

Geyserville Planning Committee Monthly Meeting

Minutes of March 23, 2021 Meeting

The meeting of the Geyserville Planning Committee, held by Zoom, was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Daisy Damskey.

Members Present: Daisey Damskey, President, Paul Connors, Vice President and Treasurer, John Cash, Secretary, Walter Kieser, and Steve Sachs. Absent: Art Torano

1. Greeting and President's Update: President Damskey welcomed everyone to the meeting and particularly our guest from Permit Sonoma, Nina Bellucci.
2. Review and Approval of January 26, 2021, GPC Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2021, meeting was made by Walter Kieser. Paul Connors seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
3. Review and Approval of the Agenda: Walter Kieser said that we should formally approve the agenda. John Cash moved and Walter seconded and the Agenda was approved unanimously.
4. Comments from the Public on Items not on the Agenda: Paul Connors praised the recent work of Victoria Heiges and Bryce Jones with the barrel painting project. Walter Kieser moved and Paul Connors seconded a motion that the Geyserville Planning Committee send formal thanks to Victoria and Bryce for their work on behalf of the community. John Cash will draft a letter for President Damskey's signature.
5. Correspondence and Member Communications: No correspondence or member communications were presented.
6. Presentation from PRMD: regarding rezoning for affordable housing: President Damskey introduced Nina Bellucci from PRMD who made a formal presentation on this subject. Participating with her were Katrina Braehmer, Planner, Brian Oh, Comprehensive Planning Manager and Darcy Kremin of Rincon Consultants. A copy of the full presentation is attached to these minutes.

Following the presentation, the PRMD representatives opened the floor to questions from the members of the Committee.

President Damskey asked how many units might be included in a rezoned property and Nina Bellucci replied that it depended on the size of the site. She pointed out that building permits would still be required for any project but housing with be a "by right" use. All projects would still require a design review by the County. Combining all sites in Geyserville, the potential is up to 100 new units.

Walter Kieser asked how many total residential units were built in each year of the past planning cycle. Ms. Bellucci could not answer the question and referred the Committee to the annual

report. Mr. Kieser made the point that development is “not easy.” And that the potential numbers are very high compared to what will likely be the actual production.

Steve Sachs expressed the view that the GPC should be looking at new affordable housing as important for the community. He suggested that we need to emphasize to the residents of Geyserville that this is a positive thing.

President Damskey said she had concerns over the design elements and referred to earlier projects in town that were sensitive to the nature of the community. Ms. Bellucci replied that formal design review would take place and that early community engagement would be a part of this process. She later pointed out that there are mitigation measures in place for at least one of the sites that include aesthetic considerations. Steve Sachs pointed out that good design does not mean expensive housing. John Cash reminded the committee that the community survey showed support for affordable housing but also in more dense, compact developments.

Walter Kieser expressed the view that all the comments from the members were helpful but we needed to consider what happens going forward. He suggested that the GPC prepare a letter summarizing our views. Katrina Braehmer said such a letter should go before the County Planning Committee once the Environmental Impact Report draft is prepared. Brian Oh said that it should be completed in April and then be open for public comment. He suggested that the GPC submit its letter once the report is released. The meeting of the Planning Committee will follow. Walter Kieser asked for a reminder as dates approached. President Damskey suggested that we aim for a formal response to the EIR in June.

Karen Waelde, a Geyserville resident and business owner, asked if the property owners have any say in whether their properties are rezoned. Ms. Bellucci said that property owners will have input but decisions will be made at the County level. Ms. Waelde questioned whether the town infrastructure was capable of supporting significant new housing. In particular she asked if the water and sewer systems were sufficient. Steve Sachs said that rezoning would only be the first step and that water and sewer capacity would be considered as individual projects are put forward for approval. Darcy Kremin said that the Environmental Impact Report will include water and wastewater analysis.

Adrian Garayalde, a Geyserville resident, asked why the landowners were not contacted before this process moved forward. Brian Oh replied that each of the property owners had been informed. Ms. Garayalde stated that we need housing but the aged infrastructure will limit development. She questioned whether the money spent on an EIR was a good use of resources given the fact that the project may well not be feasible due to infrastructure issues. Brian Oh replied that the EIR will allow for an infrastructure review and that the process currently underway proceeds from a statutory requirement of the State of California.

President Damskey thanked Nina Bellucci and her colleagues for their presentation and for the excellent discussion. Walter Kieser asked that further discussion be scheduled for the next meeting of the GPC.

7. Update on Local Area Development: President Damskey informed the Committee that she was investigating examples of local area development plans in the County. Paul Connors said that the Forestville Planning Association, a local area development group, had gone through a

lengthy process to develop a town park in Forestville. Paul and Daisy will go out and meet with the Forestville group to learn more about how they managed this process. Daisy will report back at a future meeting.

8. Update on fund development/status of request for not-for-profit status Geyserville Community Foundation: President Damskey referred to the grant application that had been prepared for submission to the Geyserville Community Foundation. She pointed out that it included language already used by the Committee in proposals to the County and to Exchange Bank. Paul Connors asked about the gift-in-kind budget items in the proposal and President Damskey explained the donations to support website development and Spanish translations.

President Damskey called for a motion and John Cash moved and Walter Kieser seconded to approve and submit the application to the Geyserville Community Foundation. Paul Connors expressed his opposition and said that he would like to see the GPC set up its own 501 (c)3 organization. Steve Sachs said that we could seek funding through the GCF while simultaneously pursuing the future creation of a separate 501(c)3 ourselves. John Cash started to refer the Committee to an article on the steps needed to secure such status but Paul Connors asked him to recuse himself from the discussion because he sits on the board of the GCF.

President Damskey said it was essential that the GPC obtain funding right away to support our communications. Kathy Zunino, a Geyserville resident and a member of the board of the GCF, said that the GCF board would be meeting on April 5 and it is important to get any application submitted soon. She also expressed the opinion that it would not be appropriate to set up another 501(c)3 organization in such a small community. Paul Connors disagreed. Walter Kieser also opposed setting up a 501(c)3 at this time but supported Steve Sach's position that we could consider it in the future while submitting the current grant request. Adrian Garayalde, a Geyserville resident, expressed the opinion that we should not continue to have more and more non-profit organizations established in a small community, particularly when it is possible to partner up.

The motion was carried with Paul Connors opposed.

9. Recommendation of meeting schedule: Paul Connors suggested holding an annual meeting in September, 2021, with another meeting following in April, 2022, which would put us back on schedule. Steve Sachs and Walter Kieser expressed support for this concept. Walter Kieser raised questions about the overall election process and would like the GPC to develop a clear method of recruitment and voting. He believes we need to make the process as democratic as possible and expressed the view that the current process is not at all democratic.

Steve Sachs said that we should take a look at the current process and examine how it could be changed to enhance participation. Paul Connors proposed staggered elections and he suggested that Steve Sachs and John Cash's positions be put up for election in September. Steve and Walter Kieser expressed the view that this should be part of a larger discussion about the election process.

Steve Sachs moved and Walter Kieser seconded that a committee be appointed by President Damskey to look at the election process including enhanced participation and staggered elections in keeping with the Geyserville Planning Committee Articles of Association. The

motion was passed unanimously and President Damskey subsequently asked Steve Sachs and Paul Connors to serve on the committee.

10. Update on GAV-MAC recommendations to County: Walter Kieser reported that a suite of projects was submitted to the County for funding last November, which had been reported earlier to the GPC. It is on the Board of Supervisors agenda as a consent item. \$380,000 has been approved plus \$5,000 for administrative costs. President Damskey asked about the status of the Oriental Hall project and Walter said it has been withdrawn for the moment. Walter listed the projects including the Geyserville Plaza. Steve Sachs asked if there is a process for community input into the Plaza design and Walter reported that there is once the funding is in place. Walter reported that the streetscape project in Geyserville, involving lighting and sidewalks, will be supported by an engineering-scale map. He praised the strength of the community for the large volunteer involvement and for the overall commitment to these projects.
11. Great Redwood Trail update/Russian River Updates: President Damskey reported on the recent forum with Senator McGuire on this subject. She will ask that a representative from the senator's office present to the GPC on the Great Redwood Trail.

Adrian Garayalde, a Geyserville resident and the Russian River Confluence Coordinator, reported that FEMA has approved the Geyserville drainage study. She is also continuing to work on the River Road erosion issue on the Munselle property. She has applied for federal funding. She is also seeking funding to replace the Asti summer bridge and is involved in the development of a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan.

Adjourn: Walter Kieser moved that the meeting of the Geyserville Planning Committee be adjourned. Paul Connors seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.