



MINUTES

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE**

December 3, 2024

6:00 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 summary of the action taken.

1. ROLL CALL

Vice-Chair Peter Radin, and Commissioners Lucy Rojas, Brando Sencion, Vanessa Meldahl, and Jennifer Veitch-Olson were present. Commissioner Daniel Dodge arrived late (6:03 PM) and Chair Ed Acosta was absent.

A. MOTION TO EXCUSE ABSENT PLANNING COMMISSIONERS (IF ANY)

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Veitch-Olson, seconded by Commissioner Sencion, and carried by the following vote to excuse absent Chair Acosta:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS: Radin, Rojas, Sencion, Meldahl, Veitch-Olson
 NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None
 ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: Acosta, Dodge

(Commissioner Dodge arrived at 6:03pm, after roll call to excuse absent commissioners.)

Staff members present were Interim Community Development Director Justin Meek, Interim Assistant Community Development Director Matt Orbach, Assistant City Attorney Mary Wagner (arrived at 6:37 PM), Administrative Analyst Elena Ortiz, Executive Assistant Celia Castro, Permit Technician Rob Manansala, and City Interpreter Carlos Landaverry.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Meldahl led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PRESENTATIONS & ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

A. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

B. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION

None

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, DENYING AN APPEAL (PP2024-7954) OF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR APPROVAL OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PERMIT FOR A LOW-BARRIER NAVIGATION CENTER (#PP2023-6297) LOCATED AT 118 1st STREET, 5 CHERRY COURT, AND 120 1ST STREET (APNs: 017-172-32, 31, & 35) AND UPHOLDING APPROVAL BY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PERMIT AND FINDING PROJECT EXEMPT FROM REVIEW UNDER CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15268

Commissioner Veitch-Olson shared a comment regarding the item and recused herself at 6:07 PM, prior to the Staff Report.

1) Staff Report

Interim Asst. Community Development Director Orbach gave the presentation.

2) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

Commissioner Sencion requested clarification regarding the statement made in the appeal process that mentions staff's failure to request a Special Use Permit (SUP) for the church as a prerequisite for the project. In answering, Interim Asst. Community Development Director Orbach clarified that the church is not required to get a SUP before the City can approve a low-barrier navigation center on the site.

Commissioner Rojas asked staff to go through the Appeal Process statements with clarification.

In addition to Commissioner Rojas' request, Vice Chair Radin asked to have staff pause after each line and allow Commissioners to ask clarifying and technical questions.

Interim Asst. Community Development Director Orbach proceeded with clarifying each line in the Appeal Process.

Line 1 in the Appeal Process:

Vice Chair Radin asked what the working definition is for the 'entitlement review process.' In answering, Interim Asst. Community Development Director Orbach shared a step by step description of the entitlement review process. He also clarified the submittal of the allegations do not affect the timeline of the entitlement review process.

ADOPTED MINUTES 4.A.

Line 2 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Line 3 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Line 4 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Line 5 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Line 6 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Line 7 in the Appeal Process:

Commissioner Rojas inquired if there is an existing Public Records Request. In answering, Interim Asst. Community Development Director Orbach clarified that the Public Records Requests are done through a different Department.

In further clarification, Interim Community Development Director Meek shared that the Public Records Requests are done through City Clerk's Office. He also shared what the process is for a Public Records Request.

Commissioner Rojas inquired if there is an appeal or grievance process regarding the California Public Records Act (CPRA) for this matter. Interim Community Development Director Meek answered he is not certain, however, the City is required to respond within a reasonable timeframe and strive to do so.

Commissioner Rojas further inquired if the Planning Commission could make a request for a process to be established regarding complaints about a Public Records Request. Interim Community Development Director Meek responded by holding the question for when the Assistant City Attorney Wagner arrives.

Assistant City Attorney Wagner arrived to the meeting at 6:37 PM.

Assistant City Attorney Wagner apologized for being late and moved forward to answering Commissioner Rojas question. She clarified that the Public Records Requests were provided and informed the Commission that CPRA has a an appeal process that can be followed.

Commissioner Rojas requested that the information related to the appeal process for CPRA be provided to the appellant.

Line 8 in the Appeal Process:

Vice Chair Radin shared a comment regarding the confusion between a change in church use and a change in church property.

ADOPTED MINUTES 4.A.

Line 9 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Line 10 in the Appeal Process:

Vice Chair Radin inquired if the appellant is claiming the project is an emergency shelter. Interim Asst. Community Development Director Orbach clarified that is correct, and explained how the center is considered in the Watsonville Municipal Code section.

Line 11 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Vice Chair Radin requested clarification regarding the management of the Low Barrier Navigation Center (LBNC). Interim Asst. Community Development Director Orbach deferred that question to the applicant.

Line 12 in the Appeal Process:

Vice Chair Radin inquired what the negative impacts are of submitting a building permit to Caltrans for review and comments prior to approving the application. Interim Asst. Community Development Director Orbach replied he is not sure, but clarified that at the time of the communication in question the City had not received a building permit application for the project and that the only feedback provided by Caltrans was to inform the applicant that they would be required to submit an encroachment permit to Caltrans for any work in the Caltrans right of way as part of the future building permit submittal.

Vice Chair shared a comment regarding the timing of submittals.

Line 13 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Line 14 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Line 15 in the Appeal Process: No clarifying or technical questions made by the Planning Commission.

Vice Chair requested for the time to be increased for presentations for the applicant and appellant.

MAIN MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Rojas, seconded by Commissioner Sencion, and carried by the following vote to approve the increase of time for presentations from 5 minutes to 10 minutes:

Deliberation

None

Chair Calls for a Vote on Motion(s)

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Radin, Rojas, Sencion, Meldahl
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS:	None
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS:	Acosta, Veitch-Olson
ABSTAIN:	COMMISSIONERS:	Dodge

3) Appellant Presentation

Appellant Catalina Torres, Marta Bulaich and Ilia Bulaich gave the presentation.

4) Applicant Presentation

The applicant Roxanne Wilson, on behalf of the County of Monterey, gave the presentation.

5) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

Commissioner Dodge asked the applicant if the organization had been actively involved in the Pajaro area after the floods or before. In answering, applicant Wilson clarified their involvement with Monterey County and Santa Cruz County including services needed along the levee that touches both counties.

Commissioner Dodge inquired about the roles of responsibilities of each county. In answering, applicant Wilson shared the timeline of events that led to the coordinating efforts to this day, including shared resources such as grants.

Commissioner Dodge asked the applicant if they received information from the State of California Housing & Community Development. In answering, applicant Wilson confirmed they did, including information pertaining to state law regarding LBNCs. She further explained the use and purpose of the LBNC currently in Cities of Salinas, Seaside and Monterey and their transitional rates.

Vice Chair Radin requested an overview of the City's position on this item. In answering, Assistant City Attorney Wagner referenced Government Code section 65662 for an LBNC and clarified that the letter from the Attorney submitted by the appellant refers to an incorrect submittal of the project and code provisions.

Commissioner Dodge asked for confirmation that Staff is not erroneous in interpreting the LBNC application. Assistant City Attorney Wagner confirmed that Staff appropriately applied City regulations and statutory requirements for LBNCs.

6) Public Hearing

Vice Chair opened the public hearing.

The following community members spoke in favor:

Paz Padilla
Elaine Johnson
Bobby Marchessault
Gretchen Regenhardt
Pastor Don Hoffman
Elizabeth Rodriguez
Mike Kittredge
Member of California State Policy Advisory
Parole Officer

The following community members spoke against:

Sandra Demala
Ramon Pacheco
Hank Wempe
Gabriel David Jenara
Ron Ince

7) Appropriate Motion(s)

MAIN MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Dodge, seconded by Commissioner Sencion, and carried by the following vote to approve the following recommendation:

RESOLUTION NO. 09-24 (PC)

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, DENYING AN APPEAL (PP2024-7954) OF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR APPROVAL OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PERMIT FOR A LOW-BARRIER NAVIGATION CENTER (#PP2023-6297) LOCATED AT 118 1st STREET, 5 CHERRY COURT, AND 120 1ST STREET (APNs: 017-172-32, 31, & 35) AND UPHOLDING APPROVAL BY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PERMIT AND FINDING PROJECT EXEMPT FROM REVIEW UNDER CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15268

8) Deliberation

Commissioner Dodge shared a comment in support of the project.

Vice Chair Radin shared a comment in support of the item and acknowledged the involvement of the community.

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

ADOPTED MINUTES 4.A.

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Dodge, Radin, Rojas, Sencion, Meldahl
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS:	None
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS:	Acosta, Veitch-Olson

B. A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL REPEAL AND REPLACEMENT OF CHAPTER 11 (STREET TREES) WITHIN TITLE 7 AND ADDITION OF A NEW CHAPTER 55 (PRESERVATION OF TREES AND TREE CANOPY ON PRIVATE PROPERTY) WITHIN TITLE 14 OF THE WATSONVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE

1) Appropriate Motion(s)

MAIN MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Dodge, seconded by Commissioner Rojas, and carried by the following vote to move the item to the Planning Commission meeting on February 4, 2025.

2) Public Hearing

Vice Chair opened the public hearing.

Hearing no comments, Vice Chair closed the public hearing.

3) Vice Chair calls for a Vote on Motion(s)

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Dodge, Radin, Rojas, Sencion, Meldahl
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS:	None
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS:	Acosta, Veitch-Olson

5. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Interim Community Development Director Meek shared that the City is organizing a Homeless Taskforce and invited members of the public who would like to participate and help address the issue of homelessness to contact the City Manager’s Office for further information. Interim Director Meek also reported on the meeting held earlier that day with federal, regional and local agencies along with nonprofit groups to discuss the challenges and opportunities to obtaining needed grant funding for implementing transportation projects, including those identified for downtown Watsonville. The meeting was funded by a grant obtained by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Thriving Communities Program, which is funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Acosta adjourned the meeting at 8:23 PM. The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

ADOPTED MINUTES 4.A.

DocuSigned by:
Justin Meek
F0B2DA20342549A...

Justin Meek, Secretary
Planning Commission

DocuSigned by:
Peter Radin
C32EA1963D2747B...

Peter Radin, Vice Chair
Planning Commission