Chair Woodrow called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Don Woodrow; Vice Chair Raymond Welter, Boardmembers Andrew Butt, Brenda Munoz, Robin Welter, Eileen Whitty and Michael Woldemar

Absent: None

Staff Present: Lina Velasco, Jonelyn Whales and Carlos Privat

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION: It was M/S (Whitty/Woldemar) to approve the Agenda; unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

Public Forum - Brown Act - None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Chair Woodrow noted the agenda consists of one public hearing item on the Consent Calendar. He asked if any members of the Board, staff, or audience wished to remove that item. Boardmember Woldemar requested removal of Item 1.

Chair Woodrow announced that any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, June 25, 2012 by 5:00 p.m.

ACTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Munoz) to approve the Consent Calendar consisting of Items 2 and 4; unanimously approved.

Item Removed from the Consent Calendar:

CC 1. PLN12-135 ROSIE THE RIVETER SIGN PROGRAM

Description SIGN PROGRAM FOR THE ROSIE THE RIVETER WORLD WAR II HOME FRONT NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK. SIGN PROGRAM INCLUDES VISITOR CENTER SIGNAGE, WAYFINDING SIGNAGE, HISTORIC SITE MARKERS, SITE IDENTIFICATION/VISITOR
INFORMATION PANELS, AND SECONDARY PARK SITES IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE.


Zoning  CRR (COMMUNITY & REGIONAL RECREATIONAL); PC (PUBLIC & CIVIC USES); AND M-2 (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)

Applicant  TOM LEATHERMAN, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Staff Contact  LINA VELASCO  Recommendation:  CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Lina Velasco gave the staff report, description of the request for approval of Rosie the Riveter Sign Program and said applicant Tom Leatherman, Superintendent of the National Park Service, is present to answer questions.

Ms. Velasco gave an historical account of the park’s establishment in 2000 and said the sign variance is needed because some of the signs proposed are not defined in the City’s sign ordinance, as well as proposed kiosks and information placards that are not typical of signage within the City. She clarified that the variance only is reviewed by the DRB and not the Planning Commission. Also, because there are multiple sites, staff did not go through a per-site analysis and only some of the signage proposed may cause a site to exceed its maximum sign area.

Ms. Velasco noted there is a brief summary of the some of the characteristics of the sign types in the staff report and these are consistent with the General Plan goals. Staff would support a way-finding program and identification program for the park. It was also reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission’s Design Review Subcommittee for conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s standards and they recommended approval. Staff has prepared findings and statements in support of those findings and is recommending approval of the project. She noted that Tom Leatherman of the National Park Service could discuss the community process undertaken to develop the program.

Vice Chair Welter referred to noticing properties within 300 feet of the site, and he questioned if this was done for every sign location, which he felt included many people. Ms. Velasco said yes; staff posted notices twice and said there were over 700 notices for this particular site.

Boardmember Woldemar stated the sign program is excellent, but voiced concern with incompleteness or display of some of the signs. He asked if there is a site plan, landscaping, lighting, or things the DRB usually reviews under a sign program, as he did not see any.

Ms. Velasco said when they went to the Historic Preservation subcommittee they noted that the signs on the plan is not actually what they will build. They cannot afford the fancy design which
would include the lighting. Staff modified it to better reflect the fact that it would not have a lighting fixture or a brick column.

Boardmember Woldemar questioned if the sign company will prepare a true drawing of what is proposed in order to properly build the sign.

Mr. Leatherman said largely, they do not have the money to build the signs in the sign plan. They will be building the signs as they receive funds. They do have money for certain signs, such as around the visitor center that is part of the permanent exhibits to be installed sometime next year. The site part of these exhibits are a separate contract which they hope to award and installed a lot sooner. And, when this gets awarded, there will be new signs for what they will look like. He said the problem they are having is they do not yet have the funds. The contract office has the funds and they are waiting until the money actually gets into the account. Once they receive it, he can forward what the new illustration looks like. Ms. Velasco re-designed the front of the sign in order for the DRB to generally see what it looks like. He said the estimate for one sign is about $60,000.

Boardmember Woldemar asked that something be in the record as well as the final signs so this will come forward and the City will know what the signage is supposed to look like. He recognized the fact there is no money, but he questioned if flowers or up lighting could be installed.

Mr. Leatherman said there is a sculpture on the corner and they envision removing this and putting the sign there. They had talked originally about doing a Victory garden plot as something they could do. There is a lawn there and irrigation. One of the reasons the lighting went away is because there is no electricity there and the cost for bringing that out is substantial.

Boardmember Welter questioned if solar lighting could be done.

Mr. Leatherman said wiring would still need to be done and the reality is that the Visitor's Center is open from 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and not open at night.

Chair Woodrow referred to the existing picture signs provided to the Board and asked why the Board was being shown signs that it does not have jurisdiction over, which are all Caltrans signs.

Mr. Leatherman said they actually negotiated with Caltrans to develop what they would look like. The signs will be a standard sign, but the placement and wording of the signs has been worked out. Right now there are signs on I-580 that are brown and white.

Ms. Velasco noted it is a park service sign. She said the packet was already prepared and she tried to eliminate as many of the signs in the public right-of-way, and Caltrans signs. In the demolition plan there were some signs the Board will need to look like, such as the Point Potrero and they are on the same sheets, but she did not include the specification details for those.

Chair Woodrow referred to Sheet A and he would not have expected to see Ford Assembly Plant at the top of this sign, as the City does not own this plant. Ms. Velasco said this was part of the applicant's application; that they need property owner authorization prior to the issuance of a building permit and this is added as Condition #4.

The public hearing was opened.
Tom Leatherman said when he arrived four years ago the big question was the location of the parks. There was consensus in the community that there be a movement for a way finding sign program. The Shipyard III development began producing images and branding, and there had not been an open discussion of how that would be done in a uniform way. They actually used base some from the National Park Service account to fund an effort to produce the way finding plan. They held a series of meetings here, invited people from neighborhood councils, land owners and partners to be involved in developing the plan. In that process, the Rosie image as shown on page S-1 was developed in conjunction with the plan as an identifying symbol for the park.

Typically, the Park Service does not produce site specific images for the park. There are a lot of restrictions with the use of this image because of that and all the sites are owned by someone other than the Park Service. Therefore, they thought it was important to have an image they could use to identify the park sites without having to go through a cumbersome approval process which the symbol requires.

They held a series of meetings which produced a draft plan, they held another meeting and received comments, and they arrived at what is presented to the Board. It is an attempt for people to find the sites, identify them, and identify other WWII sites with historical significance. Largely, they do not have the funding for all the signs, but they do have money to do all signs around the Visitor Center. S-1 and S-2 signs are located on the west and east side of the Ford Assembly Building nearby the visitor center. They have those right now and are awaiting approval to install. The other signs which are ready to install by the City’s Public Works Department are those at the Maritime Child Development Center, which is already open.

Chair Duncan clarified there were no other public speakers.

Vice Chair Welter thinks this is a great packet, but said his biggest concern is the sign going on the east elevation of the Visitor Center. It is 7 feet tall and depicted on S-3 and he confirmed it is already there. This is an historic building and he thinks signage should be a little more subtle than this.

Boardmember Butt said he saw it the other day and while the Bay Trail is right there, for the most part, you can see it from far off.

Mr. Leatherman explained that because of the size of the sign, it got wrapped into the construction contract and they installed it because the sign company did not have the tools to install it. There are small bolts that affix the sign to the building, but it is not a permanent sign and could be removed easily.

Boardmember Whitty suggested said when she first saw this package, the Home Front Park is all over the City and one never knows whether they are in it or not. She asked whether there will be a map and a red dot saying “You Are Here” on each sign. Mr. Leatherman referred to P-i-3, Elevation 2, and said the Board can see a sign that is generic, but these P-i-3 signs are actually at the major sites of the park. There will be one of these signs at each of the locations. It includes the “you are here” wording, will have the name of the site with some history on it, and it will either have directions or it will have pamphlets for people to take. There are at least a dozen of these signs at each major location.

Boardmember Whitty asked if an out-of-town visitor who wants to do the route will be able to find their way, and Mr. Leatherman said yes; this is the point of the way finding plan once signs are installed. They will be taking people off of the I-580 and I-80 corridor and directing them to the Visitor Center. Once getting there, they will find it open from 10 to 5 with a map outside and brochures.
Boardmember Woldemar confirmed they would have printed media and information available on the Internet, as well as the ability to talk with a ranger or get an audio tour which will lead people around to sites. The signs will not take people to every available site in the City, but they will take people to the major ones. She said it is difficult to envision this from a car or bike and still voiced concern with the ability to navigate the areas, but said this is a wonderful endeavor.

Mr. Leatherman added that they just produced a new tear off map and it will lead people back out from the Visitor’s Center and direct them easily to the sites.

Boardmember Butt referred to the main Visitor Center sign at the corner and if one passes it, there is a sign on Harbour Way. It seems there should be some directional signage on the main sign because otherwise people may pass it. Mr. Leatherman said there is a sign about 50 yards prior to the turn on the right hand side that states, “Visitor’s Center” with an arrow pointing to it. There will be another one part of the way down the freeway and Harbour Way, as well.

Boardmember Butt suggested also a sign indicating the Boilerhouse Restaurant or “restaurant” which he felt could be incorporated into one of these signs. Mr. Leatherman said they did discuss this and they need to return to this and figure out whether this will be a separate sign or not. He noted there is a place for partner logos, and their vision is that these will be changed based on locations of signs.

Boardmember Butt said he has noticed that the Caltrans freeway signs were very much damaged and for months were barely affixed, which look horrible. He wondered if there was a way to consider a different location or install a barricade so it does not get damaged.

Mr. Leatherman said these existing signs are not being used. Boardmember Butt said the #1 sign called Highway Guide has an odd placement where the arrow points. He noted that #2 stating “Exit 10A” seems like graphically a more appropriate mechanism. Mr. Leatherman said the new signs do not look anything like these. They are brand new and are more in line with a typical park sign and are not temporary. They tried to put the arrowhead on the sign, but Caltrans would not allow it.

Boardmember Woldemar stated Home Front National Historic Park is unique within the whole system and therefore, the idea of having signs spread over the City is an interesting challenge.

Boardmember Welter said her concerns are more about maintenance when signs incur graffiti or if they start fading, whether there is a process for switching them out. Mr. Leatherman said the National Parks Service will be maintaining and fixing the signs. The funding for the signs and installations will have to be figured out over time, but for those signs they produce and put up will be maintained. They also have a cycle maintenance program to get signs replaced. If there is a special arrangement made with a landowner on a sign, they will work with them on doing that. Their vision right now is that they will fund all the signs and work with partners to get them installed. They would then replace them and maintain them.

Boardmember Welter suggested landscaping around the main area would be nice, as well as a reuse brick with landscaping around it in the front.

Chair Woodrow said he thinks this is a great plan, but when he first heard of the park, Judy Heart was in charge. He went to a meeting in 2002 and his heart sank when she tried to explain how this was going to be. Ten years later, it looks as though it will finally happen, which is great. He said this may be the only park he has been to where you have to pass through a guard to get into the Visitor’s Center. He asked if something would be done about that so citizens would have free access to the building they own. Mr. Leatherman said the Rosie the Riveter is not the
hardest place to get to; Port Chicago Naval National Memorial is a lot harder. It is on an active military base and people have to make a reservation two weeks in advance and they run a background check on you before entering.

Boardmember Whitty noted that the Coast Guard Island at Alameda does this as well. They are working with a private owner and the Parks Service leases the buildings and must work within the parameters they have established for their facility. They have established a heightened level of security for access to the back of the building and this was agreed to be largely an incentive to bring people to that facility. What they have arranged with them is that visitors who came to the center would be allowed to come in without much issue. What it does from a security perspective is that from 10AM to 5PM, there should be no problem. If before 10AM or after 5PM, they are not open and they will not let people in, but there is nothing stopping someone to driving to the end of Harbour Way and walking in front of the building.

Vice Chair Welter noted other parks have guard shacks and collect money.

Chair Woodrow asked if all signs being made are such that a person must stand in front of them to see them. Mr. Leatherman said the primary identification signs can be seen, but other signs will be along sidewalks or areas where someone is standing to see them.

Chair Woodrow asked if the Parks Service has thought of a preferred route where someone could distribute maps and indicate people could go to the different routes.

Mr. Leatherman explained that they provide an audio tour that leads people around to the various sites. Unfortunately, the audio tour was based upon the visitor center being constructed, and they will be redoing it.

Chair Woodrow asked if there has been any thought to set up volunteers who would serve as docents, taking people around to sites, which is powerful like Battlefield guides.

Ms. Velasco said they had not thought about this, but it is a very sophisticated program. They just started a docent program. They have 60 new docents they just trained and they will help providing information at the Visitor's Center and other sites. In the future, they may be able to implement some sort of program. They have bus tours once monthly with a ranger on the bus to lead people around and this will be a program they will continue. They are also working on new technology and have an audio tour where people can call on their cell phone and get information on the site. They also will be promoting access along the Bay Trail to various sites in the park as well and talking with someone about renting bicycles to people at the visitor's center. There are various ways of providing this information, and as they build their volunteer docent program, they might think of other ways to provide that sort of personal experience.

Chair Woodrow said he is impressed with how many other sites there are in town that had something to do with the shipyards. For example, if traveling down Chancellor to 18th Street, there is a building clearly one of the barracks boarded up on the canal. He thinks they are all over town. There is a complete hotel sitting off of Carlson Boulevard which was expanded during the war which was used. There is the HMO site on Cutting Boulevard. He asked if there was something which could lead to a set of informal signs of some sort that would point out some of these.

Ms. Velasco said at the end of the packet there are HSM signs. Sheet 4 shows what the signs would be if they were separate from the building. They could also be mounted on a building. There could be a historic photo with information about the building, and these could be signs that people could request as an identifier for their building, and the Parks Service would work with them to produce those signs and establish a marker to show people the history of the
building. What they wouldn't do is provide way finding signs to get to them. However, they may create a map they could give to people that shows all the sites of these around the City. What they could do now is put up a sign in the public right-of-way that has a history of the Kaiser Field Hospital so people walking on the sidewalk could then see that this is a historic building.

The public hearing was closed.

**ACTION:** It was M/S (Woldemar/Butt) that the Design Review Board will adopt the Historic Structures Code findings 1 through 2, the sign variance findings 1 through 3, the design review findings 1 through 4, with the associated supporting Statements of Fact, all of which is to approve PLN 12-135, a design review permit to establish a sign program for the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historic Park, subject to the following specific and standard conditions of approvals numbers 1 through 12, with the following additional conditions: 1) that the actual sign design drawings for sign P-i-1.1 shall be submitted within six months and that the design for such sign shall be similar to the sketch in the staff report, and that it be submitted to staff for approval; 2) that a landscape plan surrounding sign P-i-1.1 shall also be submitted to the staff within six months and shall be subject to staff’s approval. If for some reason either of these two conditions are not met within six months, the item shall be returned to the DRB for more discussion; which carried unanimously.

**BOARD BUSINESS:**

A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements

Ms. Whales said the staff report is in response to the question posed by the Board. As far as the supermarket, staff did not retrieve the memorandum prior to the meeting but she knows the supermarket will be heard by the Planning Commission on June 21, 2012. They had a subcommittee that met on the project; however, staff does not have a specific tenant slated for the building yet. But they are going through the process so they can get the design approved to market it to different retailers like Fresh & Easy, Trader Joe’s and Whole Foods. The tenant may find itself before the DRB for alterations and modifications.

Boardmember Woldemar noted they are only required to return to the Board for landscaping. He said if they ever do another approval that includes the final decision to a subcommittee, they are making a mistake. He personally felt very strained to try and make decisions for a 7 member board when there were only three subcommittee members there and plus there were time constraints. Frankly, there are still items that he did not feel were addressed properly, and he would hope that staff would have written out all of the items that had changed and not just depend on their drawings and so that staff knew what was approved. One issue is that they did not adequately address how many trees in the parking lot there should be and landscape is coming back. He suspects that the parking lot could change, which means a site plan change and the Board would have responsibility towards that site plan change. These things were created by having the subcommittee as the decision body, and he will resist doing such approvals again.

Boardmember Woldemar said a second factor which struck him is that they took the public out of the process by virtue of approving it subject to the subcommittee approving it. That meeting was not part of the public record or accessible to the public. However, one Planning Commission member did attend it, and given this particular project and the public concern about its use, they did not respect that part of the project. He hopes staff will communicate to the Planning Commission all the things that did and did not go on.
Chair Woodrow said this gets to his point back in January that it seems that every time that a subcommittee is established, staff should prepare a one page document that explains who met, when, what happened, and the date. This would at least make what is given to them complete and it would take some of the weight off the committee.

Vice Chair Welter stated that in order to do this, the planner cannot be on counter duty like Mr. Slaughter was that day. This needs to be coordinated with staff. Chair Woodrow said one subcommittee member could make notes and provide it to the planner and ask that it be typed up and distributed.

Boardmember Woldemar noted that several hours later that same day, there were a series of pre-DRB meetings for a large residential project on Garrity Way next to Chevy’s that is trying to be rushed. Chair Woodrow said when this project comes to the DRB, there should be a summary of the subcommittee meetings to include who was present, those topics covered, and what happened.

Ms. Whales agreed to streamline the process based upon the Board’s suggestions.

Chair Woodrow said he is still hopeful that sometime Mr. Mitchell can provide comments about upcoming projects. He learned today from Tom Butt that a new company is coming into town and the owner will go out of the way to thank Mr. Mitchell. It is good he is doing great things and it would also be great if he could come and describe projects coming into town as news. Ms. Whales noted that he would have attended the meeting tonight, but was traveling. Boardmember Whitty noted that he usually provides a briefing at the Retreat, and Ms. Whales said she will ask that it be possibly quarterly, bi-annually or possibly provide an update via email.

Boardmember Woldemar added that in-between the supermarket meeting and the Garrity Way meeting he spoke with Mr. Mitchell about a number of things and upcoming projects. He noted there are two projects in the works; one at Brickyard Cove and the old Terminal One site, one project next to Sea Cliff over-looking the new car lot; and one more project south of Old Marina City Hall which is a Richard Poe project. All three projects will be significant projects and he would like to make sure that the DRB’s process amongst themselves and with staff is clear cut. He said it is time for Richmond to get something better and he will continue to say this.

Chair Woodrow asked not to forget what happened to Toll Bros. They wanted to put up a Holiday Inn on the Point and there were people with money and time to stop the entire project. If some other firm comes in, they should be careful to show the City something good and it might even get approved. Ms. Whales said she thinks this will be the case and staff is rallying around better projects for Richmond. They have looked at other municipalities that seem to get what they would like here.

1. Discuss the definition of a “meeting” and “hearing” as referenced in the Richmond Municipal Code §15.04.930.070 (B1 and B3) and §15.04.930.120 (C).

Assistant City Attorney Privat said the Board had a question about the three instances in the ordinance that says a matter goes before the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission; that it shall be heard at one meeting by the DRB, and what that means. He believes the DRB feels often times its hands are tied because they must hurriedly rush through an item to hear it all in one meeting before it goes to the Planning Commission. There was an
opinion from a prior attorney in the office that addressed this, but no one could locate it and they are starting over. The ordinance does talk about the one meeting rule in three places, and the language is consistent.

The first one is applicability. Section 15.04.930.020; “Applications requiring both the Planning Commission and Design Review Board approval shall be reviewed in one meeting by the Design Review Board for recommendation to the Planning Commission.” Under Section 15.040.930.070; Responsibility of the Design Review Board, it states the same language verbatim. The last reference to the one meeting rule is in the decision section; Section 15.04.930.120 which states, “The Design Review Board shall provide the recommendation to the Planning Commission through the Planning Department staff immediately following a single Design Review Board hearing on the application.” The use of the word “hearing” is telling and this can be interpreted to allow the Board to actually hear an item over a sequence of meetings so long as it is done in one hearing and keep the public hearing open. He said the intent was for the Board to make a decision; yes, no, or modify the project. But, if the Board is at a point in a meeting where the Board is not ready to make a decision because it does not have enough information before them, the plans are not complete, and for other reasons as expressed before, the Board is within its right to continue the public hearing.

Boardmember Woldemar said when they go to discussing closing the public hearing, and sometimes they will hold discussion about whether they will do that or not before taking any kind of vote, he suggested not closing the public hearing if they intend to have the applicant explore things and bring it back to the Board. Or, he suggested closing the public hearing, talk about it more and then re-open the hearing. Mr. Privat said he would rather not have the Board close the public hearing, to continue it, or ask that the applicant continue it. In the case of San Pablo Avenue, the applicant was very willing to continue the matter. The applicant was not the one fighting against a continuance; it was more staff and some of the boardmembers. By not closing the public hearing, the Board can get a sense of whether a decision is ready to be made or not. Some applicants would say they would prefer the Board close the public hearing and deny the project and they would just appeal it. This can also be done.

Boardmember Woldemar said he remembers historically that often the Board would ask the applicant his preference, and sometimes they would say they want a decision, which would sometimes be for denial. He asked if the Board can document this interpretation prior to adoption of a new zoning ordinance. Mr. Privat said it is the City’s interpretation which should not change. Boardmember Woldemar said this was a particular attorney’s opinion and he used to keep this file around for that reason, and he confirmed with Mr. Privat that he could write an opinion for the record.

Vice Chair Welter said it seems that the continuance of a hearing might be a more appropriate way to deal with these projects where there are many issues to be worked out. Instead of approving them via a subcommittee contingent upon the subcommittee working things out, in most cases not everything gets worked out and it allows no opportunity for public input.

Boardmember Whitty spoke about the experience with the supermarket project that continued to evolve at every meeting. First the owner was going to pay for it, but then he changed it by only agreeing to pay $1 million and the other $5 million would be picked up by the grocery store. This changed the entire site plan. Vice Chair Welter said this was an unusual project anyway because there is no tenant, but purely speculation. Boardmember Woldemar said the applicant could have applied for a retail use and not a supermarket, improved the building and made it into something nice, do some parking lot improvements and they would not have been back.
They made the choice to go that route, but that project is done for the DRB except for landscaping.

Vice Chair Welter said it also will return for lighting and signage, as well. A big part of the problem was that their packet was not complete. In reading through many of Boardmember Woldemar’s questions, there were several questions about where information was spelled out, and it would have been more streamlined if the packet was complete.

Boardmember Woldemar referred to a discussion about parking, trees and signage. Ms. Whales said staff is in the process of trying to update this in the zoning ordinance. This item will return to the Board in the future. Boardmember Woldemar clarified that his request is whether there is something specific in the zoning ordinance about tree landscaping in parking lots beyond the 10% rule, and also specific comments in the ordinance about sign programs and the Board’s review of those related to consistency with architecture.

B. Board member reports, requests, or announcements - None
   1. Election of New Officers

Chair Whitty stated the nominating committee consists of Boardmember Welter, Boardmember Butt and herself. She asked and confirmed that all Boardmembers would accept a nomination and serve if so nominated.

Adjournment:

The Board adjourned at 7:30 p.m. to the next meeting on Wednesday, June 27, 2012.