



City of Sebastopol
Incorporated 1902
Planning Department
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APPROVED MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF March 22, 2022

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The notice of the meeting was posted on March 17, 2022.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Fritz called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and read a procedural statement.
2. **ROLL CALL:**
Present: Chair Fritz, Vice Chair Oetinger, and Commissioners Burnes, Fernandez, and Kelley
Absent: Commissioner Douch (excused)
Staff: Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** None.
4. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA:** None.
5. **STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** None.
6. **REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:**

A. SEBASTOPOL LITTLE LEAGUE PRESENTATION (no written report)

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report.

Andy Russell, President of Sebastopol Little League, presented and was available for questions.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Andy, I know you're doing the Little League, but you're also responsible for renting our fields, and I know there are a number of people like adult leagues that rent from you. Can you give a brief overview of that?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

Adult softball rents our Polley Field weeknights mid-August until Halloween. They've paid a flat rate of \$9,000 these last couple of seasons and that helps cover the cost of the lights and the maintenance. The field is open for rental to anyone in the community and we have

a rental form that goes along with the contract that dictates that whoever is renting the field has to carry insurance. They could rent the field for an hourly or daily rate, depending on what their interests are. That is not a very highly utilized feature and Kari and Evert and I talked about promoting that fact more with signage such as, "If you would like to use this field, here's how you do it." I did get an email from a person in the community center last week regarding their interest in having a circus on one of the fields in the fall, which is probably not the appropriate use of that field. I'm sure there are no elephants or anything, but I'm picturing a lot of heavy use there.

Chair Fritz asked for Planning Commission questions of Mr. Russell.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Andy mentioned renting to organizations. What would work for organizations as far as the field use? You mentioned not a lot of traffic. You and I had a conversation about it might be ideal for concerts where people could put blankets out there. Do you have an idea of criteria as to what type of events would work and protect the field and not tear it up too much?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

As far as external structures or things like stages, tents, big things like that, and heavy foot traffic might cause some damage to the field. Things that are super easy would be family baseball or softball games, or if a company wanted to rent the field and hold softball games for their workplace. Or during Peacetown as a place where families could gather away from the hustle and bustle of the dancing and everything else, if they wanted a quieter place to lay a blanket out and enjoy the music and evening from there, it seems like a light use. I think those are pretty much through the summer where we have down time before we pick up again in the fall, so there might be some practice game overlaps there, but that kind of use, things that are lighter and don't tear the field up.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

You may already know that Wischemann Hall also works with the community center staff and they are very helpful in managing some of the rental business, such as collecting the insurance and any deposits that you need, so if you have one-on events you could work out an arrangement with them so you don't need to manage it so much, and then they of course would take a percentage of the fee. If you were interested in what Wischemann Hall does I could connect with you at some point. I just wanted to share that information, because it can be difficult when people who don't know what needs to happen on the field come in and then they don't know where the garbage goes, or about the locks or lights, and those are services that the community center can handle that your volunteers don't need to do.

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

That's a great idea, because being all volunteers it's after our day jobs that we're doing every other thing that we're doing, so that would be phenomenal.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

You said also that the lease asked that the Little League present some financial data to the City that's separate from our responsibilities here. It would be nice, maybe in October when you guys have a change over and you put your reports together, to maybe integrate in your Little League system and on an annual basis come to the Planning Commission and report the rentals, what kind of groups had it, general information that would be helpful, any issue that you might come across or stuff like that so that it doesn't get lost along the way, just maybe somewhere in your customs or bylaws or wherever would be helpful for that.

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

That's a perfect time to do it too, because we do an annual general membership meeting of our Little League volunteers and the president for that previous year reports on the state of the League, financials, the numbers of kids we have out playing and whatnot, so that exact report we could bring to you guys as well.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Do you have any issues, challenges, or questions for us?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

No. Our biggest ongoing thing is we have holes in the fences and people coming in and running dogs. They've been pretty decent about cleaning up after themselves, so I wouldn't even characterize it as a major issue, but as far as the facilities, that's our biggest ongoing thing. We had someone break into the bathroom and little stuff like that. It seems to be a little bit more with the unfortunate homeless situation, but that's a much more complex issue than just Little League of course.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

That's something that our Public Works is dealing with in other areas of the park as well.

Paul Fritz, Chair

What is the actual usage for the Little League? You mentioned summer is a down time, so what are your seasons? How often does the Little League use the fields?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

We're going full on right now. Our registration starts late in the year, November and December, and extends into early in the next year. February is the time where we're making teams up, doing our evaluations, and getting the kids out playing. As far as field use, mid to late February through early June, and then a little bit lighter use. There are some All-Star teams that practice and go to the tournament in July, so July is a down month. Fall Ball starts up in the middle of August and is hosted by one of the Santa Rosa leagues, but they use our fields, so kids from Santa Rosa get to come out and play under the lights at Polley, for example, and they use the two fields down at Laguna, so again, from mid August through Halloween. That lines up also when adult softball is there, so Polley Field is getting heavy use during that time. From Halloween through January the fields are pretty well dormant; we don't do much out there.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Can you explain the differences between the three fields? Like who uses the Polley Field and who uses each field over at the community center?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

Before I do that, we also rent school fields, because we have the younger kids, t-ballers, and coach pitch. This spring we're using Gravenstein and SunRidge fields, which is Pine Crest and Parkside, so renting three school fields, and those are for the younger five through eight to nine year olds. Clahan Field is the next step up from that; that's the smaller field down by the community center. That's a 60-foot diamond, so that's used by our minor divisions, which are basically nine through eleven year olds. Then Polley Field is the majors field basically, which is eleven and twelve year olds. After twelve they bump up to Laguna Field, the bigger field down by the community center, and that has intermediate, which is like a 70-foot base path we can set up, or a full size 90-foot diamond, and at that point the kids are basically playing full-on baseball, taking leads, stealing bases, all that stuff. We also share that field with the high school, so the freshmen practice there and have

a handful of games there, and the JV practices and has a couple of games there, so that field is shared with Analy.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

I want to ask a question about sponsorships that you have. I noticed some of the signage; you can see through the fence now, which is nice and adds to that. We talked about the possibility of using see-through signs, they're called perforated, where you can see the advertising if you're sitting in the field, but if you're on the outside you can look right through. I don't know the cost factor, if that's even viable, but it's nice to have that ability to look in the field. Also, a lot of people go through that field and there's nothing on there about Sebastopol, where they can get information, find something to eat, or what's going on there. Same thing with the Analy gym, as an example. Maybe you can work something out where there might be a possibility to add something like that, so I think it benefits everybody from that standpoint. But how many sponsorships do you have, and does that change over a period of time?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

We shoot for having like one sponsor for every team, and they're going to get their name on the back of the jerseys, and often that's a parent of one of the kids that's on that team. There are also some other businesses in the community that want to sponsor the majors every year; A's for example, so we have that sponsorship level. We had all the billboards across the fence at Polley. I'll have to look into the cost as far as the perforated signs, because I think we have a rate of around \$300 for one field or \$500 for all three fields. We've transitioned from the half-inch plywood board that we've used over the years to banners that you hang onto the plywood boards, so the boards are now more of a backing for that. I really like the look of Polley without all the billboards out there. We'd go on family bike rides and be cruising through the park and I always wished I could see the games that were happening there, but it would be lopped off by a billboard. I think that's something we've talked about as a Little League board ourselves, that a good thing to give up is the outfield fence billboards, just for the connection to the park and that field. Clahan is not such a big issue, because there are a bunch of brambles behind the fence, so you're not really blocking any views there. It's nicer probably at Laguna without a bunch of billboards out there too. I think it's worth a discussion on the financial impact of the billboard sponsors, whether it's worth it, because it's a lot of work for us to maintain the billboards and keep that up, and also in terms of the visuals and just how nice the park is. We're definitely open to discussing how that impacts the visual throughout the parks. I'll look into the perforated signs, but my sense is they might even be a little bit too obstructive in terms of visual.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

And there are areas on the north side of the fence that you put signage up there, maybe strategically plan it.

Paul Fritz, Chair

I think that's a nice idea, because when you're watching a game it's nice to see into the park, and also when you're in the park it's nice to see the other way. It would be especially nice to have that connection at Polley Field. It also makes the park feel larger. It's a small park and the field takes up a lot of space, so if you could at least see into it, it would help the overall feel of the park for sure.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

I want a clarification. I came in about three minutes late when you were talking about renting the space for family parties and that circus had asked you, but that seemed like not

an appropriate usage for the space. For clarification, you lease the land and then you sublet it to these other events, or how does that work?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

We have a lease agreement with the City that we maintain the fields at our expense. Part of that contract is that we report to the City what our financials are and what we're doing. Another part of that is that when we're not using the fields the community should have access to the fields, and that's the rental for uses that are appropriate.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

And then obviously you maintain it after the rentals, but does the City get any portion of that when you rent it, or does that all go to the Little League?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

No, and it's not much. The adult softball league is really the main renter. For the three months between August and October it was \$9,000, and that covers some of the cost of the lights and the maintenance. But as far as other uses, I think it's like \$25 an hour, so it's not an expensive rental by any means.

Deborah Burnes, Commissioner

I had no idea they put on some many events in Sebastopol that that was even a possibility. That's awfully inexpensive, but I don't know the cost of maintaining it. Would it be feasible at any point to really rent it out for events that didn't ruin your field and be able to bring in revenue, or is the maintenance just too cost effective and you're usage too high to even consider that?

Andy Russell, Sebastopol Little League President

I would think that's not the right place for uses that would have external structures like stages and tents, a bunch of tables, and heavier foot traffic. Any potential revenue would be outweighed by having to fix the fields up. That's the Little League's approach, as I've understood it. I think we've said no to a couple potential renters over the years for that reason. I think a couple years ago someone wanted to host a wine tasting event and we thought it would be too damaging to the field.

Chair Fritz opened public comment. Hearing none, Chair Fritz closed public comment.

Chair Fritz thanked Mr. Russell for his time and presentation and concluded the item.

B. PARK PLANNING / BUDGET REVIEW

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report.

Chair Fritz asked for Planning Commission questions of staff.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

On the parklets, I believe the street should be Bodega Avenue and not Burnett Street, the cross street.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

The parklet that is proposed for that is the one that's near Retrograde and Sunshine Café.

Paul Fritz, Chair

So that would be south.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

You're correct; it should be south.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

The phase 2 of Ives Park, does that phase included public input on a new Master Plan update, or is it just solely focused on the new path and the construction of the creek?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

That right now is focused on the creek and what it would take to get it ready for the Green Stormwater Grants or the Coastal Conservancy Grants, which would really be focused on the creek.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

When would the public meetings come regarding the other areas, like whether or not there's a rose garden, and how big the playground is, and all of that?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

You're talking about the other elements that we need to move around or re-vision as part of the Master Plan. I don't have that in this year's budget. I was thinking that it would be in the next year's budget.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

Having that information might be really good if we're going for grants, having some of that might be included, but I don't know how that works. Do you think it would be useful to go for grants for the other elements as well at the same time?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

It depends upon the grant. In conversations I've had with Jessica and with GHD, so far they are looking at the creek itself, because Healthy Streams Daylighting Streams Grants for the Coastal Conservancy is based on that, but there are certainly grants out there. The Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space Preservation, for instance, is a potential grant funder for something like this. There are some that would be more focused on other aspects, not just the creek and the associated pathways and that kind of stuff.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

So if one were following the other, we could still go for separate grants for those other element grants?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Right.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

Perhaps the worker would work together to do it. It's hard to imagine the contractors working on the creek also working on playgrounds or picnic tables, but at some point I guess it all comes together.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Exactly. If you're going to be restructuring regarding the creek, then obviously you're going to need to do that before implementing whatever is happening around it, and that's the thought behind the phasing of this. Part of it is we've got the Housing Element due at the end of this year, and a few other policy items. The appropriate time, given staff and the

Commission's workload, is our next item and we can talk about it then. Budget and work flow all fits together in the end.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

What's the connection with Americorp? Do they fund or sponsor? Why is that the name for that project?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Excellent question. This project is likely to be renamed. The reason it is called Americorp is the very top part of it right by the fields was originally constructed using Americorp people, and so that's why it's call the Americorp Trail. The extension itself, the new bridge, the new pergolas, it's really just a foot-beaten path, not a formal trail, so all of that work is essentially new. The City Council has already asked that question and asked if they could rename it, and Ag and Open Space don't care, so yes, we can rename it if there's a better name to call it until it is renamed. I think when it was submitted a grant for this it was called the Americorp Trail Extension.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

That makes sense. At least refer to it until they get a new name on there.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

And if someone wants to make a generous donation, I'm sure the City might consider a naming opportunity.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Also regarding grants and along the lines of Kathy's question, I understand that oftentimes a grant for a creek would include the path for it as well, so wondering if the grant specifically will be within Ives Park or is there spillover into, say, down by Jewell Avenue, that creek area there or by the Railroad Forest possibility? How do those grants work?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

In terms of what's phasing, down by Jewell there isn't a lot of public land for that. I don't know if there are public improvements in terms of the creek where it's channelized or what's not channelized. I believe that the area that is east of Petaluma Avenue and south of Abbott Avenue, south of the post office annex and towards Railroad Forest, there is certainly a potential for it, particularly for this green water control. That's a major stormwater path for Calder Creek, whether it's in a conduit under City streets or daylighted over in that portion of town, so I know GHD is looking at it. And there are also FEMA grants and hazard mitigation grants. If you recall the Hazard Mitigation Plan we put together, it does include Calder Creek specifically called out as a flooding prevention and stormwater need, so there are a lot of different grants that might be available, but they mostly have to do with either in the park or the downstream towards the Railroad Forest.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

I know Lynn Deedler had talked to some property owners about possibly a path from the Jewell area, but that's a separate issue I guess from that standpoint. How is it decided what grants you apply for? Who writes these grants and how is it decided?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

So far I've been the person identifying and writing those grants for the City, and also doing the administering and all the paperwork and invoicing, everything like that for it. Yes, that is definitely limiting. Working with Jessica and Riley has been wonderful and I would hope that they would continue to be engaged in some way. They certainly know the sources and the

people involved with a lot of the grant funding. I have a small portion of my budget available for grant writing, and I've used that from time to time to hire people to help with some of them. I haven't used them for park grants so far, but I could certainly see in this case it is more complex for the Green Stormwater. Of course Engineering likely has the capability of being able to go after money and they know what areas within their engineering realm are out there. Additionally, and I don't know where this is going to go, the Climate Action Committee has requested \$60,000 for a grant for climate related projects: green infrastructure, reduction in flooding, energy, any sort of thing related to that. Right now that's in my budget. I don't know if it will stay there, I don't know if it will get granted. They did raise it at the Council meeting last Tuesday when they did their quarterly report out to Council. We haven't had any of the Budget Subcommittee hearings yet and they would do any recommendations to Council. Council has the final decision on that.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Also, I know that most grants are for development creation and so forth and there's always a challenge for the maintenance part of it, and that's one thing that concerns me because it's a complicated ecosystem and it's not just a matter of cutting grass. I don't know what's out there, but I think just to keep in mind that that's always an issue. I'm sure the thought is the Planning Department will take care of all the maintenance.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Or the Public Works Department. You're absolutely right, Evert. Everyone wants to fund the sexy stuff, the new pretty things. I think that's actually one of the really nice things about the Measure M park measure is that it can be used for maintenance. Now, resurfacing a tennis court, not terribly sexy, although if you're a tennis player and it's a 20-year-old court surface, yes, that is part of maintaining and continuing to have parks that are usable. Right now we are using some of that as sort of gap funding, but the portions of it, like in the Ives Park pathway, we're just going to maintain it because we know we're likely in the long run dig it up. That's where we can use those Measure M funding sources, to be able to use that for those types of things. For the creek itself, one of the things that's happened with the creek is that over time it hasn't been maintained, so the weir has been undermined and it can't we used anymore, because it just undermines and erodes the soil underneath it. Because there's a manufactured sakrete walls around it, it doesn't repair itself the same way a natural ecosystem would, which is what we're working on. Lastly, I do have a good relationship with the Laguna Foundation folks and they have a lot of volunteers as well who are really good at that natural ecosystem maintenance and re-vegetation like they're doing for the Americorp Trail, so there are some sources. I think the Planning Commission has mentioned wanting to do some work days at Ives Park, so harnessing some of that energy in our community as well.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Thank you for representing our viewpoints regarding the shower at the pool and protecting the park funds.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

You're welcome, and I would love to, after questions, get any input or thoughts you have about what I'm presenting tonight in terms of any priorities or thumbs up/thumbs down things like that.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

As it sits right now, what are the priorities, or how do you determine what are going to be priorities?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

To me the big priorities are the things that we already have going on and getting them done, and they've been on our list for a while. The Americorp Trail, that's basically handed over to Engineering to get it ready for bid. I think they have a little bit of work to do with the consulting engineering firm to get those documents ready and out. The Ives Park pathway, and that's, again, because of the safety concerns and trip hazards, but also that pathway is just in really bad shape, as we all know. Making sure the Master Plan keeps moving forward, and then the Burbank Farm public restroom. If we get that grant, then it's basically going to be funding with a pretty small match from the City. Those are all leveraging outside funding measures, and in most cases, and with the Burbank Farm, we already have the money from those grants, we just need to do the implementation, and so that's why my recommendation this year is really to make sure we have a little bit more Measure M funds or a little bit more funds going into the public. The park improvement funds, I don't tend to count eggs before they hatch in terms of the hotel is going to come in, so they're not actually going to be paying those park fees until the hotel is open, and that's a years down the road even if they start construction this year. So really using the money we have and the additional Measure M funds to make sure we could accomplish things, we have grants. Showing that you can get projects done is super critical for future grants, and so I want to take some of these off and get them opened and do the ribbon cutting ceremony, just like we did at the new playground.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Do you know when you expect to hear about the CDBG Grant?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I think formally the funding recommendations go back to the Community Development Commission meeting that I have next month, and then from there it goes to the Supervisors. It probably goes to the Supervisors about June. I know they do the design and engineering and bid dock on that. They are already moving forward with that portion of it so that when they do get the capital dollars they'll be ready to go.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

I was wondering when the Burbank restroom ADA work was going to be done? Is that a separate building or is it an addition to the cottage?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I will be a separate standalone building. The cottage is somewhat historic is my understanding, but also just to make sure that it's ADA and it has obviously sewer and water, and it needs to have an ADA pathway between the ADA parking space, the trails, the building, and the restroom itself. In that general location work has been done by volunteers, and they were actually considering trying to build it themselves, but it turns out it was too big of a project, which is totally understandable, but in terms of now it needs to go out to public bid, it needs to have the appropriate documentation, construction drawings, for that to move forward.

Paul Fritz, Chair

I was just going to comment on the parklet item. I think we could certainly do one parklet for less than \$70,000, I'm hoping, but it remains to be seen, but I think it's good to have something in there because we may be able to do two or start work on a third or whatever, so I appreciate you putting some money into that for now as kind of a placeholder. I'm hoping those parklets are not just fully funded by the City, and I know some of the

businesses are interested in participating, so I think there are other opportunities and not just City resources to be spent on those.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

The bikes, pedestrian, and safety projects, are all those considered priority or are there some that are going to wait, or what's the status of those?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There are some of those as part of this next year's budget proposal. I don't have the full Capital Improvement Program in front of me and I apologize, and I've only seen the draft that is going to the Budget Subcommittee, but I believe we had Council authorization for some funding for Ragle Road bike lane improvements, and that was approved on consent last Tuesday by Council, so we'll be submitting that grant. That's an Active Transportation Plan Grant, ATP Grant, so I know that's one of the priorities we're moving forward with. The Commission will see all of those projects when we come back with the CIP in last May or June when you're doing your General Plan review, so you'll get the full picture of sewer, stormwater, roads, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, public art, all that good stuff. I'm happy to send you the draft CIP when it comes out for the Budget Subcommittee so you can see it in advance if you want to join the Budget Subcommittee or comment on it to them.

Chair Fritz asked for further Planning Commission or public comments. Seeing none, he concluded the item.

C. PLANNING COMMISSION WORKPLAN UPDATE

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report.

Chair Fritz asked for Planning Commission questions of staff.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

I'm grateful that you put the Ives Park Creek and planning ahead of the general planning for parks. I wasn't as interested in going through the other parks and trying to work on them too, but I feel like I am more interested in that now. It will help me to have a better vision of how all the parks are used, and I would like to spend a little more time in those parks just on my own, so I still think that that is important too and I'm glad that it's on the list.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

I would concur as far as probably for me it would be Ives Park Master Plan, and there is a need to get an idea of what else is going on, but not if it slows down that portion. I think it would be great to move forward on that. What is the Rights of Nature Ordinance that's listed on there?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

The Rights of Nature Ordinance is an action under the Open Space Element of our Master Plan, and it's really the idea that nature itself has rights and when you're doing development or you're doing other things a lot of times what you're doing to the environment isn't considered. In the Laguna areas the Environmental and Scenic Open Space Overlay requires the Commission and us to provide guidance and for us to look at the implications to habitat, to flora and fauna, and the impacts that we have on that. This is really looking at the implications of the things that we approve as a city. Can we be more proactive with our environmental measures? I'd describe it as California Environmental Quality Act looks at the current of things environmentally and it asks you to analyze if you're going to have significant negative environmental impacts. What it doesn't do is it

doesn't look at where the environment should be or could be, it just looks at the current state, so if you have a completely degraded site CEQA is going to say that's great, but the reality is can we make things better? Can we actually bring things back to where they were naturally? The Calder Creek naturalization is a perfect example of that in a lot of ways. It's environmental and you could do CEQA on it, and it's already channelized, so CEQA on that project is going to be pretty easy, because you couldn't do much to get worse on what's been done to that creek in that area. But the rights of nature ask what is the right of that creek to actually have a natural pathway? I'm sure others would define it differently, but that's my understanding of what that is.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

You also talked about updating the ordinances or recommendations regarding maintaining creeks going through private property. I'm not sure how you would define that.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Thank you, Evert, because that is not on this list. The City has a Creek Ordinance, and it's in the section of our code basically called General Regulations that Affect Multiple Districts. If you have a creek it obviously could go through commercial, industrial, and residential zones, so we have our regulations in there for the creek, and yes, you're right, that is something that is very dated. It is basically there as a way to make sure that you don't get localized flooding, and it doesn't allow you to build within 30 feet of the creek, but it doesn't say anything about what you should be doing in that 30 feet. Are you suggesting we add that to the Workplan? Is that your next step?

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Yes. I think that's important. I don't know if this is the place for it, but I'll just keep harping on the maintain issues of it seems that any project, when they're looking at CEQA they're looking at impact, they're looking at all this stuff. Maintenance should be part of that at least to look at to determine what it's going to take to maintain it or the resources. You can still go through with the project or not, but those types of things need to be identified, but from a public perspective I'd like to know this that you're passing and what is it going to create down the road? I think it's also the Food Truck Ordinance: "The Planning Commission requests to review allowing food trucks or other mobile food vendors to satisfy the food service requirements for bars/alcohol establishments." That is, in my opinion, a priority, because that falls into health and safety. All establishments that have an alcohol license are required to provide food. It's nothing that's been looked at or enforced, but I think it's important, and I can understand, logistically or financially it doesn't make sense for a business to have a full kitchen, but if it's looked at and enforced a little bit it may encourage these bars and alcohol establishments to maybe pull together to satisfy that need by having a food truck available. It's there for a reason, to have food to absorb alcohol and for safety and health, so I look at that as an important point.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I've been through a couple of permits with the Planning Commission in the Barlow, and I'm thinking of the Region wine tasting, and I think Crooked Goat does it as well, so you guys are already allowing people to satisfy the food requirement for bars coordinating with offsite. The City also does allow food trucks, and in late-2018 Zoning Ordinance update we adopted guidance for that, so I don't think there's a code change needed for that. I think it would be allowed right now if a bar, say the Crooked Goat, wanted to invite a food truck, or O'Reilly wanted to open a café, and they wanted to use the food truck that's already there Monday through Friday to satisfy their alcohol permit. It would simply be a matter of the Commission reviewing a condition that it be present whenever they're serving alcohol, and I think you'd be able to approve it right now.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

By itself a food truck operator doesn't make financial sense to come to Sebastopol in a lot of situations and slowly build up business and pay licenses, but if it's subsidized because it's advantageous to some of the other businesses, well then maybe it does, and it allows the food truck to come in and do that, so I think that's how I look at the importance of it. And I love the Crooked Goat. You can go there, there's a menu, you can order from different areas. It's a great solution. It works really well. I've ordered from there and it's quick service, but I think it's something that we want to bring attention to. We don't want to have these places close because they're not doing that, and I think by bringing the attention it may then incentivize these businesses to contribute or to find a way to support food trucks or those types of things, especially late at night when there are really no other options and people are drinking.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Since it's already feasible and it doesn't take a code change for them to be able to do that, it just takes them proposing it, what do you feel is the best way to either get the word out or help people understand that?

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Some kind of a positive reach out, just hey, by the way, you're supposed to be providing food and here are some options for you to do that. The other thing having to do with food trucks is we had talked about creating a permanent location with a hook up that a food truck could just roll in there. I know some other cities have that and I think it's at least worth taking a look at. It may not be realistic or get to that point, but I think it's worth adding it to the list. An ideal place would be right where the Livery is located, that lot right across there kind of in a corner, you could put a truck there and use one or two spaces there possibly, but to be able to have a truck roll in and hook up power and all the other things that are needed.

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

The Community Impact Reports has been on the list for a very long time. I don't foresee a big project coming through, and of course we can't do everything all the time, but I'm glad to see that it's on the list. There's a lot of stuff here that we've done and are doing and I want to give a shout out to our Planning Director. First of all, you've got a shout out for your love of nature. You knew the primacy of nature in doing economic redevelopment and also economic revitalization. I remember when we did the last General Plan update it was brought up and we had a very long discussion, so I'm glad it's still there. I just wish we could take care of that as well, but I think the priorities are fine. I'm interested to see how we work through the vacation rental issue. There are so many facets and so much information out there, I'm sure you're going to have lots of opportunity to look at what we have, what people are doing locally and regionally and even on the statewide level. I read today that Los Angeles is suing one of the vacation rental agencies for not holding up their good neighbor issues.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I will note that yes, I am familiar with the Community Impact Reports, and while we haven't moved forward with the formal policy, there are actually a lot of great guidelines that my staff and I, when we're reviewing projects we think about these criteria. What are the impacts on employment and jobs? What are the impacts on housing? What is the impact on the neighborhood? We also look at it through the light of the Local Hazard Plan. How is it going to interact with the flood plane and is it an appropriate development there? So even though these aren't codified in any way, when someone comes forward with a use permit

that sort of catch-all is this a good thing for the community and in the best interest of the community. Those are the types of things that we're looking at and trying to identify the concerns we think the Commission might have as well.

Linda Kelley, Commissioner

I meant to say the rights of nature, but my mind went blank. I know Mendocino County did a little version of that as well, as well the precautionary principle, and that was a long time ago, so those things are great ways of framing it. Back to the Community Impact Reports, the big cities that have done those for large projects where you get together the housing advocates, not always necessarily the local ones have shown up and negotiated, but to bring the different groups together and try to find something that will be livable for everyone. Never is perfect, but I think it's a great model and our county has taken a leadership in it.

Paul Fritz, Chair

I agree that we should, since we're mid-Ives Park Master Plan update. I think it's good to keep that on the front burner over the whole City Master Plan, but I think it would be interesting to do a Planning Commission meeting maybe this summer in another park. Maybe we do that once a year where we pick a park and we just walk through and do the low hanging fruit like we did at Ives Park. We don't have to do a full citywide master plan. I go to Ives Park because it's a couple of blocks from my house. I see it all the time, but I don't ever go to Super Park. There are plenty of other parks in town I never go past or see or have any involvement with, so it would be nice just to keep us all updated on the current status of the various parks in the City. It would be nice if every August we do a park tour and rotate through all the parks once a year or something like that. Regarding the Municipal Code cleanup, I agree. Since I use the Zoning Code and I look at it now and then, I see things that I think need cleaning up, and the one that's been bugging me since the day we reviewed is the Commercial Use Table and the kind of confusion of auto-oriented uses. It's like two columns and sometimes one is allowed and one is not allowed. I think that needs to be cleaned up before we get another carwash or auto-oriented use downtown. I have an ongoing list in my mind that we need to clean up. I don't know if some of those are housing related too, so I don't know if the housing related ones could be wrapped into the Housing Element update. If there are things that we need to address in the Zoning Code related to the Housing Element, maybe we can wrap some of these other issues that are related to housing into that same update at that time. There are a couple of things that are further down, not on the priority list, but I wanted to comment on them. One is on page 5 of the PDF and it's the Downtown Plan update. The Downtown Plan is very old and could certainly use an update, and I think a potential path forward to doing something like that is Caltrans has a Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant, and it's an annual grant that is due every fall when they open the new application period. I've looked through those in previous years and they definitely have sort of downtown improvement plans. It has to be related to transportation, but I think especially for our downtown the impact of the Caltrans right-of-way in my mind impacts downtown negatively. I don't think it has to. I think you can have it downtown, a main street that's a Caltrans right-of-way, and there are certainly other cities in the state that have a much better pedestrian-oriented downtown than we have, so I think that could be an opportunity for updating the Downtown Plan funding source to do that. The other thing that's kind of lower down the list but I think it's somewhat related to some of the code updates is looking at in lieu parking fees for downtown development. I'm just going to point out, for example, there's a property for sale, the building that has sagestone and porticos for sale just north of Bodega on Main Street. The way the town was developed was very incrementally. You build a one-story building and eventually they add a second story or a third story and the building gets taller and a little bit more intense, and because of our Zoning Code and the parking requirements, that lot cannot be redeveloped. It has no

possibility for having onsite parking. The lot is as big as the building. Some of the other Main Street lots have access from the back alley where they could do some kind of little parking in the back, but this particular lot—and there are others like it downtown—is just completely landlocked, and so it's always just going to be a one-story commercial use; it has no opportunity to redevelop as mixed-use and I think that's unfortunate because the building is not great, it's kind of outlived its life, but if someone is going to buy it it's just going to be to maintain it, because they can't redevelop it. I think looking at some kind of in lieu fee or looking at downtown parking or something like that would help catalyze possibly some downtown redevelopment of buildings that are under-utilized or near the end of their productive life. One other thing I want to point out, I noticed in the park budget item on the last page about the parklets, it didn't have a specific General Plan goal associated with it, and as I was looking through the Workplan, this is related to the Downtown Plan update, we have an action item to provide quality public accessible open spaces at appropriate locations downtown, so I thought you could use that as the impetus for the parklet.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I'm getting a sense that everyone is good with what are kind of immediate work on the first couple of pages, a lot of which is already laid out and already underway. I guess one question, for those that are within the B categories, is there any reorganization you'd like me to do? Demote some of the things that we haven't talked about, like the dark sky regulations, the Tree Protection Ordinance, and the noise standards, and elevate others, or are you okay knowing that when we do get to this we'll do a finer inserting of it?

Paul Fritz, Chair

I personally would like to move the Downtown Plan and the in lieu parking up higher in that list. I feel like when we did the Zoning Code update we took a pretty hard look at the Noise Ordinance. I don't know if that needs to be updated or if the other Commissioners want to weigh in on that, but I felt like we were fairly thorough on that when that happened. The Tree Protection Ordinance doesn't really cross our path too often, so I'm not really familiar with where that is or what needs to happen with it, and the same thing with the dark sky regulations. Those are kind of Design Review items, so I'm not particularly familiar with how to categorize those in terms of the priority list. I know we have those regulations somewhat in place, I'm just not sure how robustly or what we need to happen to get them.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I would say our Tree Protection Ordinance is stronger because it does have heritage trees listed. We do have some listed as nuisance trees, like eucalyptus and acacias, which is great, because they're completely pyrophytic and escaped exotics. There are certainly some updates that could be done with that, but I think it's in pretty good shape in general, and you're right, it would be a Design Review/Tree Board led on that one. It would come to the Planning Commission just because anything that goes before Council in this realm does. The dark sky regulations are probably easier to address in some ways, and right now we have a design standard that says protect against light bleed to adjacent properties, and I use that and John uses that to make people do the cutoff so that you're not also illuminating the sky. Unfortunately, that's only projects that are subject to design review; it doesn't encompass retrofits or any sort of single-family, which is a lot of our town, and so a lot of that is you get your neighbors' garage light shining right in your bedroom and up into the sky. If it were my way I'd have that one elevated.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

One thing I didn't see on here, I think the City recently had a workshop for people who wanted to convert some space and had to do with identifying and helping residents to create to more living space. Maybe someone has an attic, and the average person wouldn't

know that they could create this much more space. You go to a workshop and you have an architect there, you have a finance person, or here are a couple of structure plans, ABC plans, that you can convert a garage into rooms or living space or something like that, and help the City to identify the low hanging fruit.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

That's sort of an ongoing initiative. We had a housing fair in the fall of 2018, right around the time our new Zoning Ordinance was going into effect. I think Paul was part of that as one of the architect/experts talking to folks. We had that at the community center and it was a pretty packed house. It included people from Permit Sonoma, the Community Development Corporation, and Redwood Credit Union, which I think at the time were the only people doing financing for people to build ADUs, and we still have a lot of that material on our website. We've also been working with the Napa Sonoma ADU Collaborative, and we have Alan and Steve and Pattie from Building, and Alan, who used to be our Associate Planner, did a webinar through that about how to build an ADU in Sebastopol. John is working with him right now and they have a calculator set up so that you can calculate the cost to build different unit sizes and types in Sebastopol, along with building permit fees, and likely rent they could get, so people can understand the financial portions of that. So we have pretty big presence about that on the City website and we offer those types of webinars. When we had the housing workshop with the City Council a couple of weeks ago promoting ADUs it was one of the things that we talked about specifically, how to continue that relationship with the Napa Sonoma ADU Collaborative and continuing to find ways to promote ADUs and JADUs, which are oftentimes the conversion, and in Sebastopol most of them are rented out or used for a family member who would otherwise be trying to find a place somewhere else.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

I think for people that have already thought I've got some extra land, I want to do this, that's helpful, but also for people who maybe would have never thought of that. There are probably quite a few of those around that want somebody to come and look at your property to see what's possible, easier projects that they could add more living spaces for people and not have to build something from scratch.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I think the Napa Sonoma Collaborative does do that. They charge a small fee for it, because obviously you've got to pay someone to go out, but I think they're already set up to do that kind of a thing, so it may be just promoting that to residents.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Yes, to put that notion out there that you might have some space that you never thought of converting.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

And that is definitely inherent in the Housing Element update. My recommendation on this would be that we'll go back and make a couple of final adjustments and bring it back to the Commission as a consent item so those who weren't here or had to drop out can look at the final list, and bring it forward to Council to get their blessing on it as well, just like we did last time.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

And you do have on there the recommendation of an annual meeting. I don't know why that has pushback, but I went to one years ago and I thought it was fantastic. We got to know

each other, got an idea from Council what direction we were going, and I think it helps overall.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Maybe when the Council reviews our Workplan we can be there to talk to them about it, have a joint session.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

We had a joint work session for the Housing Element kick off last September, which was really nice.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Yes, that was helpful.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES – None.

8. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Svanstrom provided updates.

The Commission asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Fritz adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 12, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.