



City of Sebastopol
Incorporated 1902
Planning Department
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

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APPROVED MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF July 11, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The notice of the meeting was posted on July 6, 2023.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Fernandez called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and read a procedural statement.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL:

Present:	Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz
Absent:	Commissioners Burnes and Oetinger
Staff:	Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director John Jay, Associate Planner

3. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA:

Carol Everts (phonetic), a Member of the Public

I'm here to report on the project located at 7631 and 7635 Healdsburg Avenue and the ongoing conversation about their lighting fixtures. They got rid of all the lighting on the corner piece at 7631, and the little house at 7635 also has no more lighting. Other spots still have lighting with no shielding, just the glaring light bulbs. The house has recessed lighting on the front porch. They have recently put the sconce lighting back on and it glares right through our stained glass front door. It's amazing how it can do that from across the street. It's just a sconce with the entire light bulb exposed. Everything was off, but now it's back on again.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I have been by that site and I thought that they had removed everything, so it's helpful to know from your perspective that they have not.

John Jay, Associate Planner

I spoke to Kathy Austin, who is the project architect, and she said if there are any additional complaints with the lighting to please let the Planning Department know.

Kyle Falbo

I hope the City and the various subcommittees and departments are well aware of the grand jury report that specifically references the way that Petaluma was managing its contract services, and is prepared for a response to the way that Sebastopol is managing its contract services, in particular, a couple of places where your Planning Commission has utilized contract services. One is the Objective Standards Subcommittee that was originated through City Council and with a City Council member sitting on the board, but it very quickly somehow turned into a contract service with some outside entity, but I have yet to see any sort of public report through the City Council that defines what those objective standards were. First, we had a housing development project that went through SB 35 and as a result of that any of our subjective standards were not actually applicable at all, and so that was the drive behind this Objective Standards Subcommittee and this contract out with a third part to produce this list of objective standards. Secondly, we recently had our Housing Element updated, and rather than having a significant amount of public input and public members sitting on the committee, as we have had historically, instead that was also contracted out, so there was very little public input. There were surveys, but the reach and demographics of those surveys was quite limited, and so it's not clear that there was really the same level of public input in that Housing Element process as there was historically. Finally, if you look at my virtual background you will see the intersection of Bodega and Main. There is a traffic signal for pedestrians that when it turns green still stops westbound traffic on Bodega Avenue. The reason is so that people making a right-hand turn would not be enter that intersection and hit someone in the crosswalk, but since Main Street is a one-way street, it is not possible for a vehicle to enter into that crosswalk and hit a pedestrian, so on our City's busiest intersection we have a six-second delay on every single traffic light as a result of poor programming of a pedestrian walkway.

4. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None.

Director Svanstrom indicated that due to an unexpected Planning Commissioner absence, as well as a vacant commissioner position, the Planning Commission did not have a quorum and could not take action on either of the two agenda items, 6A and 6B., and the items would be continued to a special meeting the next week, however, the Commission could take public comment.

6. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

A. HopMonk – Downtown Noise Permit – 230 Petaluma Avenue

The applicant is seeking approval for a Downtown Noise Permit to exceed the City of Sebastopol Noise Ordinance for two events per month. Events will take place on Saturday and Sundays with music starting at 4:30PM and an ending time of 7:00PM. The HopMonk will notify the Planning Department a minimum of 30 days before each event for scheduled music events. The event is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA, pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4, in that the event will take place on a temporary basis and limited number of days and will not require any permanent improvements.

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report.

Chair Fernandez opened public comment.

Kyle Falbo

I saw in the list of documents what looks like a quote for sound dampening curtains, and I was curious if comment could be made as to the relevance of that and if that's related to this item? Is there some sort of expectation that the applicant would be utilizing these curtains in some way? It just wasn't clear to me why that was there as an undescribed item.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

We have been working with the HopMonk and they are looking at a number of different options, including sound dampening curtains, and we will have a full discussion regarding those options at the next public hearing.

Chair Fernandez closed public comment.

B. Ruby Pilates – Use Permit – 125 North Main Street

The applicant is seeking the approval of a use permit application for the allowance of a Pilates studio (Ruby Pilates) at 125 North Main Street in Sebastopol. The Zoning Ordinance requires a use permit for exercise facilities located within the Downtown Core district. The hours of operation are requested as follows: 5:00AM to 8:00PM Mondays through Thursday, 5:00AM to 7:00PM Fridays, and 8:00AM to 6:00PM on weekends. Appointments are required. Classes are scheduled to run on 55-minute intervals and can accommodate five people. The proposed project has been determined to be exempt from further environmental review under Section 15301 – Existing Facilities, Class 1 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report.

Chair Fernandez asked for Planning Commission questions of staff. Seeing none, he opened public comment.

Norm

I'm asking you to do something sensible. I don't like their hours, because at 5:00am we don't have the kind of security. You need to have a full-time policeman watching that down here. I used to take night deposits down to the Bank of America, and I worried after 6:00pm when it got dark. Sebastopol is dried up after 6:00 o'clock, and I know the crime rate is much higher today. Also, they're going to use those parking spots that are allocated throughout.

Kyle Falbo

I think both of tonight's agenda items are really speaking to what I'm curious about, which is here we've got some zoning ordinance that's restricting the use of a business without some additional permission from a planning commission, and I'm wondering if many of these zoning ordinances might just be out of date? What is it specifically about exercise businesses that would require some sort of change of process for a business to open in our city? I've spoken with multiple business owners in the last couple of years and they've all talked about the extremely slow pace of the process of getting a business up and running in our city, and I'm wondering if things like this zoning ordinance are contributing factors to that, and if we as the community might want to start looking at some of these zoning ordinances with a wider lens to understand that maybe they are coming from a past era. I would love to hear the history of this particular zoning ordinance that makes such a restriction on exercise type businesses in our downtown core.

Chair Fernandez closed public comment.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I don't have much to say about the hours, because our intention has been extending hours in the downtown. For exercise studios we do require some sort of review in those zones. In the downtown an exercise studio requires a use permit, because it does depend upon how intense it is. You can't have a 24-Hour Fitness, because of the issue of it being open 24 hours, and I have also seen someone trying to do 30-person classes that overlap, and they had a very small amount of parking attributed to it, and it can become an issue that way.

Evert Fernandez, Chair

I recommend continuing tonight's two agenda items to a special Planning Commission meeting on July 18th.

Kyle Falbo

I hope there will public comment on the Consent Calendar.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

There will be, but the Consent Calendar will also be continued to the next meeting as well.

Kyle Falbo

Why don't you make that thing be absences, not just consecutive absences, because tonight is a clear example of absences being an issue for the Planning Commission?

Chair Fernandez moved to continue Agenda Item 6A to a special Planning Commission meeting on July 18, 2023 at 1:00pm.

Vice Chair Fritz seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioners Burnes and Oetinger

Chair Fernandez moved to continue Agenda Item 6B to a special Planning Commission meeting on July 18, 2023 at 1:00pm.

Vice Chair Fritz seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioners Burnes and Oetinger

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Planning Commission Rules Update Resolution

8. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS: None.

9. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES: None.

10. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Svanstrom provided updates.

The Commission asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Fernandez adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will take place on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.