



## MINUTES

Special Meeting of the

### CITY OF COLUSA PLANNING COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY December 16, 2009, at 7:00 PM

425 Webster Street, City Hall (530) 458-4740

The public may address the Commission on any agenda item during the Commission's discussion of that item. When doing so, and when commenting on non-agenda items, we ask that the speaker kindly be recognized by the Planning Commission Chair before speaking and please keep their remarks brief. If several persons wish to address the same item, or if any one person's comments are excessive, a two (2) minute time limit may be imposed on individual speakers.

#### 1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:02. Commissioners present: Selover, White, Herrick, and Settlemire. Staff present: Senior Planner Bryan Stice

2. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** Items on the Consent Calendar may be removed and discussed at the request of a Commission member.

**No consent items were on the agenda.**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** The public may address the Planning Commission on any item concerning subject matter that is within the Planning Commission's jurisdiction. No action may be taken on items not posted on the agenda, other than to briefly respond, refer to staff, or to direct that an item be placed on a future agenda.

**No public comments presented.**

#### 4. PLANNING COMMISSION MATTERS

- A. New Senior Planner, Bryan Stice, will introduce himself to the Commission.

**Senior Planner, Bryan Stice, gave an introduction regarding his past city-planning background beginning as a Planner I with the City of Gilroy (CA) and he discussed the various roles in which he worked. Bryan also discussed the various land development and home-building companies that he had worked for during the past nine years. He also mentioned his schooling at Humboldt State and how since leaving there, he had always wanted to return to the north state in order to work, and is now very pleased to be able to work with the City of Colusa.**

**Commissioner Settlemire thanked Bryan for the introduction and welcomed him –on behalf of Planning Commission– to the City of Colusa. Commissioner Settlemire expressed that Colusa was primarily a farming community, and that several of the City of Planning Commissioners worked within the farming industry.**

- B. This will be an opportunity for the Commission to provide the Senior Planner with concerns of theirs regarding what issues they wish to see addressed in upcoming meetings.

**Commissioner Settlemire transitioned the discussion with the comment that he understood that the proposed Riverbend development would be coming before the Commission soon, and Bryan Stice (staff) gave a brief update of the Riverbend project. Staff indicated that recent project activity centered around the City and the applicant trying to reach agreement on project phasing, plans, processing, and costs prior to public hearing. Staff stated that some of these items were to be addressed at the City Council meeting of December 15, 2009, however those Riverbend items were “pulled” and that no action was taken at that Council meeting.**

Staff also, discussed that the Riverbend applicants were still very anxious to continue moving forward with the project despite the challenging economic climate.

Commissioner Herrick and Settlemire both discussed how the Riverbend Project drainage was very important to understand given the site's proximity to the Sacramento River levee, as well as the occurrence of flooding in the surrounding region. There was much discussion about the lack of adequate drainage, flooding, and the uncertainty as to what may result following additional flood/levee studies that are eminent. Commissioner Herrick expressed concern over the tendency of project consultants coming & going and the uncertainty that such turn-over creates. Chairman Settlemire summarized that drainage is the main issue that this project would need to address, and that he would like staff to research (and report back) if there are laws in effect that hold governing bodies responsible for all damages caused as a result of allowing development within the 100-year flood zone.

Discussion continued with Commissioners Settlemire, Herrick, and White that the project was designed attractively and that the project setting was a positive asset. Each of the Planning Commission members elaborated upon the flooding history of the region, the lack of adequate facilities and maintenance of the existing drainage system, and the implications that land-leveling –over time– has had upon the region's ability to drain. Chairman Settlemire summarized this discussion again stating that water is a major issue to consider as this next project comes through the planning process. Senior Planner Stice mentioned that he was becoming engaged with the multiple flood & drainage planning efforts currently taking place among all of the stakeholder agencies at this time.

Chairman Settlemire asked Senior Planner Stice what his committed to the city would be in terms of appointment. Mr. Stice answered that he was hired as a full-time Senior Planner on staff with the City of Colusa. Chairman Settlemire expressed that he felt that it was important that the city planner live within the City, and that the Commission would feel more confident in a planner who was directly involved in the City. Mr. Stice expressed that he currently looking for a residence within the City of Colusa, and that he and his son were excited to be moving in and becoming actively involved in the community.

Chairman Settlemire stated that there was nothing more to cover on the existing agenda, but that he had asked Administrative Secretary Cathy Higgins to place on the upcoming agenda a discussion of the reorganization of the Planning Commission chairmanship. Staff agreed to place that item on the next agenda.

Commissioner Selover brought up that there is a need to improve upon the way that the City's consulting and/or staff planners work on tasks assigned to them (i.e. zoning ordinance updates, etc...), so that information is not lost nor is it held from the Commission until very late in the process ...only for it to not necessarily reflect the intent/direction of the commission. Much discussion was then held among the present Commissioners over what might be an effective process to bring the City Zoning Ordinance into conformance with the City's General Plan.

The present Commissioners expressed a strong interest in meeting regularly (during their regularly-scheduled hearings) to help staff complete an update to the Zoning Ordinance, given their collective familiarity with recent General Plan updates and the slow period of development activity. Staff acknowledged that working together with the Planning Commission could be an effective approach to completing the subject updates, and suggested that the Commission first determine what might be the best approach/method to undertake in that effort.

Commissioner White expressed interest in working on small "bites" of the updates at a time, and Commissioner Selover agreed with that approach and requested in increase in accountability (in producing results) from Planning staff. Staff welcomed the request for additional accountability and expressed that it would lead to better performance with such accountability in place, as well as to minimize chances of staff going off on an inaccurate "tangent". The consensus of the Commission was that they would like to have regular workshops to review and begin updating with the Zoning Ordinance with staff. Staff agreed to agendize a first workshop for the next Planning Commission meeting.

5. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned to the January 27, 2010 Planning Commission meeting. The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

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Bryan Stice, Senior Planner