



City of Santa Barbara

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 5, 2020

1:00 P.M.

This Meeting was Conducted Electronically
SantaBarbaraCA.gov

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Deborah L. Schwartz, Chair
Lesley Wiscomb, Vice Chair
Roxana Bonderson
Gabriel Escobedo
Jay D. Higgins
Sheila Lodge
Barrett Reed

STAFF:

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Heidi Reidel, Planning Technician I

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schwartz called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Deborah L. Schwartz, Vice Chair Lesley Wiscomb, Commissioners Roxana Bonderson, Gabriel Escobedo, Jay D. Higgins, Sheila Lodge, and Barrett Reed

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Hentschke, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Jill Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director
Andrew Bermond, Capital Projects Supervisor
Joe Poire, Fire Marshal
Amber Anderson, Wildland Fire Specialist
Julia Pujo, Project Planner
Kathleen Kennedy, Project Planner
Rosie Dyste, Project Planner
Ellen Kokinda, Planning Analyst
Timmy Bolton, Associate Planner
Tony Ruggieri, City TV Production Supervisor
Heidi Reidel, Planning Technician I

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

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

No requests.

B. Announcements and appeals:

Ms. DeBusk announced that the City of Santa Barbara offices will be closed for the holidays from December 23, 2020 through January 1, 2021.

C. Review, consideration, and action on the following draft Planning Commission minutes and resolutions:

1. October 15, 2020 Planning Commission Minutes

MOTION: Bonderson / Higgins

Approve the minutes as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

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

Public comment opened at 1:05 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

III. NEW ITEM

ACTUAL TIME: 1:06 P.M.

APPLICATION OF PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT/ CITY OF SANTA BARBARA, OWNER OF 0 SANTA CRUZ BLVD, "THOUSAND STEPS", APN: 045-185-0RW, CITY RIGHT-OF-WAY, ZONE: COASTAL ZONE; LAND USE DESIGNATION: OPEN SPACE/BEACH; (PLN2018-00297)

Project to repair Thousand Steps, a public beach access stairway located at the end of Santa Cruz Boulevard. The project includes the demolition and reconstruction of the lowest 24 steps, installation of 10 additional concrete steps extending approximately 14 feet seaward with decorative columns and a new landing apron, installation of new stainless steel handrails from the street level to the beach, construction of a new concrete guard rail at the mid-level landing, installation of a drain to capture and redirect groundwater, re-pouring of the concrete at the mid-level landing, and repair of minor surface cracks where needed. Other improvements include new trash and recycle receptacles, and new bicycle racks at the street level. Project requires a Recommendation from the Planning Commission to allow the project to proceed to the California Coastal Commission for a Consolidated Coastal Development Permit due to its location in both the Appealable Jurisdiction of the City's Coastal Zone and the California Coastal Commission Permit Jurisdiction (SBMC §28.44.060 and California Coastal Act Section 30601.3)

Kathleen Kennedy, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation. Andrew Bermond, Capital Projects Supervisor; and Jill Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director, were available to answer questions.

Public comment opened at 1:21 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

Commissioner comments:

Commissioner Escobedo:

- Thanks staff for an informative site visit.
- The steps are very dangerous as they are and the improvements, including a handrail, are a welcome improvement.
- Supports moving the project to the Coastal Commission.
- Supports increasing the bike parking from 4 to 8.
- Would support incorporating the original name (Camino al Mar) into a monument or adjacent interpretive sign.

Commissioner Bonderson:

- Supports recommending the project to move forward to the Coastal Commission.
- The project appears to be consistent with all City policies and Coastal Commission requirements.
- Feels it is important to provide the public with access to the coastline at this location.
- Supports increasing the bike parking to 8 or even 10 after further study.
- Supports incorporating the historic name.

Vice Chair Wiscomb:

- Excited to see the project come forward.
- Appreciates the three goals for coastal access, safety, and preservation of character.
- Would prefer the historic name to be included on the monument sign.
- Supports increasing bike parking to 8 but no more without further study to determine if it is needed/used.
- Would like to see bluff top improvements but they are outside the scope of this project and she does not wish to delay the project.

Commissioner Lodge:

- Fully supportive of the project; it's needed.
- The bluff top area is shabby looking and would like to see improvements in the future.
- Any interpretive sign should be off to the side so views are not impeded.
- Supports increasing bike parking but would like to see further study before adding too much so the space is not crowded, making it uninviting to pedestrians who want to enjoy the view.

Commissioner Reed:

- Stresses the importance of making certain that the new concrete stair development will not cause erosion and potential negative impact to surrounding property.
- Supports increasing the bike parking to 8 and up to 12, but agrees with Commissioner Lodge that it needs to be balanced so the scenic overlook is not impeded.
- Encourages the applicant to exhaust all available options for potential funding to address additional improvement to what is an extremely dilapidated scenic overlook.
- Supports the addition of the historic name for the site and correcting the current name to say "Thousand Steps".

Chair Schwartz:

- Supports increasing bike parking from 4 to 8 and would like staff to study the usage to see how many are needed.
- Prefers incorporating the historic name into the monument sign but if it is not feasible, supports incorporating into the interpretive sign.
- Suggests that staff pursue funding for bluff top improvements in the future.

MOTION: Wiscomb / Lodge

Recommendation to allow the project to proceed to the California Coastal Commission for a Consolidated Coastal Development Permit because the project is consistent with the policies of the City's Coastal Land Use Plan and the California Coastal Act, with the following additional recommendations:

1. Increase bike racks from four to eight, with further study on actual use to determine if more are warranted.
2. Incorporate the historic "Camino al Mar" name into the monument signage if possible, otherwise include it in the interpretive signage.
3. The bluff top improvements should be a priority capital improvement project in the future.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

*** THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 2:26 TO 2:37 P.M. ***

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING

ACTUAL TIME: 2:38 P.M.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

The purpose of this hearing is to receive comments from the Planning Commission on the adequacy and completeness of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines §15087.

The City of Santa Barbara Fire Department (SBFD) is proposing to implement a comprehensive, coordinated CWPP to protect lives, property, and natural resources threatened by wildland fire. The proposed CWPP includes various goals, policies, and actions that represent a compilation of existing and newly proposed policies and actions related to codes and standards, funding, fire rehabilitation, evacuation, fire protection, vegetation/fuels management, and public education. Current activities conducted by the SBFD under the 2004 Wildland Fire Plan were analyzed in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2004 Wildland Fire Plan (City of Santa Barbara 2004). New proposed policies and/or actions that could result in impacts to the environment include the following categories:

- Proposed modifications to the High Fire Hazard Area
- Proposed modifications to the Vegetation Management Areas
 - Defensive space
 - Roadside clearing
 - City Vegetation Management Units (VMUs)
 - Community Fuel Treatment Network (CFTN)

- Proposed modifications to the Vegetation Management Methods
- Communication Facility Maintenance

The proposed CWPP also includes several other policies and actions that would not involve any physical impacts to the environment, including public education, interagency coordination, acquisition of funding, data gathering and management, acquisition of firefighting and communications equipment, and evacuation planning.

This hearing is to receive public and Planning Commission comment on the Draft PEIR only. No action on the environmental document or project will be taken by the Planning Commission at this hearing. The public review period for the Draft PEIR extends through November 13, 2020.

Joe Poire, Fire Marshal, gave the Staff presentation. Amber Anderson, Wildland Fire Specialist; Julia Pujo, Project Planner; Rosie Dyste, Project Planer; Jessica Kinnahan, Dudek; and Scott Eckardt, Dudek, were available to answer questions.

Public comment opened at 3:06 p.m., and the following individuals spoke:

1. Bob Hart
2. John Abraham Powell
3. Lisa Burns
4. Miriam Lindbeck

Written correspondence from the Santa Barbara Audubon Society was acknowledged.

Public comment closed at 3:18 p.m.

Commissioner comments:

Vice Chair Wiscomb:

- The document is well put together and she appreciates the effort of staff and the applicant team.
- Appreciates the fire department's multi-jurisdictional approach.
- Appreciates the production of the manual for property owners, as continued education on defensible space and hardening structures is important.
- Making educated assumptions through modeling is important to note.
- The EIR provides a program for specific action plans for VMUs, protects the environment to the greatest extent possible, mitigates for impacts, and considers the health, safety, and welfare of our community first and foremost.
- Looking forward to seeing the final document.

Commissioner Lodge:

- The project is ready to go on and be completed.
- Agrees with Vice Chair Wiscomb and looks forward to the results.

Commissioner Escobedo:

- Sharing impact of successes with homeowners will go a long way in pushing out community to harden our homes as much as possible.
- The EIR and the Wildfire Protection plan are substantive documents.
- Enjoyed hearing about regional collaborations with the State and Federal government.
- Looks forward to seeing the final draft and happy to hear that all comments will receive a response.

Commissioner Higgins:

- Hopes this moves forward to the American Planning Association for a consideration of a planning award that happens annually within the local area.
- The document is well-written and easy to read.

Commissioner Bonderson:

- Agrees with fellow commissioners that this is outstanding work.
- Respects the hard work of staff both in office and in the field.
- Agrees with Commissioner Higgins that the document should be put forward for consideration of a planning award.

Commissioner Reed:

- Proud of Santa Barbara Fire Department.
- Supports the EIR and believes it's ready to move forward.
- Suggests making clear the significance of meeting the objectives of the plan versus not, with regards to the VMU alternative.

Chair Schwartz:

- The draft is adequate and complete at this stage and ready to move forward.
- Now is the time to support staff in very robust community outreach.
- Believes it is important to work more regionally and appreciates that the Fire Department engaged in regional cooperation and coordination.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**ACTUAL TIME: 5:00 P.M.**

A. Committee and Liaison Reports:

1. Staff Hearing Officer Liaison Report

No report.

2. Other Committee and Liaison Reports

- a. Commissioner Lodge reported on the October 19, 2020 meeting of the Sustainability Committee.
- b. Commissioner Wiscomb reported on the November 4, 2020 meeting of the Sea Level Rise Adaptation Subcommittee.
- c. Commissioner Bonderson reported on the October 19 and November 2, 2020 meeting of the Architectural Board of Review.
- d. Commissioner Schwartz reported on the upcoming meeting of the Highway 101 HOV Project.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Submitted by,



Heidi Reidel, Planning Technician I