

City of Ferndale, Humboldt County, California USA

Minutes for Planning Commission Meeting of January 26, 2011

Call to Order: Chair Jorgen Von Frausing-Borch called the Planning Commission/Design Review Joint Special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commissioners Trevor Harper, Dan Brown, Lino Moggi, Nancy Trujillo and Design Review Committee members Dane Cowan, Michael Bailey, Michael Sweeney as well as City Manager Jay Parrish, City Clerk Nancy Kaytis-Slocum and City Planner Vanessa Blodgett were present. Those in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

Under Changes the City Clerk asked that the Historic & Cultural Resources Element be heard first, then the Public Hearing for the exception to development application for Willis Hadley. The Chair approved.

The Chairman turned the meeting over to City Planner Vanessa Blodgett who explained the purpose of this portion of the meeting: Gather input for the Historic & Cultural Resources General Plan Element. She gave an introduction of the relationship of the Historic & Cultural Resources Element to the General Plan; the Historic Cultural Setting and context; the historic resources and design review; cultural resources and their relationship to the Eel River Valley; and goals, policies and implementation strategies.

She then called on Tony Smithers, the Executive Director of the Humboldt County Convention and Visitors Bureau who spoke on the importance of Ferndale's Historic and Cultural resources. Heritage Tourism brings people to Ferndale because we have an authentic streetscape. He gave a comparison of what an average person spends on a trip (about \$600), while a Heritage Tourist spends approximately \$994; an average person takes about four trips a year, while a Heritage Tourist takes about five. California is the biggest destination state.

Dane Cowan, Design Review Committee member and Qualified Historical Restoration Expert, spoke on maintaining materials and features of historic buildings. Historic buildings are a physical record of time and place. Changes are made to buildings and they should be included in the historic fabric of the town. When working on a structure, one should repair before replace, and a replacement should match the old in scale, mass and proportion. Chemical treatments should be avoided – use the gentlest means possible for cleaning. Additions and extensive alterations should not destroy the historic features of the building. It is important that additions be differentiated from the old part of the building. New additions should be removable without damage being done to the existing building. Changes that can affect the historic value of your building include windows, roofing, decks and porches. Planning is important so one can have an overall view of the project – how does your project affect the streetscape? Modern materials are acceptable if they are compatible with the rest of the building. A basic concept in maintaining historical structures is to keep a record, integrate with buildings around it and maintain cultural streetscape. Cowan spoke of promoting what we already have here and suggested a city-wide inventory of historic structures. Commissioner Trujillo had concerns about forcing people who have houses over 50 years old into new regulations. Cowan spoke of encouragement rather than coercion. An inventory would help simple promotion of our town.

The participants gave the City Planner ideas for goals. Blodgett relayed the next step would be to take ideas and come up with goals. A complete draft would be brought before the Planning Commission, where there would be at least two public hearings. Changes would be made based on comments, and then the draft would be brought back before the Planning Commission asking for a recommendation for acceptance from the City Council. There was a short break at 8:30 pm.

MOTION: (Trujillo/Harper): The November 17, 2010 minutes were unanimously approved.

Under correspondence, Commissioner Trujillo commented on a form letter sent to a Home Occupation Applicant and asked that the letter contain only restrictions that are in the ordinance, rather than including when the business will be open. The Clerk said she would change the form letter, and also inform the applicant.

PUBLIC HEARING: The Chair opened the Public Hearing for a Request for an Exception to Development Permit to allow an eight foot tall fence between the subject property, located near the south end of Francis Street (APN 031-051-015), and the City Public Works Yard. The project site is zoned Residential Single Family (R1) and Agriculture Exclusive (AE). There were no public comments. MOTION: (Brown/Mogni) Adopt Resolution No. PC 2011-01 making the required findings of fact listed in Attachment A, and approve the Exception to Development Standards Permit, subject to the conditions of approval listed in Attachment B to allow for a eight foot tall fence between the subject property, located near the south end of Francis Street (APN 031-051-015), and the City Public Works Yard. All in favor.

Historical Record of Architectural Changes. Design Review Chair Dan Brown explained that this was brought up by Dane Cowan during a Design Review meeting. It would be helpful to have before and after pictures to document changes. The photographs could be required as part of the building permit process. The Chair asked that Design Review come up with a process or method and bring it back as an action item to the Planning Commission for recommendation to send it to the City Council for approval.

Public Education: Commissioner and Design Review Chair Dan Brown talked about the excellent memo and research that committee member Michael Sweeney did on public education. Sweeney spoke on the subject to the Commission. The Commission would like to see this worked into something: how can we best use this information and expand, then finalize something.

Code Enforcement: Commissioner Brown explained that he and the City Manager were going to walk the Historic District and talk to the business owners about violations. The Planning Commission suggested that we have already warned people in the Design Review district about violations, and asked that staff send letters giving a certain amount of time to come into compliance instead of walking door to door.

Home Occupation Permits: Commissioner Trujillo asked questions of the City Planner and City Clerk regarding Home Occupation Permits. She will forward her 9/6/10 email to the City Manager to the Planner and Clerk.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Kaytis-Slocum, City Clerk