

## ACTION MINUTES

### Group 5 Recent Applicants Stakeholder Interview Minutes

Friday, August 22, 2014

1. **Introductions** Senior Planner Cattan provided overview of the Zoning Code update process and stakeholder meetings.  
Stakeholders present: Peter Wilk, Gerry Jensen, Paul Gunsky, Brigette Estey and Planning Commissioner TJ Welch.  
Staff present: Community Development Director Grunow and Senior Planner Cattan
2. **Ease of Use.** Are there specific aspects of the existing Zoning Code that are unclear or difficult to understand? How could we make the code more user-friendly?
  - a. Room for interpretation throughout the code. Standards should be clear and leave little room for interpretation.
  - b. Organization of code is not coherent. New code should outline process clearly for applicant. If multiple sections apply, the code should explain which sections apply and under what circumstances.
3. **Development Standards and Regulations.** Are there specific development standards or land use regulations in existing code that have caused problems that should be revised? How do you suggest addressing these issues?
  - a. The upper village area (Fanmar, Terrace, north side of Cherry) is zoned RM-LM and reverts back to R-1. This is confusing and does not reflect reality. Rezone to R-1 for single family neighborhood with no nightly rental.
  - b. How height is measured along slopes is unclear and open to interpretation.
  - c. Floor Area Ratio. If floor area is to control massing, basement, decks, and stairs should not be included in calculation.
  - d. Define significant change. Suggestion: Consider a process for change orders. In the engineering field there are ECO (engineering change orders). Typically these are simple forms with redlines of the drawings attached. The ECOS then get routed and signed off by stakeholders in a period of a day or two. The idea is not to convene a full board meeting but rather circulate the change to individual board members (e.g. by e-mail) for comment and signoff without having to wait a month to the next board meeting. If the change is

controversial, the board member can opt for a full board meeting but a quick approval should be an option. That way the project keeps moving without costly delays.

e. Specify if paint color is/is not regulated?

4. **Neighborhood Issues.** Are there any zoning issues unique to residential neighborhoods or commercial areas that need to be addressed?

- Architectural Design Compatibility
- Height of New Homes and Additions
- Size of New Homes
- Privacy between Neighbors
- Adequate Yard Size
- Adequate Parking Onsite
- Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Historic Preservation
- Housing Costs and Affordability
- Maintain Neighborhood Character
- Sustainability (Reduce Energy and Water Consumption)

a. Height: Allow flexibility for additional height for design compatibility and unique circumstances (sloped lots).

b. Historic Preservation:

i. Identify what needs to be preserved. Update Survey of Historic Properties, remove subjectivity from the list.

ii. Let homes progress. The current regulations are too restrictive and do not allow homeowners to improve.

c. View protection. Clearly establish whether or not views are to be reviewed within projects and set standards/criteria. Support for protecting views.

d. Compatibility. There is no specific style of architecture that defines Capitola. There is a mix of styles and design. To set a standard design would not reflect current conditions. Keep eclectic mix of design as the standard.

e. Adequate yard size – Keep setbacks as they are. They work.

5. **Administration.** Are there any needed changes to streamline the City's existing permitting and administration procedures?

a. Create an online fee calculator

b. Establish the level of review of each type of decision maker. Administrative decisions by staff, decisions by Planning Commission and City Council. Establish the limits and leave no room for interpretation.

c. Create a frequently asked questions document for website.

6. **Architecture and Site Review.** Applicants are required to attend an Architecture and Site Review Committee meeting prior to Planning Commission. Do you find this required step effective? Would you suggest any improvements to the Arch and Site Review process?
  - a. Perception that there is little value in Arch and Site b/c Planning Commission can override direction provided by Arch and Site committee. Consider removing Arch and Site from the process
  - b. Empower Arch and Site as an authority. Give this committee the authority to streamline the process or remove the extra step in the review.
  - c. The name of this committee is misleading. Perceived as “passing” the first step for design. Need to clarify this step is required but advisory in nature. The Planning Commission has the authority to require modifications. Consider renaming committee to remove perception that the design is being approved.
  - d. Found Arch and Site helpful to know what other departments are looking for in the process. Thought it was useful information within the staff report so the Planning Commission became aware of what interim changes have been made.
  - e. Require Owner and Architect to attend to improve communication and expectations.
  
7. **Permit Decision-Making Process.** Depending on the type of application, land use permits require approval by City staff, the Planning Commission, or City Council. Does the current code provide a fair and appropriate level of review of permit applications (i.e., should the Planning Commission review more or less project types)?
  - a. Remove the City Council’s ability to appeal Planning Commission decisions. Impacted Citizens should appeal and the City Council’s role is to review the appeal.
  - b. Communication must improve on all levels: owner, designer/architect/building inspector, and planning.
  - c. Current level of review is good to maintain the Character of Capitola.
  - d. As a homeowner, more freedom is better. It is important that the City establish what is and what is not permitted and stay within the rules.
  - e. Empower staff to review projects. Create clear allowances that can be reviewed at the staff level. Limit unnecessary review by the Planning Commission.
  
8. **Sustainability.** The new code will place an increased emphasis on sustainability. Do you have any ideas for how can we promote sustainability principles, such as alternative transportation (bicycling and walking), reducing energy and water consumption, encouraging green energy sources, compact development patterns, etc.?
  - a. Do not require sustainability

- b. Do not duplicate efforts of other agencies. Let Soquel Water regulate water, let State regulate energy, let locals take initiative to go beyond requirements of other agencies if they choose.

9. **Other Issues:** Are there any other issues with the zoning code you would like to tell us about?

- a. When rezoning properties for the updated code, do not expand commercial uses into residential neighborhoods (Bay Avenue). Create transition areas to decrease impacts onto neighboring residential. Make sure rezones are adequately noticed and go through public process.
- b. Quality of wireless reception is poor in some neighborhoods. Review criteria for wireless facilities to make sure all neighborhoods have adequate cell phone coverage.
- c. Support for flat fees rather than deposits. Fees in Capitola are low relative to surrounding areas.

10. **Close.** Community Development Director Rich Grunow thanks the stakeholder participants and talks about next steps.