

Marin Conservation League
North Marin Unit
FINAL ~~Draft~~ Meeting Notes
January 22, 2015

The meeting was called to order at the Applen home. Present were: Bob Burke, Joyce Applen, Frank U'Ren, Pat U'Ren, Pam Drew, Rick Fraites, Susan Stompe and guests Hank Barner, Sue Potter and Steven Summers

Announcements: MCL Business and Environment breakfast Feb. 26 on The Effects of Pesticides on Bees
There will be a hike into history at Rush Creek on Saturday, March 28

Notes of the November meeting were approved as distributed

Guest speaker Steven Summers, who is involved with the planning for The Square shopping center, gave the background of the family history in Marin. The Square is owned by his cousin and his brother who is an architect is doing the design work. They also own Marin Inn in Ignacio, as well as an apartment complex in Rohnert Park and one in Santa Rosa. Jeff, his cousin, bought The Square in the 90's. The market, however, was owned by Kroger at the time. He acquired the market in 2008. He said the Novato Housing Element introduced the possibility of apartments at 30 units per acre. They are considering two buildings of apartments, one at the market site and one in the parking lot. Since the site is in a flood plain they will be podium buildings which will also enable parking under the apartments. He feels the most successful shopping center restorations are mixed use. They have tried for years to attract a market to the center without success. They feel that shopping patterns have changed, with big box stores including groceries and more done online. They are looking at 50 – 100 units mostly one bedroom with some two bedroom and maybe some three bedroom units. They estimate 10% will be affordable. Businesses that will be staying include CVS, the liquor store and possibly the workout/Gym. A traffic study is being done by a Santa Rosa firm. His timeline is 6 to 8 months of community review and probably a year and a half to construct. Pam said the neighborhood is not opposed to 10% affordable. Hank pointed out that models of big projects like this help the neighborhood and decision makers understand size. Steve said that landscaping will be important and the architecture will be green certified.

Gross Field: Susan reported that the county has received a letter from FAA stating that fleet at Gness may have changed since the EIR/EIS process began and they will be analyzing it with new studies which may take 18 months, and may change the project. The BOS has cancelled their February merits hearing.

Novato General Plan: No one was able to attend the Planning Commission hearing on Jan. 20, so a letter will need to be sent to the City Council clarifying our concern about leaving most environmental issues to CEQA review since Novato frequently does not engage CEQA in project review. Creek protection must be stronger.

Blackpoint Community Plan: Hank Barner reviewed the plan and the changes from the first plan adopted in 1978. The original plan was black and white mimeograph, but the new plan is beautifully done in color with color photographs. The goals are pretty much the same – with the intent to keep the area semi rural with emphasis on protecting nature. The paper streets in old BP have been retained, but pesticides will be discouraged and owl boxes encouraged. He noted that wildlife is more dense since the Renaissance Faire has gone. The Bayland Corridor is included in the plan, including uplands. House size was hotly debated, so the old plan of allowing up to a 10% deviation from the surrounding neighborhood was left in. Maintaining night sky by reducing light pollution was included although Marin has no ordinance. The plan restricts commercial development to the current area and restricts development on wetlands north of Hwy 37 and west of Atherton. There will be a workshop with the Planning Commission on January 26.

McPhail property south of Hanna Ranch: Susan reported on the Design Review meeting on the proposal for an extended stay hotel with live/work residential units at the level site. The proposal had a lot of comments from the Design Review Commissioners. It will be brought back at a later date. The commissioners were unanimous in their criticism of the bulk of the hotel and lack of coordination with the live/work units.

Transit Center: Pam raised concern about the potential impact of the reclassification of the downtown transit stop to a primary transit center. She stated that the cost is excessive and the new classification could force high density housing in the neighborhood.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15

The next meeting will be on February 12 at noon at the U'Rens (provided the kitchen is finished)