

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE PC MEETING ON JULY 6, 2023

**PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, RICHMOND CITY HALL**

In-Person & Teleconference

June 1, 2023

6:30 p.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

David Tucker, Chair	Jen Loy	Vacant
Jonathan Harrison, Vice Chair	Masoomah Sharifi Soofiani	
Bruce Brubaker, Secretary	Alpa Agarwal	

The regular meeting was called to order by Chair Tucker at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Tucker; Vice Chair Jonathan Harrison; Commissioner Bruce Brubaker, Jen Loy, Masoomah Sharifi Soofiani and Alpa Agarwal

Absent:

INTRODUCTIONS

Staff Present: Senior Planner Roberta Feliciano, Planning Manager Hector Rojas, and Senior Assistant City Attorney James Atencio

MINUTES –

March 16, 2023

Commissioner Brubaker commented that the minutes were very thorough.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Brubaker, Soofiani) to approve March 16, 2023 draft meeting minutes, which carried by the following vote: 4-0-2 (Ayes: Tucker, Brubaker, Loy, Soofiani; Noes: None; Abstain: Harrison, Agarwal).

AGENDA

Chair Tucker said items approved by the Commission may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk by Monday, June 12, 2023, by 5:00 p.m.

BROWN ACT – Public Forum - None

CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Tucker read each item into the record.

- 1. PLN23-130: Biancoverde Restaurant PUBLIC HEARING** to consider a Conditional Use Permit for a Type 47 on-sale general eating place Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) license

authorizing the sale of beer, wine and distilled spirits for consumption on the premises at 50 Washington Avenue (APN: 558-132-013). CM-2, Commercial Mixed-Use, Neighborhood District. Hotel Mac, owner; Blanca Zepeda, applicant Planner: Roberta Feliciano Tentative Recommendation: Conditional Approval

- 2. PLN23-065: Golden Gate Bistro CUP Amendment PUBLIC HEARING** to consider a Conditional Use Permit amendment to add a Type 41 On-Sale Beer and Wine Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) license authorizing the sale of beer and wine at an existing restaurant at 803 Wright Avenue (APN: 560-231-016). IW, Industrial, Water-Related District. JZP Enterprises LLC, owner; Victor Viera, applicant Planner: Roberta Feliciano Tentative Recommendation: Conditional Approval

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Brubaker, Agarwal) to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, which carried by the following vote: 6-0 (Ayes: Tucker, Harrison, Brubaker, Loy, Soofiani, Agarwal; Noes: None)

NEW BUSINESS – None

COMMISSION BUSINESS

3. Development Pipeline Projects – Mr. Rojas reported that 40 development projects were either approved, under construction, under review or in another status within the City. For residential activity, 1,139 residential units were under review, 1,909 units were approved and 211 units were under construction. Several important residential projects included the project at 12th and McDonald Street, the Richmond Country Club subdivision, Cherry Blossom Row, the Metro Walk Phase 2 project, the Quarry Subdivision, Brickyard Cove Residential Subdivision, Central Avenue Apartments and the Marina Point residential project. Mr. Rojas provided a brief description of each project.

Commissioner Brubaker inquired where the Central Avenue Apartments were located and Mr. Rojas stated the site was located several blocks east of the I-580 freeway.

Commissioner Loy asked if staff foresaw more projects coming forward that were under the allowable density. Mr. Rojas commented that the project located at Marina Point was currently the only project proposing to be under the allowable density. Due to Marina Point being located close to transportation, the City wished to see the site have a higher density. Commissioner Loy explained the difference between Marina Point and the Quarry was the project at the Quarry had a project already approved but the project was no longer economically feasible. The applicant then returned with a reduced-density project. Mr. Rojas added the zoning for the Marina Point site was much higher than the Quarry site.

Mr. Rojas continued the presentation and moved to non-residential activity. This included 84,531 square feet of commercial development under review, 221,895 square feet of commercial approved and 885,803 square feet of commercial under construction. Several important projects included the Chelsey Public Storage facility, Duke Richmond Industrial Building, 731 W. Cutting Boulevard, Power Plant Park and the Portside Commerce Center. Mr. Rojas provided a brief description of each.

Chair Tucker mentioned over the past several years the City had reviewed and approved many industrial facilities for cannabis. He inquired if those permits were still being pursued. Mr. Rojas

reported there had been no additional permits requested for cannabis facilities since October of 2022. Ms. Feliciano concurred there were only two cannabis projects in the pipeline.

Ms. Feliciano provided an update on the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan. The objective of the plan was to guide the transition of the 143-acre site from a low-intercity auto-oriented retail center to high-intensity, mixed-use. The goal was to guide future development that attracted people, businesses and investments to the area.

With respect to upcoming community engagement opportunities for the plan, Ms. Feliciano announced another meeting was to be held with the Advisory Committee in June of 2023, followed by a community workshop in July of 2023, then a Planning Commission Study Session in August of 2023 and a City Council Study Session in September of 2023. A survey was recently completed with 470 responses from the community and those results would be posted to the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan website.

Commissioner Agarwal requested further details about the Advisory Committee and the timeline of the specific plan. Ms. Feliciano answered the Advisory Committee was made up of 20 representatives from the neighborhood council, utility agencies, transit agencies, schools and property owners. Their role was to provide input and guidance on the plan. With respect to the timeline, Ms. Feliciano restated the Commission would hold a study session in August of 2023 and staff anticipated adoption of the Preferred Plan in 2024.

Mr. Rojas clarified that a specific plan had specific zoning for a specific area and it required a recommendation from the Planning Commission to the City Council for adoption. Commissioner Agarwal inquired if the applicant was pursuing site rezoning and Ms. Feliciano answered the applicant had not applied for a rezone or General Plan Amendment.

Vice Chair Harrison noted a specific plan was in effect a rezoning and Mr. Rojas concurred. A specific plan is more specific and it filled in the missing details of the General Plan which was a broader plan.

Commissioner Agarwal wanted to understand the debate between the current industrial use and the proposed mixed-use of the area. Mr. Rojas mentioned the plan alternatives would be discussed in the Commission's study session and the Commission would recommend its Preferred Alternative to the City Council. Ms. Feliciano explained the first plan alternative would be consistent with the General Plan and the current zoning which did not allow industrial. The second plan alternative would introduce light industrial into the area and if adopted, the applicant would be required to rezone and apply for a General Plan Amendment.

Commissioner Brubaker asked if the project would have an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or another form of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. Mr. Rojas confirmed the project included CEQA review. Ms. Feliciano clarified if a new use was introduced then an EIR would be required.

Chair Tucker encouraged the Commission to participate in the upcoming community meetings and to inform groups that may be interested in the project. Mr. Rojas encouraged folks to check the website for upcoming community meeting dates and sign up to be on the notification list.

4. Reports of Officers, Commissioners and Staff – Mr. Rojas announced the Housing Element was adopted in January 2023, but it was adopted before comments were received from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). In March of 2023,

the City received a comment letter from HCD that included minor comments and revisions. Staff was currently working on the revisions with a consultant and would resubmit a revised Housing Element to HCD on June 5, 2023. The revised draft element was posted on the City's website.

With respect to the Public Safety and Noise Element update and Environmental Justice Element, Mr. Rojas reported the elements were in draft form and undergoing staff review. Staff anticipated the Commission would review the elements at its meeting in August of 2023. Also included were additional Land Use Element changes which the Commission would be discussing.

Mr. Rojas reported the City recently adopted the Richmond Livable Corridors Form-Based Code and that went into effect in May 2023.

Mr. Rojas noted that the Planning Department was actively recruiting to fill the vacancies in the department. The City entered into a contract with MIG, Inc. out of Berkeley for contract staffing.

Chair Tucker shared his excitement about the adoption of the Form-Based Code. He announced the June 15, 2023, Commission meeting was to be canceled. He thanked Commissioner Soofiani for her service on the Commission as her term was ending in the coming weeks.

Commissioner Soofiani thanked the Commission and City staff, and encouraged the community to continue to be engaged in the planning process.

Commissioner Loy echoed Chair Tucker's comments regarding Commissioner Soofiani's term ending.

Chair Tucker announced he would not be attending the July 6, 2023 meeting but a quorum of four Commissioners would be present.

Commissioner Loy announced the Safety Return Project was holding the Richard Boyd Fellowship Graduation on June 2, 2023.

Chair Tucker encouraged folks to attend Juneteenth events.

- 5. Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m. to the next regular meeting on July 6, 2023.