

City of Larkspur

CENTRAL LARKSPUR SPECIFIC PLAN COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

Meeting #12

July 20, 2000

*Fellowship Hall
Redwoods Presbyterian Church
110 Magnolia Avenue*

Specific Plan Committee

William Broughan
Debora Busse
Nancy Curley
Monte Deignan
Maryjane Dunstan
Susan Gilardi

Helen Heitkamp
Larry Lanctot
Deborah Lundberg
Joan Lundstrom
Shawn Nazari
Cyndi Niven

Maurice Palumbo
Joe Stone
Judy Saffran
Molly White

**Alternate member*

Absent

Scott Churchill

Myles O'Dwyer

City of Larkspur

Robin Anderson, Recorder
Thomas Cooke, Planning Consultant

Robert Pendoley, Planning Consultant
Jan Vazquez, Planning Director

Welcome

Susan Gilardi, Committee Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. **Gilardi** briefly reviewed the meeting agenda and summarized the meeting purpose:

- To review three alternative concept plans for the planning area;
- To provide direction regarding possible refinements to the alternatives; and
- To identify additional information items that can assist the Committee in the evaluation process.

Gilardi stressed that this is only the beginning of the alternatives discussion; subsequent meetings will be used to evaluate and refine the alternatives. At the next meeting (August 17), the planning consultant will present more detail on each of the alternatives under consideration. **Gilardi** indicated that at the conclusion of the Committee's discussion and public review of the alternatives, an analysis of the environmental impacts for each alternative will be conducted (such as traffic, biology, flooding, etc.). Based on this analysis, the Committee will be asked to select a preferred alternative that will become the basis of the specific plan.

Monte Deignan, Vice Chair, reviewed the Resolution adopted by the City Council at its July 19 meeting. The resolution provides direction for the rest of the process, including improvements to publicity and the conduct of meetings

Gilardi also reported on the Council's discussion regarding collaboration with the Larkspur School District. **Joan Lundstrom**, City Council liaison, reported that the Council intends to work closely with the Larkspur Elementary School in pursuing joint development and use of a gymnasium and playing fields.

The June 8 Meeting Notes were approved as mailed.

Alternative Plans

Using an overhead projector and referring to diagrams posted around the room, **Tom Cooke**, planning consultant, presented three alternative concept plans. He also referred the Committee to their meeting packet, which included a preliminary description of the alternatives. Each plan illustrated the proposed location

of land uses and circulation systems. In some instances, options were developed for different subareas to respond to Committee direction during the June meeting. To demonstrate the scale of particular uses, **Cooke** presented a number of photographs of similar land uses.

Following the presentation, **Bob Pendoley**, planning consultant and meeting facilitator, asked the Committee for their initial thoughts, especially on the areas where additional information is needed. (Note: Due to the quickness of the discussion, Committee names were not captured).

- It would be helpful to have diagrams depicting the relationship between the proposed land uses.
- Need more information regarding the specific number of dwelling units, the amount of square footage per land use, building heights, number of parking spaces, location and mass of landscaping, etc.
- Can the City control or influence the potential expansion of Albertson's? *Response: Not realistically.*
- Need clarification; could mixed use include a hotel and/or a bed-and-breakfast? *Response: Yes.*
- If the library is relocated to another site, a hotel could occupy the existing library location.
- We need to be realistic: the railroad buildings cannot be moved. Let's take that option "off the table."
- Need more information regarding the scope and scale of the proposed greenbelt, including lot depth, topography, etc.
- It's important to configure the land uses and buildings to maintain maximum solar access on the plaza.
- Since the City is pursuing joint development of play fields with the school district, the alternatives should not include this use.
- If the 2050 Committee is pursuing a new library, this process should not consider a library.
- The scale of homes depicted in Alternative X is too grand.
- The nursery should be kept as an interim use.
- The location of the bicycle path should be reconsidered. The line of sight at Dougherty Drive is very difficult.
- If the railroad buildings are moved, the view corridor along the railway will be lost.
- The triangular park between the parking lot and the street needs to be attractive.
- Need clarification; how much of the parking can be shared between the uses?

- Endorse the proposed live/work option.
- The plaza needs to be big enough to hold a large number of people and variety of activities. The adjacent buildings should be used to help define the space.
- Perhaps the Committee should visit the site and use story-poles to better understand the proposed building heights.
- The bicycle path should be relocated from the south side of the creek onto the Niven property. In its proposed alignment, it will be difficult to make the sharp turn. Better to use Ward and Magnolia.

Break

Workforce Housing Presentation

Betty Pagett, representing the Workforce Housing Consortium, made a brief presentation regarding housing needs in Larkspur as well as the region, in general. (Note: Handouts of the presentation are attached). The presentation centered around the cost of housing versus income levels and the need to provide housing to support the people who work in the community (teachers, fire, police, nurses, etc.). **Mary Murtaugh** of the Ecumenical Association for Housing presented a slideshow illustrating a variety of housing types and complexes constructed using state and federal subsidies.

The floor was opened for public comment regarding the Workforce Housing presentation. Speakers introduced themselves, and are identified by name below. (Note: In some instances, the quickness of the discussion precluded recording of the name).

(no name). Ecumenical Housing controls rents at the Edgewater Place development. A 3-bedroom unit rents for \$1,000 per month.

(no name). Edgewater Place generates less traffic because residents can walk to work. The development actually needs less parking that is required by City ordinance.

Alice Stevens. Creating a neighborhood feeling is very important to any community. Usually a percentage of the overall development must be devoted to affordable housing.

(no name). Who would be responsible for managing rental property if it were to be located on this site? *Response: A rental project could be owned by a private*

party or a non-profit corporation such as Ecumenical Association for Housing. The owner would be responsible for management.

(no name). It would be important to require specific controls for the re-sale of affordable housing units to ensure that they remain affordable over time.

Joe Walsh. Live/work developments generate less traffic. Larkspur needs affordable housing for our teachers, nurses, cooks, etc.

Robin Morsing. EAH produces great work. Larkspur's teachers need affordable housing.

Malcom. It's important to have restrictions on the number of people occupying each room of a 2- to 3-bedroom unit.

Saul. Is it possible to give preference to or set aside a percentage of units for Larkspur's public servants (such as teachers)? *Response: yes.*

Charles. Providing preferences for teachers should include private school teachers.

Julia Scammell. Including affordable housing for teachers, nurses, etc. is a great idea and must be considered in this process.

James Grogan. With such high rents in the area, can subsidies be used to help generate more affordable housing?

(no name). How many affordable housing units could be constructed on the site? How big an impact ("dent") would we make? *Response: Since the site is approximately two acres, 28 units could be constructed.*

Public Comment: The Alternatives

The floor was opened for public comment regarding the proposed alternatives. Speakers introduced themselves, and are identified by name below. (Note: In some instances, the quickness of the discussion precluded recording of the name).

Alan. There needs to be a strong sense of "center" in each of the alternatives. Access from Magnolia is a good idea. Housing should not be considered in any of the alternatives given the high value of this site.

Gail. If Albertson's decides to sell, use of the existing parking area will be very important. Sidewalks should be included along Dougherty. It's important to consider play fields in some of the alternatives because joint development with the School District is not guaranteed. High density housing will require large amounts of asphalt, which will generate large amounts of runoff.

(no name). Which alternative best addresses traffic congestion on Dougherty?

Charles. It's important to retain the existing railroad view corridor and the existing Redwood grove. The amount of traffic generated from proposed uses must be calculated for each alternative. Perhaps a site visit would help the Committee better understand how the different elements relate to each other.

Marilyn. Need a better understanding of how much traffic will be generated.

James. A bicycle path should be included parallel to Magnolia. If it's located away from a main arterial, bicyclists would not use it.

(no name). Support uses in Alternative X in subareas A and B. The alternative diagrams should be posted on the web.

Mark. The proposed plaza in subarea A needs to be bigger and should function as a Town Square.

Karen Polivy. Retaining the gas station is important because it provides a valuable service to Larkspur residents. The alternatives show too much housing. The Kol Shofar Synagogue is interested in relocating to this site. This provides an opportunity for joint use such as shared classrooms.

Bob Pendoley responded that Kol Shofar had approached City staff about a possible development including a synagogue, school, community center and other facilities. Staff advised Kol Shofar that they could address the CLASP Committee under public comment time on the agenda. Yesterday the property owner's attorney wrote a letter to the City Council objecting that staff was interfering with their property rights. The Council has asked staff not to take up the issue pending advice from the City Attorney.

Carlos. A synagogue would not generate as much traffic congestion as the proposed alternatives. There is a tremendous amount of congestion already on Dougherty.

Mary. The alternative diagrams should illustrate the existing Redwood grove.

Carl. Are there optional types of housing to consider?

Robert. How many housing units are proposed for each alternative? Adding additional housing will increase traffic. Where will the cars go? There is already too much congestion on Dougherty.

Barbara. The calculation of housing units should include, and make explicit, the number devoted to affordable housing. Retaining the gas station is important.

Pam. Fifteen percent of the units in Larkspur Isle are devoted to affordable housing.

Julia. Traffic congestion along Dougherty is a "nightmare." A study analyzing traffic impacts is important. There seems to be too much parking in each alternative. Consider locating a plaza at the corner of Ward and Magnolia.

Jan. Why is the nursery depicted as an interim use?
Response: The Niven family has indicated they would like the ability to develop the property for housing in the future.

Art. Traffic congestion must be reduced. The alternatives should include uses and services that people are willing to walk to (such as the plaza).

Jeff. To ensure sustainability, a diversity of housing types should be encouraged. The bicycle path should connect to the proposed plaza, as well as to the railroad buildings.

Leo. The recommended changes should be illustrated on the diagrams. Highway 101 is a "nightmare." There are too many cars everywhere. It's important to coordinate with other communities in the region.

Schedule

Chairperson **Gilardi** asked the Committee to consider the draft schedule found in the meeting packets. The proposed schedule extends through calendar year 2000 and attempts to avoid conflicting community events such as back-to-school nights, etc.

Some Committee members expressed concern about whether the work could be completed by the end of the

year and discussed the possibility of extending the process. Other members felt it was important to stay on schedule (and show respect to the property owners and the public). The schedule was approved with the understanding that:

- Meetings may be added as necessary to complete the work plan; and
- September 9 should be reserved for an additional meeting to discuss and finalize the alternatives.

2050 Committee Report

Three members of the 2050 Committee, **Chuck Curley**, **Karen Polivy** and **Chuck Maltzahn**, made a brief status report. Since the New Year, the Committee has reviewed studies related to Larkspur's infrastructure needs, and various approaches to meeting those needs. To guide their effort in prioritizing needs, the Committee developed and adopted a vision statement and supporting principles (included in the July 20 meeting packet). Currently, the Committee is in the process of prioritizing projects in the following categories:

- Police Station
- City Hall
- Streets and Drainage
- Fire Station
- Library

- Downtown Parking
- Parks
- Transportation

Additionally, the recent Larkspur School District bond election creates opportunities for joint projects that address the prioritized needs, including possibilities such as:

- Play fields at Hall Middle School
- Recreation facility
- Joint library

City Council has approved a recommendation by the Committee to explore the feasibility of these projects (with a budget of \$50,000). The Committee will also begin exploring financing options.

Public Comment

The floor was opened for public comment. No speakers came forward

Close

We adjourned at 10:30pm