



**BENICIA PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**April 12, 2007
7:00 P.M.**

I. OPENING OF MEETING

- A. Pledge of Allegiance**
- B. Roll Call of Commissioners**

Present: Chair Fred Railsback, Commissioners Kyle Daley, Dan Healy, Mike Ioakimedes, and Bonnie Silveria
Absent: Commissioners Richard Bortolazzo and Scott Strawbridge (both excused)

Staff Present: Senior Planner Damon Golubics
Contract Attorney Kat Wellman
Administrative Secretary Gina Eleccion

- C. Reference to Fundamental Rights of Public** - A plaque stating the Fundamental Rights of each member of the public is posted at the entrance to this meeting room per Section 4.04.030 of the City of Benicia's Open Government Ordinance.

II. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

Gina Eleccion noted that there was an amended agenda removing a typographical error.

On motion of Commissioner Silveria, seconded by Commissioner Healy, the amended agenda was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Daley, Healy, Ioakimedes, Silveria and Chair Railsback
Noes: None
Absent: Commissioners Bortolazzo and Strawbridge

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

A. WRITTEN

None.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner Silveria, seconded by Commissioner Daley, the Consent Calendar was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Daley, Healy, Ioakimedes, Silveria and Chair Railsback

Noes: None

Absent: Commissioners Bortolazzo and Strawbridge

A. Approval of Agenda

B. Planning Commission Minutes of March 8, 2007

V. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. LOWER ARSENAL MIXED USE SPECIFIC PLAN EIR - SCOPING SESSION

PROPOSAL:

Scoping Session for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Lower Arsenal Mixed Use Specific Plan. The proposed project includes implementation of a Specific Plan for the Lower Arsenal site, which is designated mixed use in the Benicia General Plan. The Specific Plan covers four distinct zones, each of which exhibits a unique physical character. The Specific Plan would implement a form-based code to shape future development in the project area, with primary emphasis on the physical form and character of new development. After build-out of the Specific Plan, the area would contain approximately 741,865 square feet of mixed uses, 22 residential units, and 6.39 acres of open space. The Specific Plan area currently contains approximately 525,000 square feet of mixed uses.

Recommendation: Planning Commission hold a Scoping Session, take testimony and consider all relevant documents and determine the scope of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Lower Arsenal Mixed Use Specific Plan.

Damon Golubics gave a brief overview of the project and introduced Adam Weinstein of LSA Associates who gave a presentation. Additionally, Damon Golubics noted that Commissioner Bortolazzo was not in attendance due to having a conflict with property ownership.

Adam Weinstein stated that the goal of the scoping session is to listen to the Commission and the community about what they would like analyzed in the Environmental Impact

Report (EIR). An overview of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines was given. The focus of the EIR is to identify impacts of the project. A preliminary determination has been made as to the topics identified in the EIR.

The public hearing was opened.

Bob Berman, 250 West K Street – He is concerned with using a Program EIR, which may not be appropriate for the specific projects in the Arsenal area. Specifics of development need to be considered and additional environmental review on individual projects might be necessary. Specific sites need to be addressed in more detail.

Don Dean, 257 West I Street – He expressed concern with impacts regarding infrastructure. Financial feasibility, though not required, should be looked at.

Kathleen Olson, 920 First Street – She hopes the Commissioners have confidence in Staff, the Consultants and the process. She hates to see skepticism at such an early stage of the process.

Marilyn Bardet – She spoke on the history of the Arsenal. A brief overview of the history of the Arsenal grounds was given. The remaining cultural assets should be protected and preserved. The EIR has to include the preservation and integrity of the district. The EIR must identify and describe all cultural resources, and account for all wildlife and biological resources. Potential contamination, port security, and residential housing safety issues should be addressed in the EIR. Traffic and safety issues need to be identified in the EIR.

Belinda Smith, 347 Goldenslopes – She does not believe a Program EIR is appropriate. The EIR should focus on the historic integrity of the district as a whole, not individual properties.

Dana Dean, 835 First Street – She spoke on behalf of Amports. A letter was submitted identifying issues that need to be addressed in the EIR. Any existing projects should be addressed separately. She believes that a feasibility study should be required for this project. She referenced the General Plan and various goals and policies that need to be reviewed.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioners discussed impacts they would like identified.

Commissioner Ioakimedes commented on infill and mixed use development needing to be compatible with the existing district. It's important to look at the historic nature of the district and impacts of development outside of the district on the historic nature of the district. Economic impacts are a major concern.

Commissioner Healy commented that existing applicants should be comfortable with the issues raised in this process. There is a need for site specific analysis. The cost of infrastructure is definitely a concern. The City should look at impacts from the Benicia Business Park project. He would like to see the Industrial Park and Ampports come forward with their future plans, so we can understand the impacts on their businesses.

Commissioner Silveria commented on the need for a buffer. She stated her concerns with maintaining the historic integrity of the buildings and the district as a whole. She is concerned with access to the lower Arsenal area in emergency situations because there is only one way in and out.

Commissioner Daley agreed with the other Commissioners' concerns. He commented on local City climate impacts.

Chair Railsback echoed the Commissioners' concerns. He is concerned with safety and was disappointed that there weren't representatives of the industry in attendance. Traffic and noise should be identified in detail. He believes the proposed Benicia Business Park will have an impact on this project. Public safety and infrastructure are huge impacts. Individual projects should be looked at.

Commissioner Silveria noted that letters were received from Valero and the Chamber of Commerce.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

Damon Golubics noted that the next meeting may be a short meeting with only one item on the agenda. He further noted that Laura Karaboghosian has taken a position in the City of Dublin. The City is currently recruiting for an Associate Planner.

Damon Golubics announced that Charlie Knox and his wife are expecting a baby in September.

Gina Eleccion noted that the Historical Society and Benicia Main Street are accepting nominations for preservation awards. Nomination forms are available at Benicia Main Street and the Community Development Department.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners stated that the Planners Institute was very informative. Environmental issues were a major topic. Benicia was recognized for incorporating health issues into the General Plan. Commissioners thanked the City for supporting them in going to the conference.

Commissioner Railsback would like to see the City's "E" Street parking lot leveled out.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Railsback adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.