

City of Larkspur

CENTRAL LARKSPUR SPECIFIC PLAN COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

Meeting #15

September 9, 2000

Fellowship Hall

Redwoods Presbyterian Church

110 Magnolia Avenue

Specific Plan Committee

William Broughan
Debora Busse
Nancy Curley
Monte Deignan
Bruce Dorfman*
Maryjane Dunstan

Susan Gilardi
Jim Leland
Joan Lundstrom
Chris McCluney
Cyndi Niven
Maurice Palumbo

Joe Stone
Judy Saffran

**Alternate member*

Absent

Scott Churchill
Helen Heitkamp
Larry Lanctot

Deborah Lundberg
Shawn Nazari
Myles O'Dwyer

Molly White

City of Larkspur

Thomas Cooke, Planning Consultant
Ulla-Britt Jonsson, Recorder

Robert Pendoley, Planning Consultant

Welcome

Susan Gilardi, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M.

Gilardi reviewed where we are and where we are going. At our last meeting, we reviewed the “Y” and “Z” concept plans for subareas A and B. Today we will discuss the alternatives for the rest of the planning area. At the conclusion of today’s meeting we will make adjustments and ask the consultant to do an impact assessment of the alternatives.

Discussion: Alternatives

Tom Cooke, our planning consultant, gave a summary of alternatives “X,” “Y” and “Z” as they apply to subareas D and E, which we agreed to discuss as Niven East and West. Committee members had the following comments and questions:

Q: I am concerned about splitting up the property instead of looking at it as a whole

A: We will be looking at the impacts as a whole, and then we will develop a single concept that integrates the parts. You will probably be changing individual parts as well as aspects of the entire concept(s) once you have information on the impacts.

- Show where the affordable units (including the required 10%) are located on the next set of drawings.
- I’m concerned about traffic impacts, the need for senior housing, open space and maximizing housing diversity.
- The impact analysis should focus on consistency with the General Plan and City codes.
- The cottage homes are not “affordable.”
- On the West parcel the difference between “X,” “Y,” and “Z” is five units.
- Concern about for sale affordables versus rental affordables. Can we have both?
- 25% of our business licenses are for home occupations; we need to allow for this in the specific plan.
- Public employees can’t afford to live in Larkspur; this would be a problem in a disaster.
- Larkspur hasn’t met the State’s requirement to provide affordable housing.

- The formula that defines “affordability” is problematic; the high average incomes in Marin skews the definition of “affordable,” making the housing more expensive than people can pay.
- Put at least 15 senior housing units in the plan.

Q: Are there other options for access roads?

A: Yes; each of these alternatives can be adjusted to include access from Ward Street.

- I am concerned about the need for bicycle and pedestrian access, including the maintenance and safety issues.
- A walkway behind Albertson’s would be creepy.

Break

We took public comments:

Mary Denton There is hardly any difference between “Y” and “Z;” can you break it down into numbers of units per square foot for aggregate areas? The entire project area should be supporting affordable units. Live/work is an artificial zoning concept in Larkspur; we need to think of mixed use more broadly. Are the FAR and height limits consistent with the City’s current regulations? Finally, can we afford to acquire so much open space on the East property?

Charles Kaefer Consider higher density, two story town homes.

Susan Stoddard This is a unique opportunity to reinforce community values. Look at the impact of an expanded the range of housing types. Increase the diversity of housing.

We resumed the Committee discussion.

Q: Will the nursery be located on the West parcel?

A: Yes, in all three alternatives.

Tom Cooke made the following points in response to questions:

- It would be appropriate to share parking among parcels.
- The Nazari property is currently zoned for mixed use. The zoning ordinance requires that the ground floor street frontage must be in retail use.
- The proposed nursery would be approximately 3,800 square feet of retail floor area plus a green house.
- Housing design standards can be part of the Specific Plan.

- Lot sizes can be specified in the plan or it can be left to the developer with only the number of housing units and lots mandated by the plan.

Lunch Break

Our direction to the consultant, adopted by a vote of the Committee, is summarized in the table below.

Committee members had the following comments and questions as we developed our direction to the consultant:

- Habitat restoration does not count toward the park dedication requirement
- The playfield in “X” is 4.85 acres.
- Homes would be setback from Doherty and would
- Have a fence of some type as a separator.

Topic	Alternative X		Alternative Y		Alternative Z	
	East	West	East	West	East	West
Housing Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 single family • 5 cottages 	More affordables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 single family • 32 cottage units • up to 8 2nd units 	No change	Up to 100 units	No change
Housing Types	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop the live/work • More cottage units • Encourage home occupations and mixed use 				
Affordability	Reserve some of the open space area for affordables	Higher density affordables	Add higher density affordables		Add higher density affordables	
Creek						
Park(s)	Change playfields to housing					
Road layout		Provide access/egress options	Move the access road opposite Piper			
Linkages			Improve the pedestrian/ bicycle access		Move pedestrian access further south, away from Albertson's	

We also agreed to drop the Floor Area Ratio on the Nazari property to .6 in Alternative “Z”

- The Downtown Parking Committee recommended that the new public parking lot include spaces dedicated as employee parking.
- The playfield area in “X” could be offered for sale to EAH for affordable housing.
- In “X,” leave everything green east of the bike path.
- The economic analysis should start with a baseline in which there is a bare minimum of public acquisition.
- We should be considering land banking for a community center or library.
- All of the alternatives will be analyzed with and without access to Ward Street.

Q: Can the City defer or forgive property taxes in exchange for a land donation?

A: No.

- The access road in “Y” should be aligned with the entrance to Piper Park

- Consider alleys with garages at the rear of the house lots.
- On Doherty, consider putting garages at the rear of the properties as buffers.
- “Y” needs more diversity in the housing types.
- Make clear what you mean by senior housing.
- The General Plan allows a density bonus for making more than 10% of the units affordable.
- We are willing to consider up to 100 units in “Z” if provision is made for EAH to buy into the project.
- We must put an absolute cap on each alternative that includes bonus units and second units.
- A traffic signal will be needed at the intersection of Doherty and the access road to Niven East.
- The options for the American Legion building are intended to apply only if the Legion decides to sell the property and no longer operate it as their headquarters. The plan should have policies to indicate there is a clear preference for the Legion to stay.

Public Comment

Mary Denton The alternatives are not clear. I am confused by all of the changes to “X,” “Y” and “Z” and the alternative road alignments that will be applied to each concept plan. “X” seems to say that the cottages will meet the affordability requirement, but are they really affordable at \$300,000?

A: Some or all of the cottages can be below market rate, depending on the implementation plan. If the decision is made not to use some or all of the cottages to meet the

affordability requirement, they would still be priced at the entry level, which is a clear benefit.

Susan Stoddard Is live/work really a viable option? Alternative “Z” is the only plan that seriously addresses the need for affordable housing. The second unit idea should be explored.

Close

We adjourned at 3:25 PM