



City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

November 12, 2009

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Larson called the meeting to order at 5:31 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

PLANNING COMMISSION:

Present:

Chair Stella Larson

Vice-Chair Addison S. Thompson

Commissioners Bruce Bartlett, Charmaine Jacobs, John Jostes, Sheila Lodge, and Harwood A. White, Jr.

Commissioner Charmaine Jacobs arrived at 6:00 P.M.

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION:

Present:

Chair Beebe Longstreet

Commissioners W. Scott Burns, and Daniel Hochman

Absent:

Commissioners Daraka Larimore Hall, Ada Conner and Diego Torres Santos

STAFF PRESENT:

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

John Bridley, Waterfront Director

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner

Steve Foley, Supervising Transportation Planner

Michael Berman, Project Planner/Environmental Analyst

Allison De Busk, Project Planner

Melissa Hetrick, Project Planner

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney arrived at 5:45 P.M.

I. ROLL CALL

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

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

None.

- B. Announcements and appeals.

Ms. Weiss announced that on November 24, 2009 the new De la Guerra Plaza infrastructure concept plan will be presented to the City Council.

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

Chair Larson opened the public hearing at 5:33 P.M.

1. Andrew Bermant asked the Planning Commission to ask City Hall for consideration of Target Corporation's offer to lease City Parcel 22 at 6100 Hollister Avenue and all the impacts and benefits that Target's presence would bring to the community.
2. Mark Whitehurst, Santa Barbara Beautiful, requested that the Planning Commission include in Plan SB an implementation measure for a Public Art Master Plan for Policy EF 18 Arts and Culture.

With no one else wishing to speak, closed the hearing at 5:37 P.M.

III. CONCEPT REVIEW:

ACTUAL TIME: 5:37 P.M.

DRAFT WEST BEACH AREA PLANNING STUDY

The West Beach Planning Study is a follow-up to the West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project (WBPIP) process that reviews potential improvements to West Beach. The Study included a public participation process with community meetings and stakeholder interviews.

Staff: John Bridley, Waterfront Director
Email: JBridley@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

John Bridley, Waterfront Director, introduced Pat Saley and Janice Thomson, Pat Saley and Associates, who gave the Staff presentation.

Chair Larson opened the public hearing at 5:53 P.M.

The following people spoke in support of the project:

1. Paul Castleberg, Santa Barbara Sea Shell Association, thanked the Commission and submitted comments.
2. Skip Abed, Santa Barbara Sailing Center, thanked the Commissions for the improvements.
3. Eric Friedman, Santa Barbara Outrigger Canoe Club, supports Option B for the Canoe Hale and the Chumash Tomol House.
4. Andy Roteman, Santa Barbara Seashell Association, supports keeping the sea shell "condos" in their current location.

The following people spoke in opposition to the project or with concerns:

1. Jé Gooleby does not feel that the plan for the Chumash Tomol House is representative of the Chumash culture and asked to uncover the springs that are near West Beach where the Chumash used to congregate.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 5:59 P.M.

Discussion was held regarding the inability to involve the Ty Warner Sea Center.

The Commissioners made the following comments:

1. Commissioners Jostes and Lodge thanked the consultants and were in support of Alternative A because it has a softer touch and felt that it could be build quicker.
2. Commissioner Thompson preferred Alternative B if cost was not a factor. Supports a phased plan that could be worked into without having to tear down anything. Alternative B also requires a Coastal Development Permit. Does not see RDA funding being attainable due to the area not being blighted.
3. Commissioner Jacobs likes Alternative B, but would like to see a non-profit such as the Ty Warner Sea Center or Maritime Museum become a partner. Suggested events, such as Fiesta event, that could bring more activity to the area. Supports a splash park, as opposed to a wading pool.
4. Commissioners Longstreet and Larson are not in favor of new structures at the beach. Both were concerned with funding for maintenance of any new improvements.
5. Commissioner Bartlett supports a phased implementation of Alternative B if funding were available, otherwise Alternative A could be attained.
6. Commissioner Hochman agrees with Chair Longstreet on the issue of maintenance. Questioned the availability of Chumash Tomol House that could be used for all the community all of the time.
7. Commissioner White supports Alternative A and would like to see story poles of the two structures before going forward with the alternative. Likes the condos around the dredging of the facility.
8. Commissioner Burns stated that the closer to the cement the better for managing the sea shells' boats. Would like to see the condos stay close to the concrete.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL HEARINGS:

ACTUAL TIME: 6:14 P.M.

RECUSALS: To avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest, the following Commissioners recused themselves from hearing this item:

Commissioner Jacobs recused herself due to the applicant being a client of the same law firm that her husband is a member.

Commissioner Jostes recused himself due to owning property close to the project.

Commissioners Jostes and Jacobs left the dais at 6:16 P.M.

**APPLICATION OF ELINGS PARK FOUNDATION, 1298 LAS POSITAS ROAD;
APNS: 047-010-034 & 047-010-049; GENERAL PLAN: OPEN SPACE AND
COMMUNITY PARK; ZONE(S): ELINGS PARK NORTH: A-1, ONE-FAMILY
RESIDENTIAL; ELINGS PARK SOUTH: PR, PARK AND RECREATION
(UNDEVELOPED PARKLAND CATEGORY) (MST2006-00509)**

The project consists of the Elings Park Phase III Improvement Plan for various park additions and improvements to support active and passive recreational uses on Elings Park North (EP North) and Elings Park South (EP South). The City of Santa Barbara owns the 84-acre EP North property, which is operated under lease arrangement by the non-profit Elings Park Foundation. The 130-acre EP South property is owned and operated in its entirety by the Elings Park Foundation.

The Plan includes the following improvements for Elings Park North: 1) construction of a Community Activity Center, 2) development of two lighted multi-use playing fields and a lighted multi-sport arena field, 3) a fenced off-leash dog walking area, 4) a pedestrian trail system intended to connect the overall park amenities, 5) new picnic areas, 6) a family activity zone area, 7) batting cages, 8) a park services building, 9) new gazebo overlook area, 10) small hillside amphitheatre, 11) two new restroom facilities, 12) new and reconfigured parking, 13) new and replacement lighting, 14) landscaping, 15) a landfill cover and building protection systems, and 16) an entry kiosk.

The Plan includes the following improvements for Elings Park South: 1) relocation of the existing BMX track facilities currently located on the lower plateau of Elings Park North to Elings Park South, 2) park office building, 3) a disc golf course area, 4) individual picnic areas, 5) pedestrian access improvements, 6) new parking, and 7) landscaping.

Special events that could draw 1,000 visitors or more are proposed to occur a maximum of 12 times per year, and would typically be held on Elings Park North.

The project also includes an estimated 128,200 cubic yards of cut and 132,300 cubic yards of fill for construction. Approximately 4,100 total cubic yards of fill material would be imported to the Elings Park North and South project sites. It is estimated that construction of the entire project will take approximately 24 months to complete.

In addition to the project components listed above, the Elings Park Phase III Improvement Plan project includes several off-site project elements, including:

- An upgraded Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) bus stop located along Las Positas Road, southwest of the intersection of Jerry Harwin Parkway and Las Positas Road.
- Six-inch sewer and six-inch water line connections to existing service lines located in the Cliff Drive right-of-way to serve proposed Elings Park South facilities.

The project also includes a request for amendment to the General Plan Land Use designation for the 84-acre EP North property from Open Space and Community Park to Open Space and Regional Park, and a rezone of the EP North property from A-1, One-Family Residential, to PR, Park and Recreation (Regional Park Category). The project also includes a request for amendment to the General Plan Land Use designation for the EP South property from Open Space and Community Park to Open Space and Regional Park, and a redesignation of the property from PR, Park and Recreation (Undeveloped Parkland Category) to PR, Park and Recreation (Regional Park Category).

The purpose of this hearing is to receive comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report prepared for the project. Written comments should be sent at the earliest possible date, but **received not later than Wednesday, November 18, 2009, at 4:30 p.m.** Please send your written comments to the attention of Allison De Busk, Project Planner, at the City Planning Division.

No formal action on the development proposal will be taken at the environmental hearing.

Case Planner: Allison De Busk, Project Planner
Email: ADebusk@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Allison De Busk, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation.

Steen Hudson, Executive Director, Elings Park, introduced Bruce Giffen, Elings Park Board of Directors; and Trish Allen, Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services, who gave the applicant presentation joined by John Maloney, Electrical Engineer and George Girven, Landscape Architect.

Chair Larson opened the public hearing at 6:54 P.M.

The following people provided comments for the Draft Environmental Impact Report:

1. Chuck Vehrs expressed concern that the DEIR does not sufficiently address the increase of Elings Park noise to Bel Air Knolls neighbors, and noted the lack of enforcement over current noise infractions.
2. Evan Skei concurred with Mr. Vehrs.
3. Hugh Michaels asked to stop the development of Phase III of Elings Park. Concerned with the loss of open green space and neighborhood incompatibility.

- Changing the undeveloped park to a regional park will open the southern portion of the park to further development. Concerned with the violation of the 30-year covenant restriction for CREF funds.
4. Els Anderson submitted written comments and feels the DEIR is inadequate because it does not study noise adequately, especially amplified sound.
 5. Carol Millar submitted written comments and was concerned with the increased lighting from Elings Park North on the adjacent neighborhood of Bel Air Knolls and on nocturnal animals.
 6. Horia Metiu expressed concern over the amplified noise that comes from the park that is a nuisance to the neighborhood. Concerned with the noise that would come from increased park use. She doesn't agree with averaging the noise over 24 hours. Suggested prohibiting amplified sound.
 7. Michelle Howard was concerned with the DEIR for not taking into account the unmitigable long-term effects from changing Elings Park South from an undeveloped park to a regional park. Passive activities are good for kids, and undeveloped land offers unique opportunities for learning.
 8. Elizabeth Selover expressed concern that the DEIR does not adequately address safety and security in the park and on adjoining neighborhoods. With an increase in Park visitors, questioned how hazards of wildfire in the park and emergency evacuation would be addressed.
 9. Ed Meyers expressed concern with loss of natural land and the associated loss of flora and fauna.
 10. Ben Valencia was concerned that the DEIR does not address the light pollution that would come from the proposed BMX track and parking lot. Concerned that the DEIR does not address amplified noise from BMX or the amplification of noise through the neighborhood canyons.
 11. Jé Gooleby feels that added development is destructive to the park and the drive along Las Positas Road, and will not be the best benefit for the children.
 12. Debbie Wright agrees with Mr. Myers about the loss of nature. The change to a regional park is not analyzed; suggested a Conditional use Permit with enforcement. Would like to see a study that covers two or more events concurrently to better understand the noise impacts. DEIR does not cover parking that is already insufficient or security issues.
 13. Dan Johnson does not believe the DEIR sufficiently analyzes the noise levels and impacts to the neighborhood; peak noises are a problem. Also commented on the lighting deflected by the fog and its impact to the neighborhood. Does not support changing the park to a regional park; keep as open space. Re-zoning will have huge effects long-term.
 14. Jered Foos thinks that sound should be measured from all points in the park and neighborhood to see true impact to the surrounding neighborhood.
 15. Ellen Duke is disappointed that traffic issues along Flora Vista, Valerio, Micheltorena, etc. are still not being addressed in the DEIR. The impact to neighbors and schools due to people using alternative routes is not addressed. Concerned with parking impacts to the neighborhoods (i.e. Calle Montilla, Valerio, Flor Vista) and changes to quality of life.

16. Robert Van Buren asked that the Draft EIR be rejected for deficiency in analyzing noise and adjacent residential zoning. Asked that the report be recirculated for further review.
17. Judy Orias submitted written comments and was concerned about neighborhood compatibility and impacts from existing issues to Hidden Valley neighborhoods, including the safety impacts that additional traffic would bring. Does not see the DEIR address impacts to safety, need good evacuation routes. Retaining walls are contrary to the visual goals. Parking is inadequate; Earl Warren cannot be relied on. Would like to see the recirculated EIR documents made available to the public beyond viewing an office or library copy. Robert Write deferred his time to Ms. Orias.
18. Mark Rumer felt that the DEIR does not address impacts to neighborhood public safety, specifically parking. DEIR does not address peak park populations or impacts to surrounding neighborhoods and traffic. There is no maximum cap on event attendance. Mitigation to the effect that one large event precludes all others should be included.
19. Gary McGill feels the DEIR does not address how the noise travels when amplified through various neighborhoods.
20. Elizabeth Becker, an environmental consultant, stated that the noise analysis is inadequate and cited references in the DEIR. Noted that atmospheric factors also affect noise. She will submit additional comments in writing.
21. James Johnson stated that the improvements are not compatible with the neighborhood, and the site should be open space. He will submit written comments.
22. Ralph Fertig, President, Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition, noted that the mitigation related to BMX identified in the DEIR seems appropriate.
23. Theo Kracke, Save Elings Park South, shared concerns that the DEIR did not address the Santa Barbara County covenant restricting use, for which CREF funds were approved; the BMX track lighting that was not mitigated; the regional park zoning; and neighborhood incompatibility. The description of proposed events was deficient, as were traffic and safety impacts and proposed alternatives. Neighbors were never consulted in planning and design process until project was before ABR.
24. Marc Chytilo, attorney representing Save Elings Park South and the Bel Air Knolls Neighborhood, identified inadequacies found in the DEIR. An analysis of land use incompatibilities is missing in the document. The DEIR does not include safe evacuation of Elings Park, yet it is identified in the High Fire Zone. Asked that the DEIR be recirculated. The site provides an extraordinary visual corridor looking at Elings Park South toward the Santa Ynez Mountains; the EIR does not adequately capture this view. The project will overwhelm the street system. The project description is flawed and doesn't include foreseeable future activities based on the Regional park zoning. Project objectives need to address compatibility with the surrounding area. The DEIR does not address the conflict with the County covenant, or Charter Section 1507. Emergency evacuation for the park and neighborhood need to be addressed. DEIR needs a more robust range of alternatives.

25. Roseanne Boardman, Bel Air Knolls Association, the DEIR does not address fire hazard and evacuation impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. Concerned with the number of people using the park contributing to increased fire risks.
26. Henry Sarria noted that the BMX track would be a relocation not a new use, and that lights are used only in the fall and winter, and the PA system is only used for races, not practices. Track occupies only 1% of Elings Park South. Explained that the track is for bicycles, no engines. He supports the expansion of the BMX track and does not see any direct impacts from the proposed lighting or amplified sound systems.
27. Jeff Doubet did not find the DEIR to have studied sound in varied settings of the park relative to the neighborhood.
28. Ana Citrin, attorney representing Save Elings Park South, provided justification supporting the need to recirculate the EIR. There is no land use section; there are inadequate alternatives; the noise analysis is based on an inaccurate baseline and a CNEL measurement should be used; the retaining walls represent an aesthetic impact and landscaping is inadequate mitigation; there are baseline problems for biology because the survey was conducted in the winter. The alternatives will need to address the understated impact analysis. Additional time was yielded to her by Patty Bryant.
29. Dennis Meerenbach would like park to remain in its natural state. Traffic and parking impacts on adjacent streets is not analyzed. Ingress and egress trespassing across public and private land has not been addressed.
30. Andy Roteman referenced active/passive logic and feels that we need active areas for children to play; therefore he supports proposed uses of the project.
31. James Elliot was concerned by the aesthetic impacts of the BMX track to the neighborhood. Daytime views from neighboring properties to the east and from existing park users, such as trails, need to be considered. Asked for the DEIR to be recirculated; would like to see alternatives for the BMX placement and would like to see the open space preserved.
32. Mary Lee Sanders talked about balancing the existing wildlife habitat and the need for passive use, too.
33. John Greynald felt that the DEIR was inadequate and did not sufficiently cover lighting. Asked why light standards are folding to protect hanggliders, yet there are taller trees/vegetation proposed. Asked that zoning not be changed.
34. Chris Burke supports a more active use of the park for children. Commented that lighting of BMX track is only used during restricted periods.
35. Fred Clough addressed covenant issues and CREF grant from County.
36. Gil Barry stated that the EIR is faulty in addressing noise and light, supporting his actual accounting of increased decibel levels in the neighborhood. The sound map doesn't include the Alan Road neighborhood. Existing lights shine into his bedroom.
37. Ronald Lincoln stated that the Park hours reflects when the main park entrances are closed, after sunset, the public comes in through neighborhood areas to make use of the park. Noise impact is not addressed in DEIR. Traffic impact drives more people to the back entrances and this would only increase with proposed changes.

38. Jeff Harvison stated that only 10% of open space will be impacted by development of the BMX track; there will still be open space. Supports mitigation efforts that have been made. Special event attendees will not arrive at once, it will be staggered. Noise that is heard is happy noise.
39. Billy Gallagher, Santa Barbara Soccer Club, supported the need for additional lighting to provide support for evening activities. Supports all mitigated efforts to increase lighting.
40. Lauren Temkin, EPIC, submitted written comments.
41. Richard Glaus, Elings Park Board, supports mitigated efforts of DEIR and stated that it does address noise, safety, etc.
42. David Pritchett is concerned with the proposal, as it is too much. Expressed the need for the DEIR to identify alternatives that are feasible. There is an existing BMX track, it doesn't need to move. Traffic on side streets, especially for special events, needs to be studied.
43. Roger Modjeski sees technical problems with the noise study in the DEIR. Sees the need for an onsite monitor during the park's noise-generating events.
44. Michael Fauver, President, Elings Park Foundation, thanked the public for its input and asked that the DEIR continue to include the financial implications of keeping Elings Park South as open space.
45. John Jostes had suggested that a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) could function as a mitigation measure to provide the neighborhood some assurance that the noise, light and operations would be mitigated and enforceable. Found that this suggestion and his suggestions for alternatives and neighborhood compatibility were not included in the DEIR.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 8:52 P.M.

The Commissioners made the following comments:

1. Commissioner Burns commented on the lack of soccer fields in Santa Barbara and supported Elings Park having more soccer fields. Stated that restricting light standards to 40 feet doesn't work for sports fields. Wondered what impact the overflow of Elings Park parking at the tennis courts would have on tennis users.
2. Commissioners Bartlett and White felt that the DEIR does need more work. Lacks alternatives, other locations for BMX track should be explored. Suggested recirculating the DEIR. Need to balance passive and active recreation, suggested keeping active areas together. Topography related to sound needs to be addressed. Lighting is a big issue. Would like to see Elings Park and the neighbors continue to work together. Supports a CUP as an Adaptive Management tool. Traffic remains an issue, especially to neighbors on the east at the other access points.
3. Commissioner White felt that the DEIR needs to look back to and include Charter Section 1507. Believes there are opportunities for intensifications of use. Fire and evacuation concerns should be in the document. Circulation on the east side of the park needs to be reviewed in the DEIR; look at Highway 101/Las Positas traffic issues.

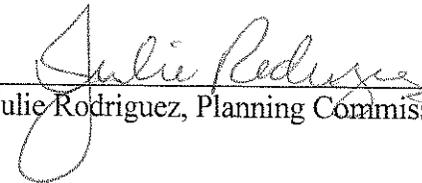
4. Chair Longstreet felt that until covenant issue is resolved, she cannot look at any development on Elings Park South. Would like to see existing conditions/limitations reviewed. Would like to see more alternatives presented in the DEIR.
5. Commissioner Thompson sees the park already having an intensive use and feels that further development will increase intensity on the surrounding residential neighborhood. Would like to see uses realigned so that more intense uses are not near residences. Traffic, aesthetics and noise are not sufficiently covered in the DEIR. Lighting mitigation does not address the environmental impacts of low clouds and fog; suggested restriction on when lights can be on. Amplified noise is getting worse and impacts the neighborhood. Monitoring noise is toothless mitigation. An obvious solution would be no amplified sound. Wind affects how sound travels and this was not addressed. Alternatives were not adequate because there was not a realistic alternative that would meet the applicant's objectives and mitigate traffic, aesthetics, and noise. Comments brought up in the scoping hearing were not covered by the DEIR.
6. Commissioner Hochman questioned whether there would be limits to the attendance for special events. Would like to know the types of special events envisioned. Would like to see a review of events on north and south sections of park. Stating that events would "typically" be held on Elings Park North is not good enough. Questioned if Veronica Meadows and Arroyo Burro pedestrian activity outside of Elings Park would be addressed in the DEIR. Wondered if the 1% figure referenced as being used by the BMX track was related to total area or just usable space. Would like to know the total percent of useable area occupied by BMX.
7. Commissioner Lodge concurred with many comments made. Commented that while North Elings Park was once a dump, South Elings Park has long been open space. Noise issues and land use compatibility were not adequately covered. Godric Grove was not addressed at all.
8. Commissioner Larson supports a recirculated DEIR and would like to see a CUP Alternative. The regional park designation needs exploration. Noise needs to be re-studied. Asked that all public comment be read and included.
9. Commissioner Bartlett would like to see design alternatives from the Cottage Hospital Improvement Plan Report included in the analysis. There are ways to handle amplification and they should be reviewed and included in the DEIR.
10. Commissioners Bartlett and White Suggested taking a proactive approach to determine what sound levels could be acceptable to the neighborhood. What are the real world irritants? What can people live with? Can we fix existing problems?
11. Chair Longstreet would like to see Elings Park negotiate more with the neighbors for defining alternatives that neighbors could live with.

Melissa Hetrick, Environmental Analyst, thanked the Commissioners and public for comments. Noted that CEQA has specific guidelines as to when recirculation is required. Staff will make a decision on recirculation after all comments are received and reviewed.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Larson adjourned the meeting at 9:25 P.M.

Submitted by,



Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

