



City of Sebastopol
Incorporated 1902
Planning Department
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Sebastopol, CA 95472

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PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF: July 13, 2021

APPROVED DRAFT MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF July 13, 2021

PLANNING COMMISSION:

The notice of the meeting was posted on July 7, 2021.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Fritz called the meeting to order.

Chair Fritz read a statement on meeting protocols.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Fritz, Vice Chair Oetinger, and Commissioners
Fernandez, Lindenbusch, and Kelley
Absent: Commissioner Douch
Staff: Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 25, 2021, and June 22, 2021

May 25, 2021

Vice Chair Oetinger moved to approve the minutes as submitted.

Commissioner Lindenbusch seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Fritz, Vice Chair Oetinger, and Commissioners Fernandez,
Lindenbusch, and Kelley
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Douch

June 22, 2021

Commissioner Lindenbusch made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Commissioner Kelley seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Fritz and Commissioners Fernandez, Lindenbusch, and Kelley

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: Vice Chair Oetinger

ABSENT: Commissioner Douch

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

Kyle Falbo

I was going to try to refrain from speaking at this moment, but I just wanted to maybe address the repeated absences, lack of quorum, and attendance with this commission. In the last six months there has only been two meetings in which full attendance has been acquired. There are members of this Commission who are regularly frequently absent, and I am curious if there is any oversight over that. Are there any sort of ramifications of that, any communication with that Commissioner about that type of attendance behavior? Thank you so much.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Thank you for your comments, Kyle. I am sure that you know that we cannot really discuss issues brought up under public comment because it is not an agenda item, but your comment is definitely noted. Thank you for that.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Yes, and I can note that yes, we do track attendance of various commissioners. Commissioners can often be excused if they have contacted the Planning Department and let us know what the reasons are.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Yes. I just wanted to add that we could not have had full attendance because we have had an empty member placeholder, essentially. I think that six is the most that we have had.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Fritz closed public comment.

5. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None

6. REGULAR AGENDA:

- A. PUBLIC HEARING** – The Planning Commission of the City of Sebastopol will hold a public hearing to consider the General Plan compliance requirements of the proposed Capital Improvement Program budget for fiscal year 2021-22. The Planning Commission does not adopt the proposed budget, which will be done at subsequent City Council meeting. *This item was continued from the regular meeting on June 22, 2021, due to lack of quorum.*

Director Svanstrom provided an introduction.

Director Svanstrom and Toni Bertolero, Engineer, presented.

Members of the Commission asked clarifying questions throughout the presentation.

Chair Fritz opened public comment.

Kyle Falbo

I would like to ask first about the Bodega at Robinson intersection. The CIP description for this project is pedestrian and safety improvement including pedestrian activated beacons, markings, and signage. The justification given was the city's safety corridor study that identified improvements of five intersections along Bodega Avenue which includes these intersection improvements at Robinson. Now, please correct me if I am wrong, but I believe this study was conducted in 2018. My question is, how does this particular choice of improvement align with the Sebastopol zoning map update that shows half of the lots adjacent to this intersection as multifamily residential, R7. What other, if any improvements to this intersection were discussed and what, if any conversation about the lack of sidewalk on Robinson near this intersection were considered with unit number minimums as high as we have for R7 multifamily residential. It would seem to me difficult to just merely providing pedestrian safety improvements on this scale with the understanding of the increase in car volume expected via Robinson to Leland as a result of planned development without providing sidewalks in this area as a consideration. Does this really satisfy circulation elements 1-2, 1-11, or 2-2 with its explicit discussion of incorporating sidewalks, perhaps outside the scope of this body, but I would also appreciate any insight regarding the cost of this project. Perhaps this was addressed in the context of the failed bid process described in the presentation? When proposed as part of the 2019-2020 budget, the cost of this project was allocated at \$41,000. Just two years later, this cost is increased by over 35% to \$56,000.00, including new fees for project management, professional services, and predesigned design that were absent 2019-2020 request. Secondly, it is unfortunate that the CIP suggested the repaving of Bodega as being scaled down as a result of 1.2 million funding shortfall. Can any additional details be provided to the actual scale down itself? In particular, what considerations will be taken to consider the deterioration and need for replacement aspect of this project as opposed to the shoulder improvements and frontage improvement aspects that I would prefer to see offset by future developers for those suggested sites. At issue here for bicyclists is whether repaving of Bodega will be completed. CIP of bicycle lane street striping and signs for Bodega were already approved in previous years but will not be completed until repaving is completed. As bicyclists continue to wait for these lanes to be placed, they continue to jeopardize their own safety in utilizing Bodega without appropriate bike lanes. With that being said, it seems like the preference would be for the replacement to be in the region described by Director Svanstrom as a Class II pathway beginning at Parkside and heading west. I have a reference to that, there is actually a Sebastopol Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan from November 2011 that makes reference to some of the things that were talked about. Then financially, I am hoping to hear if there are any details on the Ives Park pathway replacement. Has a path material been decided on or proposed? I spoke at a previous meeting about the benefits of using concrete over other materials such as asphalt in terms of long-term maintenance and cost.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Thank you, Kyle.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Fritz closed public comment and asked if Director Svanstrom or Ms. Bertolero for their thoughts or responses to some of Mr. Falbo's questions about the Bodega/Robinson intersection and/or about the Bodega project he posed.

Toni Bertolero, Engineer

I can respond to some of the questions. I hope I captured them all. One has to do with the cost increase of about 30% since 2018 when the original estimate was done. I was not here at that time. I believe W-trans did the traffic study report and so they estimated cost at that time. After they did that, once they started doing the CIP and putting it on the project, we update costs every year, by the way. Construction costs are just going crazy, it has been very, very difficult for engineering to keep up with these construction costs because of the fact that every time that there is a fire that occurs, all of the sudden construction costs go up. We have literally had to update costs every six months. That is how difficult it has been to keep up with the costs. That is part of the reason why the ADA project could not actually be done. At the time the estimate was done, that was a year earlier and then all of the sudden one goes out to bid, then the cost just exploded. It is very, very difficult to do that. What we tried to do, and I think Director Svanstrom alluded to that in the beginning is that we really tried hard to update a lot of the costs so that going into this year at least, we have updated costs instead of carrying forward costs that are say two or three years old. I do not know if that answers why it went up 30%, but I do know that construction costs do increase every year. Sometimes it is from lack of materials, asphalt, things like that, which causes construction costs to go up. The other question had to do with some sidewalk gaps. I do know that on Robinson Road, Director Svanstrom, there is a development that is occurring in those areas and there are some plans for frontage improvements by those developments, yes?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Right, so we do have a couple of sidewalk gap areas, they are being closed as part of this. One is the Huntley Square proposal which, as most of you are familiar with, they do have a formal application in that is just west of Golden Ridge Avenue on the north side and that is where the sidewalk ends, and you have the uphill dirt trail that comes back down. They will be installing a retaining wall and the appropriate sidewalk improvements (curb, gutter, sidewalk) as part of their development, if that project were not going ahead, the City would not have to be paying for that, but that project does look like it is going to happen. One way or another that will get filled at the same time that the improvements are done. If there is a schedule difference, we will likely do a development agreement with them to make sure that it gets done in an efficient manner and gets in place at the same time so there is not more disruption to each of these blocks. That is the other reason why we do blocks at a time because this is a pretty disruptive construction process for the neighbors and we do not want people to have to go through it twice. The other portion of it, I believe, is being closed by this project. I do know that there is a substandard sidewalk, just north of Robinson, the proposed development there, if that moves forward would have to replace the sidewalk to the current standards as well. That is typical frontage improvements are required when a property develops or is developed for the first time. I think there was one other question about the Ives Park path. I would love to have a concrete path, however, it is two to three times the cost of asphalt. Ms. Bertolero may know more about the numbers of, if you were to put a concrete pathway through a park versus some asphalt, what the cost references are. In the current budget, I know that we are not anticipating this year to be able to build all of it, we are trying to stretch that dollar as much as we can. Ms. Bertolero do you have information on that?

Toni Bertolero, Engineer

No, I understand, and I prefer concrete sidewalks myself, from a maintenance standpoint they are going to be a lot better, but they are very expensive which is why a lot of cities are going towards asphalt. There are actually some that are going to non-asphalt surfaces, or more of like a crushed rock, but that is not ADA compliant because it is not

skid resistant. Unfortunately, there are not too many products out there that can be used that are also ADA compliant.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

DG is notoriously high maintenance as well, especially when trying to maintain a level of service where you do not have the puddles and the trip hazards.

Toni Bertolero, Engineer

Exactly. I think there was a question in there about the one and a half million dollar scale down of the project. I was not exactly sure what the question was, but the reason why was because I think, as I mentioned earlier, the City did ask for a much larger grant and basically, the City was not able to secure that grant, they were only able to secure half that amount. That is really the main reason why we are going to a scaled down version, there is going to be a big discussion before the City Council on July 20, 2021, and I encourage the public to attend that meeting if they are interested. There is also going to be a discussion on what the design will look like because the design engineer will also be there. That should be a good meeting if you are interested in that particular project and the bike lane project and what it is going to look like. The difficulty in that area, of course, is the right-of-way when you are trying to fit in a bike lane to meet Caltrans standards and you have a very fixed right-of-way. If you know parts of Bodega Avenue, you have got some pretty steep hills on there so you cannot cut into the hills and so you are really boxed in in some areas so that is a little bit of a challenge to fit the bike lanes in there. They are doing the best they can in terms of trying to fit that in as well as they will have to minimize some of the lane widths in there. But again, on July 20, 2021, there will be a nice discussion with Council on that. I believe that was all the questions I heard, unless there is anything else that Director Svanstrom heard?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

That is it.

Ton Bertolero, Engineer

Okay.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Great, thank you. Would anyone else on the Commission like to ask further questions or add comments?

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

Thank you, I just wanted to give a broad comment about the Capital Improvement Plan overall, and just really express my appreciation for how thorough this document is. I completely agree with Ms. Bertolero that it is a very readable document. I think that is hugely important in terms of conveying what the City's priorities are. I was really happy to see the level of comprehensiveness. Also, in terms of city-wide priority, I think you see pretty much pockets of every part of town represented here in the City's priorities, and I also see a lot of feedback from the Planning Commission and other bodies, comments that have been made over the course of years really embedded through this. I am really glad to see that City staff and the whole team is really considering how to best represent the full city in terms of funding these projects, and I really appreciate the scope of all of this, and the priorities in general. With that, I just want to add that I hope that there might be some room for incorporation for addressing that gap between Bodega and Pleasant Hill and Ragle, not to beat a dead horse on that one but I am just thinking about how we might be able to just get that in the CIP, understanding as well that this is not going to be all funded at once and it would probably be, I guess phase three, and might not even fall

within the next five years. Just something in there, I think, especially in looking at the Circulation 1-2 section of the General Plan, I think just making sure that it is really connected, and that all of these assets we are investing in, \$9 million dollars for the Ragle bike lane improvement, it is incredible that we are doing that after so many decades of talking about that and I really want that to be as accessible as possible. The part of CIR 1-2 that jumps out to me, and that is considering the context of surrounding land uses and meeting the needs of all roadway users, I think it can maybe be easy for some of those who are residents to forget, if there are bike lanes why don't you go to Pleasant Hill and then turn around and go to the park and go around Ragle. Just thinking about all roadway users and that there are going to be people who do not know this town who are biking through it, and they might not know that they are going through a really unsafe stretch of Bodega Avenue to get to the amenities that are on the other side. I think that is really important to consider and I would love to see that somehow, and I am not exactly sure, either, I guess, and I would like some clarity on if we were to amend this in any way, if it would even be able to go back to the City Council at this point, or if our option is primarily to accept the General Plan consistency to avoid having to do these further readings.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

The Commission's role is the General Plan consistency items, it is not to add or subtract things from the CIP. However, that said, Ms. Bertolero and I are hearing you and as the Bodega Avenue project moves forward, as I said, it is in the Class II portion of that stretch, for that stretch is in our Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and we will certainly keep that in mind in terms of the design of the project.

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

Thank you. I guess my very last question is the timing of this. We are not looking at General Plan consistency for the five-year plan, it is just for this fiscal year, is that correct?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Correct.

Toni Bertolero, Engineer

Yes.

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

Okay, thank you so much.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Could you go through the process again, for the public's sake as far as where we go from here? Will there be an opportunity for the public to comment further on this, or have we already passed that?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

The Council already held two different meetings, public sessions, where they took public comment on the CIP, both on the 30th and again on the 6th. The Council has approved this subject to the Commission's findings this evening.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

Okay, yes, I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you.

Commissioner Oetinger moved to approve the Capital Improvement Plan for FY 21-22 as meeting the goals and policies of the General Plan.

Commissioner Lindenbusch seconded the motion.

Chair Fritz asked for further questions or comments.

There were none.

Director Svanstrom asked to take a roll call vote of the Commission on Commissioner Oetinger's motion to approve the resolution approving the General Plan consistency findings for the Capital Improvement Plan for FY 21-22 which was seconded by Commissioner Lindenbusch.

AYES: Chair Fritz, Vice Chair Oetinger, and Commissioners Fernandez, Lindenbusch, and Kelley

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Douch

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Thank you all very much and thank you all for your wonderful and very intelligent questions, I actually learned a bit about some of the projects that I was not familiar with in this process.

Paul Fritz, Chair

Great, thank you everyone. Thank you for making this easier to understand, Ms. Bertolero. I agree that the report is very clear. It is easy to read and see what money is going out, where it is coming from, where it is being spent, and the projects are pretty well explained. It is fairly easy to go through. I appreciate that.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Luke Lindenbusch, Commissioner

- The Climate Action Committee will once again be evaluating a ban on all new gas stations and expansions of fueling stations within city limits at its meeting tomorrow.
- At their meeting yesterday, the SCTA RCPA Board expressed unanimous support for discontinuing permits for new gas stations and infrastructure as we are also looking at.
- The agency is taking a county-wide look at implementation as well.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

- A Civic Spark Fellow will soon be selected to work with the Climate Action Committee and staff to develop a climate action framework.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

- The Ives Park improvement subcommittee met with Superintendent Del Prete in the park a while back and covered some of the last details that were on our list of improvements that we would like to see made.
- At this point, we are feeling that we have accomplished a lot of the low hanging fruit.
- We have also created a framework for looking at the next level of projects, some of which would need to be funded through some nonprofit sources, or in the future, as improvements get made in the park such as removing fences when the pavement gets replaced.

- We have this information that we have collected, and we can still continue to look at it, but I think the next area where we want to start moving is looking at how to fund these improvements, and also how to guarantee some sort of a funding mechanism for maintaining the restoration when it occurs in the creek at Ives Park. That seems to be something that will need to be ongoing in order to keep that area with the waterway really functioning well for its purpose. I am not sure whether City staff will be able to do that given the constraints they already have.
- We also thought that if we create a funding source, we might be able to get a lot of the nonprofits in the area working together on Ives Park, with the restoration in mind to come up with matching funds for that specific project. That would take some effort. It seems like that process should happen, either through us or through the community to make sure we have something in place when the restoration is ready. I know it could take years, but we should be thinking about that.
- Some of the things we covered with Superintendent Del Prete, and his assistant, Erik, was the white curb around the youth playground. Many people think it is unsightly, and it is damaged right now. What was constructive was that Superintendent Del Prete mentioned that if the new asphalt paving is high enough, it could act as a curb to the playground to hold the mulching and I am not sure how to proceed in terms of finding out if that is true or not.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

- That is probably a question I can ask the designers of it, they would know.
- I will note that that portion of it probably will not be done this year given the phasing that we need to do for the project, the budget.
- I know they need to meet ADA grades, but I certainly think, if they are able to raise that, or if we can excavate out a little bit on the playground so the depth is higher, that would certainly be ideal instead of having PVC plastic as a barrier.

Paul Fritz, Chair

- It seems like they could detail the edge, even if the actual paved surface is not at the right elevation. They could detail a curb to hold it in place. That would be a lot nicer than what is there now.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

- Yes, that is a good point.

Kathy Oetinger, Planning Commissioner

- Yes, I think Superintendent Del Prete was concerned that if it was also black, like the asphalt, it might be a tripping hazard, but then dropping into the playground would be a falling hazard as well. Maybe we need to set up another white stripe along the edge, or maybe some placement of boulders and rocks that match whatever happens in the restored area to indicate to people that they should not fall in there. It is something that I think is worth looking into. Director Svanstrom, thank you for following through and looking into that.
- The other thing that we wanted was lowering the fence at the gate, and we were pretty sure that will happen when the pavement gets replaced, but we are not actually sure. Right now, it is not a priority for Public Works.
- I wanted to make it clear to them what is a priority in my mind right now.
- The other thing we looked at was painting the lampposts and, again, that is not a priority. I think the park is enjoyable and useful without them painted, but I think long-term would be something to keep on the list that might be funded if we had estimates and I think Superintendent Del Prete could work on that, but we do not need to look at that now, because prices change over time.

- We also discovered that a lot of the projects are not really workday projects but organizing groups to adopt a specific area is a way that volunteers can help. Spreading woodchips, if and when we have them, is a good project for volunteers. I know that was something that we were talking about, again, working with existing local nonprofits like the Rotary and Kiwanis too to work on these projects. It could be helpful for them. I know the Rotary in particular has done a lot of things in Ives Park already, so they may be interested in helping with that.
- We also were asking about the new trash receptacles that we had heard about before. Those are the new black ones that used to match what was in the downtown area. There are 11 of them already assembled, it is just a matter of putting them in on a concrete pad so that there will not be a weeding issue around the base of them and so they are secured as well. Superintendent Del Prete is going to continue putting them up as they can, and I guess our committee will continue to look at that and see that it is happened and how long it takes.
- The last thing, that was very positive was that we heard that the City is looking at new plans for revising the landscape design in their parking areas and parking lots. High Street, besides downtown, is one of the priority locations and that there will not be as much landscaping, but there will be trees and there will be cobblestones that are set in place to avoid weeds.
- At that time, that would be nice to have it replaced, but we can also get the unused signposts removed. I just wanted to make sure that Superintendent Del Prete was aware that that is something on our list that will probably happen at that time too.
- It looks like a lot of little things are happening.
- I think that since this committee has been formed, and has been working with Superintendent Del Prete, he has been able to accomplish some of the things that I felt were, and many of us felt were unsightly, and made the park feel like it was not valued. When I walk through it now, I feel like it is valued.
- Having been to a lot of small towns in our travels with children, and even today without children, we often do stop in small town parks, and I feel like this park has a lot of value relative to what other people have in their small town parks.
- I think we can be proud of what we have been able to maintain, keep, and enjoy.
- I do not feel like we should feel like Ives Park is a disaster since we have a long list of things that need improvement and some of the improvements have already been made. We will keep watching.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

- I want to thank you, Vice Chair Oetinger.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

- I wanted to add to that our appreciation for Superintendent Del Prete, he has been very receptive as far as working with us and being very positive and collaborative about it.
- It was also eye opening to kind of understand the workings of Public Works and I think it is important for the Commission, as the Parks Commission to know how they are trying to keep up with simple park maintenance. Along with maintenance, they have to deal with graffiti issues, damage issues from over the weekend, etc. They usually only have a couple of days per week to handle maintenance because on Monday's they are usually dealing with all the stuff from the weekends, and homeless issues, and all those types of things fall on Public Works. I appreciate the dilemma that he has with the number of people that are working on it.
- That is why I also asked before about the projects, it seems like along with the cost of the project, they should also factor in maintenance.

- The Public Works department is just trying to keep up and it has really been difficult for them to do that.
- Right before the 4th of July, the Public Works department had to focus on fireworks, so they are always kind of just focusing on certain things.
- The Public Works department is doing their best, but they are kind of understaffed.
- One of the things that I will be bringing up with the Zero Waste Committee is trying to help with recycle cans being used for that purpose and not just having trash thrown in it which means that the materials are not necessarily ending up where we want them to be.
- I just really appreciate Superintendent Del Prete and his positive attitude with all of that.
- Vice Chair Oetinger has done a great job interacting with Public Works, and getting all this stuff going, and moving it forward. I appreciate her work on this as well.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

- Yes, thank you for mentioning the receptacles. That was a part that I did not read from my notes.
- It is daunting to think of how much work it would take to try to get recycling going on in our parks, and it is the same situation out in front of Screaming Mimi's. There are multiple containers, but they are all just filled with trash. I guess it is the same on Main Street as well.
- We are a city that wishes that could be different. I do not know how to change this, but I think it is worth trying and talking about.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

- We also talked about trying to get public workdays going.
- I think with people happy to be getting out, it is a good time to identify some of those areas to figure out how we might be able to include the public, how the public can assist with some of our maintenance needs.

Kathy Oetinger, Vice Chair

- Yes, there are certainly a lot of topics that we can continue thinking about and connecting on.
- I will mention that there is room for another person to be on the committee if somebody is interested or wants to join our discussions as we have them.
- Former commissioner, Kate Haug, is still communicating with the committee and will join us when she can.
- We could take another member of the Planning Commission.

Paul Fritz, Chair

- Thank you.
- The Design Guideline Subcommittee has not met recently.

Evert Fernandez, Commissioner

- This month's Zero Waste meeting was cancelled this month.
- We are mainly going to be focusing on SB 1383, California's initiative for zero waste so I will be reporting on that at future Commission meetings.

8. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Svanstrom provided updates.

The Commission asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

Commissioner Fernandez noted that he would not be able to attend the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings of August 10th and September 14th.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Fritz adjourned the meeting. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will take place on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.