

Los Alamos
Planning Advisory Committee (LAPAC) Meeting
Los Alamos Senior Center
690 Bell Street, Los Alamos, CA
December 10, 2009
Unapproved Minutes

1. **Meeting Called to Order:** By Chair, Chris Wrather at 6:35 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

LAPAC Members Present: Chair Wrather, deWit, Fordyce, Mortholé, Naughton, and Thyron

LAPAC Members Absent: Jimenez

Also Attending: Bethany Clough, Chair, Central Board of Architectural Review

Staff Present: Derek Johnson, Director, Long Range Planning
Vicki Parker, Deputy Director, Long Range Planning
David Lackie, Supervising Planner, Long Range Planning
Bret McNulty, Planner, Long Range Planning

Chair Wrather convened the meeting and recognized Bret McNulty, Planner.

Bret McNulty described that the purpose of the meeting was to review the Community Plan Update goals and implementing programs and address concerns that had been raised by the LAPAC regarding the new development standards. Mr. McNulty introduced Bethany Clough, Chair of the Central Board of Architectural Review and staff members Derek Johnson, Vicki Parker, and David Lackie.

2. **Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda:** None

3. **LAPAC Administrative Tasks**

- a. **Minutes** – The LAPAC considered the unapproved minutes from the October 28, 2009 meeting. Chair Rather clarified with staff that additional meetings will be held and opportunities to comment on the Plan will occur before the LAPAC makes its recommendation to decision-makers.

Mortholé made a motion to approve the minutes, Fordyce seconded, and the motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

- b. **Report from Staff – Staff attending upcoming December 16, 2009 Los Alamos Community Services District (LACSD) Board Meeting**

Vicki Parker and Derek Johnson informed the LAPAC that staff would be attending the upcoming LACSD Board Meeting on December 16th to present information regarding the potential impacts on their facilities that would result from adoption of the Los Alamos Community Plan Update. Staff is making the presentation to ensure that the LACSD remains informed partners. The Plan Update will increase demand

on the LACSD managed water supply, wastewater treatment facilities, and associated infrastructure. Members of the LAPAC expressed a desire to attend the Board meeting. Staff encouraged the LAPAC members to attend and reminded them of the Brown Act Open meeting regulations, which allows members of a decision-making body to attend a meeting of another decision-making body; however, they should not sit together or deliberate among themselves.

2010 Census- April 1, 2010 is Census Day

Vicki Parker and Derek Johnson detailed the countywide Census 2010 outreach efforts. The efforts are focused on minimizing the potential for an undercount. An undercount could lead to less representation in Congress and reduced funding of programs, particularly for special needs populations. The Census will be hiring approximately 1,000 workers at \$15.00 an hour and above, temporarily reducing unemployment in the County by one-half of one percent.

c. Board of Supervisors Suspends Marijuana Dispensary Permit Processing

Vicki Parker informed the LAPAC that the Board of Supervisors suspended processing of new marijuana dispensary permits in unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, including Los Alamos. New permit applications would no longer be accepted and existing permits frozen until an urgency ordinance could be adopted regarding the appropriate regulations for this type of use. The Board will consider adopting an urgency ordinance at their January 18, 2010 meeting.

4. Los Alamos Community Plan Update (Plan Update) Draft EIR

Bret McNulty reviewed the, history of the Plan Update and the land area in the Los Alamos Planning Area, the goals of the Los Alamos Community Plan Update and it's implementing Bell Street Form-Based Code, and Design Guidelines.

Mr. McNulty described how during the Plan Update meetings the community identified the existing C-2 zoning as being difficult to comply with technically, as well as time consuming and costly. A financial study of the typical lot types in Los Alamos supported assertions in the community that the traditional C-2 zoning placed significant procedural and financial constraints on individual projects. In addition, the C-2 zoning is not suitable for the smaller irregular lot types found in Los Alamos. The C-2 zoning was found to be inappropriate for traditional American small-town downtowns and more suited for communities with land areas and strip retail-commercial developments with large parking lots

To address the zoning issue, the LAPAC chose to adopt a new Form-based development code and Community Mixed Use (CM-LA) zoning district that applies to the Bell Street Corridor. Mr. McNulty described how the form-based code describes the desired mass and scale of development in downtown, and the design guidelines, the architectural styles compatible with the Los Alamos Western Town theme. Mr. McNulty detailed how the existing building size threshold that triggers preparation of a Development Plan was being relaxed from 5,000 square feet to 15,000 square feet for projects compatible with the new form-based code and design guidelines. He further described how the planning documents would provide a greater certainty for developers and the community as to the type of development deemed compatible with the Los Alamos Western Town theme.

Mr. McNulty turned the floor over to Bethany Clough to discuss the BAR role.

Bethany Clough reviewed the role of the Central Board of Architectural Review (CBAR), which is one of four BARs in the County. The BARs review many different kinds of projects that are subject to the County's various permit triggers. The BAR participated in the drafting of the Bell Street Design Guidelines. BAR review consists of three phases including concept, preliminary and final design review, and approval. When reviewing a project, the CAR looks at the proposed buildings, the existing buildings, the site layout, the design. They do not consider the land use itself, rather its fit with the guidance from the design guidelines. The CBAR works with the various Boards and committees in the County. Ms. Clough recommends that the LAPAC receive the agendas of the CBAR. The BAR also looks for guidance from the LAPAC. Ms. Clough invited the LAPAC to the CBAR meetings in the Courtroom in Solvang.

A member of the public asked Ms. Clough whether the BAR works with private citizens with development applications. Ms. Clough responded that depending on the permit requirements, a project might have BAR review requirements. Additional questions regarding the review of future parking requirements including public parking lots. Mr. Johnson described how the EIR evaluated parking requirements along Bell Street and found that adequate on-street parking exists in Los Alamos for Buildout of the plan. The County will monitor the parking situation as the plan develops and make changes as necessary to accommodate parking as needed. Mr. Johnson cited Old Town Orcutt as an example of on street parking occurring in the County and Arroyo Grande in San Luis Obispo County as another example.

Mr. McNulty discussed requirements in the design guidelines that would not allow for inappropriate architectural features, such as stairways encroaching onto a pedestrian sidewalk, such as were previously noted in the city of Buellton. Ms. Parker discussed the project in Buellton and how its design, while effective was not completely suited for the site. Mr. Johnson discussed the different contexts that exist in Los Alamos and Buellton and how the Los Alamos form-based code and design guidelines are tailored to complement the existing adjacent residential and commercial uses.

Chair Wrather asked Ms. Clough if the LAPAC got it right with the design guidelines. Ms. Clough reviewed the façade and design issues addressed during development of the document, and that the guidelines are handling the issues correctly, particularly for infill development projects.

Ms. Parker described how Ms. Clough and the BAR worked with staff to develop the review process. Staff and Ms. Clough answered additional questions from the LAPAC regarding the Buellton project and the design review process that would be implemented using the new form-based code and design guidelines. Ms. Parker emphasized that review processes are in place with the BAR and Planning Commission and the LAPAC brings the community values to the review process.

Laurie Tamura expressed concern that landscaping is restricted. She is concerned that landscaping requirements and the form-based code bringing the buildings to the street would make clean water compliance difficult and adds cost to projects. Vicki Parker noted that engineers in communities throughout California have successfully tackled the water quality problem. She cited potential examples suitable for Los Alamos and that the problem was not insurmountable. Mr. Johnson noted that the water quality issue already exists and are compounded by the C-2 zoning, but are assisted by the flexibility and financial feasibility added by the form-based code, CM-LA and design guidelines. Micheal Fordyce asked if we were replicating another community's approach as an experiment. Mr. Johnson explained that the Bell Street Form-based code is used all over the country, but has been tailored to fit Los Alamos and provided examples. Ms. Parker pointed out that Bell Street provided an example of form-based land use rather than use based land uses, and described the history of the planning

field's look as uses. Ventura and Arroyo Grande were identified as communities that use form-based codes to achieve uniquely different communities. Mr. Lackie described how a similar approach was used in Old Town Orcutt to gain additional parking and higher use densities. Mr. Johnson described how zoning in Orcutt have stimulated development of underutilized infill sites. Ms. Parker cited an example of the Sierra Business Council who works with smaller communities in the Sierras. The Council uses form-based codes as a tool. Grass Valley and Petaluma were cited as other communities that adopted form-based codes.

5. **Discretionary Review Procedures**

Vicki Parker introduced the new procedures Long Range Planning developed to facilitate discretionary project review by the LAPAC. Mr. McNulty described how the process would bring project information to the LAPAC early in the review process. He outlined a three-step process that begins with a notice at the planning counter identifying plan areas where the Board of Supervisors has assigned a discretionary project review to a PAC. Two forms will be used. One form will be used by the case planner to notify the PAC about a project and request their review. The other form is for use by a PAC member who will be assigned to record the PAC review and track the project. The PAC member would track the PAC recommendation on the form and obtain a signature from the Chair. The form will be forwarded to the case planner who would integrate the form into the project staff report to the BAR and Planning Commission as appropriate. Ms. Parker and Mr. Lackie emphasized that the project would come to the LAPAC for early review and LAPAC comments would become part of information reviewed by review bodies. The PAC member would track the project as it moves through the decision-making process and report back to the PAC. Ms. Parker noted it formalizes the types of projects seen by the LAPAC, and allows the LAPAC to tell staff which projects they want to review. Staff answered questions from the LAPAC regarding the review process and the project types that would be subject to LAPAC review.

6. **Citizen Access Portal**

Staff introduced the Planning and Development Departments new web-based permit tracking system to the LAPAC. Mr. McNulty described how the portal was developed in response to requests that more information be available regarding projects in town. He demonstrated the use of the portal to search for planning and building permit information and staff answered questions.

7. **Future Meeting Date:** On Thursday, January 7, 2009, the LAPAC will receive a report from Long Range Planning summarizing comments received on the Draft EIR. Additional meetings will be scheduled in late January and early February.

8. **Adjournment**

LAPAC adjourn to a future meeting date.

ACTION: De Wit moved to adjourn, seconded by Mortholé, and carried by a vote of 6-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.