

**SPECIAL PINOLE CITY COUNCIL & GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
JOINT GENERAL PLAN WORKSHOP
MINUTES
JANUARY 12, 2010**

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Special Pinole City Council / General Plan Steering Committee General Plan Workshop were held in the Alex Clark Room located in the Public Safety Building, 880 Tennent Avenue, Pinole, California. Mayor Long called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called roll.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debbie Long, Mayor
Roy Swearingen, Mayor Pro Tem
Tim Banuelos, Council Member arrived at 5:35 PM

GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE (PLANNING COMMISSIONERS) PRESENT:

David Kurrent, Chair
Patty McGoldrick, Vice Chair
Maureen Toms, Member
Paul Sekins, Member
Tom Brooks, Member, arrived at 5:43 PM
John Bender, Member
Norma Martinez-Rubin, Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Belinda Espinosa, City Manager
Benjamin Reyes, City Attorney
Winston Rhodes, Planning Manager
Michelle Fitzer, Assistant to the City Manager
Patricia Athenour, City Clerk
Anne Hersch, Associate Planner
Mary Drazba, Economic Development Manager
Leslie Carbahal, Redevelopment Analyst
Christina Radcliffe, PMC Consultant

The agenda was posted on Friday, January 8, 2010 at 10:00 AM. All legally required notice was provided.

3. STUDY SESSION

Winston Rhodes, Planning Manager opened the presentation with a power point exhibit and provided a project overview, discussed the next steps and stated that the goal of the meeting was to receive direction on the policy information provided on the General Plan elements. The

public draft General Plan was nearing completion. Review of the initial draft Specific Plan was also complete and both plans would be available for concurrent public review. It was anticipated that the draft Zoning Ordinance would be brought to the Steering Committee for discussion in February.

Rhodes summarized the major policy changes. Changes in the Housing Element included an energy efficiency, conservation and sustainable residential development goal, and housing density increases.

Major changes in the Circulation Element included a reduction on the traffic threshold from LOS Level E to LOS Level F in Old Town and a potential reconfiguration of a portion San Pablo Avenue.

Mayor Long advised staff that she anticipated more discussion on the specific issues at a later time, specifically the narrowing of San Pablo Avenue, as there appears not to be community support.

Summary of major policy issues include the addition of three new elements in the General Plan to reach a total of nine: Community Character, Community Services and Facilities, and Sustainability; new topics include Climate Change. There were no proposed changes to City service area or boundaries, and no proposed annexations currently identified.

There was a brief discussion regarding Community Character. Mayor Pro Tem Swearingen said he thought there were community character standards in place, addressing colors textures, etc.

Mr. Rhodes said it was mentioned in the current General Plan and in the City's Design Guidelines, and there would be more emphasis in the new element.

Council Member Banuelos raised a question regarding the defined entries, asking if it was limited to new one (since some already exist).

Staff explained that the General Plan would define where they are/should be and what types of features they should include.

Planning Chair Kurrent asked if this type of presentation/discussion format was desirable to the City Council or whether more detail was required.

Mayor Pro Tem Swearingen said it was acceptable now with more details to follow. Mayor Long mentioned her desire for more input and discussion on the Circulation Element at a later time, specifically the narrowing of San Pablo Avenue. She raised questions regarding the sub-areas on the Old Town Map, referencing that they were inconsistent and not contiguous and asked if that would be remedied, possibly through changing the Old Town boundaries.

Rhodes mentioned the rationale for what was included on the draft land use map and that potential changes to the Old Town boundaries could be made.

Growth Management Element

Rhodes said that this element was required by Measure C as well as Measure J. Chair Kurrent said that the level of service (LOS) requirements were in Measure C, but not J.

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Land Use & Economic Development

Mayor Long asked how the statement could be backed up regarding “to retain & preserve existing businesses particularly those offering living wage to Pinole residents”. She said it was about a sensitive balance between economic vitality and existing character/neighborhoods. She said she did not want to be too centered on flexibility and did not want to balance the new businesses on the backs of existing neighborhoods. She supported identification of the types of businesses we want to encourage, and said it should be clear that developers cannot demand flexibility; the Council may offer it.

The Planning Commissioners responded to Mayor Long’s concerns and said there were addressed in a variety of the elements.

Draft Land Use Map

Rhodes and Radcliffe said that the map did not reflect a few specific changes made the prior evening.

Changes in land use categories included:

1. New designation of Rural (0.0 -0.20 du per acre) was added;
2. New designation of Suburban Residential (1.1 to 10 du per acre)
3. Elimination of Neighborhood Commercial and Downtown Commercial and replacing these designations with Specific Plan Sub-Areas;
4. Regional Commercial was retained
5. Suburban Rural was eliminated;
6. Low Density Residential was changed with a new maximum density of 1 du per acre

Mayor Pro Tem Swearingen questioned two designations to describe the same density of 1.1 – 10.0 du/ac. Mr. Rhodes explained there were differences between the two and that one designation described an area within the Corridor Specific Plan, but the General Plan addresses it in detail and the aim was to assure internal consistency between the Specific Plan and General Plan on the land use map.

Mayor Long said she did not support the increased densities and understood it was being done to satisfy the State. She asked staff to provide examples of how the density changes would affect specific sites/areas in Pinole. She said the General Plan should address specifically under what conditions the maximum density would be allowed.

Mr. Rhodes explained that the criteria to determine density on a site included landscape and open space requirements, parking requirements, view corridors, terrain, density compatibility to adjacent properties, ability of the sight to handle the development as just a few of the components for which a property would be reviewed.

City Manager Espinosa asked if there was language regarding what proportion of a site could be utilized for housing unit development. Mr. Rhodes explained that could be addressed at the Zoning ordinance level.

Planning Commissioner Toms said it could also be addressed by calculating density per “net” acre, and a policy could be included regarding calculating area in specific land use designations

or zone. Planning Toms asked about further explanation of why the 20 dwelling units per acre density is important in the Housing Element.

Mr. Rhodes said there was a State requirement for a specific number of low and very low units, as well as a State mandate to show on paper that there are sufficient sites zoned with densities of 20 du per acre to provide for low and very low income housing.

Housing Element

Staff explained that this is the only element in the General Plan requiring State review for consistency with legislative requirements, and most Housing Elements plan for a variety of needs and housing types.

Discussion ensued regarding housing objectives and the four existing goals. Rhodes presented the new goal – Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Sustainability to encourage green building.

The ABAG Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) was discussed. Pinole's allocation was 323 units, applied to a 7-year RHNA cycle, and the mandate is that cities must zone for their fair share need and there must be a land use designation with a minimum of 20 du per acre for planned lower income housing. Based on the current zoning and existing sites, there is currently a potential for only 72 housing units, but it can be demonstrated that there is a potential for 361 units through potential rezoning. Another caveat is that 50 percent of the allocation must be met within purely residential zones, not mixed use development.

A brief discussion followed regarding whether there was any opportunity to pay the County or Richmond to "house" our units.

Rhodes cautioned the Council that Pinole needed to approve a Housing Element in compliance with State law, or place our Measure J funding in jeopardy. He advised that there may not be sufficient time to partner with either agency at this juncture, suggesting it could be looked into later during implementation. He also said that the County had just adopted their Housing Element, and such a partnership would need to be identified in both agencies elements.

Mayor Pro Tem Swearingen agreed that it should be looked into later. Mayor Long suggested looking at opportunities for annexation while looking at the Housing Element.

Ms. Carbahal said that one of the elements addressed identification of sites for annexation and Rhodes said that we could discuss with the County that we would welcome an annexation to meet our housing needs.

Mayor Long expressed frustration upon hearing that the Housing Element was past due for State review in July 2009 and asked if there was a risk of losing transportation funds if there was no Housing Element Update in place.

Chair Kurrent said he did not believe there was a threat of losing funds, but the City could be vulnerable to lawsuits.

Chair Kurrent mentioned that the draft Housing Element included his suggestion relating to exploration of programs that would allow seniors to age in place, address housing for all income levels, i.e. executive housing / above moderate rate.

Public Comment:

No speakers addressed the Boards.

Mr. Rhodes said at the next meeting, January 26, 2010, the discussion would resume with the Circulation Element. The remainder of the agenda would include:

- Draft Circulation Element
- Draft Community Services and Facilities Element
- Draft Health & Safety Element
- Draft Natural Resources and Open Space Element
- Draft Sustainability Element

Confirmation of Draft Three Corridors Specific Plan Policy Direction

- San Pablo Avenue
- Pinole Valley Road
- Appian Way

4. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:55 PM, Mayor Long adjourned the meeting to the next Regular Council / Redevelopment Agency Meeting of January 19, 2010 and the next City Council / Steering Committee Study Session of January 26, 2010.

Submitted by:

Patricia Athenour, MMC
City Clerk

APPROVED BY COUNCIL: