

**Planning Commission Minutes  
Community Chambers  
Wednesday, June 24, 2009, 7:00 p.m.**

Commissioners Present: Mark Braly (Vice-Chairperson), Ananya Choudhuri (alternate), Greg Clumpner (Chairperson), Lucas Frerichs, Rob Hofmann, Kris Kordana, Mike Levy, Terry Whittier

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Mike Webb, Principal Planner; Xzandrea Fowler, Planner; Jennifer Border, Associate Civil Engineer

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**1. Call to Order**

Chairperson Clumpner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved by consensus.

**3. Staff and Commissioner Comments (No action).**

Mike Levy spoke about a report he saw released from UC Davis last week called “Achieving Sustainability in California’s Central Valley.” He said it was interesting and the City of Davis scored third with 30 points. It didn’t seem to include one element which was specific policies that examined retrofitting existing infrastructure of the city which would have been nice to include in the index. He passed around a few pages of the article to the Commissioners.

**4. Public Communications**

Matt Williams of El Macero said it was important to recognize that the City Council approved Measure J on a 4 to 1 vote. This would go on the ballot as it stands currently and the second motion was for the Planning Commission along with two other Commission’s guidance to discuss whether a second measure should be on the ballot regarding an exception to Measure J for a Business Park. He said it made no sense fiscally or morally to grant an exception on something that was unknown whether a business park was needed or the value the City could get back from it.

**5. Consent Items**

There were no consent items.

**6. Public Hearings**

- A. PA #42-08, General Plan Amendment, Specific Plan Amendment, Rezoning and Preliminary Planned Development, Development Agreement, Affordable Housing Plan, Tentative Map, Final Planned Development, Design Review, and Mitigated Negative Declaration for Residential Subdivision (Willowbank Park) at the vacant property located on Mace Boulevard, south of San Marino Drive and north of Redbud Drive; (Xzandrea Fowler, Planner)**

Public Hearing to consider a 29 unit single family residential subdivision on the vacant 4.48 acre site located on Mace Boulevard between San Marino Drive and Redbud Drive. The proposed density is medium, and six lots are proposed as low-income “for-sale” units. The proposed homes range in size from approximately 1,200 square feet to 2,650 square feet. The proposal includes a pedestrian walking path along the north property edge, adjacent to Putah Creek. There is also a proposed bike path connection to the existing Willowbank greenbelt bicycle path that is located to the west of the project site. To accommodate the drainage for the subdivision, the proposal includes the enlargement of the existing drainage pond in the Willowbank greenbelt, located directly west of the project site.

Xzandrea Fowler, Planner, presented the staff report.

Chairperson Clumpner opened the public hearing.

Dave Taormino, managing partner/applicant, introduced his team and described the project. He did not agree with Conditions of Approval, Condition #100 regarding the Mace Boulevard Alternative Striping Plan; it was punishing the developer. He did not agree with being required to have two accessible units, Condition #55, and only wanted to build one accessible unit. He also wanted Condition #41, Bike Lane, changed from an eight foot wide bicycle lane along Mace Boulevard to four feet wide.

Jason Taormino, applicant, described the vision of Willowbank Park. He stated the homes will be built 35% above Title 24 and it will be the greenest project in Davis.

Stephen Cole, President of the El Macero Home Association, said not everyone in El Macero was notified of this project proposal. He was surprised that staff stated a density of almost 11

homes per net acre was consistent with the adjacent density of three homes per net acre. A General Plan was written for the reason of good planning otherwise put an auto body shop there. They would like a consistent application of land use and not an urban infill. He said they would like an edge of town development consistent with the existing density and home styles. He urged the proposal be sent back and re-densified. If the General Plan is changed for the area then the parking requirements would need to be changed. It doesn't make sense to put in an urban infill project on the edge of town.

Romey of Willowbank #9 was concerned with the parking and access issues to the units. He said the density range proposed was incompatible with the existing neighborhood.

Steve Kafka, a neighbor, did not object to the property being developed for housing. He believed the developers had done a nice job of trying to consider the neighbors aesthetic concerns in the project. He did have three concerns: the density was out of proportion for the neighborhood; the wildlife of foxes and hawks will leave when the houses are put in along the creek, a bigger buffer is needed; and a concern with the fast pace of the process of the development going forward. This development with very high density would change not only this neighborhood but could represent the first step in changing the character of Davis in terms of developing its infill. This could set a precedent for future neighborhoods.

Matt Williams, an El Macero resident, pointed out that the setbacks of two to three feet between houses created dead zones. Attached or zero lot line housing creates better density. Davis should look at the model of El Macero Oaks as an attached home community. This would create more green spaces in the development along with density.

Debbie Laird, a neighbor, felt they had to scramble to respond because the development was moving forward so quickly. She stated the project was large enough to fundamentally alter the character of this area of south Davis. The developers could use the Housing Steering Committee's guidelines as a permission slip to build at this density range. If the General Plan is a macro guide or directive for the future of Davis, then this project is a contradiction and the South Davis Specific Plan was meaningless. The South Davis Specific Plan policies talked about this site was intended for large lot single family units. The site plan was not of a quality that the site deserves. The site plan could get there but the current proposal has issues with parking and aesthetic or functional flow between neighborhoods. She wondered about the single story restrictions for lots 17, 18 and 19. The Red Fox habitat was important to consider preserving as well.

Julie Almond, resident of Willowbank #9, emphasized the importance of the parking issues which are closely tied to the density issue. The three major concerns are parking, density and compatibility with the surrounding homes. She was concerned with children running between parked cars due to the density of the neighborhood as proposed.

Beverly Cooper, on the Board of Directors for El Macero, said the project didn't fit in this location, it was high density. She did not want to have this project crammed in just to compete with Woodland. The parking, water conveyance issues and no CC&Rs are worrisome and could bring down the whole neighborhood.

Chairperson Clumpner closed the public hearing.

Jennifer Border, City of Davis Associate Civil Engineer, explained that a four foot wide bike path was the minimum requirement but eight feet was preferred. She explained the reason for Condition #100 "Mace Boulevard Alternative Striping Plan."

Commissioner comments (not necessarily consensus):

- Recommended that Condition #47, Maintenance Statement, be included in the CC&R's unless it is covered by some other documentation.
- Wondered if the pathway improvement should remain Willowbank #10's responsibility as well as this project in case there is a default by the project, it provides incentive by the Willowbank #10 developer to make sure it happens. It may not be a good idea to remove it from Willowbank #10 right now.
- Recommended that in the *Recommended Findings and Conditions of Approval*, #55 "Affordability Requirements" should have a colon after the last sentence in a) and then quotes for section b and re-label it to section c.
- If there was a provision for co-signers for affordable housing, then the unit should have to be owner-occupied.
- One Commissioner preferred having a landscape strip on Mace Boulevard, and feels that it would be more aesthetically pleasing rather than having more concrete or widening that section of Mace Boulevard.
- The Housing Element Steering Committee spent two years reviewing and surveying all the land in Davis. Overall the citizens of Davis favor higher density in terms of infill projects versus sprawl at the edges of town onto agricultural lands. Growth is inevitable and we have to balance smart growth in our infill and ag land. The demand now is for smaller homes, smarter designs and energy efficiency. The era of large lots with large homes is not in demand anymore and the community needs to accept this change.
- The General Plan is 25 years old and is built out now. We are well overdue for an update to the General Plan that would then give everybody expectations of what to expect and where. You can't fairly live in Davis in the last ten years next to a vacant lot and expect the density to approximate the surrounding neighborhoods given the environmental realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the increased housing demands for the region. It is a reality that wherever we develop in the City, there are constraints that require the spaces to be tighter and higher.
- The staff alternative proposal makes a lot more sense than the developer's proposal.

- Interested in future dialogue regarding exceptions of the Affordable Housing Ordinance but not for a specific project. Recommended not approving co-signors until the ordinance is changed for everybody.
- Would like Mitigated Negative Declarations in the future to have a cross reference to the Deep Aquifer Environmental Impact Report so there is a reference in subsequent EIR's to the consumption impacts addressed.
- Could have wider cul-de-sacs with 5-6 fewer units.
- This site is a good infill site; needs the higher density but the lack of parking is a valid issue in the proposal.
- Didn't think this proposal was exactly the right plan; favored reducing it by 5-6 units. The project was too dense at 11 units per acre given the context of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Commented that there was a general concern about the lack of storage space in the affordable housing units. There was room in the design to accommodate this issue that could be worked out in future alternative proposals.

**Action:** Vice- Chairperson Braly moved staff recommendation of the proposal as put forth by the applicant. Commissioner Frerichs seconded the motion. After some discussion, Chairperson Clumpner substituted the motion to have the applicant and the neighborhood group go back and do more work on the proposal and bring back some alternatives with maybe 5-6 units less and address some of the neighbors concerns. Commissioner Whittier seconded the motion. Chairperson Clumpner also added that CC&R's should be brought back with an alternative plan that would address parking and other issues. Commissioner Whittier agreed. Commissioner Levy asked if the motion could be amended by withdrawing the part of the motion to reduce the units by 5-6. Chairperson Clumpner re-stated the motion and clarified that the applicant would be submitting alternative plans with a potentially lower density than the 29 units proposed. Commissioner Whittier agreed.

AYES: Whittier, Hofmann, Clumpner  
NOES: Levy, Braly, Frerichs, Kordana  
The motion failed 3 to 4.

Vice-Chairperson Braly withdrew his original motion. Commissioner Levy moved a substitute motion that was identical to Chairperson Clumpner's motion but would be density neutral which meant it didn't matter the density amount but alternative proposals should address the configuration issues. Commissioner Whittier seconded the motion.

AYES: Whittier, Levy, Braly, Frerichs, Hofmann  
NOES: Clumpner  
Abstain: Kordana  
The motion passed 5-1-1.

Commissioner Frerichs suggested to staff that the Social Services Commission and then other Commissions and the City Council go back and review the Affordable Housing Ordinance as it relates to the price caps and co-signers for future developments.

**7. Business Items**

**A. Election of Chair/Vice-Chair**

Chairperson Clumpner nominated Vice-Chairperson Braly to be the Chairperson. Commissioner Kordana seconded the motion.

AYES: The motion passed unanimously 7 to 0.

Both Commissioners Levy and Kordana made statements of interest for being elected as Vice-Chairperson. The voting was done by ballot.

Mike Webb, Principal Planner, announced that Commissioner Kordana received three votes and Commissioner Levy received four votes. Commissioner Levy was elected as the new Vice-Chairperson.

**8. Informational Items**

**A. Planning Commission Schedule**

Mike Webb, Principal Planner, explained the upcoming meeting schedule and verified attendance.

**9. Staff and Commissioner Comments (continued).**

There were no staff or Commissioner comments.

**10. Public Communications (continued).**

A neighbor said she understood that times have changed and that increased density is the direction we are going to. She thought most of the neighbors thought that this area wouldn't be developed at the same surrounding density but the proposal of three times the neighboring density was too much.

**11. Adjournment to the next regular Planning Commission meeting to be held on Wednesday, July 8, 2009 in the Community Chambers (23 Russell Boulevard).**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15 p.m.