



City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

May 18, 2006

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair John Jostes called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Chair John Jostes

Vice-Chair Charmaine Jacobs

Commissioners, Stella Larson, Bill Mahan, George C. Myers, Addison S. Thompson and Harwood A. White, Jr.

Commissioner Jacobs arrived at 1:06 P.M.

STAFF PRESENT:

Paul Casey, Community Development Director

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst

Debra Andaloro, Environmental Analyst

Susan Reardon, Project Planner

Rob Dayton, Traffic Planner

Tully Clifford, Supervising Traffic Engineer

Kathleen Kennedy, Associate Planner

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

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

None.

B. Announcements and appeals.

Ms. Weiss made the following announcements:

1. The 1464 La Cima Road appeal will go to City Council on May 23, 2006.

2. Thanked the Commission for participation in the Neighborhood Preservation Update.

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

Chair Jostes opened the public hearing at 1:02 P.M. With no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 1:02 P.M.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

ACTUAL TIME: 1:03 P.M.

A. PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE GENERAL PLAN TO INCLUDE THE EASTERN GOLETA VALLEY WITHIN THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, PROVIDE TEXT DISCUSSION OF LAND USE ISSUES IN THE GENERAL PLAN LAND USE ELEMENT, AND PRE-ZONE THE AREA (MST2006-00160)

The City is proposing this General Plan Amendment in response to the Committee for One's pending application before the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO) to expand the City of Santa Barbara's Sphere of Influence. The area proposed for inclusion within the City's Sphere is the unincorporated area between the City of Santa Barbara and City of Goleta's jurisdictional boundaries, excluding the existing mobile home parks. The proposal would pre-zone the subject area to reflect existing County zoning designations.

Case Planner: Susan Reardon, Project Planner

Email: sreardon@santabarbaraca.gov

Chair Jostes announced that, as the facilitator of the Eastern Valley Goleta Visioning Committee, he will not be participating in the discussion and handed over the Chair to Bill Mahan as Chair Pro-Tem. Commissioner Mahan passed the Chair to Commissioner White.

Commissioner Mahan announced that this is his last year serving on the Commission.

Susan Reardon, Project Planner, gave the Staff report.

Commissioner's comments and questions:

1. Commented on the word 'sphere' and asked why LAFCO is not using "ellipse" to define the area.
2. Asked if the mobile home parks within the City are on rent control.
3. Asked if it would be possible to annex the mobile home parks and still maintain their ordinance protection.
4. Asked if the litigation process for the mobile home rent control is pending and possibly awaiting settlement: commented on the inclusion of an unincorporated area included into a sphere.

5. Asked if the sphere of influence would allow the City to still be able to live within its resources.
6. Asked if the sphere would eventually lead to annexation, would the City forgo having to provide services.
7. Asked for clarification of what areas would be annexed if the Sphere of Influence was extended and annexation moved forward. Asked if there is a time table that annexation typically follows.
8. Asked about the general population of the area.
9. Noted that agricultural land is being included and asked for clarification on whether the inclusion was for LAFCO purposes.
10. Asked if the City has an Agricultural Zone District.
11. Looks at Sphere of Influence as going steady, not being engaged; you have an intent, but you have not gone all the way.

Ms. Reardon explained the LAFCO process and defined the area being included. Paul Casey, Community Development Director, added that, to some extent, part of the sphere is defined by politics. Stated that, if the sphere of influence is amended, the area in question is more consistent.

Mr. Casey stated that the City no longer has a vacancy rent control ordinance for mobile home parks, however the City has a mobile home ordinance that caps how much rent can increase annually. He referenced a legal decision that made this change. The County has a rent control ordinance for mobile home parks which is one of the reasons that the mobile home parks do not want to be annexed. Mr. Casey stated that there is pending litigation that could go either way in the protection of the mobile home ordinance. The City would not want to be in a situation of adopting an ordinance that could later be legally challenged.

Mr. Casey addressed the unincorporated area, stating that the mobile home parks would be islands outside the sphere. If annexation of the eastern Goleta Valley occurred in the future, then they would still remain unincorporated islands; but could contract for services.

Ms. Reardon stated that there is no jurisdictional change if the sphere is extended. The County would still maintain jurisdiction.

Mr. Vincent advised the Commission that a similar discussion regarding living within resources would have to take place before an annexation, if an annexation were proposed. The Charter section would still exist regarding living within our resources. In reference to the provision of services, there are portions of the City that are currently served by Special Districts, such as the Goleta Water and Montecito Water Districts.

Mr. Casey stated that the timing of a future annexation is unknown. There is not a required timetable that annexations follow. There is a common feeling between the City and the County on any annexation that annexation would not start in the near future. LAFCO ultimately decides on what areas would be annexed. Looking down the road, it is perceived that Hope Ranch would be included in an annexation if eastern Goleta Valley were annexed.

Mr. Casey stated that the population is roughly 30, 000. The Goleta Valley in its entirety is approximately 90,000.

Mr. Casey stated that there are issues that LAFCO will have to balance; one is the Patterson area agricultural block. LAFCO does not like to include active agricultural land within city boundaries that provide urban services, yet wants to minimize the number of unincorporated islands. It is unknown what LAFCO will choose to do.

Ms. Reardon replied that the City does not have an Agricultural Zone District. Agriculture uses are allowed in single family zones if performance standards are met. They are allowed in some commercial zones through pyramid zoning.

Chair Pro-tem White opened the public hearing at 1:23 P.M.

The following people spoke in support of the Sphere of Influence:

1. William Gilbert, Committee for One.
2. Wilson Hubbell, resident of unincorporated Goleta Valley.
3. Kas Terhorst, Shadow Hills Home Owners Association
4. Dan Cross, Shadow Hills Home Owners Association
5. Susan McLaughlin, Suzanne Eldege Planning and Permitting
6. Steve Engles, President, West Santa Barbara Commission, presented petition of over 4,000 signatures representing residents wanting to be included in the Sphere of Influence.
7. Carla Reeves, resident of unincorporated Goleta Valley.
8. Dan Secord, resident
9. Steinunn Danley, resident

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 1:39 P.M.

Commissioner's Comments:

1. Supports re-establishing the Sphere of Influence. Believes that cities are better suited to service residents than the County. Question remains as to which City is better suited to serve the area. Concerned with islands that are formed by the mobile home parks, but understands their exclusion.
2. Referenced the change in the sphere of influence in 1987 and supports the reinstatement.
3. Supports the General Plan amendment. Wants to make sure that we can live within our resources, as per Charter 1507. Does not believe that we can address the mobile home parks with the general plan amendment, but would like to gain a solution for the homeowners to reside in the last area of affordable housing and leave an open door for those residents to later become part of the Sphere of Influence.

4. Consensus of Commissioners was in support of the expanded Sphere of Influence. It was understood that there are legal reasons that separate the inclusion of the mobile home parks.
5. Feels the PC should lobby the Council to increase the pool of potential applicants to City Commissions and Boards by allowing residents of the City's Sphere to be on our Boards and Commissions. The addition of the unincorporated area residents within our Sphere would contribute a greater pool of participation in City government panels, boards, and commissions, such as the Architectural Board of Review.
6. Congratulated the residents of the unincorporated area for their activism and presence.

MOTION: Thompson/Mahan

Resolution No. 020-06

Recommend that the City Council adopt the General Plan Amendment and consider an amendment to the City Charter to allow residents within the Spheres of Influence to be able to serve on City boards and commissions.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 2 (Jostes, Jacobs)

Chair Pro-tem called for a recess at 1:52 P.M.

The meeting was reconvened at 2:08 P.M. and Commissioner Jostes resumed the Chair.

ACTUAL TIME: 2:08 P.M.

B. TRAFFIC WORKSHOP Continued from May 4, 2006

Staff will make a presentation on existing traffic in the City and how traffic levels of service are calculated.

Case Planner: Rob Dayton, Supervising Transportation Planner

Email: rdayton@santabarbaraca.gov

A request was made by Staff to allow a resident to speak before the Staff Report was given. The Commissioners agreed.

Judy Orias, resident, spoke about the large Senior population in Hidden Valley. Asked that consideration be given to use a park, or narrow street, etc., to mitigate speed through that area. Requested that the 1,000 cars criteria not be applicable to these neighborhoods.

Rob Dayton, Traffic Planner, gave the Staff report and also provided an update on the State Street Traffic Study.

Commissioner's questions and comments:

1. Asked how the Level of Service (LOS) takes stop signs into consideration.
2. Asked for the source of data for the graphs shown.
3. Asked about the changes in the volume numbers vs. the capacity number. Asked if the capacity number always remains the same.
4. Asked about the operation method of counting, where delayed times are counted, and whether is used in parts of the City.
5. Asked if the Upper State Street Study would be using the volume to capacity ratio.
6. Asked whether the hourly volume charts were averaged over a period of time, such as a day, week, or month.
7. Asked if weekend peak hour data is used in addition to weekday data. Asked if ratio's of cars, bicycles, etc. to single occupants were used per each neighborhood block.

Mr. Dayton said that a four-way stop sign usually precedes a need for a signal. Mr. Dayton stated that the source for the data used came from actual street counts; these are real numbers and not estimated. Mr. Dayton stated that the capacity number could change due to changes upstream or downstream in the intersection.

Mr. Dayton stated the Upper State Street would be using the capacity ratio. The hourly volume charts shown were of a spot day. Wednesdays usually tend to have a higher amount of traffic. Friday's can be either very low or very high.

Tully Clifford, Supervising Traffic Engineer, addressed the traffic counts and stated they look at traffic patterns and demand on traffic signals.

Mr. Dayton stated that the census track offers data that includes bicycles, etc. It is not incorporated into the LOS. The ITE looks solely at cars.

Chair Jostes opened the public hearing at 2:52 P.M.

The following people spoke about the Traffic Workshop:

1. Naomi Kovacs, Executive Director, Citizens Planning Commission, gave a presentation identifying the discrepancy of traffic counts in contrast to actual traffic congestion.
2. Connie Hannah, League of Women Voters, questioned the Staff Report and the 'evaporated trips' that materialize after any major development and never included in predictions.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 3:06 P.M.

Mr. Dayton expressed a desire to have the public and the Commission better understand the Levels of Service.

Commissioner's questions and comments:

1. Acknowledged and commended Staff for very clear presentation of explaining how the Level of Service (LOS) methodology is used. Also, acknowledged the Citizen's Planning Association's presentation of traffic impacts on Upper State Street.
2. Noted the Carrillo Street area and the impact on traffic with the closure of Castillo Street. In addition, bicyclists and buses impact traffic when causing cars to slow down. Looks forward to how we can factor in all elements to traffic.
3. Appreciated understanding LOS and how it can be applied to the Upper State Street Study. Ghost trips and mid-block traffic will need to be included in the study. Suggested using people who use those streets everyday, such as pizza couriers, to share what is working and not working.
4. Stated that caution should be used when looking at square footage. What appears to be underutilized space could change without any notice.
5. Understood LOS, but questions solutions for implementation. Suggests that funding may be what keeps the solutions from implementation. In the process of looking at the Circulation Element, asked how social bias can be changed to interest the public in using alternative types of transportation.
6. Suggested looking at pressure points as the key, and not just looking at an intersection, when determining impacts. Noted the years it took for the public to utilize Downtown State Street as pedestrians. Thinks there will be qualitative change for how the automobile is used.
7. Gave a brief overview of the history of State Street. There are multiple solutions, but cars are the first choice for most travelers and will probably remain the case.
8. Suggested that the Planning Commission become more like the Architectural Board of Review and become more subjective; not rely on quantitative information. Need to talk about the real impacts of traffic, not just theoretical numbers.
9. Asked how the Planning Commission can set the stage. Stated that we are looking at the traffic problem as a problem, and looking at snapshots of time in a static point in time. Suggested taking a longer view of looking at LOS over all intersections to be able to see trends in direction, rather than just a flash in time. Supports the value of input that is coming out of the workshops and encourages the good work to continue.

Mr. Dayton thanked the Commission for the input and stated that the next workshop will be on Parking Policy; no date has been set for the next workshop.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

A. Committee and Liaison Reports.

1. Commissioner Jacobs reported on the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Committee's public open house at the Faulkner Gallery last Saturday. Reported that the Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR) is now a part of the ordinance. Some people feel it should be used as a guideline; others feel it should be a

legislative restriction. The ordinance will be coming to the Commission on June 1st. Commissioner Mahan reflected on the steering committee's vote for a review of projects under 7,500 square feet and guidelines for projects over 7,500 square feet and a comment by one public speaker who stated that this was law for the poor people and guidelines for the rich. Staff has recommended 10,000 square feet.

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

1. Commissioner White asked to hear at some point about the Shalhoob approval. Ms. Weiss reported that Shalhoob's application was submitted to legalize the existing seating capacity. Shalhoob changed their use from a meat market to a deli and restaurant over time; however, consideration was not given to the impacts on parking. The parking modification request is to change to 62 seats with zero parking spaces. Staff presented a rationale that the restaurant being one block away from the Downtown Improvement District, presented the same pedestrian and car traffic as one in the District.

Commissioner White was concerned at the precedent of this modification and whether looking at adjacent areas, such as Gutierrez Street to Sola Street be given the same standard.

Mr. Dayton added that the parking structures that were created in the 1960s were for the purpose of reducing congestion and minimizing driving. Mr. Mahan stated that when the parking district was created, the zone of benefit did not extend beyond a surrounding four block radius of each parking garage; noted people are walking beyond this radius to get to places.

C. Action on the review and consideration of the Minutes of April 6th, 2006 and Resolution 015-06, 1464 La Cima Road.

Chair Jostes stated that the minutes and resolution had been deferred to allow for review by the City Attorney based on a request from an applicant.

Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney, stated that Steve Wiley, City Attorney, has reviewed the minutes and added only one change to reflect his recollection of the meeting.

Ms. Weiss stated that the only change had been an addition of one sentence on page 6 of the minutes, last paragraph sentence. Ms. Weiss added that the draft minutes shown are the minutes that have been included in the City Council Agenda report.

MOTION: Mahan/Myers

Approve the minutes and resolution as corrected.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Abstain: as noted below Absent: 0

Commissioner White abstained from Resolution 015-06.

Commissioner Jacobs abstained from Resolution 015-06.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jostes adjourned the meeting at 4:10 P.M.

Submitted by,

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary