

MEETING MINUTES CITY OF MILPITAS

Minutes of: Special Meeting of Milpitas City Council
Date: Tuesday, October 8, 2019
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: Barbara Lee Senior Center, Rooms 140/141,
40 N. Milpitas Blvd., Milpitas

CALL TO ORDER SPECIAL MEETING

Mayor Tran called the special meeting to order at 5:40 PM. City Clerk Mary Lavelle called the roll. All present said the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PRESENT: Mayor Tran, Vice Mayor Dominguez, Councilmembers Montano and Nuñez

ABSENT: Councilmember Phan was absent at roll call. He arrived at 5:42 PM.

Also present were consultants from DeNovo Planning Group, Ben Richie and William Crenshaw.

PUBLIC FORUM

Rob Means, resident, commented on the Rules Subcommittee which did not have a quorum last time. He believed this was slowing down government.

Voltaire Montemayor, resident, attended a meeting on BART and bicycles which was very interesting.

Anand Nandakumar, CEO of Urbo, said he was super excited about a possible shuttle program in Milpitas and would love to work with the city on its “last mile” problem, in order to accommodate public transit. He inquired how he might work on a pilot program.

Huascar Castro, from Silicon Valley at Home, read aloud comments on housing in opportunity areas in the General Plan for residential development with increased density. Specifically regarding Opportunity Area 12 on Calaveras Blvd., he urged the City to increase housing there.

Councilmember Nuñez asked the consultant to address comments when the Council got to those areas mentioned by speakers.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Update on Land Use Maps for the Updated General Plan

Planning Director Ned Thomas introduced Ben Richie from the consulting firm DeNovo to discuss the update to the City’s General Plan, with attention to specific preferred land use maps.

Mr. Thomas referred to the last City Council meeting in May when General Plan opportunity areas were reviewed. Staff had been working with the consultant on those. At this meeting, staff and the City Council would look at revised maps based on comments that Council provided last time and the Preferred Land Use Map (draft) would be identified at this meeting.

Ben Richie and William Crenshaw from DeNovo Consulting next gave background on what took place to date. California Circle would be the main area for focus and discussion at this meeting. Council would be asked to “bless” or endorse one map, but not give final approval. That would allow DeNovo to proceed with technical analyses required for the General Plan preparation.

The consultant explained one change: on the Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use – land use proposed for the Sunnyhills Commercial Center, with no boundary around any residential land.

Mayor Tran expressed his goal to support mixed use development in Milpitas and was concerned about past action taken in the Town Center zoning, which prohibited housing in that retail/commercial area. Councilmember Phan agreed.

For the California Circle area, a map with current land use designations was displayed. Proposed as the consultant described was: to retain some industrial, limit new housing, add commercial and hotel use, find traffic and entry solutions, and add amenities to the area including trails/open space. He described the possibility for a potential future Specific Plan for California Circle area (showed on overlay).

Mayor Tran inquired about a park in the area. Support for 100% affordable housing was stated, in this area, which he urged allowing in California Circle.

Councilmember Nuñez was not keen on a Specific Plan just for California Circle, since he wanted to see action. He did not see having 100% affordable housing, rather it needed to be blended in. Mixed use with housing, he did support.

Councilmember Phan felt if one area was designated 100% affordable, it doesn't matter if it was subdivided and blended in. Overall, he wanted development so long as there was an increased affordable housing component.

Consultant Mr. Richie asked if multi-family housing with an affordable component was important to Council? By consensus, the answer was yes. He pointed to the lower segment of land use map on display.

Mr. Thomas suggested the city could extend Abbott Avenue to allow for housing next to the Holiday Inn Hotel area. This might allow for another way in and out of the California Circle neighborhood, since there was just one way in currently. Maybe a "corridor plan" or something a little less than a Specific Plan could be proposed, and include a policy statement about affordable housing in it. In reply to Mr. Nuñez, the map could include the upper left side (gray square) in the California Circle and designate it as open space (as now).

Councilmember Montano would like a theatre at the location where the BAPS temple was located, in the future.

Mayor Tran commented that any residential should be mixed use, with commercial on the first floor, to protect the City's tax base.

Councilmember Nuñez inquired about height limitations on mixed use buildings. Staff replied there was no limit, and could be written as desired.

Councilmember Phan recommended to include a density bonus to incentivize housing, then he would support the mixed use idea.

Mayor Tran wanted to allow for new housing closer to current housing on the western portion of this area and Councilmember Phan agreed.

Councilmember Nuñez commented that people had some confusion at BAPS with residential on either side and then commercial across the street. He agreed with having residential all on one side, with concern for incompatibility.

Mr. Richie cautioned against designating residential next to the Interstate 880 freeway. He recommended residential designation in the area next to Holiday Inn Express (across from developed hotel stretch adjacent to freeway).

Mayor Tran referred to one area, zooming in on one parcel to bring development, products and services to the City. Ben Richie responded on quick changes versus the right change for an area. If high density residential was proposed, developers would come right in and build soon.

Councilmember Nuñez commented on school access from this area. It would be difficult to get to Weller School. He liked mixed use idea, to generate revenue toward costs for infrastructure.

Mr. Richie said maybe neighborhood commercial-mixed use could allow for some housing with maintaining commercial, which was so needed in the area. He described a policy statement that could go along with the written description for Neighborhood Commercial-Mixed Use zone, to entice a density bonus if residential units were affordable.

Mr. Nuñez said that on the BAPS location, he acknowledged that the group had an application in for some improvements. He felt if it moved or left, the value of the property would go up if the property were designated as residential.

Next, Mayor Tran invited public comments.

Allysson McDonald, resident, made various comments on housing potential in the area, and to maintain opportunity for all residents. She was concerned about wetlands there.

Evelyn Chua, resident, asked if there was a map of proposed income producing land use. She asked if these uses would impact revenues to the City. There was a need for 25% industrial land to sustain the City.

Voltaire Montemayor, resident, used to do kayaking to this location from Alviso. This would connect to Curtner School in the estuary from the Bay.

Huascar Castro, of Silicon Valley at Home, commented on ground floor retail from 100% affordable housing, and sometimes that affected the financing for a project. Maybe that should be allowed.

Resident Joseph heard some good comments and wanted to see it in his lifetime. He had helped build projects in Milpitas. Planning designations were for design, but could not guarantee those get built. Allow the housing to be built, he urged.

Mayor Tran summarized the Council's discussion on the opportunity site at California Circle, identifying the Council's consensus.

Ben Richie summarized by listing the changes he heard from City Council regarding the California Circle map for the General Plan:

1. Maintain existing housing, high density residential designation
2. Designate housing use in the southeast corner area of map
3. Look for opportunity for more residential development
4. Identify Neighborhood Commercial-Mixed Use, where projects with significant affordable housing could have a density bonus
5. Keep business park designation for Research & Development where now it was zoned as industrial (IP)

Councilmember Phan would like more discussion on the "P" for a potential park, and to talk to the BAPS owners about their long term intentions.

Councilmember Nuñez asked the City Manager to come up and give his feedback. Mr. McHarris made supportive remarks on the Council's map preferences.

Mr. Richie agreed he could write a memo with his summary along with a revised map for California Circle, and send that to City Council in a week or two.

Mayor Tran mentioned it was not good to have unused/unoccupied property, not for owners nor the City. One parcel was identified by the consultant (north of Home2Suites Hotel).

On one more point regarding the General Plan, Mr. Richie stated the consultant would take the entire boundary of the MidTown Specific Plan area and designate it as MT Plan in the General

Plan. On November 12, the staff would come to City Council to discuss the MidTown Specific Plan and to move ahead to update it.

2. Shuttle Study

Assistant City Manager Ashwini Kantak gave a background report on the anticipated BART station and Milpitas Transit Center along with a need to plan for moving commuters to and from the new station. A shuttle study was underway, per an approved project in the FY 2019-24 Capital Improvement Program.

A potential interim shuttle program was possible. Ms. Kantak defined the scope of the shuttle study, where maximum coverage or maximum ridership was to be considered. A survey was done of Milpitas businesses, and a majority of employers expressed interest in a shuttle. A description of a pilot program (Option A) over two years was given, including time for evaluation.

Transportation Engineer Steve Chan reviewed with a map the planned transit routes, for current public transit routes via A/C Transit and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus lines and then showed three potential defined shuttle routes, from BART to City Hall, Kaiser area (blue line), and then two routes to McCarthy Ranch and Tasman areas (red/north, green/south). Proposed action would be to hire a turnkey vendor (after a Request for Proposals) to implement a shuttle program. This would be cheaper than if considered doing so with city equipment and drivers.

Councilmember Nuñez asked if the city had talked to VTA staff about doing this program and Mr. Chan replied yes. VTA was available to compete with others, and did support the city having a shuttle program to support BART riders. Some companies might be interested in the program and supporting it, as well.

Option B entailed the City operating a shuttle with a turnkey vendor including using the City's Senior Shuttle for one route (with a larger number served) and private vehicle for two routes. Grant opportunities to fund the program were detailed along with other options.

Councilmember Phan asked if there could be a financing district for such costs and staff said it could investigate that.

Councilmembers Montano and Nuñez asked many questions about the potential program, its costs and provided comments to staff. Concern for the cost of such a program were expressed.

City Manager's staff member Ahmad Raza described benchmarking that was done looking at six Bay Area cities with some type of shuttle or bus service. He provided details on some of those programs for the "last mile" and other types of ride services.

Ms. Kantak asked the City Council to give input on four specific questions relative to a potential shuttle in Milpitas.

Mayor Tran and Councilmember Nuñez remarked on VTA operations, costs, bus lines and opportunity to work with the city on meeting the specific needs a shuttle program was intended to meet.

Councilmember Phan felt there was plenty of time until BART came along to find consensus on a proposed plan.

Mayor Tran thanked staff for the work done on this report, which was directed specifically by Council direction. He thanked and appreciated Council comments on this topic.

The Mayor requested for a future agenda: regarding kids going to school on Escuela, he noted that VTA buses drive that route and he'd like to propose a short shuttle service from Jacklin/24 hour Fitness or the Community Center parking lot, for parents to drop off children. Then use the City shuttle to school with a pick-up and drop off zone. Use the City's current shuttle to support youth and have some traffic mitigation.

Mr. Nuñez did not want to say no to schools and students.

Mr. McHarris summarized what staff should take back to the consultant. Find out how other cities funded programs without much City money, as the last effort in the study from the paid consultant.

Next, the Mayor invited comments from the audience.

Dinesh Gupta, resident and Chair of the Science, Technology and Innovation Commission, said the Commission had this as a goal on its work plan with a technology based idea for driverless and on demand shuttle service. This did not include the city paying for that. Commissioners envisioned it being offered in the 2022-24 time frame.

Rob Means, resident, was concerned about reducing CO₂ in vehicle emissions. He was disturbed that VTA did not want to help fund a shuttle program. He recommended disregarding the blue route path (one of three on the map presented by staff earlier).

A man urged use of electronic vehicles. Based in the East Bay, this could bring down costs much lower in Milpitas.

Voltaire Montemayor, resident, wanted the City to combine good service and a good program to make Milpitas famous.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Tran adjourned the special meeting at 9:40 PM.

The foregoing minutes were approved by Milpitas City Council on November 5, 2019.

Mary Lavelle
Milpitas City Clerk