MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
February 17, 2015
Regular Meeting
7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers*
1017 Middlefield Rd
Redwood City, CA
Ph: 650-780-7233
Accessible to Disabled

APPROVED

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioner Borgens, Commissioner Hale, Commissioner Radcliffe, Commissioner Schmidt, Commissioner White, Vice-Chair Bondonno

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair (Vacant)

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Manager Turner, Deputy Assistant City Attorney Sater, Principal Planner O’Dell, Community Development Director Aknin

GUESTS: None

PROCEEDINGS RECORDED: For further information not contained in this draft of the written minutes, a DVD recording of the entire meeting is available for listening on the City’s website.

AGENDA POSTED: Copies of the Agenda for this meeting are posted at City Hall on the Friday prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Julie Pardini spoke about a recent march protesting rising cost of living and rent prices in Redwood City. She noted the Stay In Place Fire Safety First program and stated that it does not seem to be a program that will help affordable housing. She stated that this won’t solve the problem, but exacerbate it. She asked if this will only be applied to older buildings in Redwood City. She stated that new buildings need rent stabilization.

Colt Rymer spoke about the effect on small businesses in relation to low-income housing. He stated that many people running small businesses cannot afford to squeeze their families into tiny apartments to afford rent.

Tom Lineberger noted that he was also at the affordable housing march. He stated that rents are going up astronomically. He stated that rents have gone up 40% in the last 18 months.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR: No item

6. SELECTION OF PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

A. Selection of Planning Commission Chair
M/S (Schmidt/Borgens) to Elect Kevin Bondonno as Chair of the Planning Commission
Motion Passed 6-0
M/S (Radcliffe/Borgens) to Elect Shawn White as Vice Chair of the Planning Commission
Motion Passed 6-0

7. PUBLIC HEARING – NO ITEMS

8. STAFF REPORT
   A. Proposed Framework for the Community Benefits Program

   Principal Planner O’Dell gave a presentation on the following:

   Community Benefits Program

   Overview
   - Overview of Partnership Redwood City Program
   - Community Discussion of Desired Benefits
   - Results of Initial Financial Analysis
   - Proposed Program Framework
   - Next Steps

   Partnership Redwood City
   - A program to find new and creative ways to form working relationships within the community to achieve City and community goals.
   - Outreach to Business Community
   - Partner with Local Non-Profits and Community Organizations
   - Obtain Additional Community Benefits with Development (Community Benefits Program)

   Creating a Community Benefits Program
   - Identify benefits that the community ants
   - Conduct economic research to determine current development value
   - Create a program that delivers specific benefits (such as an ordinance, fee, other requirement)

   Identifying Benefits Desired by the Community
   - City Council hearings on Staff research and program potential
   - Two Community Workshops
   - One Planning Commission Hearing
   - Online Survey (Redwood City Forum)

   January Workshop
   - Approximately 60 community members
   - Staff presented information on existing and potential programs
   - Community members each spent 10 of community benefit "dollars" on a variety of benefits

   Economic Analysis (EPS)
   - Purpose: Determine if the value of development in the current economy is sufficient to fund additional benefits.
   - Three types of residential
   - Three forms of office
• Finding: Generally, there is sufficient value in development to find a specific amount of community benefits.
• Further outreach to developers
• Maintain balance with economic development

Proposed Program Framework
1. Updated Fees and Requirements
2. Onsite Improvements
3. Community Fund Incentives

Updated Development Fees and Requirements
• New Fees: Affordable Housing
• Updated Existing Fees
  o Park Dedication
  o Transportation
  o Contact School District about impact fees
• Additional Development Requirements
  o Percent for Art
  o Transportation Demand Management

Commissioner Schmidt asked for a definition of Nexus Study.

Ms. O'Dell stated that the Nexus Study examines how new development will create a need for affordable housing.

Precise Plans with Incentives
• Plans
  o Inner Harbor
  o El Camino Real
  o Downtown Precise Plan
• Area Specific Benefits
  o Affordable Housing Requirement
  o Access to Bay
  o Child care sites
  o Shuttles and transit
  o Bikes and Pedestrian Improvements

Community Fund
• Ways to collect funding for neighborhood and city-wide programs such as:
  o Community and Arts Events
  o Job Training and Apprentice Programs
  o Afterschool Programs and Education Foundation
  o Façade Improvements
  o Shuttle Services

Next Steps
• February 17 – Recommend Direction on Potential Framework to City Council
• March 23 – City Council Considers Framework

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS
Commissioner Radcliffe asked what the existing transportation fees currently cover.

Ms. O'Dell stated that the Transportation Impact Fee covers specific road improvements and capacity improvements. She stated that it's a set multi-year program.

Commissioner Radcliffe asked if the fee was for taking care of existing infrastructure.

Ms. O'Dell stated that is correct. She stated that Transportation Demand Management means that residential and non-residential development can be worked with to reduce demand on vehicular traffic.

Commissioner Radcliffe asked if that is not what is already in place.

Ms. O'Dell stated that there is a Transportation Fee but Staff is discussing doing an ordinance that would mandate a TDM program for certain developments.

Mr. Turner stated that in the next steps, Staff is looking at a March 23rd date due to availability of the City Manager to participate in the City Council discussion.

Chair Bondonno asked if it's dependent on feedback from City Council as to how and when which pieces would potential come back to the Planning Commission. He stated this is not all one singular package so pieces could take different paths and routes.

Ms. O'Dell stated that is correct. She noted that it is not a whole, single ordinance but is more of a multi-year work plan of different steps.

Chair Bondonno stated that some things may come back and others may not.

Commissioner Hale asked how this will be measured and monitored.

Ms. O'Dell stated that there are still details that need to be figured out. She stated that the procedure to report back will be developed after some of these details are figured out.

Commissioner Borgens asked if there are transportation demand policies currently in place and how they are monitored.

Ms. O'Dell stated that some projects are required to have Transportation Demand Management policies as a condition of approval, not as a requirement of the Zoning Code. There are different ways to report back, and it is typically the job of the applicant or building manager to report to the City about how well employees are using the program, etc.

Commissioner Radcliffe asked if there is a schedule for reporting back to the City.

Ms. O'Dell stated that it is typically yearly reporting.
Mr. Aknin stated that the idea of reporting behind TDM is evolving. He stated that many organizations have escalating requirements with failure to meet measurable results.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Michelle Beasley, representing Greenbelt Alliance, thanked the City for working on the Community Benefits Program. She stated that new development must benefit community members. She encouraged the Planning Commission to address jobs, affordable housing, and mobility in their framework. She stated that San Mateo County is the least affordable county in the country.

Diana Reddy stated that the discussion about Community Benefits will be an opportunity to discuss the creation of affordable housing. She stated that based on the results of a recent Berkeley study, 5 service workers are generally required for every high-tech worker that comes into a community. She stated it is important to leverage opportunities and challenges in making it possible for service workers and others to remain in the community. She noted that childcare workers do not make very much money. She stated that affordable housing is necessary so childcare workers have a place to stay. She noted that she received a newsletter that discusses the fact that certain developments may be asked to contribute to the Community Benefits program. She asked the Planning Commission to push for all developments.

William Knack, San Mateo County Building Trades Council, spoke about the need to retain businesses in the area and support new businesses. He stated that the multi-year build out enabled by area-specific plans in Redwood City should provide hundreds of construction jobs that pay prevailing wages. He noted that community youth could apprentice with approved construction teams. He spoke about the need to employ community members.

Lee Callister stated that there may need to be someone appointed in charge of Affordable Housing. He stated that it seems from the presentation that Affordable Housing and others were presented as fees rather than given to developers automatically from incentives, but that doesn't seem to be the intent in the plan. He stated that 1 Marina has contributed $1.5 million towards affordable housing, and he's not sure where that's going or what conditions were placed upon Mr. Powers. He stated that in Seattle there aren't requirements to automatically give incentives, but there is a fee that's imposed.

Dave Gahagen asked if impact fees are a one-time fee assessed on a developer or an ongoing fee. He stated that if it's not ongoing then programs won't be funded in a viable, ongoing manner. He stated that the developer's ability to pay those fees can depend on many factors. He asked what mechanisms are in place to determine whether or not the impact fees will continue to be available to fund the programs. He stated that he wishes the City could do more about affordable housing, but he understands that the City cannot do as much. He stated the solution has to
come from the Federal and State level. He asked the public and the City to ask the State and Federal representatives to do something to help with Affordable Housing.

Tania Sole stated that she is concerned about Redwood City's continued focus on additional development. She spoke about water concerns related to additional development. She stated it is irresponsible on the part of the City to not consider the importance of water while continuing to approve additional developments.

Tom Linebarger agreed with Ms. Reddy and Mr. Knack. He stated that as a painter his local was in Redwood City and is now north, but many members are in Redwood City. He stated that there has been up to 30% unemployment in his local while 2000 units were built in Redwood City, all non-union. He stated that some people from Alabama were in Redwood City working on construction. He stated that the members here, who don't have jobs, are trying to live in this expensive city. He stated that the money goes out of the area and doesn't support the community when workers are hired from out of the area.

Mary Askins, Redwood City Education Foundation, spoke about the impact fees related to the school districts. She stated that the impact fees are through the Community Facilities Act. She stated that those impact fees that are collected by the district are for infrastructure, and is not realized for the enrichment programs for the students. She stated that her interest is to fill that gap for the students. She stated that Stanford gave the Foundation a tremendous gift because they came into Redwood City as a developer. She stated that money will go directly to the students. She stated all developers should do this.

Suzie Peyton, Arts Redwood City, spoke about what developers can do for art. She stated that she is advocating for a fund for art in the City. She stated there is arts going on in the City that doesn't have any funding.

M/S (Radcliffe/White) to close the public comment

Motion Passed 6-0

Chair Bondonno asked Ms. O'Dell if she has responses to questions from the public.

Ms. O'Dell noted that one question was if the Impact Fees will be one time or ongoing only. She stated that the Impact Fees will be one time. She stated that fee will go into a fund that the City will use to partner with non-profits to construct affordable housing. She noted that another question was about 1 Marina. She stated that they were required to contribute funds that would be used to partner with a non-profit that would create affordable housing in Redwood City.

Mr. Aknin stated that with the 1 Marina fund, the Council did direct Staff to move ahead to form an agreement with Habitat for Humanity for a downtown affordable development.
Commissioner Radcliffe asked if there is a developer who is contributing to the transit demand or to education, if that money could be spread out for multiple years.

Ms. O'Dell stated that the Impact Fee, if the City were to set it, would be a requirement of the development. The development would have to pay that affordable housing fee. She stated that with specific plans and community fund, that allows for flexibility, which makes it possible for an area-specific plan that would make the choices about long-term giving, etc.

Mr. Turner stated that the impact fees themselves are not flexible, because that would be a requirement of all projects.

Commissioner Borgens stated that the impact fee is one fee; she asked if there is the possibility of more flexible fees, could those be ongoing such as what Stanford is doing.

Mr. Aknin stated that Staff would have to investigate that because that's more of a tax than a fee. He stated that Stanford has a phased implementation of their fee so that it is distributed over time rather than all at once.

Commissioner Radcliffe stated that she was thinking more of the profile of the Stanford donation.

Mr. Aknin stated that could be part of a development agreement.

Commissioner Hale asked about the notion of incentives and when they are triggered. She stated that her understanding was the fees would be mandatory, and with second and third prong then there would be more about incentives or concessions.

Ms. O'Dell stated that is correct. She stated Impact Fees would be mandatory, with space within the area-specific plans to develop individual area incentives.

Commissioner Hale stated that several comments were made about hiring locally. She stated that the three prongs speak more to economic incentives on the City's part. She asked how that factors in together.

Ms. O'Dell stated that Staff has been thinking about doing job apprenticeship programs with the community fund. She stated the prevailing wage is not a specific Impact Fee. She stated it is possible it can be looked at from an area-specific standpoint.

Mr. Aknin stated that if it fell into any category it would be in the middle category as an intrinsic value of the development itself.

Chair Bondonno noted that what Staff wants tonight is feedback and guidance on the framework. He stated this is not a final decision on what will or will not be included.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS
Commissioner Schmidt stated that in regards to prevailing wage and apprenticeship, he wanted to make sure the City is also thinking about training for people who want career changes. He stated that there are a lot of high-tech jobs in Redwood City. He noted that Redwood City and Stanford are providing a program for entrepreneurs. He noted that right now it seems like there is more concern over construction jobs, but there are more people than that who need to be considered.

Commissioner Hale stated that there are quite a few unknowns at this time, which is difficult. She stated that it is important to have more detail and specifics about how the money the City receives aligns to the community's priorities.

Vice Chair White stated that the framework is simple and makes sense. He stated that one area without enough emphasis is community partnership with non-profits. He stated that the community fund is the only opportunity he sees here to fund programs, and not capital projects.

Ms. O'Dell stated that the community fund is a mechanism for that. She stated that there is a connection with the onsite improvements. She stated that developers can be incentivized to pay into the community fund.

Vice Chair White stated that his concern is the ongoing maintenance of, for example, a new gym. He stated that discussion should be upfront when developers come in so they know exactly what they're getting into. He stated he is also interested in how to create incentives to hire local workers. He noted that with the Park Development fee, there is a time period in which those fees must be used. He asked if any of these fees will have that kind of timetable.

Mr. Aknin stated that there is a state law that relates to this, and most impact fees have to be spent within 5 years. He stated that Staff can report back.

Ms. Sater, Assistant City Attorney, stated that there is a requirement to report in five years about what fees have not been used just to create some tracking.

Vice Chair White stated that it is important to create that list of priorities so that the fees are spent appropriately and in a timely manner.

Commissioner Borgens stated that there needs to be some function for tracking so that there is appropriate follow-up. She stated that other communities have mandated hiring local within their development agreement. She stated that she would like to see more effort to hire local. She stated that she thinks every developer has to participate.

Commissioner Radcliffe stated that she would like to see part of the fund to go to RCEF and Project Read. She stated that the infrastructure of the school does not need to be funded, but the kids in the school needs to be funded. She stated that partnership between different non-profits is important. She stated that there are resources already in place that can be
using these funds. She stated she would like to see transportation demand to work towards the streetcar in the General Plan.

Vice Chair White noted the 60 community members who participated in the conversation about what was important to the community. He noted that the items at the top of the list are clearly important, and 60 members is not necessarily a statistically significant sample. He stated that he would like to see a larger study done.

Commissioner Schmidt asked what came from the meetings about the area plans.

Ms. O'Dell stated that for area-specific, the concern was recreational programs and access to the Bay. She stated that for future developments such as office and residential, there are other concerns such as providing childcare.

Chair Bondonno stated that he agreed that 60 does not seem like enough to represent the community. He stated that he appreciates this order of concerns, and is glad that Affordable Housing is the clear winner. He spoke about the balance of distributing the funds.

Ms. O'Dell stated that as Staff moves forward they can work more on the specific choices and emphasis for the funding.

Commissioner Radcliffe stated that it is an interesting point to define art.

Ms. O'Dell stated that is something that the City will be able to define more as they continue working.

Chair Bondonno stated that this is not a singular body of work and each piece can be worked on separate from each other.

Commissioner Schmidt stated that the City needs to use the passion of the community effectively.

9. MATTERS OF COMMISSION INTEREST

Planning Manager Turner stated that the community and Commission have expressed their support for Affordable Housing and so has the City Council. He stated the next meeting was for March 3rd at 6 P.M. He stated that the next meeting will be on Hillsides.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN

M/S (Borgens/Radcliffe) to adjourn the meeting of the Planning Commission

Motion Passed

The meeting adjourned at 8:43PM to reconvene at the Joint Planning Commission Meeting and Historic Resources Advisory Committee Meeting scheduled for March 3, 2015 at 6:00PM in City Hall Council Chambers, 1017 Middlefield Road, Redwood City, California. The Regular Planning Commission meeting will begin at 7:00PM.