

**MINUTES OF THE ADJOURNED REGULAR MEETING
OF THE LOMPOC PLANNING COMMISSION
February 27, 2013**

ROLL CALL: Commissioner Cioni - absent
Commissioner Allan Clark
Commissioner Ron Fink
Commissioner Mary Leach
Commissioner Jack Rodenhi - absent

STAFF: Planning Manager Lucille Breese
Principal Planner Keith Neubert
Deputy City Attorney Brandon Ward

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Commissioner Fink moved the minutes be continued to the next meeting and in the future the item be re-located to the end of the agenda, Commissioner Clark seconded.

VOTE: The motion passed on a vote of 3-0-2, with Commissioners Cioni and Rodenhi absent.

CONSENT CALENDAR: None

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

1. OLD TOWN SPECIFIC PLAN - TA 12-07

The Planning Commission will consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding changes to the Old Town Specific Plan (OTSP). The OTSP was prepared by Urban Design Studio and adopted by the City in 2000.

On February 27, 2013 the Commission will discuss *Chapter 2 - Planning Framework* and *Chapter 3 - Development Criteria* listed in the current OTSP will be reviewed. Although these Chapters are the topic of discussion at this meeting, changes proposed by the Commission and the community will be incorporated into a revised document and returned for further review and discussion prior to a recommendation being made to the City Council.

Planning Manager Lucille Breese summarized the written staff report. Commissioner Fink indicated each part of the OTSP will be discussed separately.

Chapter 2B – Planning Issues

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Existing Language: Natural Environment – Increasing flowers, trees, and other plants within Old Town, enhancing the “Valley of Flowers” image.

Debbie McComb, Economic Development Committee member – suggested consideration of re-branding the area from just “Valley of the Flowers”.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Clark agreed and noted the current emphasis on the wine industry. Commissioner

Fink stated the basic question is the importance of a specific industry.

Chapter 2C – Goals and Implementation Strategies

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Debbie McComb, Economic Development Committee Member – noted that due to the proposed change to the Old Town (OT) boundaries, the language in the text will need to change. Regarding the street spanning arches encouraged in 3c – suggested smaller scale in median with an entry arch at entrance to the City; suggested nostalgic signage to enhance the evening experience; indicated partial closing of I Street should be an option for Circulation; discussed strategic marketing by the Chamber of Commerce; and suggested requesting a marketing budget from the City Council.

Dirk Starbuck, property owner – noted he had an 1,800 sq. ft. building and had to provide parking to support commercial of four (4) spaces and provide a fire exit for an adjoining building. Commissioner Fink referred Mr. Starbuck to the Building Official to discuss building code requirements.

Steve Pepe, Economic Development Committee Chair – stated when considering parking requirements need to consider proposed transit center; advised both Buellton and Solvang have raised TOT by 2% with the funds being designated to develop marketing campaigns.

Commissioner Leach asked Mr. Pepe if he knew what the existing TOT was in both communities and he replied Buellton & Solvang were at 10% prior to the increase and Lompoc remains at 10%.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Clark expressed concern with important strategies not being implemented; expressed support for an OT Manager; and noted in his internet research he observed many plans contain an artist conception of the vision.

Commissioner Fink indicated the current OTSP was a collection of ideas instead of an implementation plan with specific accountable goals and suggested each goal be assigned to a group/individual for accountability; noted the Commission is in a difficult position since implementation of the OTSP requires investment from the property owners and they haven't attended the meetings; suggested focus on goals in the revised OTSP; and asked the EDC members to return with some viable implementation measures for discussion at the upcoming workshop.

Commissioner Leach agreed with the need for an OT Manager and association; indicated businesses need to invest in themselves; agreed some plans have artist conception but noted the Commission has limited resources; noted the OTSP is a planning document for new development; and suggested if a OT Manager could be hired, funding sources could be explored as well as a list of priorities.

Chapter 2C / Section 4 – Circulation and Parking

OPEN/CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING – no one spoke

Commissioner Leach noted there had been a suggestion to close South I and South J Streets which could be problematic to the overall circulation pattern for the community; expressed concern with the established routes for large trucks; discussed the potential for parking problems if the proposed Transit Center is established in the Old Town; and expressed the need for more information regarding the RDA and the parking lots in OT.

Commissioner Clark agreed the proposed Transit Center would impact parking in the OTSP area.

Commissioner Fink noted the proposed Transit Center will eventually be reviewed by the Planning Commission and at that time the parking layout can be considered and noted commuters currently park in the OT to utilize the Clean Air Express service.

Staff advised the Commission the City Council is currently reviewing possible locations for the proposed Transit Center.

Chapter 2C /Section 5 – Economic Development/Management Goals & Implementation Strategies

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Steve Pepe, Economic Development Committee Chair – stated the goals were OK but suggested looking at item c. which states: *“Renovate and revitalize the theater in Old Town and promote as a major venue for performing arts and entertainment”*, Mr. Pepe indicated there is no reasonable probability of restoration and the building is an eyesore.

Commissioner Fink suggested the need to discuss alternative language.

Debbie McComb, Economic Development Committee Member – stated there is a need to come up with some other creative way to fund the effort and discussed possible sales tax increase so the effort is not funded solely by hotel industry.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Chapter 3, Section 2 - Purpose

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Debbie McComb, Economic Development Committee member – suggested a more open concept instead of a long list of prohibited uses.

Steve Pepe, Economic Development Committee Chair – stated rather than listing specific business provide a list by nature of concern (i.e., noise, dust, odors, hours of operation, etc.); suggested limiting restrictions to things that would annoy people; and noted Santa Barbara County has established specific standards for wineries.

Commissioner Fink noted these would be subjective standards difficult to maintain.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Chapter 3 Section B – Land Uses and Permit Requirements

Commissioner Clark discussed definition of a “nightclub”.

Commissioner Leach discussed definition of *“artisan”* and suggested change from *“incidental”* to *“integral”*; noted locations where a *“micro brewery”* would be allowed; stated she is hesitant to accept a list where only “prohibited uses” are listed; referred to San Luis Obispo and Arroyo Grande downtown areas where specific uses are highly regulated with the intent to create a pedestrian ambiance; noted lighting should be a high priority to enhance the evening experience; stated businesses should have longer hours; and expressed that the Specific Plan should set parameters for use.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Steve Pepe, Economic Development Committee Chair – stated the definition of “artisan” is too specific and noted a “micro brewery” needs volume to be successful and most are attached to food service operation, suggested removing the reference to “low volume”; noted it seems odd to allow a restaurant serving alcohol without land use permit and yet to require a CUP for a tasting room and micro brewery.

Debbie McComb, Economic Development Committee Member – expressed agreement with matrix in concept but would like more MUP approval included; noted the old “Owens Building would be idea for a pool hall/family entertainment concept.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Fink agreed with the need to clean up the proposed Land Uses; indicated matrix approach saves space and is easier to understand.

Commissioner Leach agreed with the matrix approach and expressed concern with “auto related” uses in the Old Town, would like to see a definition for “auto related”.

Chapter 3 Section C –

Development criteria

Chapter 3 Section C 3 – Nonconforming Uses and Structures

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Debbie McComb, Economic Development Committee Member – noted generally public parking benefits business; suggested more leniency for non-conforming business; and expressed a concern a that limit of 180 days to re-instate a business in the current economic climate is a problem.

Steve Pepe, Economic Development Committee Chair – discussed the median project in Buellton to add landscaping in the Caltrans right-of-way.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Fink noted the design goal of an entry arch was to provide identity to the Old Town; indicated the Commission is open to other ideas; stated the goal is to maintain and enhance the historic structures and create a theme based on historic uses; noted awnings were a staple in olden times and are encouraged in the current OTSP; indicated if spanning arches are not possible there may be other solutions to create an entry; and asked about the status of the City’s unreinforced masonry buildings.

Chapter 3 Section 2 – Review of Projects

Commissioner Fink asked Mr. Donar about proposed improvements to his building and the cost of same.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Marc Donars, property owner – stated a minimum of \$5,000 in improvement shouldn’t require Planning Commission review as it adds to the cost of improvement and commented on the need for parking as infrastructure to encourage business to invest in the Old Town.

Dirk Starbuck agreed.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Leach expressed lack of confidence in the concept of setting a dollar amount as basis of Planning Commission review. The Commission had a general discussion on the language in the Architectural Review Guidelines.

Chapter 3 Section D – Special Development Standards & Regulations / 1. Sidewalk cafes

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Debbie McComb, Economic Development Committee Member – suggested refining requirements for sidewalk café and allowing A-frame signs; allow furniture to be neatly stacked on site and consider term and renewal of permit.

Barb Marquez, resident – suggests improvements including public seating at H & Ocean and creating a focal point.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Fink indicated pavers and benches have been added on South H Street and are intended to remain in the revised OTSP.

Chapter 3 Section E. Development Incentives

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Debbie McComb, Economic Development Committee Member – agreed the City has no funds but needs to create a sense of urgency and suggests reducing fees as a method of enticing people to vacant properties in the Old Town.

Commissioner Fink suggested specific proposals for incentives could be returned for discussion at the proposed workshop.

Commissioner Leach noted there were funds available in the past which were focused on LHCD projects in the Old Town which did not come to fruition; noted with dissolution of RDA funds are not available; however there are some potential resources with the utilities the City provides.

Ms. McComb addresses a recent project approval where the applicant was required to install sidewalk on the property and the possibility of deferring such improvements and possibly deferring fees for a specific time period.

Commissioner Leach indicated the need to be careful when proposing ways to assist business so it is not considered a special interest gift of public funds.

Steve Pepe, Economic Development Committee Chair – suggested deferring fee payments over a period of time and noted the risk to the City would be if the business closed prior to the business paying the full fee; noted a phased project in Buellton and how that was handed to make it easier for business; suggested more discretion be allowed to staff.

Dirk Starbuck, property owner – indicated incentives are in place but need to balance existing business vs. new business.

Commissioner Fink expressed the need to create a fair policy.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

There was a general discussion of "in-lieu parking".

Commissioner Fink indicated there would be several more meetings and opportunities to discuss the OTSP.

NEW BUSINESS -- None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS -

Barb Marquez asked about the date of the OTSP workshop. Commissioner Fink advised the Workshop was scheduled for March 13, 2013.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS -- None

DIRECTOR/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS --

Planning Manager Lucille Breese advised the Commission:

- March 26 -- City Council will hold a hearing on General Plan Expansion Area A Bailey Avenue
- March 27 -- Planning Commission meeting cancelled
- March 13 -- there are business items for the Planning Commission meeting

COMMISSION REQUESTS -- None

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Fink adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Lucille T. Breese, AICP
Secretary

Mary Leach
Chair

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Lucille T. Breese, AICP
Secretary



Mary Leach
Chair