

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE



TELECONFERENCE/REMOTE

January 11, 2021

6:02 PM

In accordance with City policy, all Planning Commission meetings are recorded on audio and video in their entirety and are available for review in the Community Development Department (CDD). These minutes are a brief summary of action taken.

1. ROLL CALL

Vice-Chair Anna Kammer, and Commissioners Ed Acosta, Gina Cole, Veronica Dorantes-Pulido, Jenny T. Sarmiento and Jenni Veitch-Olson were present. Chair Matthew Jones was absent.

Staff members present were City Attorney Alan Smith, Community Development Director Suzi Merriam, Principal Planner Justin Meek, Executive Assistant Deborah Muniz, Administrative Assistant II Maria Elena Ortiz and City Interpreter Carlos Landaverry.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chair Anna Kammer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PRESENTATIONS & ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

A. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

B. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Cole encouraged residents to participate in the upcoming Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission meeting regarding the Transit Corridor. She announced the Coastal Rail Trail was in development and encouraged all to visit the project site.

Vice-Chair Kammer shared her excitement for the development of the new pump track project at Ramsay Park.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION OF A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT WITH DENSITY BONUS AND

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (PP2019-432/APP #18) TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION OF 50 APARTMENTS ON A .745 +/- ACRE PARCEL AT 558 MAIN STREET (APN: 018-241-20)

1) Staff Report

The staff report was given by Principal Planner Justin Meek.

2) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

Principal Planner Meek, in answering Commissioner Sarmiento, spoke about the underutilization of the parking lots in the vicinity of the apartment complex and potential use by tenants.

Principal Planner Meek and Community Development Director Merriam answered questions from Commissioner Cole regarding the seating capacity for the proposed restaurant, the requested density bonus, project specifics, ingress and egress of vehicles, project amenities, and the traffic study.

In answering Commissioner Dorantes-Pulido, Principal Planner Meek explained what the proposed water feature entailed and spoke about required affordable units for the project.

Principal Planner Meek, in answering Commissioner Veitch-Olson, explained allowed height for buildings in the downtown area.

3) Applicant Presentation

The presentation was given by William Hansen.

4) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

In answering Commissioner Sarmiento, Mr. Hansen spoke about ADA compliance requirements and ability for the units to be converted to comply with ADA regulations.

Mr. Hansen, in answering Commissioner Dorantes-Pulido, stated the proposed restaurant being considered would serve sushi, spoke about efforts to reduce the building's carbon footprint, and addressed concerns regarding parking at nearby parking lots.

Mr. Hansen and Director Merriam answered questions from Commissioner Cole regarding yard storage guidelines, bicycle storage spaces, plan for rental of apartment units, compliance with General Plan Element Six (6), project amenities, and plans to mitigate traffic issues.

In answering Commissioner Veitch-Olson, Mr. Hansen spoke about the apartment complex's pet policy, bicycle parking onsite, and parking available at the project site.

Mr. Hansen and Director Merriam answered questions from Commissioner Acosta regarding rental rates for the apartment units.

Vice Chair Kammer stated her concerns regarding traffic and pedestrian safety near the project site. Mr. Hansen spoke about mitigation efforts to address traffic safety concerns.

Mr. Hansen and Principal Planner Meek addressed traffic and pedestrian safety concerns raised by Commissioner Acosta.

5) Public Hearing

Vice-Chair Kammer opened the public hearing.

Raeid Farhat spoke in support of the proposed project.

Rafael Hernandez, housing program associate at Monterey Bay Economic Partnership, spoke in support of the proposed project.

Edward Newman, real estate attorney, questioned the proposed East Lake access easement and asked that it be limited for use for emergencies only.

Hearing no further comments, Vice-Chair Kammer closed the public hearing.

6) Appropriate Motion(s)

MAIN MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Veitch-Olson, seconded by Commissioner Sarmiento, to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 1-21 (PC):

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING A DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT WITH DENSITY BONUS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (PP2019-432/APP#18) TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF 50 APARTMENTS ON A +/- .745 ACRE SITE LOCATED AT 558 MAIN STREET, WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA (APN:018-241-20)

7) Deliberation

At Commissioner Cole's request, Mr. Hansen and Director Merriam addressed Mr. Newman's concerns regarding the project access easement.

Director Merriam, Principal Planner Meek, and Mr. Hansen answered questions from Commissioner Cole regarding access to the apartment complex.

Mr. Newman requested that the easement be limited to emergency use only.

Mr. Hansen clarified planned ingress and egress to the proposed apartment complex.

8) Chair Calls for a Vote on Motion(s)

MAIN MOTION: The above motion carried by the following vote:

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Cole, Dorantes-Pulido, Sarmiento, Veitch-Olson, Kammer
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Acosta
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS:	Jones

5. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Director Merriam thanked Commissioner Sarmiento for her work in the Planning Commission.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Kammer adjourned the meeting at 8:22 PM. The next remote/teleconference Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at 6:00 PM.

Suzi Merriam, Secretary
Planning Commission

Anna Kammer, Vice-Chair
Planning Commission