

City of Larkspur

CENTRAL LARKSPUR SPECIFIC PLAN COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

Meeting #20

January 25, 2001

Fellowship Hall

*Redwoods Presbyterian Church
110 Magnolia Avenue*

Specific Plan Committee

William Broughan
Scott Churchill
Nancy Curley
Monte Deignan
Bruce Dorfman*
Maryjane Dunstan

Susan Gilardi
Bob Gonzalez
Helen Heitkamp
Larry Lanctot
Barbara Landy*
Jim Leland

Cyndi Niven
Maurice Palumbo
Judy Saffran
Molly White

**Alternate member*

Absent

Debora Busse
Deborah Lundberg

Joan Lundstrom
Myles O'Dwyer

Shawn Nazari

City of Larkspur

Thomas Cooke, Planning Consultant
Ulla-Britt Jonsson, Recorder

Robert Pendoley, Planning Consultant
Jan Vazquez, Planning Director

Welcome

Susan Gilardi, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

Bob Pendoley, planning consultant, reviewed where we are and where we are going, and gave an overview of the agenda. At our last meeting, a Design Subcommittee was appointed and asked to make recommendations on housing types and densities for the Niven Property, as well as design policies for the Specific Plan. Tonight we will review the Subcommittee's recommendations for the Niven property and begin to discuss design policies

We made corrections to the December 7, 2000 Meeting Notes:

- Explain how the Design Subcommittee was appointed
- "Incentives" should be described as one effective approach to getting affordable housing (page 3, top of right column).
- Change "certainty" to "direction" (page 3, top of right column).

Pendoley reported that the 2050 Committee has accepted a draft of its plan with direction for editorial changes. Two recommendations relate to the CLASP project:

- The library should be relocated from City Hall. The CLASP Committee has identified the city parking lot and the Nazari property as possible locations for a library.
- A new public parking lot should be built to add at least 50 parking spaces to downtown. The CLASP Committee has been reviewing the feasibility of public parking on the Niven property.

Choosing Alternatives: Niven East & West

Jim Leland summarized the Design Subcommittee's recommendations for housing density and mix on the Niven property: 99 housing units, consisting of 37 single-family homes, 35 cottage homes and 27 units of affordable housing.

Committee members had the following questions and comments:

Q: did you consider economic viability?

A: Yes, but we did not do an analysis. We believe the proposal is financially feasible because it is similar to the builder's presentation at the December 7 meeting.

Q: Why not explore the economic feasibility of an 84-unit project with 27 affordables?

A: We can study that. You will find that as the number of affordables increases as a percentage of the total project, the price and size of the market rate units will go up.

- I disagree with the assumption that affordable housing has a lower traffic generation rate.
- This shows a bias toward affordable housing.

Q: How did you weigh the number of units against traffic?

A: We compared five alternatives ranging from 42 to 105 units. Three of the alternatives, ranging from 84 to 99 units, had a maximum difference of 8 vehicles in terms of total trips generated during the peak evening commute hour. The data is in Table 2 on page 4 of the Subcommittee's memo.

Q: Is the lower trip generation rate for the affordable due to the proximity to downtown?

A: It is probably true that affordable units close to downtown generate less traffic than if they were further from downtown, but that has not been factored into the projections. What has been factored in is a lower trip-generating rate based on affordability. The trip generation rate used in the Subcommittee's recommendation is conservative, that is, somewhat higher than would be expected in real life.

Q: Did Wilbur Smith [traffic consultants] review these projections?

A: (**Tom Cooke**) I consulted with them.

Q: If EAH purchases 2 acres, what difference does it make to the rest of the development in terms of the total number of housing units?

A: It depends on which option you are using for comparison. If Option #2 is compared to options #3 or 4, the differences are 15 units and 2 or 6 trips respectively.

- We need to understand the threshold of economic feasibility. The original alternatives X1, Y and Z1 were all economically feasible. How do we find the break point, given the mix of units we would like to have. We need to understand the economic break point so that we can achieve the best balance of traffic and housing opportunity.

Q: Wasn't alternative Y feasible at 83 units?

A: Yes, with 10% of the units affordable. Y may not be feasible if 27 of the units are affordable.

We took public comment:

Rita Carr Plan for more open space and parkland; do an EIR

Tom Burns I support the choices that offer the most affordability.

Christine Anderson We need housing for teachers. The local district is experiencing a 20% turn over rate due in part to the cost of housing and the commute.

Dan Hillmer You should be aware that under any of these alternatives, the amount of square footage is essentially the same.

Carol (missed last name) I support a lower density. There is a considerable difference between Options #2 and 3. Plan the development at an appropriate scale and do not overbuild Larkspur.

Ed Jameson What is our objective? What protections will be provided for the people of Larkspur? Would the affordables be for sale or rentals?

Charles Klaevel I am concerned about the format of the options that have been presented; there is a big gap between options #4 and 5. Traffic is the key issue. Find an alternative between #'s 4 and 5. I have a problem when hospital management says we need affordable housing for nurses, but the nurses have to go on strike for wages. What guarantees do we have that teachers and nurses would live in the affordable units? Also, the creek setback should be 100 feet.

Bob Busse I recently sold a 900 square foot house, and the buyers are happy. The cottage units are a good idea.

James Holmes How do we reconcile 18 units per acre to Larkspur's character?

Betty Pagett Edgewater Place is approximately 18 units to the acre.

James Holmes I am concerned about so many affordable units concentrated in one place, and I question the credibility of the trip generation figures.

We resumed our discussion of the Design Subcommittee's recommendation.

We voted on the Subcommittee's proposal. With 12 voting members, 5 voted to support the recommendation and 7 voted against it.

Maryjane Dunstan proposed that the Committee consider the following option:

- 27 to 30 affordables, similar to Edgewater Place
- 15 to 20 cottages at 950 to 1200 square feet, selling for \$200,000 to \$400,000
- 35 single family homes, averaging 2500 square feet.

The average density would be 3 units to the acre. The affordables should be designated for firefighters and other local workers who can walk to work.

Barbara Landy My first priority as a representative of Citizens for Responsible Growth (CRG) is traffic. The CLASP Committee's first priority is obviously affordable housing. I support Option #5. Workforce housing will have a high turnover rate. Larkspur Isle is an affordable project, and it is not managed well. CRG is not opposed to affordable housing as long as it is not dense.

Molly White We already voted to try to develop a proposal between Alternatives Y and Z. We have said we are willing to work with 85 units if the project is diverse and affordable. I propose we study an 85-unit project with 27 affordables and design guidelines. Part of the assignment has to be economic feasibility

Susan Gilardi I am willing to put up with an increase in traffic if it results in more affordable housing.

Bill Broughan We have learned in the past that EAH would need 27 units for an affordable project to be feasible.

Judy Saffran I would like to about 15 small affordable rentals set aside for seniors, 20 larger cottage units that are affordable (in both the low and moderate income ranges) and the rest in single family homes.

Larry Lanctot Monahan Pacific is proposing to build 23 market rate units and 24 affordables in the Larkspur Landing area.

Helen Heitkamp Why not set a traffic cap, and then plan the housing mix?

Nancy Curley The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) says that Larkspur should build 103 affordable units to meet its fair share housing obligation.

After further discussion, we took a straw poll of the 12 voting members on the following proposals:

- An 85-unit cap on development – 8 yes votes
- An 85-unit cap with 27 affordables – 8 yes votes.

Break

Susan Gilardi asked that we try to summarize and vote to confirm points from our preceding discussion with the following results:

- 10 members *voted* to support the concept of a 27 unit affordable project.
- Several members said that putting an 85-unit cap on the project would mean less diversity.
- A majority of members *voted* to support an 85-unit cap with 27 affordables.
- Members expressed interest in a traffic cap and allowing up to 90 units in return for appropriate public benefits.

Maryjane Dunstan asked, if the owner sells 2 acres to EAH for an affordable housing project, must 10% of the units developed on the remaining 14 acres be affordable?

Bob Pendoley responded that the City can not require the developer to sell the 2 acres to an affordable housing provider. The typical arrangement would be that the City would accept the affordable housing obligation as having been met in return for development of the affordable housing project.

Preliminary Land Use Plan

We briefly reviewed our decisions from previous meetings regarding preferred land uses for the other properties in the planning area, exclusive of the Niven property. We unanimously agreed that the chart in the

staff report titled “Summary of Land Use Decisions” accurately reflects the Committee’s direction.

Design Policies

Tom Cooke summarized the required elements of the Specific Plan:

1. Goals
2. Land Use
3. Circulation
4. Infrastructure
5. Design policies
6. Implementation

The Committee has given direction on goals and principles. Land use, with the exception of the Niven property, is almost complete. The design policies need input from the Committee. The other sections of the plan are essentially technical and should require a minimum of Committee oversight. If the Committee can give final direction on land use and design policies, the consultant team can prepare a draft plan.

We agreed to e-mail our comments on the “Major Design Objectives & Proposals” (included in the agenda package) to the consultants for the Design Subcommittee’s consideration.

Public Comment

There were no other public comments.

Close

We adjourned at 10:20 PM