

AYES: Chair Luthin, Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Member Bush
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Board Members Henley and Level
ABSENT: Board Member Balfe.

4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Associate Planner Jay reported that:

- City Council recently adopted the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and grant funding is available to help mitigate hazards such as floods and other natural disasters.
- City Council approved the Habitat for Humanity project last month. The project is tentatively scheduled for the September 7th Design Review Board meeting for the final stages of design review.
- The first cutoff for the Façade Improvement Program was August 15th.
 - The City received two applications for the program, and DRB will review the items at its September 7th meeting.
 - The City received two extension requests from the last Façade Improvement Program from two businesses that were unable to complete their projects before the end of the fiscal year.
- The Woodmark Apartments project received its conditional approval letter sent last week. Site demolition will begin within a week with the anticipation of pulling building permits at some point this year.
- The Housing Element update is in draft review for public comment. Anyone interested in making comments related to housing in the City of Sebastopol should visit the Planning Department's website for the Housing Element update, which provides a link to a survey and the opportunity to make comments.

The Board asked questions of Associate Planner Jay.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: None.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA:

- A. Continuation of Item 7B from the May 18, 2022 Meeting** – Consider whether to change meeting to once a month, or to continue with the twice a month format.

Associate Planner Jay presented the staff report and was available for questions.

The Board had no questions for Associate Planner Jay.

The Board discussed the item as follows:

Christine Level, Board Member

I think a once a month meeting is a good idea, but I think we should have the option to schedule another meeting if something critical comes up or needs to be addressed.

Ted Luthin, Chair

I agree with that. I think that's a good idea. If a critical issue comes up or if we end up continuing an item and the item has some urgency to it, we could drop a meeting in.

Cary Bush, Board Member

I say leave well enough alone. We've been following this format, or at least I have, for close to six years, and I'm fine with it. It just leaves two dates available; it's on the calendar every first and third Wednesday of every month. That works for me, and if it can't, then we all are pretty transparent about what works or doesn't work for us. I think it's been a good rule to follow.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

That's a good point. John, can you explain again why this is even being considered?

John Jay, Associate Planner

Going back to Christine's question as to when we potentially go to an in-person or hybrid format, if we are going to be renting out a location and having the infrastructure there in place, and if we regularly cancel meetings, depending on the amount of notice that we have beforehand it could raise some issues. Once we get a clear scope on pricing and if we're going to be charged for cancelations, that is the main reason why it was brought up. In my short time here we've had quite a few cancelations due to not having items, scheduling conflicts, or things that come up with your professional jobs. I want to give everyone an option; if there's a certain day that works better, or we go with keeping it as is, I'm fine with that as well.

Melissa Hanley, Board Member

I'm curious if you have data on the cancelation rate over the last 12 months?

John Jay, Associate Planner

Yes.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

Multiple cancelations.

Melissa Hanley, Board Member

This is my first actual participation in one of these, and I've been a board member for about two-and-a-half months now, because of cancelations and vacations.

Ted Luthin, Chair

I'd say the bulk of the cancelations are because there's nothing on the agenda. We don't often have cancelations because we don't have a quorum. It happens maybe a couple of times a year, usually probably in the summertime, but most of the time they're canceled because we don't have any issues to review. I can go either way. I feel the same way as Cary does: my personal schedule is flexible enough that if I get a cancelation of this meeting on Friday or Monday or whatever, it doesn't really upset me a whole lot, and if other people need a more regimented schedule, I'm fine with accommodating that too. I don't know that I feel super strongly one way or the other.

John Jay, Associate Planner

Board Member Hanley, to your question, we've had eight cancelation meetings so far this year.

Melissa Hanley, Board Member

That's almost 50% eight months in, twice a month. That sort of tells us what we need to know then.

Christine Level, Board Member

I brought this up with John privately, but it would be really helpful just knowing more in advance what's coming up. I've got so much stuff going on right now, and we have this date sitting open and don't find until the Thursday before if it's a yes or a no. If we could know about the projects coming down the pipeline and know what meetings are really essential, that you need the Board for, that would be super helpful in trying to schedule these meetings.

Ted Luthin, Chair

I agree, it might be a good idea in the front part of our agenda where we have Planning items of interest to have a Planning look ahead to see what is coming down the pipe.

John Jay, Associate Planner

I think that's fair enough.

Christine Level, Board Member

If we could have a better schedule, know when stuff was coming up, then I would be more amenable to the twice a month schedule, but right now it's just so hit or miss it almost gets to the point where you don't take it seriously anymore. Then we have the issue of the meeting location. We used to have the meetings in our standard room, but I guess that's not available anymore, so the City has to rent a location and set up the infrastructure if we're going to have an actual live meeting. In that case, it would be better if the City has to do all of that to set one day a month for our meeting, and maybe the second meeting is just a Zoom meeting. There are a lot of factors playing into this.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

Do we have to wait for what's coming down from City Council on the Zoom meetings? Maybe we need that information to help us decide.

Melissa Hanley, Board Member

I think we should go crazy and take a vote. We got an over 50% cancelation rate, so I feel like 50% of the meetings is probably the right amount of meetings.

Ted Luthin, Chair

I tend to agree with that. I'm guessing historically if we look back over the last three or four years, 50% is probably about what it's been. I also think that if the need arises we can always go back to the every two weeks format.

Cary Bush, Board Member

I'm comfortable one way or the other; whatever works for the City and my fellow Board members is fine with me.

John Jay, Associate Planner

And we can always change it going forward as well. We can continue as is, and then assess it again when we get an actual location and if we are doing hybrid format meetings. That's always an option as well.

Ted Luthin, Chair

I do also want to be conscious of the customer service aspect of this. If our meeting is on the third Wednesday of the month and someone walks in the last Tuesday of the month and has to wait almost a month to get on our agenda, there is that aspect too, that we have some responsibility to be responsive to our community members.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

Then from our perspective, if we have to miss a meeting for some reason, then we don't get to go to a meeting for two months, and there would be more likelihood that we lack a quorum because of that.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes, if you lack a quorum, then you've got a two-month gap.

Christine Level, Board Member

I think you make a really good point, and I'm like kind of convinced to move my interpretation back to the two times a month, because our purpose here is to serve the public, so we should be available to the public. It would be helpful if Planning could reveal anything that they even think is coming up so that we can plan ahead a little bit more and it's not a last minute surprise. But I take your point really well, Ted, we do need to be available to the public; that's our purpose.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

To your point, Christine, wouldn't that also then factor into whether we have to reserve or cancel a meeting location? If we know a week ahead, that place should be flexible enough to let us cancel a meeting.

Christine Level, Board Member

Additionally, a lot of the bigger projects are coming down the pipeline for a while; they don't just show up. John, does it have to be a meeting for you to let us know what's coming, or can you just email us that something came in and what looks to be important for the next meeting? Is that appropriate?

John Jay, Associate Planner

Yes, as long as we're not discussing any items or making any conclusions, approval, or denial on the project. As long as it's purely information-based, then I don't see an issue with letting you know beforehand that a project is on the way. I know it's still a public meeting.

Christine Level, Board Member

I'm going to move strongly back to two times a month, because I strongly believe we need to be available for the public.

Board Member Level moved to continue with the twice a month DRB meeting format, with the stipulation that staff is free to give more notification regarding upcoming agenda items.

Board Member Bush seconded the motion.

Chair Luthin opened public comment. Seeing no speakers, Chair Luthin closed public comment.

AYES: Chair Luthin, Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Members Bush and Level

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: Board Member Hanley

ABSENT: Board Member Balfe

B. Tour of Past Projects – Consider the second tour of past projects, which includes Woodfour, Handline, Barlow Townhomes, Exchange Bank, and Fern Bar.

Associate Planner Jay presented the staff report and was available for questions.

The Board had no questions for Associate Planner Jay.

The Board discussed the item as follows:

Ted Luthin, Chair

The other project I might throw on the list is where Flavor Bistro is.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

We looked at that last time.

Cary Bush, Board Member

Good walk and talk.

Christine Level, Board Member

The other one I'd like to add on there is the giant sign at The Barlow.

John Jay, Associate Planner

Is that the one that overhangs McKinley Street?

Christine Level, Board Member

When you turn into where Community Market is there are two giant signs that have changed since we approved them. Size is the key on that. You could put anything you want inside that sign.

Christine Level, Board Member

I have one quick question about the list. You mentioned The Barlow Townhomes. Are those the original Dan Davis projects?

John Jay, Associate Planner

Yes.

Christine Level, Board Member

Yes, that's the one where he craftily told us that this was going to be his family project, and he was going to rent it out, that it was a heritage project.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

I don't know if we can comment on what design was proposed versus what design was built.

Christine Level, Board Member

No, I know. I'm just making a comment about that one.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

The political nature of the Design Review Board. Last time we did a walking tour, but this is a little bit farther, so how about if we get on bicycles and do a biking tour?

Ted Luthin, Chair

I'm up for that.

Christine Level, Board Member

Are you providing me with a bike?

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

We could probably rustle you up a bike somehow.

John Jay, Associate Planner

Might need two.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

We could go to the bike shop. It's a public service; maybe they'll rent us a couple of bikes at a low cost.

8. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES – None.

- 9. ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Luthin adjourned the meeting at 4:34 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Tree/Design Review Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 7, 2022 at 4:00 P.M.