

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

Under Definitions on page 3 of the Staff report it says Homeless Shelter, Temporary Use, Temporary Care Unit. With the temporary care unit definition, is there a time period attached to that temporary care, or how is that dealt with?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

That isn't directly applicable to this use. This is under the second definition, Temporary Use, a non-permanent use of the site, which can be any of the uses listed, and again, that temporary use was the same classification as the Community Churches' shelters. But to clarify, a temporary care unit is generally for a single-family property or another private site where it's more one-on-one and can request from the Planning Department a temporary use permit as well; that's the process for these things. There is not a limit on it, however, in terms of the time. For that we do have similar requirements as the SAVS site has, such as connection to the sewer, electrical, water, etc., so they have utilities and there is proper health and sanitation at the site. The temporary care unit, I believe our code requires it to be renewed on an annual basis, so it would require a certification of some sort for that, and then we would just ask for renewal of that, and the temporary care unit in this case can either be a caretaker or the person who is giving the care.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

I'm trying to understand the City funding aspect of this. So the City has been making lease payments so far this year, and so you're saying that they got money from the County to make those lease payments, is that correct?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I believe so, and I'm going to ask Patrick from SAVS to address that, because I know he was more involved with City management on that.

Patrick O'Loughlin, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

You have it right. The money flowed through the City, but it came from the County, and that's already taken care of. I will point the City has put no money into it and has no plans to put money in next year, so as a general welfare to the City, I think this is giving a lot; it's really providing a lot.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

I had a clarification. In the conditions of approval, Exhibit B, page 105, Condition #5, says, "The approval for the temporary use permit to operate the SAVS," it says, January 1, 2022. Should that be 2023? Is that when this temporary use permit will start, January 1, 2023 or are we going retroactively?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Yes, it would start this January 1, 2023.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

So that needs to be updated in the conditions.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

In reading the report I thought I had read that there wasn't funding, but a need for security and additional hours where there wasn't any right now. I just wanted clarification on that. Also, originally I thought it was the intent to help the residents find longer term housing, permanent housing, but now it seems like they'll be here, the same residents, for two years, so is that anywhere in the plan?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I think the applicant could probably best answer both of those. I do want to move back to Commissioner Fritz. Exhibit B on that page—I'm going to share my screen—the note regarding the temporary use permit, I'm going to suggest we combine this one and Item 2, because it's redundant. Item 2 has the correct January 1, 2023, ending December 31, 2024. I think this statement that it's an interim use only and shall not be allowed to be permanent can go up under Item 2, and so I suggest we strike Item 5 and move that up in terms of any further changes to those. This could not be a permanent use. It is not zoned for a mobile home park, which is what a long-term use of this would need to be, such as Park Village has the two RVs that are down there.

Patrick O'Loughlin, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

There are two parts to Commissioner Burnes' question. One was about finding long-term housing, and that is our goal. We are dealing with long-term homeless clients, which are more difficult to place. We are always working on that goal and moving people forward. We're dealing with some mental illness and some drug addiction while we work on those issues to move people forward. Our goal is not to find a home for our clients here permanently, but there are more difficult to place clients that we are working really hard with. That's just the honest truth about it, and that's why on our application we're honest about putting someone in there for six months is not going to solve their issue of being unhoused. They need some more support and more guidance to get their life put more together, which we're working on. With regard to additional funding, I'm not sure the exact piece you were talking about. We are working on additional funding in general for this site that is separate from the permit, and we're working with the County on those as well, but the permit is not dependent on us having funding; otherwise we're funded right now to be operating through the current permit just fine and we don't need additional funds.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

I have a question of Planning Director Svanstrom regarding page 5, the analysis. You were mentioning that St. Vincent de Paul has plans for construction beginning in spring of 2024. At any time have you had discussions with them regarding the dismantling of the SAVS facility or the plans for moving it to another site? Has that ever been part of your conversation with St. Vincent de Paul?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

No, it has not. They are at the very initial stages. I don't know if you have any specific means about this other than they've asked us and talked about what the past approvals were for to get a sense of what the past approval was, which is pretty typical of an applicant.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

So if they did come forward with a plan that we were considering, would they need to have plans for site preparation and that would be part of that proposal?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Are you asking would they need a transition plan for the SAVS?

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Yes, that's the question. Or would their approval be conditioned on a plan for it? It's usually we require them to do some sort of site preparation and you can't just approve a project with this situation.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I do know that SAVS and St. Vincent de Paul are working very closely, and I see Adrienne from SAVS has her hand raised, so I'm going to ask her if she has any information on that.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Okay, or maybe we can discuss it later when they're giving their presentation.

Chair Oetinger asked for further Commission questions for staff. Seeing none, she asked for the applicant's presentation.

The applicant gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Chair Oetinger asked for Planning Commission questions of the applicant.

Evert Fernandez, Vice Chair

What's the process of how individuals come to stay at that site? Is there any consideration for people that are more local?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

Everybody is local. In our contract we have agreed to keep it to Sebastopol. Once we get Sebastopol solved, we'll maybe open it up to Graton, we don't know yet. Originally the people who came were from Morris Street. I think we got all but two or three vehicles off of Morris Street, and we've had very little turnover, so that's mostly it, but we do have a waiting list. People call us every day, and they're people who live in Sebastopol.

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

A follow up to the question of the local preference, is the waiting list possibly attracting folks to camp near and around the site waiting for an open spot? I know there aren't very many, but do you have a sense of if the folks that are on the waiting list are also waiting on our outskirts?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages, (SAVS)

We actually discourage that and tell people if they camp close by they're likely to get bumped out of the top level. I don't think it happens very much, maybe one person that I can imagine. It's just not a way to get to the Village, and we tell people that.

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

That's a very interesting occurrence, because they coincide together, and I'm glad to hear your answer. Do you all still have the resident, board, and self-governance group, and how is that going?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

It's been a bit rockier than I would want. I think we're on our third or fourth iteration. We found that people were not interested in doing the work. It's taken awhile to find people who want to make a commitment to actually do it, because it requires homework and showing up and being reasonable. But we have a good crew now, and we've got another set of how they're governed and what their goals are. I'm optimistic, let me just say that.

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

That's great. I know that would be hard. We have a couple of co-housing projects, and the one that's a rental that was established near where Palm Drive Hospital used to be, because it's a rental project it was a concern about getting as much buy-in as like our co-housing

that is owner-occupied/ownership, and so I can understand that and I'm glad to see you're continuing to want to do that, because it seems like a very worthy goal.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

I wanted to follow up on the funding question. I appreciate the fact that you need our approval to get certain funding sources and all that, but I'm curious what happens if you don't get all the funding that you need by January 1st? How much money do you have that you know you have? Could you operate at least through June or next October, or do you have a sense of what that is with the funding that you do have lined up at this point?

Patrick O'Loughlin, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

We are set to operate through the end of the contract, which is December 31st, and that's what our funding will cover, and we are not funded beyond that. Any funding we need beyond that will go into our own direct money that we have as an organization, but our plan is to close the program if we don't receive any funding. We do have an exit plan for our residents, and it needs to be fleshed out further, but overall it's working with INDT team and West County Community Services in trying to place that. Lots of other Villages have been broken up in the past and we'll use their playbook in order to try to use all the existing services in Sonoma County to place them, but that's going to be a difficult task and it will be a rough few months for us and the clients that are there, but if the money is not there, the money is not there and we'll only operate it when we can operate it fully.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

I'm also wondering if in your communication with St. Vincent de Paul if there has been any talk of—and I realize there would be a gap—if and when they do develop housing on that site, would any of your residents be offered opportunities to be permanently housed in that development? I'm an architect and I just finished an affordable housing project and there was a transitional housing site that then became a permanent housing site, and the people were temporarily relocated and then they were offered houses once the new construction finished, so I'm wondering if you had any conversation like that as a way to get these people permanently housed on the same property.

Patrick O'Loughlin, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

That would be a great solution, or converting the site to an RV park as is and changing the structure of it, what it is legally, would be really interesting. But no, we haven't had that specific discussion, and we would have that if we get funded, because we recognize and acknowledge at the end of 2023 that St. Vincent is taking over and developing long-term housing. So to answer your question, not in the current residence, because it's too big of a gap, but at the end I'm sure we'll have those discussions, because they would be great clients.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

Can you explain a little bit about the current staffing situation? You mentioned there's a person who is there 40 hours a week. What other staffing do you have onsite beyond that at this point?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

We've had illnesses, so we've had one guy who's been out for two months with an illness, and I think he's due back full time starting the 8th. We have a full time Village manager, and then we have security people who divvy up the hours, and we also have Whitestar Security who do the overnight shifts for security. We have a resident who lives there and is also part of the staff, and he's there 24 hours a day, and we have a couple of other people who live

there who are short or part time, but they're also available when they're needed. I don't know if that's clear enough for you. I feel a little muddled about it.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

I wanted to follow up on what one of the Commissioners had asked about discouraging people to be close by and are the residents local? Having a warehouse on Morris Street, I've been up close and personal to all these people since they first started moving to Sebastopol, knowing most of them very well. It was very transient, the people were not originally from the area, but this is where they called home. I don't know if any of us are originally from here, so I don't see it as encouraging other people to be there to get into the Village necessarily, just because this has been something that's been here for many, many years. And yes, Morris Street did start out small and then we kind of expanded, but I don't think that that's actually what's happening. We just have more of a problem with people not having homes than we have homes for them, so we will find more people moving here. Just being here since the very beginning, I don't think that that is really an issue, and they're all local now. This is where they've chosen for their home, so there you go.

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

They're definitely people who have deep roots in Sonoma County, and I remember somebody talking to me about graduating from Analy High School, and they're certainly sons and daughters of long-time Sebastopol residents.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

I have a question of the applicant that goes back to your transition plans. I know that first you need this approval and you need funding, but at some point down the line the people who have trailers there are going to have to find another place to move their trailers, and I was wondering if there was a timetable for planning that? I know if you don't get your funding you've got an immediate plan to work with West County Community Services and other organizations to do that. Is that what you would be starting to do at some point down the road as we get closer to January?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

We started to do that the second week we moved in, and right now we're trying to do another whole level of the bureaucracy to do all of that, but yes, it will be sort of panic time and a lot of focus time if we have to close in January. Other than that, it's long and slow, and finding another spot for your RV, or maybe you'd be happier in an apartment and you'd want to give your RV up, these are long conversations, because people feel pretty insecure, and understandably so. But yes, at some point everybody has got to be off the lot, that's clear, and we'll just keep working on that.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

It's a shame, because that lot is so close to so many services and stores, and if you find a country property that's available, it's a long way from anything.

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

But most people have cars. It's a big surprise, but some people have more than one car.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

When they do need to move their vehicles off of the lot, is there funding in place for that as well? Is that part of the funding? I know some of those vehicles aren't drivable anymore, and some of them are. Is that something that we'll be able to help the residents with?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

That is a really good question. Our intention is to do some of that, but there are major, major costs, and if we have to close by January, I don't know how much we'll be able to do. The long-term level, yes, that's an ongoing process. We're trying to get people registered and get their whole scene set up so that they're more independent.

Patrick O'Loughlin, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

We will also plan our exit budget that way, so we may close a few weeks earlier in order to have the funding to handle the tow costs and other costs associated with it. We'll just shorten the end of the actual closing date in order to have the funding, so we don't sit there and say there's nothing funded, now we're just going to stay here. We'll be out on the date we need to be out.

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

An infrastructure question. I see that there is electricity to the common areas. I assume there isn't electricity to each of the trailers? The second question is are people still using generators?

Patrick O'Loughlin, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

Actually there is electricity out to every trailer, so there are no generators. And we even got through a hot summer and had no issues with that.

Chair Oetinger ask for further Commission questions of the applicant. Seeing none, she opened public comment.

Heather Stone and Ken Mitchell

We are homeowners back behind the Hurlbut, and we are also investors in the local community. We actually are providing low-income housing downtown and below-market housing. Our issue is mainly with process. I'm an attorney and with compassion for the situation that the homeless find themselves in, I feel like there was a total disregard for process in informing the local homeowners, local businesses, and giving people an opportunity to participate and have their thoughts heard. I feel like from an emergency standpoint, okay, but then a two-year extension on top of that? Help works properly when there is participation from all interested parties, including local businesses and local residents, and I feel that we haven't been included in this to the extent that we should have been, because it affects our day-to-day lives and it's our taxpayer dollars. I have no problem with something being situated there once the normal process has been followed and people have had notice and a chance to voice concerns and participate.

Suzanne Lande

I'm a longtime volunteer both with the residents who were in the Morris Street area, or in the Laguna without a vehicle, and at Horizon Shine I'd say at least a year and-a-half, so I've known people a long time. I'm a retired nurse. I keep my RN license active in order to help homeless people. The comments that I got from residents, on Morris Street and that area it was so hard and people would be mad at each other and smash something or whatever. It's not like that at Horizon Shine. People who at one time did not get along at all now are offering to help with something physical, or if one person has a car several others might get a ride. People lone the tiniest bits of money, like \$3 or \$5, and I know they pay it back; it's because the need is so real. As a nurse I see that the homeless people there do not have just ordinary I could call my uncle or my sister and they would help me problems, they have big, big problems. There is a lot of mental health, really a lot of issues. There are some people who have been unemployed for a very long time. Of course there are some substance abuse things, but there is help for it. There have been people who probably

would not be alive if it weren't for some of the services they've had. And then there's the outreach clinic, the medical stuff that I help with through Third Street House in Guerneville with an excellent doctor and nurse. They now also have a social worker that is a therapist, and an additional social worker is coming. I just think we have a sense from the residents there that it's really a community, and that is a blessing and will help them get further.

Zack Imbrogno

I'm commenting on behalf of a neighborhood group, Friends of Northwest Sebastopol. We filed a letter of objection to the two-year temporary use. As written, we find issues with the site as it relates to City zoning code, including the fact that there is not a temporary residential. Furthermore, the Department's findings brush over the very real, very serious environmental impacts to the neighborhood. I'm speaking on behalf of neighbors who have come to me in increasing numbers over the last several months to report increasing problems. Many say they've lived here 30 years and have never seen anything like this in the area. Whether it's tools stolen from someone's yard, gas drained from a car, trespassing, being harassed for money, witnessing verbal assault on others, being unable to walk on a sidewalk with someone passed out on it, passing by drug deals at Exchange Bank, and endless amounts of noise complaints both day and night. I am also speaking for area business owners who are afraid to speak out for political reasons, but go to a business in Redwood Marketplace across from the site and speak to a manager or clerk and they will tell you shoplifting, dumping, and loitering has increased since the opening of the encampment. If you need proof, consider the fact that Redwood Marketplace hired a full-time security guard three months into the camp's opening to mitigate these issues and ensure a safe and sanitary environment for shoppers. For related images and video, please review the impact statement included in our letter of objection. It's impossible to know how many of these issues have arisen directly from residents of the encampment itself or have come as a result of other transients seeking services or shelter there, but the bottom line is clear, the findings in this report ignore the very real change in the character of the area that is happening right before our own eyes. We request the Planning Commission consider our letter of objection and forthcoming appeal to address the issues of the zoning code and the environmental impact to either deny this permit, make the changes needed to make the site legal, or know that we are prepared to take further legal action.

Vanessa

I have a question regarding the process. During the City Council meeting last week the St. Vincent de Paul representative had mentioned at the very earliest, assuming everything works out really well, it will be two years. My understanding is the extension is basically to keep the RV village there until St. Vincent de Paul is ready to break ground and start building the brick and mortar. My question is if that gets pushed back five or ten years before they're able to actually start building the affordable housing project, how does the process work then? Does it just keep getting extended at two-year increments, or is it two years and then it can't be extended past that, because then that exceeds the emergency homeless village as it's not zoned as such?

Bea Lineatus

I would like to echo the initial comments about process and the lack of involvement of the public, the adjoining neighbors, and the neighborhoods in this process from the very beginning of the site selection that was abruptly changed to this site with very little to no public notice or involvement. I respectfully request that the public be involved in this process and that this Commission delay a decision on this request for a CUP until a valid and thorough public engagement to hear community concerns can be carried out. I would like to echo what Zack had to say. We live just around the corner from this site and I have seen a marked increase in what appears to be transient individuals moving up and down the

highway carrying their belongings and setting up shop, if you will, not too far from the site. They may not be associated with the site, but I do believe that the site attracts additional homeless people that may be performing the unlawful activity that Zack mentioned. I've seen people sleeping rough on the sidewalk, I've seen people sleeping rough out by O'Reilly Media Center, and it disturbs me. We moved to this area to get away from that kind of life, and I'm disappointed to see that it is an attractant.

Angie

I am a participant at the SAVS Village. I've been there since the beginning and it's been a very positive experience for me. I've been able to park my RV there and have it be a safe place so that I could then go and try to get a job and try to advance myself out the homeless situation that I found myself in starting about a year ago. Since I've gotten to SAVS they've involved me in many of the different things that they've been trying to do. I know that Adrienne sent out a schedule of things that she had hoped to accomplish with the project, and when I went back and reviewed it, as I am trying to start a blog right now about the progress of the project, she has actually been successful in putting forward all of the programs that she had planned. I have been able to get medical care. I've been able to get dental care. We got our showers and our power and everything hooked up, and we've really all tried to work together as best as we can to get and keep it going. I recently got a full-time job at a bed and breakfast in Occidental and I'm doing phenomenal compared to how I was doing when I very first met some of the SAVS people on the street. Suzanne Lande, who spoke earlier, has been absolutely instrumental in my success. She's a volunteer, but she is so important to me. She has really helped me get a lot of things done. When we see different things happening in the neighborhood we do try to address them if we know the people. We don't always know the people that are at the shopping centers that are doing different things. Sometimes they're not people that we are friends with in this community, and they are sometimes people that we know, and when there are problems we do address them directly and we do try to discourage whatever it is that they're doing, and if it's something that bothers the neighborhood it's usually something that we can help immediately. We know what's going on and we try to stop it. I really do think that this is a situation that is happening all over California, and it's unfortunate that it's increasing, but it's increasing everywhere and it's not just entirely because of the community here. Either way, there's only so much we can control in our community, but we really do try to address anything going on outside.

Arthur George

I'm chair of an ad hoc volunteer group called West County Homeless Advocates that consists of a variety of volunteers from service organizations, churches, and interested and activist citizens. We've spoken before the City Council numerous times in support of safe parking, sanitation, and housing. I have provided written comments to the Commission, but I'd like to supplement those in response to some of the questions and comments I've heard tonight. First of all, I'd like to address the concerns of Chair Oetinger and Commissioner Burnes about the relocation of vehicles if the Horizon Shine Village were to close. Those vehicles are likely just to spill back out onto the street where they started, through no fault of SAVS. SAVS has provided Horizon Shine to get those vehicles and their occupants off of City streets, off of Morris, and without Horizon Shine they would be back somewhere. All ending the Village really does is expel all those people back out onto the streets. The new police chief, Ken Nelson, suggested last week before the City Council that there is no identifiable link that Horizon Shine is a magnet to other unhoused people. He suggested that if there are additional unhoused camping rough along the Norlee Street, the former Lucky site, the former Mary's Pizza site, the former Chase Bank site, these are vacant properties in the Redwood Marketplace that predate Horizon Shine for various business reasons, and he suggested that with the sweeps on Morris and Laguna homeless individuals

are going to go someplace, and they go to places that are dark and concealed, and the Redwood Marketplace certain meets those definitions, so those people who are camping rough opposite Horizon Shine are not Horizon Shine residents. The Horizon Shine residents were tucked away safely back in their RVs sleeping. Higher levels of government than the City are going to have to come in and assist with the relocation of the RVs and all the other unhoused individuals, and the failure for that to happen is not due to Horizon Shine or to the City. Diana Rich has tried to find other sites; none of them exist. In terms of process, we are here engaging in a process. Courts have reviewed the prior process and found it adequate and lawful, and the tens of thousands of dollars that have been expended by the City and the Friends of Northwest Sebastopol who oppose the Village could have been much more adequately spent in providing the services that these people so desperately need, and I say that acknowledging that everybody has a right to pursue their litigation, but we should look at how money is spent, where it goes, and what it does.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Were there questions? I didn't take notes, but I did hear some.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I believe some of the questions were about the transition, and there were a couple of statements about the process. The Planning Department was not involved with the prior process, so as Mr. George said, the prior process has been through the courts and so what we're at now is a public process. This is a temporary use permit. It is being heard by the Planning Commission because it's more than six months, as required by our code, and any decision of the Planning Commission is appealable to the City Council, and it sounds like some folks are aware of that. This was noticed. We certainly sent to the neighbors and I'm glad that many of them were able to join us here tonight and hopefully start some of the discussion and be more informed and involved in the discussions. I believe the only question that I had from Vanessa was the process of if St. Vincent de Paul is delayed further would this be continued? This does need to be a temporary use, as noted. This site is not zoned for this use as a permanent use, just like the Community Church site was not zoned for the smaller residential structures that are there. It's a single-family zone, so they could put a single house on it but not the parking and the community shelters that are there, and so that also required a temporary use permit such as this. What we're looking at tonight is a two-year extension. There is a potential that it could be extended if the applicant requests. They would have to go back through this same process, and I think at that point, and possibly tonight, there are already discussions about this is supposed to be a temporary emergency thing, what is the transition and the need for a transition plan. The Community Church micro-shelters were permitted for five years; I certainly would not consider it a temporary use if it were ten years, but whether it's two, three, four, or five years, I'm not sure. We don't have a definition of temporary in our code other than something that is not a permanent structure, a permanent use of the site. They have requested two years, and so that is what we review as the Planning Commission.

Chair Oetinger closed public comment.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

I'd like to confirm with Kari that nothing has changed to make today any less of an emergency than a year ago when this first condition of approval was approved.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I can go back to that portion of the staff report to clarify. There was not a conditional use permit of any sort when this use was originally done. It was done under the local homeless emergency adopted by City Council on November 30, 2021. That has been renewed, so that

is still in place, and the local homeless emergency shelter that was adopted in 2018, I believe that is still in effect, although I would have to check on that. I know that was done so that we could apply for temporary RV spaces that we installed at Park Village specifically, and that was funded entirely through a State grant. In terms of the context for this particular use, that resolution of local homeless emergency was adopted last year. The use that was proposed was for 12 months or less starting in February and ending in January. As a short-term use stay like that it could be defined as a homeless shelter. In our code a homeless shelter is defined as a residential facility operated by a provider to provide temporary accommodations for two persons or families with low-income for a period of not generally more than six months. In this case it was 12 months, and that's the part that they're not proposing at this point, which is why it would need to be done through the temporary use permit process. A homeless shelter is permitted "by right" in the General Commercial zone in which the site is located, so anything that is permitted by right does not require a conditional use permit. The permitted use of the homeless shelter would only need to have all of the City requirements that we would normally have, and those are the utilities, health, sanitation, and electrical that they had to provide to the site, etc., so those were all reviewed as part of that, but done as a permitted use. To extend requires the conditional use permit that you're reviewing tonight for the temporary use.

Chair Oetinger asked for Commission questions or comments.

Evert Fernandez, Vice Chair

I wanted to address one of the public comments regarding some of the crime issues at the Redwood Marketplace. I don't know if it's happenstance related to the SAVS site, or if we have any police reports. I wanted to make sure we address that, and any of the SAVS staff might also want to address that.

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

What we've heard from the police is that the need for them to police this particular group of people has plummeted, so they saved a lot of time on that and they're very supportive of how we're doing things. There are occasions when they get called into the Village for one reason or another; sometimes it's false alarms or someone being concerned about something that's really not a big deal. Other times, I think maybe once a policeman had to come and stand beside somebody who was yelling at somebody else; I think that might have happened, but it's very rare. Usually the police come, they'll say we hear this or that, maybe they'll come and check about it, and then they leave. We just don't have a lot of police involvement.

Evert Fernandez, Vice Chair

Also, address some of the comments that were made about issues at the Redwood Marketplace or other businesses. I'm trying to see if there's a connection with that.

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

I guess I have to lean on the police chief at the City Council meeting who said he just didn't see any real link. There have been changes of policies at the City level and sweeping people around and taking them out of particularly the Laguna, because a lot of people were camping down there and felt pretty out of sight out of mind, and now they're not out of mind or sight. I think what Angie from the Village said is also true, we really do try to address it one by one, and I would urge people to get in touch with me if they're having specific problems that they think might be related to the Village. Like Angie said, we can't control everything, but sometimes we do actually know the person and we can say you've got to get along with the neighbors. This is a community here; we're trying to be a positive

part of the community, not harmful, and they really respond to that and take their business somewhere else or just not doing whatever it is that's objectionable.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

And Vice Chair Fernandez, I can address that. Our police chief, Ron Nelson, was going to be in attendance. I have had conversations with him about this. As we do with all use permits, this was routed to all the City departments and we routed this the same just to make sure that everything from the technical side, like the water and sewer, there weren't additional requirements for an extension. I did specifically speak with the police chief on that. He concurred with what Adrienne just said in that the Village itself is not terribly problematic. I do know that there has been far less stress on both Public Works and police in terms of Public Works was pulling out a garbage truck full of stuff on Laguna every day and trying to maintain that area. A lot of that has obviously calmed down or just gone away. The one thing that Chief Nelson did recommend—and this is the recommended additional condition of approval—is having more coordination with SAVS, not for inside but if they see things outside. Also, if there's a way that the neighborhood groups could assist with that, I think that would be helpful. I do know that it came up at Council that some of the areas are not in the City of Sebastopol proper, since the site is somewhat close to City limits on the east side, especially on Hurlbut. That doesn't mean that people can't necessarily drive down the street and not sometimes discourage things, just the eyes on the street and the presence, especially if they're in police vehicle. So Chief Nelson did definitely feel that some of that overflow issue could be dealt with more proactively, and so that is definitely one of the things that we would want to look to. The city manager and myself have also had conversations with the owner of Redwood Marketplace, and yes, there are definitely some issues there. I wouldn't say that he associated them with the SAVS Village, and in fact it sounds like there has been a homeless issue behind some of the stores at that place for some time, and so whether or not that has grown or not he did say that that was part of the issue and one of the reasons why they had gotten the security guard to assist there. They are unfortunately also dealing with the chronic vacancy at the CVS there, which is not owned by the Redwood Marketplace; it is owned by CVS and they are basically just not interested in renting it to anyone unfortunately. I can tell you that the Burger King that is vacated right now is actually going to be a Starbucks; that went through the Planning Commission review and design review and I believe they're about to submit their building permits and sign permits. Who knows what attracts people, but we are certainly looking forward to the Starbucks revitalization and having that be a hopefully fairly busy outlet.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

Vice Chair Fernandez, to speak to your question as well as something I read, there was also a concern by the neighbors about people also camping outside where Sterry Garden is down by Rileystreet building. I am there often and I have noticed that as well, that there are a couple of people there and a lot of trash and debris. But I will say from being a business owner on Main Street for going on 25 years, and having a warehouse for almost 25 years on Morris Street where the encampment was, that I understand what the neighbors are going through. We saw a lot of stuff on Morris Street, but I don't think that this has anything to do with the Village and this community, and the reason why is it being here for so long. Before there was an issue on Morris Street we had theft on Main Street. We had the police number right on our wall because we would have people who had mental disabilities who would be running up and down Main Street causing havoc. There has always been this type of activity and I'm sure that it's growing, however, I believe that it is growing more in society, so it doesn't feel justly put upon this situation since I've been here for so long and none of this is new. I will say that the solution here is not to look at whether this is the issue and are these residents living there causing it, but what can we do to help with the people who aren't housed still so that we're not having this situation. Lastly, the Laguna has been a

longstanding issue with people camping there, and the City has really tried a lot. It's been a longstanding issue long before Morris Street was there. But a question I do have is what is the security like at the site? I know that the gates close I believe at 10:00. Is there security at the site? Are most people in every night? What happens if somebody is not in?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

There is 24/7 security, so there's always someone on duty. We don't enforce the residents to stay at home; that's not our job. They're human beings, they're adults, but we do check them in and out in the evenings after 10:00, and we have a pretty strong visitation, who comes and goes, with some people not allowed in the Village at all. I hope that answers your question.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

It does, and I absolutely agree with you, these are adults, they don't need to be home. I'm trying to address some of the concerns of the neighbors. I did sit out there and I listened to some loud drumming, but it wasn't coming from the Village, it was in the Laguna. We've had that forever here. This seems like we have two separate issues going on. One is the Village causing any liabilities to any of the citizens of Sebastopol, and what do we do about this other issue, because it's been an ongoing issue? I will say this has really helped Morris Street. The business owners there, we never experienced any theft or anything with people on Morris Street, but it was a lot, so I think we need to remember to separate these issues. The reason I was asking that is it seems like you guys have a pretty clear picture that even if they're not there in the evening that some of the thefts and the issues going on for the neighbors are not associated with your residents, is that accurate?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

I think that's pretty accurate. I think that's very accurate.

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

My house is by the Joe Rodota Trail, and I certainly do hear some lively conversations at time, and there was a fire from probably someone camping. It has certainly gotten worse over time. I got scared one time when I was coming home late at night from work thinking that there was someone stalking me, so I understand the concerns. However, I'm satisfied that two more years is tolerable, especially if issues at the Redwood Marketplace are being dealt with, and hopefully our Parking Ordinance is being administered if there is neighborhood parking that's within the City limits. It sounds, especially from the woman who spoke who is a resident there, my heart just opened up to possibilities that you are providing there. You can't fix the mental health issues and the drug issues, and there was a letter to us about we should be lobbying stronger for mental health services on demand, drug treatment on demand; that's a huge problem. I'm a registered ICU nurse, and I've taken care of many, many homeless folks over the 38 years I've been at Memorial. Sometimes we are only there to show love and respect and can't fix all the social problems, but I've been very proud of Sebastopol trying, and we do need to have a facility like this. Then we have strengthened our Parking Ordinance, and to the chagrin of many people, because it's pretty strict. But I'm happy with a couple of additional conditions that staff has recommended, and so I'm ready to move forward, and God bless you for having put this together.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

I agree with a lot of what's been said by other Commissioners. I would also like to reiterate that this is the public process. I realize the original approval of this went through a different kind of process, but this is the opportunity for the public to make their voices heard, and I appreciate the emails and letters that we've gotten, and the public comments tonight. I

think that is an important part of the process. Bottom line is we need more permanent supportive housing, period. We just don't have enough. I'm an architect and I've worked on these kinds of projects for permanent supportive housing, and they are few and far between, and they take a long time to put in place, so thinking this problem was going to go away within a year was magical thinking, and I think that the problem was worse when many of these people were on Morris Street or spread around town. This environment, like we heard from the resident that spoke tonight, and Adrienne, a community is being creative, people are supportive of each other, and I think that support is really important and it was very heartwarming to hear Angie speak tonight. That's exactly why we need to do these types of things, because having a stable place to live, even if it is in your RV, that helps you move on, so I think this is an important project. I totally hear the neighbors' concerns. I live in town and I have definitely seen an increase in my daily routine of homelessness and people sleeping on the sidewalks and more trash and things like that, and it's something we're all dealing with. It's certainly not limited to Sebastopol, not even just California; this is happening across the country unfortunately; it's just a dire situation. I do believe that the fact that half of the Redwood Marketplace is vacant certainly doesn't help. That is the kind of place that attracts homeless people, because there is less oversight and less people going by on a regular basis and it feels a little more out of the way. I think it's unfortunate it's across the street and there seems to be some kind of correlation, but I know the owner of that shopping center and I know there has been issues of people living behind there for years, it's not necessarily a new thing, and maybe it's becoming more out in the open now that Mary's Pizza is closed too; the whole end is just dead. But from a land use standpoint this is the process that we go through for this kind of use. It's a temporary use permit, this is the public process, and this is the legal process. I'm supportive of this from a land use standpoint, and if people have concerns that the City Council said this is only going to be for a year, that's an issue to take up with those Council members and that's a political issue and not necessarily a land use issue, but as a Planning Commissioner reviewing this application we have before us tonight, I'm inclined to grant the two-year extension request.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

My concern is not really with clearing the site at the end of two years, it's making sure that the people who live there have a place to go before the last minutes, because one of my concerns when they first went there is that it's only temporary, they're still going to need to find a another place, and finding that other place isn't going to happen overnight. I'm wondering if other Commissioners would be interested in adding a condition that at the quarterly report at some point in the process SAVS begins to define the process and the actual numbers for places where people will go so that in those last three months they're not in a crisis situation. I know that's a huge ask, but it's just really painful to think of having this two-year time period and allowing people to be evicted without a plan for them to be transitioned. Kari, is that a reasonable addition to add that number or some evidence of that plan through the quarterly reports?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I think as a conditional use permit for a temporary use, to understand how it's going to be closed, is absolutely appropriate. And I know that SAVS has been looking at other sites and things like that, but I think that especially if this is transitioning to permanent affordable housing by St. Vincent de Paul, there will be a need to do that.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Is the last six months too late? I mean, it can take years. At what point do you think something like that should kick in if there is evidence of something else in the works?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I would say if it's a two-year that at the beginning of that second year there start to be an understanding of what the options are and how those develop. I'm not a social service provider, but I would suspect, just how I've seen others work, that it's probably not one solution, it's probably going to be a mix of an opportunity for three people here, five RVs here, and that kind of thing. Even if it's not resolved, to make sure we're talking about it earlier, even if it is we're still having some of these issues but we're looking at some of these things, I think that would be in the best interest of everyone.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Yes, I would feel more comfortable. I know there's no way to enforce it. I just think we need some way to prompt that so we begin to feel that something is happening.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Yes, and I think it's fine to ask the applicant halfway through how long this type of planning would take, and then start reporting on it. That's what I would recommend, and I think that's an excellent point.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Can I ask either of our applicants representing SAVS here today if that's something that they feel they could add to their quarterly report if we requested?

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

Yes, I think we can do that. You're right, it's not an easy thing, but it's in line with what we want to do. I'm hoping that all of the people that we have there now will be somewhere else by the time the St. Vincent de Paul goes on, but we'll have new people, and we'll be just as concerned as you that they not just be kicked out.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Yes, it feels awkward to move somebody in and get all set up and organized with them only to have to send them back to the street a week later.

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

It's heartbreaking to even contemplate it; we know these folks.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Chair Oetinger, I did want to note, I know Vice Chair Fernandez has his hand up. He had asked the question of the police earlier. I was able to get ahold of Police Chief Ron Nelson and he is here now, so Vice Chair Fernandez, I don't know if you're able to repeat the question you had earlier, and then get any comments from Chief Nelson.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Thank you. First of all, along with Chair Oetinger, I'm in support of getting that report as informational, and I am quite convinced that the SAVS group and organization is as concerned as we are about making the transition and working on that part of it, so I will look at it as giving us information for us to prompt them, but more for information as to how things are going along, and maybe somehow we can help or at least let the public know what's going on. Chief Nelson, thank you for being here. Comments were brought up by some of the neighbors making the connection that perhaps some of the crime issues or problems in the area were directly related to the Village residents, and I'm not sure if that's something that can or cannot be commented to say this person was from the Village or not, but I was curious to any general comment regarding neighbors' concerns that by having that organization there and those people there that it has directly resulted in more crime issues.

Ron Nelson, Sebastopol Chief of Police

It's not a simple answer; I'll start with that. I think you're talking about two issues really. I don't have any information that correlates any of the Horizon Shines residents being involved in any of the criminal activity that's occurring proximate to that facility. It's my belief that the majority of the residents there are abiding by the rules as best they can. Now, that's not to say that there might not be an attraction for non-residents to visit the site or to come into the area to hang out with their friends, that's normal human interaction, but I've requested that should the extension be granted that Horizon Shine institute some additional procedures to track who is going in and out, set visiting hours, set some restrictions to try to limit some of that periphery perception that some of the issues that are going on in the neighborhood are directly associated with Horizon Shine. The other piece of the pie there is that directly across the street you have the Lucky supermarket shopping center, and due to our economic situation nationwide and in the state, and in Sebastopol as well, we've had businesses there close. As I mentioned in a previous meeting, homeless folks, unhoused folks, are forced in a way, due to the lifestyle and their situation, to be opportunistic, and they will look for vacant properties, vacant lots, spaces like the Laguna de Santa Rosa, to bide their time during the day as well as finding places to land at night to be able to sleep in their cars and essentially have a safe spot in their mind where they can be. That shopping center itself, by the fact that there's less traffic, there are vacant businesses, there are loading docks that are now not being utilized, they utilize that opportunity for them to use it as a landing spot. I think a good majority of the increased crime, it's serious to the people that are affected, but I would characterize it as nuisance crimes. They're low-level petty thefts, drinking in public, things like that, quality of life issues, which make no mistake, they do affect the quality of life to the residents in that area. I don't have statistical data to substantiate this, but my instincts are telling me that the majority of any increase is directly related a lot to that site being vacant, and also to the fact that we have non-residents of Horizon Shine who may be hanging in the area or passing through, and during their "rounds," so to speak, are probably committing some petty offenses in neighboring shopping centers, such as the one that holds the Ace Hardware and the Pacific Market.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Thank you, and thank you, Commissioner Burnes for your comments. I also am satisfied as to the Village/SAVS and what they're doing. I believe that if they weren't doing the job and providing a place for people to be, and a place where they need to abide by certain rules and so forth, that there may be more issues that would be happening in the neighborhood, outside the neighborhood, all around, so the fact that those unfortunate incidents happen, I don't believe that it can all be because of direct relation to the site being there. In fact, I think it's quite the opposite, that it's been very helpful. I'm certainly in support of the program; I really appreciate what they've done. As far as what individuals have commented about the process, as Commissioner Fritz had mentioned, prior to us getting this it was going to Council and they went through their own process, but for us as Commissioners, notice was put out. This is the forum for people to make those comments, as they have, and also they have the opportunity to submit an appeal to City Council as well. I'm happy to support this project, and I think we have certainly done our due diligence as best as we can.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

I just wanted to thank all the people involved and also my support for the project as well. I do want to also say as we support this that I think all the Commissioners are feeling very understanding of the concerns the neighbors have, and I want to reiterate, we have two separate buckets here. One is the Village and the other is the other issues that have been longstanding in Sebastopol and it seems like are getting worse, so at another time it would

be appropriate to look at what more we can do, because as this escalates we can see more problems all over town, so the correlation between that and the Village I don't substantiate with my many, many years of being in the epicenter of this, but I'm in complete support. I feel very lucky that they came in and helped in the way that they did. So, with saying that, I was wondering if we could put forth a motion now?

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

I'd be happy with that. Do you have one?

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

Yes.

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

Chair Oetinger, before we move, since we have the police chief here, there was a question about enforcing, or have we had a need to enforce, our Parking Ordinance for neighborhood parking around this area?

Ron Nelson, Sebastopol Chief of Police

We've had some sporadic incidents throughout the City where we've had folks attempting to park their RVs, but frankly not a huge number. When we're notified about it, or when our parking person becomes aware, she makes contact with the individuals, explains what they can and can't do, and also we always try to offer services and enlist the help of our liaison and see if we can get them additional services. I think Vice Chair Fernandez touched on it: this is a managed approach, and it's a temporary solution to provide resources and a hand up to people to try to get them on a path where they're able to reintegrate into society. Prior to Horizon Shine being there, essentially it was a free for all, and we saw the result of that on Morris Street and it was starting to spread out throughout the City, and as we've seen through the managed approach and this resource being available and all the wonderful work being done by our advocate community and by Horizon Shine, we've been able to lessen the impacts of this. If this facility were to not exist we'd be right back to square one, and my guess would be that it would probably continue to grow and spread throughout various other areas of the City, because Morris Street was impacted to the point where there was no more room and we were starting to see that happen. Is it ideal? No, there is no ideal one size fits all solution, but I think this managed approach is the best that we can do in our current situation and in the current time frame, and I could see it being somewhat disastrous if this facility and a lease extension were not granted. If we think we have impacts now, you haven't seen anything as to what it would probably look like.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

And Chief Nelson, you did miss one of Chair Oetinger's conditions, so just to reiterate the conditions, because it sounds like we're looking towards a motion. We do have the condition of approval that Chief Nelson had recommended regarding additional coordination from any SAVS folks, and again, Chief Nelson, I also volunteered any neighbors who have issues that they be able to proactively contact the police and the police can proactively deal with that and try to address some of those issues not involving the SAVS Village, but use those as some of the eyes on the street, especially with the vacancies, so that is in our conditions of approval. I did not include the condition regarding visitors, because this is actually part of their operations already, and all visitors must log in and out and they have visiting hours between 8:00am and 10:00pm. Overnight visitors need to be approved by submitting a request form no later than noon of the day of the overnight. No more than six overnight guests at the site at any one time. Requests must be first come, first served, with a maximum of two overnight guests per person and a maximum of two consecutive nights per guest. So there are a number of rules that they've actually implemented and that actually

covered beyond what you had suggested. This is a two-year approval. Chair Oetinger had requested in the quarterly reports by the time we get to the beginning of year two that there start to be reports on how to transition the RV folks to more permanent or other locations so that there isn't a last minute scramble, and Chief Nelson, just so you know that we're not in this situation at an 11th hour and no one feels forced into additional extensions and things like that, the Planning Commission is probably the better group to do the preliminary review on that. Chair Oetinger, did you have specific wording that you wanted for that, or do you want me to try to come up with something quick?

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

I would appreciate you coming up with it.

Evert Fernandez, Vice Chair

If I could make one reminder comment regarding when Adrienne was speaking about a board or a group that meets and specifically addresses any concerns of the neighborhood, I'm wondering if perhaps that contact information could be displayed on their sign on the outside of the fence? Contact information for any kind of issues, because it sounds like they have that specifically to address any neighborhood issues, so it might make it a little bit easier for someone who might have a concern to contact, because maybe they can't get ahold of anybody from the City, and generally that's our go-to. The police have other things also and I'd hate to have them bogged down with that, so maybe a first contact with the SAVS organization might be a good first step.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

I wasn't sure if that was a condition you were adding.

Evert Fernandez, Vice Chair

No, it was just a suggestion to SAVS.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

And Vice Chair Fernandez, you may want to get a response from SAVS. That is something that we have made conditions of approval and good neighbor policies in the past, and so Patrick or Adrienne, if you could address how you're currently doing that, if a neighbor needs to contact you about something.

Adrienne Lauby, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

We do have our 24/7 contact line that we publicize. That's on the outside of the gate. Nobody ever calls it. I think Mr. Fernandez's idea might be useful. We do have a small number of people who show up at our monthly meeting to talk about things, but mostly we hear from the City, or we hear from the police, or we hear from somebody who contacts Hector directly that there's a problem. Sometimes people just walk over and knock on the door and say can you help, and then we do what we can.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

If I can follow up on that, I was going to suggest maybe when you have a meeting date scheduled, hang a sign that says community meeting on X date so residents in the area see that. That might be a helpful way to announce.

Patrick O'Loughlin, Sonoma Applied Villages (SAVS)

We can do that on our website as well.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Chair Oetinger, I believe I have a draft of the conditions, and I can write it out in a Word document too if you want to tinker with it. It didn't sound like Vice Chair Fernandez was asking that his comment be a condition, just a suggestion. So for the transition plan, "SAVS shall plan for the transition of residents at the end of the program. Reports on this plan shall begin on the 5th quarterly report at the latest," and we can change it from 5th quarterly report. I just couldn't figure out in my head what date that would be, but that's basically the beginning of the second year.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

How about first quarterly report of 2024?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Thank you, that works. And I'm saying at the latest, but we'd love to hear thoughts and ideas sooner too, of course.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

And you were also striking Item #5.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

And combining the second sentence of that with Condition #2, and that gets rid of the error that Commissioner Fritz has and the redundancy with the time frame of January 2023 to December 31st.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

So if I were making a motion, would it be appropriate to adopt the draft resolution with edits to Exhibit B, striking #5, adding the quarterly reports at the first quarter of the second year, approved base of the facts and finding analysis set forth, and subject to the recommended conditions of approval? Is that enough for a motion?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Yes, and I'm assuming that's given the wording, "The SAVS shall plan for transition of residents at the end of the program. Reports on this planning shall begin the first quarter of 2024 report at the latest."

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

And I second that.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Thank you. So moved and seconded, as stated in the record.

Chair Oetinger made a motion to adopt the draft resolution with edits to Exhibit B, striking #5 and adding the quarterly reports at the first quarter of the second year, approved base of the facts and finding analysis set forth, and subject to the recommended conditions of approval. The SAVS shall plan for transition of residents at the end of the program. Reports on this planning shall begin the first quarter of 2024 report at the latest.

Commissioner Fritz seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Oetinger, Vice Chair Fernandez, and Commissioners Burnes, Fritz, and Kelley.

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. Planning Commission Training

Director Svanstrom played a Planning Commission training video titled, "Working with the Public."

(Video skipped ahead, deleting the end of the training video. Video resumes with Commission comments in progress.)

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

...leads to frustration for people. I think we might want to think about staying ahead of things like that to maybe establish a neighborhood meeting or something like that ahead of the Planning Commission meeting where we can meet in a more informal setting, listen to concerns, and be more interactive than a formal Planning Commission meeting.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I encouraged Woodmark Apartments, and they did have a community meeting beforehand, and the same with City Ventures up at the O'Reilly site and they had an open house as well. Those weren't required though, they were suggested, and it's actually the same thing with the preliminary review. We have a couple of places where a preliminary review is required, like if you were doing a Planned Community zoning, but mostly it's staff when we see a project. We actually have an application that we just got in that we're actually going to do as a joint Planning Commission/Design Review Board because it is a housing project design, but it has a subdivision, so it comes through the Planning Commission as well as the Design Review Board. For housing projects, under State law I think it would be difficult to add any requirements, because they're always looking at governmental constraints and the time to process applications, although I would certainly hold up something like Habitat for Humanity as these guys did a preliminary review and they flew through the process, and part of that was they had the feedback, and by the time they got to the hearings they had investigated if they could do ADUs or not, or if they could add units, which was incidentally the same question the Council had when they got to Council, so it was an easy answer because they had done the preliminary review. But yes, for other commercial projects we don't have a requirement for that really. A question for you, since you've done the neighborhood meetings, do they have Planning Commission at those meetings?

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

No.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Because you get into the whole quorum Brown Act issues.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

There may have been some just there in listening mode, but it wasn't like they were participating, it was more the developer, the staff planner, maybe a couple of other City staff people, and then members of the public. I'm doing a multi-family project in Santa Rosa now that we need to do a neighborhood meeting for a housing project, and it's a housing project that's kind of by right housing. We're not really asking for anything special, but we still have to do a neighborhood meeting, so yes, they do require that for multi-family.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

The only thing we require, because we wrote this into the code for Telecom for a new antenna, that needs to go through here, so not just the equipment change, which is mostly what we see these days, but if someone wanted to do a new antenna they have to do a neighborhood meeting before they can apply. That's a good question, because it certainly has been helpful in raising awareness. Huntley Square did one as well.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

I don't think it needs to happen for every single project, but like Huntley Square and Woodmark you knew was going to be controversial, especially the bigger ones you know are going to be controversial, but even we knew this thing tonight with Horizon Shine was going to be controversial with the neighbors. Again, I think people feel like they're a little more heard in other settings than they are in these more formal meetings. I think people feel like it's a done deal by the time it gets to this point and there's really nothing they can do to change anyone's mind, so just something to think about. I don't know if we want to formalize it.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Well, SAVS had that in their plan. I remember when they first came up and they were looking at this spot down at Public Works, they had a lot of meetings, and then once they moved they had more meetings again, and there was supposed to be a monthly time for neighbors to come and address issues when they came up, and I don't know whether they are continuing to do that, but I think that was one of the things they were planning to do.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Yes, they did, or they do, hold those, but I think it's become more for the residential community there and neighbors don't attend so much, but I believe they did have that.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

Yes, they were going to have a time and place for the neighbors to comment and to meet as needed about things, so it's a little surprising that they didn't, or maybe they did, or maybe they're just always up against the same group complaining, so they already know that.

Evert Fernandez, Vice Chair

One thing we might consider is for the park issue, because we were talking about that fence for the duck pond. The next thing I know I'm reading people saying, "They decided they're taking that fence down," and it's like whoa, we just talked about the possibility. So something like that where you've got so many stakeholders there, the neighbors, the school, and we hold a meeting and we think we're including them, but it's not really a public forum, it's more like we're going to give you three minutes and then we're going to talk about it, and something else might occur to you, but now you can't comment on it. So something like that to head it off at the pass. Kari, you follow the procedure. You inform neighbors, you let them know, and there are always going to be people that are like we just heard about this and why are you making the decision now, we need time to talk and think about it, and it's not necessarily their fault. We follow the procedure and give them a week, but in their eyes they haven't gotten the word, they're not paying attention until somebody mentions to them and by that time it's crisis mode. So I think because of those types of things that we should consider that more, because we try to, but by the time it gets to us public perception is you guys have already decided this, you're just ramrodding this through, you're not giving us a chance to talk about it, and public perception is important, whether it's true or not. Oftentimes I feel like maybe we should delay it, but then that's not fair to the applicant. When they came through to talk about the hotel, they did an excellent

job. They held these workshops, these open meetings, they took in public comment, they came to the Planning Commission to get some idea if they were on the right track, so that by the time they came back it was so smooth, and for a project that size, it seemed to go very smoothly. But I'm with Paul, I think that there are certain things that we should just say here's your chance to talk about it or consider making it two meetings, because we know that the first meeting is just going to be starting and we'll give people an opportunity for a second one, something like that.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

In the case of the fences, if there are three or four options to consider that are visual enough that people can understand them, then you can present those ideas a couple of weeks in advance and publicize it and let them know that you're taking feedback.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

That's actually like the Libby Park playground where we did the survey on we're replacing this, what do you want to see? And I've gotten so many comments, even from two or three of the current City Council candidates, and not just the ones who were at the tour, but a couple of the other ones as well. Most people, when they're appointed to the Planning Commission aren't necessarily aware that they are now a park commissioner as well, so I'm wondering if there's a way for those issues to have particular Planning Commission meeting dates, maybe twice annually or quarterly, where there would be any park topics on those dates? I know Calder Creek was a special project and had its own dates, but things like the Little League will be coming to the next meeting to do their annual presentation, and Chair Oetinger, you had asked what about our other partners that we have? It's interesting when you might require preliminary review to get that initial feedback that Vice Chair Fernandez is talking about. This is something that I think would be helpful to talk about. The last place I worked we had the ability to do a study session or just go straight to hearing, and that was actually a design review process. I encourage everyone with a more complex project to do the preliminary review, and I make it clear that if the applicant hasn't done a preliminary review the Planning Commission shouldn't feel the need to rush a decision, and it's the job of staff to identify the issues that have more complexities, and what our code does have right now is if you have a building larger than 10,000 square feet or more than ten units, it requires a 30-day notice and the big blue Notice of Intent to Develop sign. If you were to very quickly want to do something I would say that's maybe the metric for requiring a preliminary review too, and that would be a code change, an ordinance change, but that would be the starting point for that discussion if you all want to think about that and if it would make sense to amend something like that in the future.

Evert Fernandez, Vice Chair

It does make sense, because oftentimes it seems like we do feel the pressure to make a decision, or if we continue it, it puts us in a position of we're not going to have public comment at this second meeting, and that's not necessarily right either. People are coming in that just heard about it and they want to be able to talk. So I think it helps to continue that and to know ahead of time and have that open as a possibility rather than make it seem like when the suggestion is brought up should we continue this, but it's like 'no we shouldn't, we need to make a decision, we shouldn't drag this on', so have it be more open minded that way as a possibility ahead of time.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Right, and if we were to review a very large project, something with an EIR or something like that, as planners we do sometimes schedule that as there are going to be two or three meetings on this. This one is going to be the introduction and presentations, questions from the Commission, and we might have public comment as a part of that, but you might also

have public comment later on, because now they've just seen this information and the general public can understand it at that different level and then come back and have a second hearing that is public comment, and a third public hearing that's deliberations. I have seen that for very large projects. I don't know if Sebastopol has had those very large projects in my time here, other than the General Plan Update or the City projects that we've done like the Local Hazard Plan and the Climate Action Framework where we've done that throughout the process to have a little bit more of that participation process where we're almost using the Planning Commission meetings not as a public hearing but as a presentation and dialogue, like the Calder Creek and the Local Hazard Plan where there is time for input not matter where you come in on the process.

Paul Fritz, Commissioner

But still, those meetings are always the public input is three minutes and it's still not really a dialogue or a back and forth or anything, it's just tell us what you want to say and then move on to the next one kind of thing.

Kathy Oetinger, Chair

If we work on updating the Park Master Plan, that would be the time to have those meetings and draw those schedules in, send out those surveys, and spend some money.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Libby Park, Chair Oetinger

Chair Oetinger will type up her notes from the Libby Park tour and send them to Director Svanstrom, who will add her own comments and form them into draft minutes and send them to other Commissioners if they have anything to add.

Climate Action Committee, Chair Oetinger

The compost giveaway did not have as many takers as in the past, so there was quite a bit of compost left over. The public is still welcome to come and pick some up as needed, and it may also be used by Public Works.

Design Guidelines Subcommittee, Commissioner Fritz

The Design Guidelines Subcommittee met on October 11th to kick off a new phase of objective design standards for SB 9 and SB 35 projects. Commissioner Fritz was pleased to be working with consultant Opticos and said they seem like a good fit.

7. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Svanstrom provided updates.

The Commission asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Oetinger adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 25, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.