point for design.
4. Ms. Carrie Kelly, President of the Downtown Organization, spoke about the businesses in the area and near the Plaza wanting parking close by. Concerns were expressed that losing immediate parking would negatively affect businesses and would be very challenging. She encouraged the Committee to keep De La Guerra Street open. She noted that the long term use of the buildings in the area should be considered in the design and the longer term parking also be considered.

Public comment closed.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Sneddon adjourned the meeting at 2:54 p.m.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

**Special Meeting, Friday, April 10, 2020, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Room 15, City Hall 735 Anacapa Street.**