



**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JOINT WORKSHOP BETWEEN THE
PLANNING COMMISSION AND
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2008**

5:30 P.M.
City Hall
130 Cremona Drive, Suite B
Goleta, California

Members of the Planning Commission

*Kenneth Knight, Chair
Brent Daniels, Vice Chair
Edward Easton
Doris Kavanagh
Julie Kessler Solomon*

*Patricia Miller, Secretary
Linda Gregory, Recording Clerk*

Members of the Design Review Board

*Bob Wignot, Chair
Thomas Smith, Vice Chair
Scott Branch, Architect
Cecilia Brown, At-Large Member
Simon Herrera, Landscape Contractor
Chris Messner, Landscape Contractor
Carl Schneider, Architect*

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The special meeting workshops were called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Contract Planner Pat Saley followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL OF PLANNING COMMISSION

Present: Planning Commissioners *Daniels, Easton, Kavanagh, Knight, and Solomon.

*Commissioner Daniels entered the meeting at 5:47 p.m.

Absent: None.

ROLL CALL OF DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Present: Members Branch, Brown, Messner, Schneider, and Smith.

Absent: Members Herrera and Wignot.

Staff present: Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller, Advance Planning Manager Anne Wells, Contract Planner Pat Saley, and Recording Clerk Linda Gregory.

PUBLIC FORUM

No speakers.

AMENDMENTS OR ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

None.

A. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

A.1 Minutes for the Joint Workshop between the Planning Commission and Design Review Board meeting of August 18, 2008.

Recommendation:

1. Approve the minutes for the Joint Workshop between the Planning Commission and Design Review Board for the special meeting of August 18, 2008.

MOTION: DRB Member Branch moved, seconded by DRB Member Smith and carried by the following voice vote to approve the minutes for the Joint Workshop between the Planning Commission and Design Review Board for the special meeting of August 18, 2008, as submitted.

DRB VOTE: AYES: Members Branch, Brown, Messner, Schneider and Smith.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Members Herrera, Wignot.

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Daniels, Easton, Kavanagh, Knight and Solomon.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

B. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

B-1. Building Intensity Standards in the General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan

Recommendation:

1. That the Planning Commission and Design Review Board continue their discussion on building intensity standards at the September 15, 2008 public workshop, take public input and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Staff speakers:

- Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller
- Advance Planning Manager Anne Wells
- Contract Planner Pat Saley

Contract Planner Pat Saley presented and discussed a PowerPoint document entitled "City of Goleta, Continued Public Workshop, Building Intensity Standards, Planning Commission & Design Review Board, September 15, 2008".

Speakers

1. **Scott Hopkins**, Peikert Group Architects, spoke in support of the effort to establish new development standards for the City. He commented: a) FARs should be generally increased for the R-P, R-MD and R-HD zones. b) Residential FARs should be consistent with the density designation for the site, for example, if a site is zoned for 20 units per acre, the FAR should allow for the development of 20 units per acre which would allow for the most efficient use of the remaining vacant land. c) The development standards should be flexible enough to allow for projects that have a bonus density. d) He provided elevations of sample projects that illustrate various FARs. e) He stated that he is not specifically recommending FARs but he is suggesting a FAR range of .030 to 0.59 for R-P zones, a FAR range of 0.60 to 0.85 for R-MD zones, and a FAR range of 0.86 to 1.10 for R-HD zones.
2. **Craig Zimmerman**, The Towbes Group, provided copies of a letter from Michael Towbes, The Towbes Group, dated September 15, 2008, that was sent by email earlier today regarding the workshop. He commented: a) FARs are more confusing than useful for creating better design. b) Recommended that the proposed tables be modified to control the general size and intensity of development by deleting FARs as a City standard and using three tools: setbacks, building heights and minimum open space ratios. c) Advocated for an optional Conceptual review opportunity with the Planning Commission if a project does not meet the standards at which the applicant could receive input on any revisions which would be required to support a finding of good cause. d) If minimum densities will be used, he encouraged that the minimum density standards be increased.
3. **Barbara Massey**, Goleta resident, expressed concern that there may be an interim period between the time an item is removed from the General Plan and the effective date of a zoning ordinance amendment, if the item is even added to the zoning ordinance. She commented: a) The original intent of the Minimum Lot Size standard in the General Plan was that lot sizes would not change from what was existing in the City at a certain time in 2005. b) She believes that the changes proposed to increase both building heights and FARs would benefit developers. c) There are reasons for the maximum heights placed in the various zones, for example, the maximum height for the Community Commercial zone was set at 25 feet because these parcels were adjacent to residential properties. d) Requested that the current building intensity standards be retained.
4. **Gary Vandeman**, Goleta resident, stated that he believes the General Plan should be a goal. He commented: a) With regard to FARs, he stated that limits are needed. b) If FARs are eliminated, he does not believe FARs should be removed

for residential use, stating that FARs relate to how many people will be living in an area. c) The limits need to remain in the General Plan.

5. **Andrew Bermant**, Bermant Development Company, stated that he believes FARs are not necessary and that development constraints are already in place. He said that FARs were originally developed to help cities control the growth of housing within urban centers and that he does not think the application makes sense within suburban environments. He commented that FARs do not dictate how many people will be living in a house. He presented examples of three different FAR representations. He commented: a) With regard to FARs, there may be a specific location, such as Old Town, for example, where higher density may be appropriate on a smaller site to try to generate some interest and resurgence in the area. b) The concept of a Minimum FAR is not appropriate, particularly if a site is constrained, and would not allow for flexibility which could be achieved by using existing standards. c) He concurred with speaker Craig Zimmerman's comment that if minimum densities are used, the minimum density standards should be increased. d) He suggested that there needs to be consideration of the impact on the RHNA housing allocation if minimum densities are reduced. e) Conceptual review should be optional for applicants at the time of the initial application.
6. **Peter Koetting**, Westar Associates, commended staff on the staff report. He commented: a) The utilization of FARs is not appropriate in most of the land use categories, particularly commercial. Lot coverage, parking and open space standards are more appropriate. b) Encouraged more flexibility in architectural elements and building heights with regard to rooftops for more variety, rather than flat roofs. c) Suggested that the term "mezzanine" and "loft" be defined with regard to both residential and commercial use. d) Recommended an increase in the maximum height limitation of 25 feet in mixed-use in the residential use table. e) Recommended increasing the height limitation from 25 feet to 35 feet in the C-C category in Table 2-2. f) Higher maximum building heights are needed in the C-C category because higher parapets are being used to hide equipment on rooftops. g) Flexible design is very important, especially in the mixed-use category. h) Optional Conceptual review is very valuable and should be implemented.
7. **Kim Schizas**, representing Camino Real and Wynmark, commended the work that has been done on this subject. She commented: a) It is difficult to try to establish numbers to be used for design parameters for building intensities and densities. b) From an academic standpoint and personal experience, she is not in favor of FARs. c) One downside of FARs is that the project may meet a FAR but the size, bulk and scale of the building seems too large by the virtue of the building's design. d) She urged more consistency with regard to the FAR standards in Table 2-2 and Table 2-3. e) An example of her concern is that the FAR for a hotel would be different depending on the zone district. f) She suggested that the recommendation for a maximum FAR of 0.40 and 0.60 in certain zone districts may have been made because projects with 0.30 or 0.50 do not work.
8. **Bendy White, representing Oliver Dixon and John Price**, expressed appreciation for staff's work and responses to comments from the last meeting. He commented: a) He spoke in support of the loosening of the FARs so far, stating

that FARs should be a standard that is less important and consideration should be given to other elements such as building coverage and building heights which would be more useful. b) In general, he does not favor FARs and he shares the views of other speakers tonight. c) Cautioned that he has observed projects that had problems related to the excessive size of the units and suggested consideration be given to unit sizes in the decision-making process. d) Early Conceptual review is very important for the developer and helps keep costs down. e) He expressed concern that spreading a building out over an entire site, and building height restrictions that push a building outward, eliminates the opportunity for landscaping. f) As land values rise, parking will tend to be located under a building or in its own structure, ideally underground although it is much more expensive. Speaking for himself, he commented that he believes that it would be difficult to develop a mixed use building with a maximum height of 30 feet in the Old Town area because the high floor area ratio and low building height seem in conflict with one another. He believes that a 35-foot building height would be acceptable in appropriate places. He said that there are ways to achieve compatibility between mixed-use buildings and adjacent residential areas; for example, the City of Santa Barbara uses a building height and setback ratio.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 7:30 P.M.

There being no objections, the Planning Commissioners and the Design Review Board Members decided to conduct a brief recess, reconvene for discussion, and then schedule a third joint workshop between the Planning Commission and Design Review Board to continue the Discussion/Action Item regarding Building Intensity Standards in the General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan to be held at a later date.

RECESS HELD FROM 7:33 P.M. TO 7:40 P.M.

DRB Member Brown commented: a) The minimum permitted density standards need to be deleted. b) She believes that mixed-use projects are a unique product that would need some development standards but FARs would not work. c) Old Town would benefit by having form-based codes. d) Mezzanines and lofts should be defined and included. e) If the opportunity arises, FARs should only be applied to single-family neighborhoods (she noted that the DRB uses FARs for comparing proposed remodels with existing housing). f) FARs are a confusing tool. g) She agreed with speaker Andrew Bermant that FARs could probably be removed for commercially-zoned sites and replaced with development standards such as building coverage, height and other standards. h) She expressed concern that loosening some of the standards, for example with regard to the FARs for hotels, may not necessarily be appropriate and that it is somewhat difficult to quantify the standards in the absence of having some experience and examples of projects in the City. i) She expressed appreciation to staff for their work on this subject which is very complex and to the City Council for providing the opportunity for involvement by the Planning Commission and DRB.

DRB Member Schneider commented: a) He highly recommended that the process of an early Conceptual review of projects be implemented, possibly as a joint session

with the Planning Commission and DRB, which would be a benefit for both the City and developers. b) He believes that the General Plan should not be too specific which can be a problem for some projects, and suggested keeping this in mind when considering specifics. c) The concept of form-based codes would probably work very well in Old Town but may not be appropriate for the rest of the City. d) Future discussions will be needed with regard to items that include building heights, defining floor area, mezzanines and basements, etc., most of which are pertinent to the zoning ordinance. e) With regard to Table 2-1, all of the allowed uses and standards for residential use categories should be removed from the General Plan except density or unit counts. f) He suggested finding some other way of defining building intensities that address State requirements in a commercial zone, possibly with lot coverage requirements, and removing the FARs, and also removing the building height and minimum lot size standards from the General Plan and including building height standards in the zoning ordinance; g) He suggested consideration of consistency of standards for hotels regardless of the zone. h) Mixed-use standards need to be defined. i) The minimum FAR is not pertinent and should be removed, noting that there are times when a project may not meet a minimum FAR. j) Minimum Lot Size standards should be removed.

DRB Member Branch commented: a) He does not believe that FARs are necessary, stating that there are other development standards that can be used. b) One of the problems with FARs is that there are existing structures which already exceed the FARs which are older than the date the FARs were implemented. c) Form-based codes would be successful in Old Town, particularly with the existing density. d) Early Conceptual review should be implemented, noting that in many circumstances much money is spent before the project is reviewed.

Planning Commissioner Solomon commented: a) From her experience on the Planning Commission considering FARs, she believes that FARs do not make sense as a tool for review. b) Early Conceptual review is overdue and needs to be part of the review process. c) She agrees with most of the previous comments.

Planning Commissioner Daniels commented: a) FARs are confusing and are not appropriate to achieve good design which can be done with other standards and zoning regulations (but noted that FARs can be a good tool for analyzing when making decisions). b) FARs should be removed from the General Plan and not be included in the zoning ordinance. c) With regard to the City Attorney's Memorandum regarding General Plan and Building Intensity, he referred to an excerpt from the attachment to the Memorandum from the State General Plan Guidelines 2003, which states "Unfortunately, the court stopped short of defining what are proper measurements of building intensity."; therefore, he is comfortable with not having FARs in non-residential areas because there are other standards and limitations in the General Plan, as well as the zoning ordinance, that can be used. d) He agreed with DRB Member Schneider's comment with respect to residential building intensities. e) He suggested future discussion with respect to building intensities in the non-residential zones. f) The vast majority of these performance standards needs to be removed from the General Plan and included in the zoning ordinance. g) He looks forward to discussions in the future with regard to the zoning ordinance. h) He expressed appreciation for the information provided by staff.

Planning Commissioner Knight commented: a) It seems apparent from staff's research and experience from other communities that FARs are not being used as a tool in General Plans. b) He requested that staff research and provide additional information with regard to items suggested by speakers at this hearing which include setbacks, building heights and open space requirements that can help provide guidance in the General Plan. c) Most of the projects being discussed are discretionary projects that will have the opportunity for review by staff and the public as well as by the DRB, Planning Commission and City Council depending on the appropriate review level. d) Removing some items from the General Plan and placing them in the zoning ordinance would increase some flexibility and would also define standards in the zoning ordinance for planning purposes. e) He spoke in support of the benefits of early Conceptual review.

DRB Member Smith commented: a) He agreed, in general, with most of the comments made by the Planning Commissioners and DRB Members. b) With regard to multi-family residential units, he believes the process would be best served if the number of units per acre is addressed in the General Plan, and items such as setbacks, lot coverage, building height, open space, possibly solar access, etc., are included in the zoning ordinance. c) He believes there should be some standards with regard to FARs in single-family residential neighborhoods. d) He spoke in favor of early Conceptual review, noting that the City of Ventura has a pre-application meeting whereby attendees include representatives from the Planning Commission, Historical Landmarks Committee, Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works, etc. e) He suggested that early Conceptual review should be mandatory for projects of a certain size. f) He cautioned that the concepts approved at the early Conceptual review should be consistent throughout the process, noting that from his experience in other jurisdictions in some cases the concepts were changed during the process; g) He spoke in support of form-based codes in Old Town. h) With regard to commercial and industrial areas, he believes it would be appropriate to not have FARs as long as other standards and constraints are used to review the project.

Planning Commissioner Kavanagh commented: a) When reviewing a project, it is important to consider good design and also the compatibility factor, for example how a building fits within a neighborhood, which is one of the benefits of early Conceptual review. b) The General Plan should be a general document and some of the particulars need to be included in the zoning ordinance. c) She spoke in support of form-based codes in Old Town. d) There needs to be some better definitions, for example for net lot area. e) Expressed appreciation for the information provided by staff which was very helpful.

Planning Commission Member Easton commented: a) FARs may be useful for analysis but they do not produce good design. b) The concept of FARs can be confusing for the Planning Commission and may be difficult for the public to understand which should be considered. c) He expressed concern that the process for joint Conceptual review by the Planning Commission and DRB would need to be clarified, for example regarding how guidance would be provided with regard to findings of community benefits. d) The review process with regard to the concept of development standards needs to be quantified. e) He spoke in support of form-based

codes for the entire Old Town area on an overall basis. f) There are some lots in Old Town that are too small for duplexes.

DRB Member Messner commented: a) He spoke in support of early Conceptual review which he believes is vital for project reviews.

DRB Member Brown commented that from her experience on the County Planning Commission, the Conceptual review process is an opportunity for the developer to present a project and for each Planning Commission member to comment individually; however, no overall findings are made by the County Planning Commission.

Planning Commissioner Knight clarified that he supports a Conceptual review process where there is an opportunity for public comment as well as review by the Planning Commission and DRB.

Contract Planner Pat Saley clarified that if amendments are approved to the General Plan, staff's intent is that the changes would be coincident with the effective date of the amendments to the zoning ordinance for consistency and so there would be no interim period.

Contract Planner Pat Saley stated that the next joint workshop between the Planning Commission and DRB on Building Intensity Standards will be held on October 20, 2008, at 5:30 p.m.

C. ADJOURNMENT: 8:40 P.M.

Prepared by Linda Gregory, Recording Clerk.

GOLETA PLANNING COMMISSION/DESIGN REVIEW BOARD JOINT WORKSHOPS