



# City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

January 12, 2006

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair John Jostes called the meeting to order at 1: 07 P.M.

### **ROLL CALL:**

#### **Present:**

Chair John Jostes

Vice-Chair Jacobs

Commissioners Bill Mahan, George C. Myers, and Addison S. Thompson

#### **Absent:**

Commissioner Harwood A. White, Jr.

### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Paul Casey, Community Development Director

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst

Jan Hubbell, Senior Planner

Homer Smith, Principal Engineer

Liz Limón, Project Planner

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner

Steve Foley, Associate Planner

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

Julie Rodriguez, Acting Planning Commission Secretary

### **I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:**

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

None.

- B. Announcements and appeals.

Ms. Hubbell announced that Trish Allen, Associate Planner, will be leaving on January 20, 2006, and that Jim Donohoe, Associate Planner, has resigned.

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

Chair Jostes opened the public comment at 1:10 P.M.

Tisha Levy requested modification approval to her project addition.

Mr. Vincent stated that the Commission could not make comment because 1) it would conflict with the Brown Act and 2) the public has not been noticed.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public comment was closed at 1:12 P.M.

## **II. CONSENT ITEMS:**

### **ACTUAL TIME: 1:13 P.M.**

#### **APPLICATION OF DESIGNARC, INC., ARCHITECT, AGENT FOR PROPERTY OWNERS, 3339 CLIFF DRIVE, APN 047-082-015, A-1/SD-3 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL AND COASTAL OVERLAY ZONES, GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: RESIDENTIAL, ONE UNIT/ACRE, BLUFF (MST2003-00388)**

The project consists of a one-year time extension for a project that received approval of a Coastal Development Permit on January 15, 2004. The approved project consists of a 1,200 square foot, second story addition and a 284 square foot, first-story addition to an existing 4,009 square foot, one-story single-family residence. The proposal also includes a 700 square foot, detached three-car garage. The project site is located on a 1.3-acre lot in the Hillside Design District and in the appealable jurisdiction of the Coastal Zone.

The discretionary application required for this project is a Time Extension of the Coastal Development Permit for development in the appealable jurisdiction of the Coastal Zone (SBMC § 28.45.009).

Case Planner: Kathleen Kennedy, Assistant Planner

Email: [kkennedy@santabarbaraca.gov](mailto:kkennedy@santabarbaraca.gov)

Ms. Hubbell requested that the Staff Report be waived.

#### **MOTION: Mahan/Larson**

Waive the Staff Report

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (White)

Vice Chair Jacobs arrived at 1:10 P.M.

Public hearing was opened at 1:14 P.M.. With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 1:14 P.M.

**MOTION: Mahan/Thompson**

**Assigned Resolution No. 002-06**

Approve the Time Extension of the Coastal Development Permit, making the findings outlined in the Staff Report.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (White)

Chair Jostes announced the ten calendar day appeal period.

**III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**ACTUAL TIME: 1:15 P.M.**

**A. PROJECT SELECTION AND PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA FOR CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION RULE 20A UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING PROJECTS**

Discussion of proposed criteria for selecting future undergrounding projects funded through Rule 20A funds and consideration of possible projects.

Case Planner: Homer Smith, Principal Engineer  
Email: hsmith@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Homer Smith, Principal Engineer, gave a PowerPoint presentation and introduced Jane Brown and Steve Freisen, representatives from Southern California Edison (SCE).

Commissioners' questions and comments:

1. Asked for estimate on costs of project for the intersection of San Andres and Micheltorena Streets.
2. Asked how \$2,200,000 was acquired.
3. Asked if in, setting priorities, it would allow for looking at smaller projects.
4. Noticed that, poles are becoming more vested with wireless, such as Las Positas Road and Cliff Drive, and asked if they could be undergrounded, too.
5. Asked about Southern California Edison's allocation formula. Asked if city were to annex land, would amount of money for allocations increase.
6. Noted that, without doing the utility undergrounding at the same time, some of the economy of the intersection upgrade at San Andres and Micheltorena Streets was lost. Does not want to lose undergrounding opportunity when projects are in process. Asked if there is an economy to be gained by joining with private development.

7. Asked about the timeline associated with undergrounding a commercial block.
8. Commented on construction inflation being about 15% per year, which would mean that smaller increments could be achieved over time. That supports doing larger projects.
9. Asked for clarification of logistics on bidding process.
10. Asked for clarification of costs.
11. Asked if SCE and utility companies are eager to move forward with undergrounding.
12. Suggested getting input from SCE on efficiency for larger projects.
13. Asked if the Commission or the City has the ability to require undergrounding on a proposed project.
14. Asked about timeline for returning to Planning Commission
15. Have seen four projects and asked if other projects need consideration.
16. Would like to see historic districts, such as El Pueblo Viejo, included as a criterion in the matrix . Suggests removing private views, since this is not looked at by the Planning Commission.
17. Would like City Council to be encouraged to look at fees to match 20.A funds with large projects that need to do undergrounding, such as projects seen on Chapala Street.
18. Agrees with Staff recommendations on mortgage approach.
19. Would like to see Chapala Street, Outer State Street, and other areas, included in undergrounding consideration.
20. Asked where the balance of monies to underground comes from and how it compliments SCE monies.
21. Would not accept that the San Andres intersection be excluded from any undergrounding considerations. Pleased that the City has streamlined the undergrounding process. Wonders how many people are taking advantage of the undergrounding opportunity.
22. Matrix approach helps in the decision making process when assigning priorities.
23. Suggests that matrix include commercial traffic and tourist traffic, so that use of streets is known. Also, suggests including a map of the City that shows areas that have already been undergrounded.
24. Consensus is that cost is a factor as well as how prioritization is made.
25. Would like to see Mr. Smith return with a priority ranking.

Mr. Smith responded that the cost of undergrounding for a commercial block is \$1.5 million, while the cost of undergrounding a residential area is \$250,000 per block due to fewer overhead lines. Mr. Smith replied that the \$2,200,000 was accrued following completion of the Milpas Project.

Mr. Smith added that smaller areas would be notified ahead of time and could take advantage of the project. Mr. Smith added that wireless is being dissuaded from pole use.

Ms. Hubbell stated that the City has been conscious about putting up poles with use by wireless. It is very expensive and putting up a pole is a last choice.

Mr. Steve Freisen, SCE representative, stated that amount of funds would increase if there were annexations to the City.

Mr. Smith said that there is an economic gain in joining with private development, but that it raises liability issues and usually involves multiple contractors. Mr. Freisen concurred that this has happened, citing Goleta as an example, but the use of multiple contractors does present complications.

Mr. Smith replied that it took about 3 ½ years to complete Milpas Street. Mr. Freisen stated that it depends on complexity of job. States it would take 2 ½ - 4 months in most cases.

Mr. Smith explained the logistic process and involvement with other utilities. Undergrounding must be completed first, then subsequent removal of overhead system. He added the costs have become astronomical and that what we are seeing is competitive. Mr. Freisen added that underground high voltage cables are very expensive and require thick insulation for safety reasons, require transformers in ground, fusing, vaults, etc.

Jane Brown, SCE representative, stated that SCE is neutral on undergrounding. Mr. Smith added that most utility companies are neutral; most are concerned with the safety that undergrounding contributes. Ms. Hubbell discussed some of the pros and cons associated with above ground poles vs. undergrounding.

Ms. Brown stated that SCE has a designated department in Ventura that exclusively handles Rule 20.A underground projects.

Ms. Hubbell replied that a City cannot force anyone to underground. Assessment Districts need to be formed and the cost is an uncertainty that cannot be passed on to a district. Mr. Smith added that part of franchise fees will be available to provide seed money for Rule 20.B proposals that form Assessment Districts.

Mr. Smith anticipated that staff would return to the Planning Commission in the March/April time period. Mr. Smith took a tour with Southern California Edison (SCE) representatives and these areas were the ones given most consideration.

Ms. Hubbell stated that at this time, no monies come from the City; it is all SCE.

**B. SANTA BARBARA 2030 (SB 2030) VIEW AND VIEW CORRIDOR POLICIES & ISSUES**

This report will provide information about existing City policies and guidelines related to views and view corridors. The report also begins to identify issues and questions for discussion during the public participation process of Santa Barbara 2030.

Case Planner: Liz Limón, Project Planner  
Email: elimon@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Ms. Limon gave the Staff PowerPoint presentation.

Chair Jostes opened the public hearing at 2:56 P.M.

The following people spoke in support of the SB 2030 report:

Barbara Lowenthal, Pearl Chase Society, who also presented photographs showing important views in the City  
Sue Adams, Pearl Chase Society  
Maureen Masson, Pearl Chase Society  
Louise Boucher, Citizens Planning Association  
Naomi Kovacs, Citizens Planning Association  
Sheila Lodge, Citizens Planning Association  
Claudia Madsen, Citizens Planning Association  
Mary Louise Days, for Paul Hernadi, Citizens Planning Association  
Michael Gray, Citizens Planning Association  
Catherine McCammon, League of Women Voters  
Dianne Channing  
Brian Cearnal

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 3:40 P.M.

Chair Jostes called for a ten minute break at 3:40 P.M. The meeting was reconvened at 3:55 P.M.

Commissioner's questions and comments:

1. Asked if the policies and process are sufficient. Asked what sort of mitigation is likely to take place when a view corridor is blocked, such as with Marborg building. Requested Staff to cite examples of the kinds of trade-offs for view corridor obstruction.
2. Asked that invasive species and views from parks be included in view preservation.
3. Acknowledge and appreciate all work in Staff Report and the direction it provides for SB 2030.
4. Asked how to be more restrictive on corners and east/west corridors while allowing more building in mid-block areas. Asked how to do zone overlays in a fair and balanced way. Supports a digital inventory; suggests a DVD approach.
5. Acknowledged need to look at bigger picture, such as where parks will go.
6. Asked to review slide of De la Guerra Street and view toward mountains. Buildings can frame view. Low, old 3-story buildings and arches work to frame the view.
7. Openness is key at Harbor / Waterfront – should be for Downtown too. Must balance maintaining openness and views. If we compromise one for the other, then we lose our identity as Santa Barbara. It's not just view corridors. Architecture is a key ingredient. Openness, good architecture, views – all must work together.
8. "Uptown" is what we should now call Outer State Street.

9. Commented that sometimes a one story building will block a location, other times it will not, depending on where you are standing, distance and width of street. Sky is as important as mountains; cited Firestone Building on Chapala as an example. Suggest coming up with overlay zones that will help address building heights.
10. Parking behind buildings and bringing buildings to edge of street meets some objectives, but you lose the space / openness. Big surface parking lots in Downtown also provide openness.
11. Existing views and view corridors policies are not sufficient and need to be strengthened. Do we want overlays to control height on one side of street for mountain views or not? Corners? Side streets? Mid-block? Overlays that would change heights could work.
12. Review process is working, maybe. Twenty years ago, mostly 2-story development was happening. Now that's changing. Development trends will affect character of the City.
13. Need to have a professional photographer to do inventory so it "looks like it looks."
14. We need definitions of "openness".
15. Need to find ways to control overall height. May need to require setbacks and step-backs.
16. Would like to see digital photo inventory and associated costs. Is there a way to link photo inventory to GIS?
17. Consensus is that base exists, but more tools are needed.
18. Policy "bones" are there, but need updating.
19. Don't lose sight of ocean and island views. Buildings should frame / enhance views.
20. Zoning ordinance should have more 'teeth' in it to be effective in implementing policy.
21. Housing, circulation and view policy conflicts are real and need to be balanced; can't be entirely solved.
22. Most commissioners agreed that views are subjective and varied from where one is standing. Feels environmental reviews are an effective tool.
23. Stated need to increase public parks and Paseos now.
24. Stated Alameda Padre Serra should not be ignored and should be included in view preservation.
26. Pedestrian-friendly design can result in openness trade-offs.
27. Suggested architects break-up buildings and incorporate more techniques to preserve, enhance and frame views.
28. All commissioners acknowledged an exceptional Staff Report and appreciated Staff's work in its production.
29. Public is encouraging us to "make history" by determining what public view corridors are worth keeping. History is a layered experience.
30. Suggested getting input from Historic Landmarks Committee and Parks and Recreation to find out what has historically been significant to our community.
31. Is there a conflict between density and views? Between development in El Pueblo Viejo area and Affordable housing? New development must not dwarf historic buildings or views.

32. Need to determine what views are important and how to implement protection measures..
33. Suggested looking at public parks, public vistas and viewpoints, and plazas, such as De la Guerra and the Rose Gardens; and Uptown gateways, such as La Cumbre and the Airport. Views from terminal and arriving at airport are important too.
34. Commissioners thanked public for elevating issue of view preservation and Staff for its follow through and presentation.
35. Acknowledged need for larger context, recalled historic changes over the last twenty years and the shift in focus from Outer State Street to Downtown.
36. Hard to get a vision if you don't have an image.
37. Conservation Element's policy context was on developing residential areas of the City. Now development is happening Downtown.
38. Building plans don't always show context. West Figueroa and 1100 block of Chapala not reviewed in a larger context. Could we have done that differently / better? It can happen fast.
39. Policies are great but implementation has been weak.
40. Context is challenged when looking at a two-dimensional map. Asked if we can we add dimensions to it.
41. How can we vary development standards parcel-by-parcel or block-by-block to get modulation and variation? Would overlays work? Would floor area ratios work?
42. Suggests looking at floor area ratios in entire blocks to see what takes place with a proposed development.
43. View points should take into account the pedestrian. Extend the paseo system out to link pedestrians to views.
44. North and south view along State Street Downtown looks park-like. Distinctly different from the Outer State Street.
45. Include north / south views in preservation too; don't just focus on east and west.
46. Consider micro and macro views. Be sure to include all angles when taking pictures for photo inventory and not just the 90 degree angle.
47. Include views through arches, looking out from public places, such as the County Courthouse. Don't miss the "little gems."
48. Suggest that we ask about people's sense of place. View preservation is one of Santa Barbara's core values.

Ms. Weiss responded that the City first gets its hands around the significance of the public vista and its relation to the project context. This is difficult and the City looks at each project setting and that, as discussed, the views are relative to where one is standing. Each project presents an opportunity for reviewing impacts. She recalled the La Entrada project and how mitigation workshops were held to address view issues. Ms. Weiss also stated that the City is making distinctions in policies and project reviews between ridgeline effects, skyline effects, and Riviera and lower Foothill effects. Ms. Hubbell recalled the Double Tree project and how view preservation measures were taken that were successful. A case by case approach is best; other approaches have been considered, but not as successful.



Mr. Ledbetter replied that GIS capabilities exist and will be integrated in future growth and development.

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**

A. Committee and Liaison Reports.

Commissioner Mahan reported on the De la Guerra Design Review Committee. A professional team will be sought to fix De la Guerra Plaza. Feels that De la Guerra Plaza vision needs to be included in the General Plan Update

Commissioner Myers reported on Downtown Parking Committee. Granada Garage is scheduled to open on March 1, 2006, with offices opening a month later. Delays have been caused by doing construction so that problems won't arise later. Reported on the "My Ride" program. Only 10,000 downtown employees, not the 23,000 that was initially reported. At this time, 982 are using the program. This contributes to the need to revise the My Ride condition.

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

None were requested.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Jostes adjourned the meeting at 4:55 P.M

Submitted by,

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Julie Rodriguez, Acting Planning Commission Secretary