

CITY OF BELMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
SUMMARY MINUTES

TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2010, 7:00 PM

Chair Frautschi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Frautschi, Reed, Mercer, Parsons, Mayer, Horton
Commissioners Absent: Mathewson

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Senior Planner DiDonato (SP), Associate Planner Walker (AP), Housing Specialist Shiels (HP), Parks Division Manager Ourtiague (PDM), City Attorney Zafferano (CA),

- 1. AGENDA AMENDMENTS - None**
- 3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None**
- 4. CONSENT CALENDAR**
- 4A. Minutes of May 4, 2010**

MOTION: By Commissioner Mercer, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, to accept the Minutes of May 4, 2010 as presented. Motion passed 6/0/1 by a show of hands, with Commissioner Mathewson absent.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

5A. PUBLIC HEARING – Vacant Lot on Semeria and Casa Bona Avenues (Semeria Park)

To consider a Design Review Permit, Conditional Use Permit, and Grading Plan for the construction of a small neighborhood park for both active and passive recreational uses.

(Appl. No. 2010-0017)

APN: 044-042-180; Zoned: R1-B (Single-Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Mitigated Negative Declaration

Applicant: City of Belmont Department of Parks and Recreation

Owner: City of Belmont

Project Planner: Damon DiDonato, (650) 637-2908

SP DiDonato summarized the Staff Report and PM Ourtiague gave the background of the project and thanked Commissioners for their earlier comments, adding that the final design had been presented to and

authorized by Council at its last meeting. He explained that the fast tracking was necessitated by the fact that \$288,000 had been awarded by the State, and the State required that the project be completed by September 31, 2010. Using a Power Point presentation, he and Mr. John Cahalan, Landscape Architect for the project, reviewed the changes that had been made to the design, primarily due to geotechnical recommendations, and described the amenities, landscaping and signage planned for the park.

Responding to Commissioner Mercer and Chair Frautschi, staff stated that the 200 yards of grading will be off-hauled and that a grading permit will be required as part of the project.

Chair Frautschi opened the Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Vice Chair Reed, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 6/0/1 by a show of hands, with Commissioner Mathewson absent.

Commissioners were unanimous in their praise of the park design and expressed their thanks to Mr. Cahalan and responsible staff and Council members. Additional comments included:

- Commissioner Parsons had been assured by the Parks and Recreation Department that there will be a final plan check and that everything will be done according to City procedures.
- Commissioner Mercer asked that the neighbors be advised of construction scheduling.
- Commissioner Mayer continued to believe it would have been wise to have included a gazebo for shelter.
- Chair Frautschi thought it would educational and add to the versatility of the park if they could include a plastic-enclosed sign at the entrance that would label the native plants and include a statement on watering requirements.

MOTION: By Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, to adopt the Resolution approving a Mitigated Declaration of Environmental Significance and a Mitigation Monitoring and Report Program for a Design Review, Conditional Use Permit, and Grading Plan for the construction of a Neighborhood Park (Semeria Park) on a vacant 10,967-square-foot parcel (APN 044-042-180) located on Semeria and Casa Bona Avenues (Appl. 2010-0017)

Ayes: Mercer, Parsons, Horton, Mayer, Reed, Frautschi

Noes: None

Absent: Mathewson

Motion passed 6/0/1

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Vice Chair Reed, adopting the Resolution approving a Design Review Permit, Conditional Use Permit, and Grading Plan for the construction of a neighborhood park (Semeria Park) on a vacant 10,967-square-foot parcel (APN 044-042-180) located on Semeria and Casa Bona Avenues (Appl. 2010-0017), with the Conditions attached and including the condition that neighbors be notified when the grading haul-off begins.

Ayes: Mercer, Parsons, Horton, Mayer, Reed, Frautschi

Noes: None
Absent: Mathewson

Motion passed 6/0/1

PM Ourtiague informed the Commission that construction should begin by late summer and it is estimated to be 3-month project.

CDD de Melo announced that this item can be appealed within 10 calendar days.

5B. PUBLIC HEARING – General Plan Housing Element 2007-2014

Notice is hereby given that the Belmont Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing to review and consider adoption of the 2007-2014 General Plan Housing Element and the associated Initial Study/Negative Declaration of Environmental Impacts. The Housing Element presents a comprehensive set of housing policies and actions for the years 2007–2014. The Planning Commission will make a formal recommendation to the Belmont City Council.

CEQA Status: The City has performed a comprehensive evaluation of the potential impacts for the City of Belmont 2007-2014 Housing Element in accordance with CEQA, and finds that the proposed project, when implemented, will not have a significant impact on the environment, as the Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration does not identify any significant environmental effects.

Lead Agency: City of Belmont, Community Development Department

Project Contacts: Jennifer Walker, (650) 595-7453, Laurie Shiels, (650) 637-4717

AP Walker called attention to an error in pagination in Chapter 4 of the memo prepared by Dyett & Bhatia, noting that she had distributed a corrected version.

Vivian Kahn, Dyett & Bhatia, summarized the background and proposed modifications to the 2007-2014 Housing Element Update, and explained the proposed next steps.

Responding to an email received from Commissioner Mercer, AP Walker discussed the expected funding for the low/moderate income housing program for FY 2011 in light of the recent State take-away of redevelopment funds. Income is anticipated to be \$1.8 million for the LMI set-aside fund and day-to-day operations of the program. The larger scale housing programs, such as the acquisition of additional properties, will need to be re-evaluated and prioritized. There are new tasks such as zone text amendments and code editing to allow certain uses that should be able to be absorbed into existing planning and finance staff time. CDD de Melo added that \$2.3 million had been sent to the State via the schools and \$500,000 is expected to be required to be sent to the State next year. A November ballot initiative, if passed, will provide protection from further State raids of RDA funds. Every year there is an infusion of approximately \$1.8 million into the LMI funds so he is confident that there will be funds available to move through the programs that are suggested as part of this Housing Element, and if future funds are protected from State raids, resources will be available. Further discussion ensued regarding funding for projected property acquisitions and large scale capital projects, and programs and objectives of adoption of the Housing Element.

Referring to item C., Housing Programs, on page 6 of the Attachment III, Chair Frautschi asked what the reference to removal of R-5 Zoning District means to the City. Ms. Kahn responded that it would mean an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance if the District is not being used. CDD de Melo added that R-5 is the

highest residential density – over 50 units per acre – and there is no site that is quantified within the Housing Element that would achieve an R-5 zone. Ms. Kahn added that generally a City does not want to retain a zone that is not needed.

Chair Frautschi asked for the definition of “extremely low-income housing” and also noted an inconsistency in the number of required units, which was referred to as 46 in the memo and 45 in the actual Housing Element. Ms. Kahn said that they will check on the number discrepancy and explained that low-income housing is affordable to households that do not earn more than 80% of adjusted median income, very low is no more than 50% and extremely low is less than 30%. CDD de Melo pointed out that a definition of the four categories is provided on pages 2-20 and 2-21 of the Housing Element.

Ms. Kahn and CDD de Melo responded to Commissioner Frautschi’s requests for clarification of the Revisions section at the bottom of page 4 of Attachment III.

Chair Frautschi opened the Public Hearing. There were no requests to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Vice Chair Reed, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 6/0/1 by a show of hands, with Commissioner Mathewson absent.

A summary of comments by Commissioners follows:

Vice Chair Reed:

- Quoted the Statement of Purpose of the Housing Element: “The California State Legislature has identified the attainment of a decent home and suitable living environment for every citizen as the State’s major housing goal.” He doubted that the State is very serious about low-income housing considering that in Judge Connelly’s court the State took \$2.3 billion from local redevelopment agencies; Belmont’s share of that was \$2.3 million.
- Believed the number 399 is extremely aggressive. In Table 233, the number of permits granted for new units or other improvements ranges in the mid 30’s and total permits for all new units as well as repairs is just about 400.
- The document represents really good work, but failed to see the value other than ticking a box at the State level.

Commissioner Parsons:

- Concurred with Commission Reed’s comments. If the State really wanted to save money, the need for the Housing Element would have been eliminated this year and some of the State workers could have been furloughed who spend all of their time shuffling papers, reviewing and making comments that do not mean anything about giving housing to people. It does not help Belmont one bit and does not contribute anything to the well being of the State of California.

Commissioner Horton:

- Felt similarly, however, thought it helped identify some shortcomings in Belmont’s ordinances and conflicts that needed cleanup.
- Would like to move it forward and get it submitted.

Commissioner Mayer:

- Agreed with what had been said so far.
- Would be interested in knowing the amount of money that this has cost the City of Belmont, let alone the State of California, to produce the document. Could not see the payoff for Belmont.
- Some positive results--statistically it produces a lot of useful information about Belmont and where it stands in comparison with the rest of the State.
- It is time to put it to rest.

Commissioner Mercer:

- Concurred with everything that had been said. Done with it and wants it over with. Angry about the whole process and hoped somebody at the State level hears the anger.
- She had heard an estimate that Belmont spent \$100,000 doing this. Multiplied State wide, consider the actual housing programs that could have been implemented with that money.
- Concurring with Commissioner Horton's point, codes could have been reevaluated and rewritten for 1/5th of the cost of this document.
- Hoped something changes by the time it has to be done again.
- Could sign off on the document as is.

Chair Frautschi:

- Disagreed with the revision response under Governmental Constraints, section (c), Multi-family Development, specifically the promise to remove the CUP requirement for multifamily housing once new design guidelines are adopted. His suggested language was "will possibly modify or evaluate for CUP requirement removal," which seemed more appropriate and non-committal. He saw a real value in the CUP, even in this particular process.
- 17% of the General Plan is the Housing Element, so they are 17% complete with the General Plan.
- He thought it was important for the City to know itself, but that there might be a cheaper route to self analysis.
- He believed the State would be far better off to take monies and provide direct grants for housing if they really wanted to build housing instead of shuffling numbers on cities and coming up with the impossible goals.
- He asked what would happen to the whole housing program if the Redevelopment Agency goes away; much of the Housing Element is based on a Redevelopment Agency. If the State thinks the City can do a Housing Element and a housing program without Redevelopment Agency funds, he did not believe they were seeing the same numbers he was seeing.

MOTION: By Vice Chair Reed, seconded by Commissioner Mayer, to adopt the Resolution recommending City Council approval of a General Plan Amendment to adopt the 2007-2014 Housing Element and Negative Declaration of Environmental Impacts.

Ayes: Mercer, Parsons, Horton, Mayer, Reed, Frautschi

Noes: None

Absent: Mathewson

Motion passed 6/0/1

Chair Frautschi noted that this item is not appealable and that it is tentatively scheduled for the June 22 City Council meeting.

CDD de Melo thanked the Commission and the City Council for their work on this document. He added that staff is committed to creating housing opportunities described in the document.

Chair Frautschi thanked the Dyett and Bhatia and City staff for their work on this document.

6. OLD BUSINESS

6A. Belmont Sign Ordinance Amendments – Continued Discussion – Outstanding Questions/Issues/Policies

Chair Frautschi referred to memos between Commissioner Mercer and the City Attorney dated May 18 and May 28, respectively. He advised that only one of the questions raised in the memos would be discussed at this meeting – tent signs and holiday decorations – and the rest of the items will be deferred for a final ruling.

CDD de Melo reviewed the background of the discussion to date, and referred Commissioners to the draft ordinance, a worksheet regarding changeable copy signage that was prepared by Commissioner Mercer, and the staff memorandum. Chair Frautschi led the Commission and staff through discussion of additional policy questions; the remaining items were continued to the June 15th meeting, to be followed by a Public Hearing at a date to be determined.

7. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

7A. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project

No update at this time.

7B. San Mateo Development – North Road/43rd Avenue

Commissioner Parsons asked if Planet Granite had taken any action to design a storage area for their dumpsters. CDD de Melo responded that the Fire Department and Public Works did an inspection but were at a loss as to where it should be located. Commissioner Parsons suggested that a site be chosen, even if it is at the expense of some landscaping. Commissioners Mercer felt that it is only fair to the neighboring residents to get it resolved and Vice Chair Reed questioned the safety of the current method of storing trash receptacles.

7C. Parking Study – Downtown Village Areas

No update at this time.

7D. High Speed Train (HST) Project – San Francisco to San Jose

A community outreach meeting was held the previous Wednesday, with approximately 50 people in attendance. Questions and comments were assembled for dissemination.

7E. Emmett House

The flooring samples are being priced out by the project manager. Exterior finishes to date have received positive comments from citizens. The “widows walk” will be reinstalled.

7F. 1000 South Road

No new activity on this site. This item will be removed from the list of Updates.

7G. US 101 Pedestrian/Bike Bridge Project

The contractors have been constrained by the wet weather. More activity expected in June if the weather cooperates.

Other Items

National Night Out is scheduled for Tuesday, August 3rd. The Police Department has questioned whether the regularly scheduled Planning Commission for that night should be held. CDD de Melo will ask Commissioners to make a decision at their next meeting.

City Council will be discussing the **Zone Text Amendment** for Section 12 at their June 8th meeting.

He suggested that Commissioners go by Carlmont Drive to see the driveways at the three townhomes project. Commissioner Mayer commented that he had observed that the car in the far left unit had an impossible back-up problem that morning, due to the way the other residents had parked their cars. He did not believe the plan was working.

Chair Frautschi reminded of the June 8th is elections.

8. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2010

Liaison: Commissioner Mayer
Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Parsons

8. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, June 15, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

Carlos de Melo
Planning Commission Secretary

*CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the
Community Development Department.
Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.*

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