

Geyserville Planning Committee Meeting Minutes  
January 23, 2018  
7:00-10:00 pm

Present: Paul Connors, Hal Hinkle, David Luebkehan, Daisy Damksey and Ryan Petersen

Absent: Okaya Tatsuo

Guest Speaker: Walter Kieser, Senior Principal/Planner for Economic and Planning Systems, Inc.

David Luebkehan opened the meeting by giving a brief overview and update on the progress of the Geyserville Planning Committee. The GPC has a functioning website and all GPC agendas and the meeting minutes will be published on the site for the public. The idea that the GPC may be under the Brown Act was addressed at the last meeting. Historically the Committee has not functioned under the Brown Act but because the GPC duties function almost in the same way as a city council David suggested that we need to investigate our status and become compliant if it is appropriate to do so in the future. The committee took action deciding that we would work with County Counsel to assure we are following up to date regulations.

David stressed the reason we have been unclear of our status for including under the Brown Act is the lack of active communication with PRMD and the fact that we often hear about projects to late in the process to make an impact. David stressed that our agreement with the Board of Supervisors gives the GPC broad responsibilities and in order to be pro-active we need to have a direct line of communication with both PRMD and the community we serve. Paul gives the example of the farmworker housing units planned for Geyserville. David said it is hard to operate under "news paper articles" and he offered to set up a meeting with PRMD to open up a more active channel of communication.

Ryan Petersen suggested that property rights were the guiding principle of the committee when it came to planning. David, Daisy and Paul disagreed with this position, stating that a community plan could inform property owners' future buyers and the county about the wishes of the community served by the PRMD. Ryan said that he understood that was where we were going and it was agreed that it was important to get input from the community. Hal Hinkle has put the Community Plan Survey up on the Website and David and Hal showed the GPC a draft for the mailer that will go out in a few days. The GPC is trying to have the Survey translated into Spanish and will be offering future surveys to the community.

David asked who would follow up on the recent plans submitted to the committee by the PRMD. Daisy volunteered to follow up on a tasting room planned for the north part of town and Hal will follow up on the Ranch of Sonoma Spa proposal. Daisy asked if there had been any updates on the Ranch and Hal said yes, the county has approved the original plan and confirmed the right to build. Hal stated currently the debate with the developers is how much improvement will be required for the

road that will take guests up to the Spa. The Spa has passed design review and road improvement talks are now underway with the county.

David introduced the evening's speaker, Walter Kieser.

Walter grew up and started his career in Sonoma County and gained his knowledge of land use and public policy through his first job with Sonoma County.

Walter stated that being pro-active and knowing what is going on in Geyserville was critical to the future of the town. Walter stated that General Plans are about policy and how something is done. He asked if the old plan fit the Geyserville of today and tomorrow. Walter told the audience that this was the time to create a vision for the future and an opportunity to reconsider policy that has been established in the past.

Our speaker stated that he was talking about tweaks not disruption and we need to establish both *Values and Vision* to inform our framework for decision making.

Walter said that he sympathized with the understaffing of PRMD, in 1975 the staff had 27 full time employees and now, because of county cutbacks there are only 6 full time staff members charged with all the work of the county.

Walter said that because of the short staffing the county was unable to add a lot of depth to their work in creating a future vision for non-incorporated areas and the department was being forced into being reactive vs. proactive. Walter praised the GPC for taking a leadership role and also told the committee that much of the process of community planning would have to come internally and by taking the lead due to limited funding. Walter said that it would take 500,000 dollars to do a complete plan and that funding most likely would not be available. Daisy and Paul said that Supervisor Gore has set aside funds for Geyserville and that is what gave us the impression that we were going to get some support from county funding. Walter told the crowd that our concerns about extensive K zoning in our town were well founded but the county would not want to touch that zoning at the point in time. Walter suggested that the GPC look at other ways these concerns can be addressed. The planning process that the GPC has undertaken can look toward creating DESIGN STANDARDS. What would the area look like if we had a million dollars to spend? Dive the process by creating a community design model that will inform future growth and recommendations was Walters's advice to the committee. Look toward a broad outreach of the stakeholders within the community and find the resources needed in grants and other funding sources to support the documentation of the process. Walter said that this can become very political and that there was no "bloody way" that zoning was going to change so we need to create an "overlay" or what he called "modern zoning" by using our survey and other community processes to develop an over lay of design specs. This overlay would state, "you can do this but, not that" as a general principle. Walter volunteered to help the committee in their plans and David stated that we have a series of speakers coming to address the GPC and they will inform the committee in ways to move forward in

our desire to create guiding principles for the future of Geyserville. Daisy mentioned that Supervisor Gore has encouraged the committee to take a leadership role and he has offered support in this process. Daisy also mentioned the scope of our area and the fact that River access would be looked at in the future.

Art Torano, was the next presenter. Art owns the corner lot by the old post office and he is creating a two-story building that will be a work/Live space in town. Art has presented to our committee in the past and he showed his completed plans adding all the features we recommended in his first presentation last year. Currently he is working with Cal Trans and has created a landscaping plan that fits their requirements and recommendations. He has provided parking and sidewalk development in his renderings and worked closely to capture design features found in neighboring historic buildings. Art is submitting his plans to PRMD next week and will keep up updated on the process. David thanked Art for being so proactive and invited him to continue in conversation with the committee.

The last presentation was from the Geyserville Market. They are exploring ways to provide gas service in a limited capacity downtown on their property. David asked them to come back and report when they complete their research. Hal said he could not support a gas tank in town. It was decided that this proposal was premature and the GPC will wait till more facts are presented.

The next meeting will be held at the Geyserville Firehouse. The monthly working meeting will be held on February 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm and all members of the community are invited to attend.

Daisy Damskey-Secretary