

CITY OF CHICO PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
June 16, 2016

Municipal Center
421 Main Street
Council Chambers

Commissioners Present: Toni Scott, Chair
 John Howlett, Vice Chair
 Cynthia Arregui
 Dale Bennett
 Bob Evans
 Ken Rensink
 Margaret Worley

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Mark Wolfe, AICP Community Development Director
 Brendan Vieg, Principal Planner
 Mike Sawley, AICP, Associate Planner
 Matt Johnson, Senior Development Engineer
 Andrew Jared, Assistant City Attorney
 Stina Cooley, Administrative Assistant

1. **ROLL CALL**
Chair Scott called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Commission members and staff were present as noted.
2. **EX PARTE COMMUNICATION**
Commissioner Worley stated she had driven by the Meriam project site.
3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

3.1 Approval of Minutes

May 5, 2016 Minutes

Commissioner Rensink moved to approve the minutes, Commissioner Howlett seconded the motion which passed (7-0-0)

4. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

4.1 S/PDP 09-01, Amended Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map (Meriam Park) a proposed amendment to a previously-approved vesting tentative subdivision map to divide approximately 78 acres of the 270-acre Meriam Park site into 72 lots that would subsequently be developed in compliance with the City's form-based "Traditional Neighborhood Development" (or TND) code. In addition to development lots, the amended map would consolidate five open space lots into one public park site, reconfigure interior street alignments, and modify several street designs. Currently undeveloped, the site is located adjacent to the north side of East 20th Street, south of Little Chico Creek, west of Bruce Road, and east of Bedford Drive. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Meriam Park Master Plan was certified on June 19, 2007. The EIR included several mitigation measures that have been and will continue to be applied to subsequent discretionary approvals. Pursuant to Section 15162 of the California Environmental Quality Act, no subsequent environmental review is necessary, as there have been no substantial changes to the project which would require revisions of the EIR, no substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is being undertaken which would require major revisions of the EIR, and no new information of substantial importance has become available which would require revisions to the certified EIR.

Associate Planner Mike Sawley provided a project overview.

Staff responded to questions regarding previous approval of the map, subsequent modifications, and the housing affordability component that was part of the project previously.

Chair Scott opened the public hearing at 6:46 PM

Jim Stevens, NorthStar Engineering addressed the Commission and introduced Dan Gonzales to speak on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Gonzales requested permission to provide the Commission with an informational audio/visual presentation lasting approximately 15 minutes.

Chair Scott granted the request.

Mr. Gonzales provided background on the project and the evolution of the vision and goals for Meriam Park which lead to the request for modifications of the map. Mr. Gonzales presented a slide show with conceptual designs for the entire project and the Traditional

Neighborhood Development model. Mr. Gonzales described the various “districts” within the project and stated the overall theme will be health and wellness. Mr. Gonzales explained the reasoning behind the requests for a variance from setbacks in various areas and the combination of open space areas into one central area. Mr. Gonzales stated that following approval they hope to begin construction in the Fall.

Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Stevens answered questions from the Commission and discussion continued regarding the set-backs.

Chair Scott called for a recess at 7:25 PM

The meeting resumed with all Commissioners present at 7:29 PM.

Commissioner Bennett stated that he had just become aware of a conflict of interest involving the project and recused himself.

Chair Scott called for public comment. No additional members of the public requested to speak.

Chair Scott closed the public hearing at 7:30 PM.

Discussion continued with the Commission. Commissioner Worley requested clarification on the additional requests and information provided by the applicant at the meeting.

Principal Planner Vieg stated that the Traditional Neighborhood Development standards are fairly recent and because of the slowdown in building in recent years there hasn't been any projects utilizing this standard so there may be a few adjustments necessary.

Community Development Director Wolfe stated that the project would still be going through the architectural review process and the set-backs could be approved at that time. If the Commission chose to pass the resolution as written, the additional requests could be considered in the architectural review process without the need to return to the Planning Commission.

Chair Scott Re-opened the public hearing at 7:40 PM

Commissioners requested clarification from the applicant regarding design, consolidated open space and the design along Little Chico Creek.

Mr. Gonzales stated the applicant simply wanted flexibility in the plan, the design was still developing. He stated the set-backs on East 20th Street were more vital for their project. Mr. Gonzales also addressed questions regarding the consolidation of open space. He stated that the is to build an amphitheater in the park and that required an acre of land to build the design they desired. He also stated that there are “social” space designed throughout the project. Mr. Gonzales stated that while the park standard will be met, the social spaces will far exceed the standard.

Chair Scott Closed the public hearing at 7:43 PM.

Commissioner Evans moved that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 16-07, approving the amended tentative subdivision map, subject to the attached conditions. The conditions were modified by adding the applicant proposed conditions #1, #2 and #3 to condition #9 on the resolution.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rensink and passed (6-0-1, Bennett recused).

Chair Scott called for a brief recess at 7:45 PM.

The meeting resumed at 7:48 PM with all Commissioners present.

5. **REGULAR AGENDA**

5.1 **Selection of new alternate for Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board**

Community Development Director Wolfe presented the item.

Director Wolfe stated that a member of the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board had resigned because he had moved out of the City limits. Director Wolfe stated that the City Clerk’s office indicated they intend to wait until the normal recruitment time to fill the vacancy. He stated that while Commissioner Bennett is currently serving as the alternate, his spouse is also serving on the Board. Director Wolfe stated that since the alternate will be serving in a more significant capacity, the Commission should appoint a new alternate member to avoid any appearance of impropriety. Commissioner Bennett stated that he agreed with Director Wolfe.

Director Wolfe briefly clarified the role of the alternate and stated the most critical time would be when a quorum is needed.

Chair Scott nominated Commissioner Rensink, Commissioner Worley seconded the nomination. Commissioner Rensink was voted the new alternate member for the Architectural Review and Historic Preservation Board (7-0-0).

5.2 Sustainability Task Force Update

Principal Planner Vieg introduced Dr. Mark Stemen the Chairman of the Sustainability Task Force to give the presentation. Dr. Stemen reported that the task force was beginning to see progress in meeting the goals and targets for the energy code. Dr. Stemen stated that the new building codes are moving forward and working. He stated that the task force now needs to focus on retrofitting the existing housing inventory rather than focus on the new housing market.

Principal Planner Vieg provided information regarding the new Civic Spark Program through AmeriCorps. The program is focused on climate change issues. He stated once project will be to collaborate with community agencies to create a community challenge.

Commissioner Evans stated he was happy with the work that the Sustainability Task Force was doing. He stated that as a sub Committee of the Planning Commission; he believes the Sustainability Task Force should provide updates and/or communication to the Planning Commission prior to reporting to the City Council.

Principal Planner Vieg stated that in the past the reports provided to the City Council had been a written memo. He agreed that any future communications should go through Planning Commission prior to presenting to the City Council.

6. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Dr. Mark Stemen addressed the Commission regarding his concerns with the Chico Scrap Metal project that will be coming before the Planning Commission in the near future.

7. REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 Planning Update

Community Development Director Wolfe informed the Commission that Associate Planner Morley left the City to move into the private sector. Director Wolfe stated

staff is currently dividing his projects and the status of agenda items for the July 7, 2016 meeting is unsure at this time. Director Wolfe reported that Associate Planner Mike Sawley has passed the exam to become a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and has earned the right to add AICP behind his name. Director Wolfe also reported that the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the WalMart expansion will be posted for the 45 review and comment period on June 17, 2016. Director Wolfe also stated that due to a clerical error the Chico Scrap Metal item will start the review and approval process from the beginning, starting with a 30 day review and comment process.

Commissioner Evans inquired about the General Plan review.

Principal Planner Vieg stated that the process is a large undertaking but they are making good progress. He stated that he hopes to have the first review in October.

Community Development Director Wolfe stated that the review of the Habitat Conservation Plan has taken a substantial amount of time and review by Principal Planner Vieg and that is why more progress has not been made on the General Plan review.

Commissioners Bennett, Evans, and Rensink all stated that they would be out of town on July 7, 2016 and unable to attend the meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business from the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM to the **Regular Meeting of Thursday, July 7, 2016.**

Date Approved

Mark Wolfe, AICP
Community Development Director /
Planning Commission Secretary