



HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 3, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Administrative Building Conference Room, First Floor

Chair Boyle called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Administrative Building Conference Room.

ROLL CALL –

Commissioners Present: Patricia Boyle (Chair), Sally Cadigan, Anne Moser, Yvonne Murray (Vice-Chair), Brigid Van Randall.

Commissioners Absent: John Bautista, Carolyn Clarke.

Staff Present: Douglas Frederick, Housing Manager; Megan Nee, Management Analyst.

A. PUBLIC COMMENT #1 - None

B. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Recommendations from the Housing Commission to the Planning Commission and City Council Concerning the Downtown/El Camino Real Specific Plan

Housing Manager Frederick distributed preliminary recommendations of the Planning Commission as provided to him by Arlinda Heineck, Community Development Director. He explained there are two sets of recommendations because the project is so large the Planning Commission can't consider it all at once. One set of recommendations, dated July 21, 2011, relates to the Station Area; the other set, dated July 28, 2011, relates to the Downtown. Housing Manager Frederick said the Planning Commission discussions were centered on reduced parking requirements.

Housing Manager Frederick said it is undetermined what kind of housing, if any, will go along El Camino. There are no restrictions as to affordability; theoretically speaking, housing built there could be one hundred percent affordable (however unlikely). The minimum amount of affordable housing would be the amount required by the City's BMR Ordinance.

The Commission expressed a strong desire that housing and affordable and/or workforce housing in particular, be included in Menlo Park's vision for downtown and El Camino Real. Commissioners expressed support for senior housing, mixed-income housing, Transit Oriented Development (T.O.D.), well designed higher density developments with set-backs, and utilizing publically owned land for housing (specifically, putting housing over parking on City owned parking lots). Commissioners said that housing along El Camino and in downtown would make these areas more vibrant and help businesses there.

It was decided the Commission should make a statement at tomorrow night's planning meeting as well as on August 22nd. After a discussion, Commissioners agreed the statements should be simple expressions of support for the Downtown/EI Camino Real Specific Plan, and should not be overly detailed. The Commission decided the statements of support should stress the importance of the following:

- Transit Oriented Development (T.O.D.)
- Affordable housing
- Reduction in green house gasses
- Utilizing publicly owned property such as parking lots for housing (over parking)

It was also agreed it is important to say there are some potential housing sites on EI Camino that the Commission would like the City Council to support. It should be said that there are currently some proposed projects on EI Camino that include housing but there are currently no actual, approved projects on EI Camino that involve housing and this is a concern for the Commission.

The Commission decided Chair Boyle will make the statements at the meetings. Chair Boyle said she will draft a statement, which she will distribute to Commissioners tomorrow for their feedback. She confirmed the statement will be brief.

2. Approval of July 6, 2011 Minutes

M/S Moser/Cadigan to approve the minutes as presented; 5-0-0.

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Update on Housing Activity (Report from Staff)

Housing Manager Frederick provided an update on the work being done at 1382 Hollyburne Avenue. This home was purchased by the City and is being rehabilitated as part of the City's Neighborhood Stabilization Program. When complete it will become part of the City's BMR Program and be sold to an eligible and qualified buyer from the BMR Waiting List. The slab for the garage was poured yesterday. The trusses for the roof are up and the Job Corp people have been out there working. The rotting floor boards were replaced and the framing for the windows and doors is done.

Housing Manager Frederick said he issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design and development of housing on the City-owned, vacant Hamilton property. The City would like to find a developer to put together a proposal for the City-owned site itself, as well as for both the City's site and the adjacent, privately-owned light industrial properties that may possibly be included in the development. The developer will also be responsible for taking the proposal or proposals to the community. Responses to the RFQ are due on October 14th.

2. Monthly Report on Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program for June 2011

The Commissioners accepted the report.

3. Report from the Chair

Chair Boyle reported that Shelter Network got a \$767,000 contract with the Menlo Park V.A. to provide emergency shelter, transitional, and family housing. They are looking into the possibility of buying property along Willow Road for this purpose. She wondered if the City could somehow help with this.

The League of Women Voters, Green Belt Alliance, and Sam Trans are putting on a "Walk the Talk" event in October having to do with what has been done, and what has yet to be done, on the Grand Boulevard Initiative.

4. Commission Member Reports

Commissioner Moser reported on a recent meeting she attended in which the V.A. is requesting proposals to develop a 1.9-acre parcel on the V.A. grounds in Menlo Park. The V.A. is looking for a lessee to lease and improve the land to provide housing for veterans who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. The V.A. is hoping to have things "in motion" by Christmas.

Commissioner Moser also expressed concern over the results of recent redistricting in Menlo Park. She said the redistricting has split Belle Haven from the rest of Menlo Park, so now it will have a different representative than the rest of the city. She said she is very disappointed by this and had submitted this opinion to the people taking comments about the redistricting. Several commissioners expressed interest in also commenting about this so she provided the address of the website that people can send comments to, as follows: www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. None

E. PUBLIC COMMENT #2 – None.

F. ADJOURNMENT – 6:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Megan Nee, Management Analyst