



City of Santa Barbara

Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

January 3, 2008

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Charmaine Jacobs called the meeting to order at 1:04 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Chair Charmaine Jacobs

Vice-Chair George C. Myers

Commissioners Bruce Bartlett, John Jostes, Stella Larson, George C. Myers, Addison S. Thompson and Harwood A. White, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Dave Gustafson, Community Development Director

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner

Jan Hubbell, Senior Planner

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner

Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

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

Chair Jacobs opened the public hearing at 1:04 P.M. and, with no one wishing to speak, closed the hearing.

II. DISCUSSION ITEM:

ACTUAL TIME: 1:04 P.M.

Chair Jacobs opened Item II with an overview of the format. There would be multiple opportunities for public input and response. This meeting is to be a discussion and may result in a motion.

PLAN SANTA BARBARA

Planning Commission will review and comment on the Staff Report regarding the following *Plan Santa Barbara* components: *Plan Santa Barbara* Outcomes & Next Steps and Schedule; Special Planning Commission Worksession- Development Trends: past, present & future; and CEQA Environmental Review.

Case Planner: Bettie Weiss, City Planner; John Ledbetter, Principal Planner
Email: bweiss@SantaBarbaraCA.gov; jledbetter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Bettie Weiss, City Planner, gave the Staff presentation joined by John Ledbetter, Principal Planner; Rod Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner; Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst; and Woody Tescher, PBS&J.

Community Input Summary Report:

Staff answered Planning Commission questions about the length of time for the last General Plan Update (GPU) by stating that the previous update took 2-3 years and did not include an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), nor address the other elements of the General Plan; clarified the steps for a General Plan Amendment versus a General Plan Revision; reviewed the timeline for Plan Santa Barbara (Plan SB); and the status of further discussion on the Upper State Street Study.

Commissioner's comments:

1. One Commissioner felt that California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) should be more significant in the process. Asked if policy shapes CEQA, or if we will be using the EIR to shape policy. More environmental information is needed for the Commission to be able to make planning decisions.
2. One Commissioner expressed a desire to know when the process will result in a final product; when will the Commission have the tools it needs to make policy decisions.
3. One Commissioner asked for confirmation that the Land Use Map and Land Use Elements are also being updated.

Staff responded that the final product should be anticipated after 2010.

Staff presented the following topics for discussion:

Community Forums/Workshops

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner, gave the Staff presentation, joined by Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner.

Staff clarified for the Planning Commission that forums focus on issues that are being explored; whereas workshops look at innovations for the issues. Staff also explained the

linkage of transportation to everything else in response to why time was being spent on a transportation workshop.

Development Trends Worksession:

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner, gave the Staff presentation, joined by Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner.

Staff answered additional Planning Commission questions about the commencement of Phase I of the General Plan.

Chair Jacobs opened the public hearing at 2:15 P.M.

The following people addressed the Commission:

1. Judy Orias, Allied Neighborhood Association, submitted written comment that included questioning how much residential development could be done in commercial zones; how the mixed use development impacts the environment; infrastructure capacity constraints; economic impacts on City with build-out; the impact on city tax revenues; and the state of the current real estate market's impact on the City's budget. Concerned with the charter mandate to live within our resources. Suggests that a poll be done by a professional consultant.
2. Cathie McCammon, League of Women Voters, requested that the development trends booklet be made available to the public more than one week before the scheduled meeting; suggested the workshops be broken into two parts separated a week apart. Other topics such as growth potential and management, housing, preservation of community design and character all need to have separate workshops and contribute to Plan SB. Basic issues need to have adequate discussion. Requested to know what became of the Upper State Street Study and its incorporation into Plan S.B.
3. Jean Holmes, League of Women Voters, Sustainability Committee, spoke on the need to improve affordable housing policies and commented on the increasing number of high priced market value units being built; GPU will not be complete without addressing the need for preservation of existing rental units and construction of new rental units.
4. Christy Schuerch, Coalition for Community Wellness, introduced members of the Coalition including many of the major health providers in the community and encouraged participation and attendance at the Coalition's forum on "Creating a Healthy Community" to be held on January 19, 2008 at the Victoria Hall Theater.
5. Sheila Lodge, Citizens Planning Association, commented on the need to update the air quality chapter of the Conservation Element; noted that visual resources, including creeks and trees, were not covered in the Conditions, Trends & Issues Report, yet are a part of the Conservation Element.

6. Dave Davis, Common Ground and Community Environmental Council, commented that housing, open space, and transportation need to be looked at holistically. The Architecture 2030 group has been renamed Santa Barbara 2030 and is taking an active role in Plan SB. Believes that the community needs to be included sooner, rather than later; summarized a need for focus, timing and inclusion.
7. Megan Birney, Community Environmental Council, felt that Plan SB needs to include global warming and consideration of greenhouse gases in the Environmental Impact Report.
8. Joseph Rution, Allied Neighborhood Association, expressed concern with the proposed strategies of the Common Ground Statement of Shared Principles; asked that Plan SB address the limits of affordable housing and protecting the uniqueness of the community.
9. Bill Boyd, commended Staff for the quality of the Community Input and Summary Report; but was concerned with the lack of quantitative analysis in the report and encouraged future reports to include quantitative analysis. Requested that overcrowding in housing be reviewed.
10. Maria Paez, Union of Concerned Scientists, was supportive of global warming discussion and wished to know what advances were being made to get rid of discrimination in Santa Barbara.
11. Mickey Flacks, Common Ground, asked that housing, open space, and transportation be included in Plan SB as well as the overall effects that they have on the community. Concerned with making sure that ethnic and economic diversity is included in the community. Does not want to see Santa Barbara become Carmel.
12. Steve Yates asked that Plan SB consider who we are planning for and what the adult population of 2030 will be faced with if we continue with the policies in place now.
13. Dennis Jaffe, Director of Walk Santa Barbara, a project of Coalition for Sustainable Transportation (COAST), need to focus Plan SB on outcomes; "To plan is human, to implement is divine".

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 2:57 P.M.

Chair Jacobs called for a recess at 2:58 P.M. and resumed the meeting at 3:20 P.M.

Draft Policy Options Report/Worksession:

Bettie Weiss, City Planner, gave the Staff presentation.

Ms. Weiss and Mr. Tescher provided the Planning Commission clarification about the timing and definition of the Housing Element and the Land Use Element.

Mr. Tescher answered the Commission's questions about financial responsibility in addressing housing needs.

Staff answered additional Commissioners' questions about polling the community, the potential outcome of polling, and timing for conducting a poll for maximum effectiveness.

One Commissioner wanted to encourage forward moving momentum in the creation of a poll that does not reiterate all that has previously occurred.

Environmental Review:

Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst, gave the Staff presentation.

Staff answered additional Planning Commission questions about the timing of the Final EIR, the General Plan Amendment, and the Housing Element; defined Environmental Justice by stating that it will be reviewed by Staff with the environmental consultant and be a part of the Plan SB discussions; the longevity of the Conditions, Trends, and Issues Report as a baseline resource; analysis for updating existing policies; and incorporating the public forum discussions into the EIR process.

Chair Jacobs reopened the public comment at 4:26 P.M.

1. Steve Yates commented that Environmental Justice was an important component to add to the EIR. Need to look at how we will treat Measure E. Need to analyze small business displacement. Most of the Community agrees on the same values, but not on the priority of the values. Suggested looking at putting the values in priority before doing polling. Need to offer policy options to the community.
2. Cathie McCammon, League of Women Voters, stated that the most often heard community concern is growth: growth within our resources, growth beyond our resources, and what are the resources and limits. Would like to see a more participatory process beyond the courtesy two minute public comment periods offered at most meetings.

Mr. Ledbetter stated that the workshops will include dialogue with the community and be more inclusive of public discussion. Ms. Weiss added that the workshops have not yet been formatted.

With no one else wishing to speak, Chair Jacobs closed the public hearing at 4:34 P.M.

Overall Commissioner's Comments:

1. The Commission was appreciative and acknowledged Staff's work.
2. One Commissioner does not have confidence in the workshop and forum process without restructuring. Believes it will take too much time, costs too much money, and needs greater substance and structure. Agreed with the public about the sense of urgency and the potential alienation of the public. Indicated the process needed to be significantly modified to be timelier and generate results.

3. The Plan SB process needs to be prescriptive and not always focus on options or will lose momentum.
4. Very concerned with deferring the Land Use Element to after 2010. Questioned the logic of starting the EIR process before a specific project is identified.
5. One commissioner felt that the Planning Commission needs to offer leadership to Staff and the process.
6. Development Trends Workshop should assess General Plan build-out that Staff has articulated that includes whether we can live within our resources at current build out, and prioritize future development. Develop specific selection criteria that can be applied to the Land Use Element. Allocate future growth based on the land use map. The General Plan update comes down to answering how much development and what kind, goes where, goes when, and under what circumstances.
7. Some Commissioners were willing to ask City Council for more resources, if more are needed by Staff to move the process more quickly. Will ask City Council for extension of Measure E through the study process; will ask for coalition of community wellness to expand regionally.
8. One Commissioner stated that the Upper State Street Study (USSS) was a successful triage effort that took time away from Plan SB and takes some responsibility for the impact on Plan SB; wished that Plan SB could have continued during USSS.
9. The Commercial corridor is where the action is in Santa Barbara and should be put in the center; we need to look at development in the commercial corridors that is consistent with the short term and long term goals of the City. We cannot wait until 2011 to address commercial corridors.
10. One Commissioner felt that we are caught in looking at a short term plan and a long term plan. We need to define what living within our resources and sustainability means; establishing baselines is paramount to moving forward. Felt that we need to look at long term before we can look at commercial corridors.
11. One Commissioner felt that the poll needs to take into account the demographics of those answering the poll, as well as who is not answering the poll. Another Commissioner felt that the polls should go to schools, and/or commuters; questioned the way that we have crafted our workshops.
12. Most Commissioners felt the schedule needs to be shortened. One Commissioner supports the schedule as it has been laid out. Most Commissioners felt the Land Use Element needs to come before the Housing Element; suggested by early 2009. Many Commissioners felt that that both need to be looked at concurrently.
13. One Commissioner expressed concern that the process could get in the way of results.
14. Would like to see Plan SB meetings for the Planning Commission be single item agendas and not buried with other items.
15. The City has a longstanding vision, most notably articulated as "living within our resources." These shared values were reaffirmed in public comments during Phase One of the General Plan Update. Yet the current planning process seems bogged down by "what if's" that ask if the community changed its vision. The vision and the values have not changed. We need to move forward with confidence in that vision. It is time to discuss implementation scenarios and resulting outcomes.

16. One Commissioner would like to ask for a forum topic on Youth to be considered, to be held at the local high school and include youth.
17. Renters in our community are more than half of our population. We need to look at how to make renting an attractive option and how the City serves its renters.
18. Commuters should also be looked at; why do they choose to commute.
19. Polling should be targeted to include parts of the community that are not being included now.
20. One Commissioner outlined a significantly modified six-step process that would expedite the development of a set of preferred policies, re-sequence the preparation of a Land Use Element update, postpone non-critical path workshops and dovetail with the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process.
21. One Commissioner suggested the Commission designate a subcommittee to meet with Staff to refocus the update process on structure and substance and report back to the Commission several weeks later regarding staff's willingness to make process changes.

MOTION: Larson/Jostes

Appoint three members of the Commission to meet with Planning Commission Staff to restructure the process to maximize efficiency and focus on substance. The Planning Commission Subcommittee includes Commissioners Jostes, Thompson, and Chair Myers.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 7 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

Chair Jacobs opened the public comment at 5:42 P.M.

Steve Yates stated that the issue for the public is not expediency, but comprehension.

III. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Myers/White

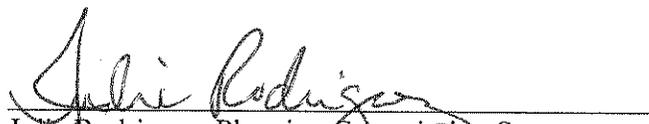
Adjourn the meeting of January 3, 2008.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 7 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

Chair Jacobs adjourned the meeting at 5:43 P.M.

Submitted by,


Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

