

City of San Rafael
Citizens Advisory Committee for Economic Development and Affordable Housing (CAC)
Virtual Meeting Summary Notes
November 5, 2020

CAC Members Present: Mari Jones, Bill Carney, Kati Miller, Glen Koorhan, Dirck Brinckerhoff, Joe McCallum, Gladys Gilliland, William O’Connell, Roger Smith, Madeline Silva Khan

CAC Members Absent: Andrew Naja-Riese

City Staff Present: Simon Vuong

Guests Present: Joanne Webster

Members of the Public Present: None

1. Call to Order: Chair William O’Connell called the virtual meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

2. Approval of October 1st Meeting Notes: Date of Item 2 was noted to be incorrect. Otherwise approved as submitted.

3. Approval of Inclusionary Housing Letter: Approved as submitted.

4. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items: None.

5. Discussion – The View from the Chamber: Pandemic Effects on Business – Joanne Webster:

Ms. Joanne Webster of the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce led an open format discussion regarding the impact of COVID-19 on local businesses, their survival strategies as well as the road to recovery. Ms. Webster generally noted that the pandemic has magnified inequities in the community, as well as accelerated anything which was in the process of automation (i.e. online sales). Ms. Webster also remarked that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how there was no County wide emergency plan in place to protect businesses. The San Rafael Chamber has subsequently become involved in Keep Marin Working (“KMW”), which is a group of business leaders who have assembled an eleven-point framework for economic recovery.

Ms. Webster remarked that she felt the future of Downtown San Rafael retail was headed in the direction of “experiential” versus “transactional,” as it historically has been. Optimistically Ms. Webster felt that the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic could be an opportunity to pivot in that direction. Ms. Webster spoke about how the Dining Under the Lights event has done well under the circumstances and that the City of San Rafael did a great job of streamlining applications to ensure the success of the event.

6. Project Updates:

As a follow up to the October meeting, Mr. Simon Vuong reported that there were no new updates from the City of San Rafael planning department in regards to the approved 120-unit project at 703 Third Street, as well as the 136-unit project known as Northgate Walk at 1005-1010 Northgate Drive. Chair William O’Connell remarked that he had been told that the 703 Third Street developer was working on setting in place financing which had held the project up to date, and that the project was likely to commence in the first or second quarter of 2021.

As a follow up to the October meeting, Mr. Vuong noted that the Goldstone Market Hall project at 1001 Fourth Street is still in the midst of an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (“ENA”) with the City of San Rafael, and that the parties were still working on a parking arrangement. Mr. Vuong said the ENA would likely need to be extended by an additional six months.

Mr. Vuong also reported that the Hampton Inn and Suites hotel project at 1075 E. Francisco Blvd was expected to be completed at the end of 2021 or the beginning of 2022.

7. Discussion of Priority Development Areas for December Meeting:

Discussion revolved around focusing on the topic of the two named Priority Development Areas “PDAs” of San Rafael, and honing in on the elements of the PDAs which would be of most importance to the CAC. Ultimately, a presentation on the PDAs would also serve as an educational exercise for the CAC.

8. Discussion of Topics for Precise Plan for December Meeting:

Members of the CAC discussed potential topics to focus on in a future meeting regarding the Downtown Precise Plan (“DPP”). Area of interest included parking, historical preservation and homelessness.

9. Election of Officers for December Meeting:

Members of the CAC discussed writing a letter in opposition to the proposed change of election for the committee chair based on a seniority rule. For the December meeting, Mr. Vuong noted that nominations for elections will be solicited per the usual protocol.

10. Adjournment: Chair William O’Connell adjourned the virtual meeting at 9:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Joe McCallum