

## MINUTES

### **AD HOC SITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

**November 19, 2024**

**Hybrid Special Meeting – In Person at Schoolhouse and via Zoom**

### **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall.

Present: Mary Hufty, Ronny Krashinsky, Danna Breen, Nona Chiarello, Joslyn Gray, and Karen Vahtra

Absent:

Town Staff:

Council Liaison: None

### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Joslyn Gray informed the Committee that she was in attendance by Zoom.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

None.

### **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

#### **a) Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Interim Planning and Building Director Grindall invited discussion from the Committee.

Councilmember Hufty suggested that the Committee consider a secretary to ensure the minutes are recorded according to their preferences. She proposed that people could self-propose and that they take one position after the other to elect. She stated that she would like to wait until Ms. Gray arrived.

Ms. Gray advised that she was approximately eight minutes away.

Planning Commissioner Ronny Krashinsky stated that he was a computer engineer, and he has been in the Town for four to five years. He shared that he is on the Planning Commission, and he is on this committee as a liaison representative from the Planning Commission. He mentioned that he closely monitored the Housing Element both before and during his tenure on the Planning Commission.

Karen Vahtra said she lived in the Town for twenty years and she was on the original Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee and served on the Hawthorn's Public Access Working Group recently. She said she wanted to join the committee in hopes that some interesting sites can be found that could support worker housing directly.

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Nona Chiarello stated that she lives on Brookside and bought her home in 2009. She said she serves on the Conservation and Open Space committees. She was the liaison from Conservation to Wildfire Preparedness for three years and recently stepped down. She thought this would be a fairly sobering assignment, and she looked forward to working with all of the qualified individuals on the Committee.

Councilmember Hufty said she is on the Council, spent a lot of time on the Trails Committee, and started out on the Conservation Committee. She said she came to the Town amazed at the ability to keep the wonderful connection between humans and nature. It is an amazing experience to be in the Town and feel the soul of nature while in a small town. She said she began reading about green connections and mixed housing, and she thought the Town could do better. She wanted to ensure that the Committee would do the job correctly.

Karen Askey stated that she has lived in Portola Valley for slightly over twenty years, and she lives on Groveland Street. She said she is a retired marketing executive and also worked at Ormondale for approximately seven years as an aide in the classroom. She said she is currently on the Parks and Recs Committee, and she served on the Ad Hoc ADU Committee, which was an offshoot of the Housing Element. She said she is currently on the ad Hoc Hawthorns Committee. She said she has been very involved in the Housing Element and went to almost all of the meetings. She felt very strongly about the Town's General Plan and thought having that gateway to Portola Valley was important.

ASCC Commissioner Dana Breen said she was also a supporter of the General Plan. She said she was on the Conservation Committee for twelve years and the ASCC for close to twenty years. She said she has been in the Town for a long time and knows a lot of people, land, and properties. She thought the Committee would have to do some fundraising.

Joslyn Gray stated that she has been renting in Portola Valley for over thirteen years. She said she knows that more housing is needed, and she would like to be a part of the solution. She said she works at Stanford in architectural design and planning.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall introduced himself and stated that he would be around for a while. He advised that since the secretary was not on the agenda, they should not appoint that person until the next meeting. He said that right now, the members should figure out who wants to be Chair of the current meeting and elect them.

Ms. Askey said she would be happy to be Chair if it is the right thing to do for the Committee.

ASCC Commissioner Breen stated that she would like to nominate Ms. Askey as Chair.

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Ms. Askey asked Councilmember Hufty about her thoughts on being Vice Chair. She asked if anyone else wanted to be Vice Chair and felt the Committee should discuss it.

Ms. Chiarello stated that she would be willing to be the Vice Chair because she feels a deep commitment to the success of the Committee.

ASCC Commissioner Breen asked if it was possible for Mary Hufty to be the Vice Chair.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall replied that if she could get four votes, she could be Vice Chair.

ASCC Commissioner Breen stated that she would nominate Ms. Askey.

Ms. Vahtra said she would second.

**Motion** that the AHSEC elect Karen Askey as Chair and Mary Hufty as Vice Chair. Seconded by Committee Member Vahtra, the motion was carried (7-0) unanimously by voice vote.

### **b) Receive Update on Committee Requirements and Timelines from Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall**

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall advised that the Town currently has a decertified Housing Element, but efforts are underway to get it recertified. The Committee is working towards improving the Housing Element and looking for additional sites that might be better than some of the existing sites. The Housing Element indicates that the Committee would be starting the site planning in May 2025 for the Dorothy Ford site. A request for proposals (RFP) would then be issued for proposals to find a developer for the site with a goal of January 2031 to develop fifty low-income units.

Chair Askey asked whether they have to be built or if they have to be permitted for building.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall stated that they are supposed to be under construction.

Committee Member Krashinsky inquired about the plan for removing a site from the Housing Element if alternative sites are identified.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall explained that the Commission would make an amendment to the General Plan Housing Element. There would need to be an environmental analysis of the new site. There was a mitigated negative declaration that was produced for the Housing Element and there would have to be some environmental work done. The Housing Element could then be amended to add the additional site and remove the site(s) being replaced. The amended Housing Element

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would then need to be submitted to the State for certification. While they review the recertified EIR, the General Plan would still be in a certified condition.

Committee Member Vahtra requested information regarding the best- and worst-case time for going through the Town process and going through HCD.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall stated that it should take approximately three months for a minimum time and likely six months for a process for the actual amendment of the Housing Element. The State should be able to approve it in three months, but they are lagging behind. The best-case scenario would be about one year. He explained that the progress report will be assessing progress on programs and not necessarily how many housing units have been built. There is an April progress report that has to be provided every year. Part of what is included in the progress report is the units that are actually built. He confirmed that some preliminary SB9 applications have been received.

Committee Member Hufty expressed concern due to the recent recertification event. She felt hesitant about not making the zoning changes that the Committee thinks are most appropriate sooner rather than later. She asked about the cost of making the zoning adjustments and if there was the possibility of having costs be lower if several are done at one time.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall advised that the cost is quite variable and most of the cost pertains to the required environmental analysis. It depends on the project site fairly dramatically. Turning an office building that is already built out into a residential unit is a much simpler process. Any kind of wild land or wildlife areas gets much more expensive and challenging. It is difficult to say what the cost would be without seeing the particular site. Regarding the fifty units, he advised that the State would expect the units in the site collection to be produced. Even if there were a number of units ahead of schedule, it would still be required to stick to the schedule that the Committee has for the Dorothy Ford site. He explained that it was possible to have a site that is zoned for medium density residential that gets raised to high density residential and it could serve to replace the Dorothy Ford site, but the Housing Element would still have to be changed to remove that site.

### **c) Review Graduated Decision-Making Grid**

Committee Member Vahtra shared her screen and provided background information on the Gradients of Agreement. She believed that this tool could be useful for the Committee to pass more information on to the Town Council, who will make any final decisions. She suggested modifying the MidPen Gradients of Agreement list slightly and have 4 to be not counted as supportive or non-supportive and recorded as an abstain.

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Chair Askey thought it worked well with the Hawthorns Public Access Working Group (PAWG) and helped to show where people were leaning. She felt that until the Committee has something concrete, it would be difficult to know how it will work.

Vice Chair Hufty thought it was a lovely idea and may be useful.

Vice Chair Hufty presented the Outreach Subcommittee report and provided an overview of the final report of opportunities identified during its process that should be considered by the Ad Hoc Site Evaluation Committee (AHSEC). She presented the Town-Owned Property Assessment Report and discussed the possible sites to develop housing.

Chair Askey stated that landslide areas are not developable and inquired regarding how an affordable housing developer would have any interest in them. She asked if anyone had looked at two sites that have the same affordable developer and if that presents the same financing or economies of scale opportunities.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall stated yes, it is something that needs to be figured out. He indicated that the economy of scale comes with a managed project. Having the project split into two or three does not create the economy of scale because a good affordable housing project has an on-site manager in the project, and that cost has to be spread across at least twenty-five units for it to become feasible. Having diverse locations does minimize the economy of scale.

Judith Hasko explained that during the outreach, she wanted to pull together all of the past work product. She said it was really informational for the Committee to figure out a good use for it. She recommended that the Committee work with Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall and others to understand what those opportunities looked like. Many of the sites are not going to be attractive. She reminded that the Committee's task is to find affordable housing sites.

There were no public comments.

### **i. Subcommittee Report on Selection of Members October 30, 2024**

Vice Chair Hufty inquired whether it was possible to have a subcommittee of this Committee that has outside members.

Committee Member Vahtra remarked that at any point, the Committee Members could consult people outside of the Committee. She cautioned that the Committee Members should be careful due to the Brown Act.

### **d) Discuss Finance Committee Liaison or Other Options**

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Committee Member Vahtra felt that the financial component to any kind of project was key. She thought that should be a strong component of what the Committee does. She proposed having another person join the Committee that was a true financial expert.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall advised that the members of the Committee are appointed by the Town Council; however, it could be possible to have someone who sat in the audience that provided information that would not have any impact.

Chair Askey encouraged that just one member of the Committee be in contact with that individual so that there are not more committee members meeting with that one individual.

Vice Chair Hufty suggested a subcommittee to allow for more than just one person. There could be two or three members of the subcommittee. She shared that she has talked to more than fifty people qualified in finances who are interested in the project.

Chair Askey sought clarification that Vice Chair Hufty was recommending a subcommittee that would be finance related and therefore get the appropriate financial knowledge from one or many resources.

Vice Chair Hufty said that was correct. She stated that her understanding of how things work is to have multiple financial people looking at any project because there are multiple places you get money. Otherwise, there will not be enough money to do the project. Limiting it to one person who has one point of view or has worked with one person does not work.

Chair Askey remarked that along with the issue with financing and cost, there is also a revenue issue. Better understanding is needed regarding when the developments are going in and what the Town is getting back in revenues.

Chair Askey invited public comments.

David Cardinal commented that affordable housing is a total loss leader no matter what. Building affordable housing will cost money even if the Town donates the land. Financing is important, but it will not pencil out. Unless the Town allows a large-scale development similar to Stanford, where 80% of it is market rate and they are happy, and they give 20% below market rate. In order to get 50 units, it would probably be necessary to build 250 units to get 50 BMR units. It is all based on having a huge moneymaker with a small component of affordable housing. He stated that three qualified financial experts to consider were Jim White, Brian Greenberg, and Rebecca Flynn.

### **e) Discuss Schedule and Timeline**

Chair Askey announced an upcoming meeting scheduled for December 3, 2024.

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Vice Chair Hufty stated that Christ Church was willing to be brought forward and to do a site visit.

Committee Member Vahtra questioned whether the Committee would propose a subcommittee structure.

Chair Askey pointed out that there were thirteen sites on the Portola Corridor, according to the chart provided. There are eight on Alpine Corridor and four on Los Trancos.

Committee Member Vahtra stated that she would want to be on Portola because she lives close to Alpine and that would be a conflict of interest.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall advised that Vice Chair Hufty could send information ideally to the entire Committee, but that does mean it will become public. Sharing information with any member of the Committee is a potential public record, so the private information should be stripped of the site. He suggested contacting the owners and seeking permission for it to be made public.

Committee Member Vahtra suggested dividing into three groups for the next couple of weeks until everything gets sorted out with the owners, and then go out in pairs with Vice Chair Hufty to visit the three different sections.

Chair Askey noted that Vice Chair Hufty and Committee Members Breen and Gray were assigned to Nathhorst; Vice Chair Hufty and Committee Members Krashinsky, Chiarello were assigned to Alpine; and Chair Askey, Vice Chair Hufty, and Committee Member Vahtra were assigned to Portola. She advised that the Committee has meetings scheduled every other Tuesday at 5 p.m.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

### **COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### 3. Commission Reports

None.

#### 4. Staff Reports

None.

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None.

### **ADJOURNMENT** [6:57 p.m.]