



CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025
City Council Chambers

7:00 p.m. REGULAR MEETING

All City Council Members are present and the meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. Also present is City Manager, Glen Rojas; Assistant City Manager, Starla Jerome-Robinson; City Attorney, Bill McClure; and Executive Assistant, Pat Carson.

Mayor Robinson led the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Robinson made a quick note that Menlo Park was hit today by our first major storm.

A. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Barbara Franklin addressed the Council regarding second hand smoke, and asked when the Smoking Ordinance will be placed on a City Council agenda.
- Debra Saber and Juan Reese spoke regarding an incident with the Police expressing their concerns about abuse of Police power.

B. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Review of and direction on the Emerging Plan and Next Steps to the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

City Manager Glen Rojas opened the discussion stating that he hopes Council will provide staff with the direction to take action on the project. He acknowledged the two years of planning and work that has gone into the project. He thanked the Oversight and Outreach Committee, Associate Planner Thomas Rogers, Community Development Director Arlinda Heineck, staff, the Planning Commission and community participants, commenting that so far public participation has been very successful with excellent turn-out.

Associate Planner Thomas Rogers thanked City Council on behalf of Community Development Director Arlinda Heineck for their support of the public planning collaboration and community engagement process in the community meetings. This evening, they will take a look at the overall project as well as the history that has led up to this point. Community Engagement Manager Cherise Brandell spoke about the community engagement process. The engagement process was developed based upon best practice and designed to develop consensus. The process is distinguished from public opinion because it is based upon factual information, deliberation and consideration of broad public consensus.

During the Vision Plan Phase 1 there were over 2,600 participants. Council set a broad goal for the downtown to establish a plan for development. The process is very open-ended. The Specific Plan was developed based on the goals developed in Phase 1. Staff is hoping to clarify any questions about how we arrived at this point.

Mark Hoffheimer and Prakash Pinto, the consultants from Perkins and Will provided background from the last workshop, talked about where we are, and next steps. Next steps include the

development of a draft Specific Plan and draft EIR. Key aspects include public space, character, vibrancy and connectivity.

The Mayor opened the discussion for Council Members to ask questions, make comments and to gain clarification about what needs to be defined in order to go forward.

The Mayor then called for public comment on the item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following members of the public commented on the Emerging Plan and Next Steps to the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan:

- Robert Lico, VP Giannotti, Inc. expressed concern that there is an attempt to do too much, parking concerns, and about the problems with current employee downtown parking
- Mark Flegel with time donated by Lynn Macy and Henry Riggs, expressed a concern that the business owners are not being shown respect, the plan must include the important people, and protecting the village environment. Los Altos and Los Gatos modeled their parking plazas after Menlo Park
- Richard Draeger with time donated by John Draeger spoke regarding the idea of parking structures and preserving parking. He would like to see the parking plazas preserved
- Cortland Bohacek spoke regarding his concern with the number of parking spaces, and the importance of readily accessible parking to businesses
- Nancy Couperus spoke regarding the early vision and stated that it served Menlo Park well, and voiced concerns about parking and impacts to the businesses
- Lee Boucher, previous business owner of Boucher's is concerned with creating a need for additional parking, given the overcrowding of the existing parking plazas and is opposed to parking garages
- Jo Eggers, business owner asked Council to preserve the parking plazas and not build parking structures, and asked that the City have an auditor come in and look at the data
- Gary Eggers, business owner thanked Council for the work and the scope of the project, supports preserving the parking plazas, does not support five-story parking structures and opposes converting private spaces to public spaces
- Marc Macy, would like to see the parking plazas maintained, opposes parking structures and conversion of private parking to public space
- Sophie Lo with time donated by Howard Crittenden opposes parking structures which will create a negative impact on downtown businesses, does not want to see Santa Cruz Avenue widened nor any private parking converted to public space
- Joanne Bailey wants to preserve the character of the downtown area, less density, concerned with the impacts to Trader Joe's and the Farmer's Market
- Patti Fry, resident and former Planning Commissioner asked the Council to somehow make this more real to the public, stating a majority of those in attendance have shared concerns, the fiscal analysis is very important and asked that information be made more accessible and more readable, underground parking would preserve parking and supports improving bike networks
- Frank Carney, resident stated the village character has been a high priority to maintain, the three or four story buildings on El Camino will not maintain the small town character, suggested proceeding with separating El Camino Real from the Downtown plan. If taken away the Farmer's Market would be a real loss, retaining trees is important

Council continued discussion including concerns brought to their attention by members of the public, and asked additional questions. Staff and the consultants responded to the comments and questions.

Action: Motion and second (Fergusson/Boyle) authorizing staff and the consultant to move forward with the preparation of the Draft Specific Plan and Environment Impact Report (EIR), taking into account comments made by Council, and authorizing the Council Subcommittee to work with staff to explore opportunities for additional public involvement opportunities during the upcoming phase of work, which may or may not include the Oversight and Outreach Committee. The vote was unanimous.

C. COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

Councilmember Boyle and Councilmember Fergusson spoke briefly under Councilmember reports. Mayor Robinson had comments as well. Council Member Fergusson asked questions about an upcoming meeting with Planning staff and the Planning Commission chair and vice chair.

Councilmember Cohen and City Attorney McClure are recused and vacated the Council Chambers

Councilmember Rich Cline spoke about the recent Court ruling on High Speed Rail

D. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

None

E. ADJOURNMENT at 12:30 a.m.

Pat Carson
Executive Secretary to the City Manager

The minutes were accepted at the Council meeting of November 10, 2009