

CITY OF COTATI

MINUTES for the SPECIAL Meeting of the Planning Commission

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, November 17, 2011
TIME OF MEETING: 7:00 pm
PLACE OF MEETING: Cotati City Hall, City Council Chambers
201 West Sierra Avenue, Cotati, CA 94931

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Moore called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Brady, Ford, Hancock, Vice Chair Ritter and Chair Moore
Commissioners Absent: None
Staff Present: City Manager Dianne Thompson, Director of Community Development Vicki Parker, City Engineer/Director of Public Works Damien O'Bid, Chief of Police Mike Parish, Deputy City Clerk Tamara Taylor

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

IV. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

V. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

VI. MATTERS AT HAND

- A. Consider alternative concepts for the Old Redwood Highway Street Improvement Project and recommend an alternative to the City Council.

City Manager Thompson introduced the item.

Project consultants from Omni Means traffic engineering firm, Chief of Police Michael Parish, Director of Public Works/City Engineer Damien O'Bid and Director of Community Development Vicki Parker presented the staff report.

Chair Moore opened the floor to public comments. The following individuals spoke regarding the item:

Brad Yearwood (questioned traffic simulations).

Janet Baer (supported 4-lane).

Rick Stewart, owner of Arch's Glass in the subject area. (Concerned about business access and visibility; supports 4 lanes).

Christina (last name not discernable) (supports business, expressed concern about traffic, project funding, pedestrian crossing, emergency vehicle access).

Jan Kravitz (opposed to roundabouts due to impact on future business, diverted traffic, emergency access).

Greg Karraker (opposed to the 2-lane alternative, expressed concern regarding emergency vehicle access).

Kathryn Wickstrom (supported roundabouts; concerned about traffic volume and emergency vehicle access).

Joel Rosenblum, property owner in subject area. (Concerned about workability of roundabouts, traffic volume, emergency access, access to property).

Paul Oliva property owner in subject area. (Concerned about existing businesses; supports Oliver's proposal).

Carol Mazzetti, representative of Peet's Coffee (supports 2-lane alternative to slow down traffic).

Randy Figueredo on behalf of Olivers' traffic engineer (expressed support for Oliver's proposals due to estimated future traffic volumes).

Richard Merriss (supports 2 lanes funneling into a single-lane roundabout, and read a letter from Dave Ergo that indicated supported additional discussion and a modified roundabout).

Jim Bennett commented on the United Nations and other various topics.

Claire Fetrow, owner of the Hub Cyclery located in the project area. (Indicated support for the Village Main Street alternative).

John Osborn (opposed to roundabouts).

Steve Gold (supported Village Main Street alternative; safety should be top priority).

Gale (last name not discernable) (supported Village Main Street alternative and education on how roundabouts work).

Jenny Blaker (supported Village Main Street alternative; asked for clarification on project funding).

Wade Belew (supported Village Main Street alternative).

Chair Moore called a recess at 8:58 p.m. and reconvened at 9:14 p.m.

Public comment continued:

Lisa Newman, of the Oliver's design team (supported Oliver's proposals and staff review of same and expressed concern over development timeline).

Chris Cone (supported the Village Main Street alternative, particularly due to increased safety and village character).

Katie Arnold (supported Village Main Street alternative due to small-town character and reduced emissions; asked for clarification of Rancho Adobe Fire District's opinion regarding roundabouts).

Gary Helfrich (last name not discernable) of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition (supported Village Main Street Alternative due to increased safety and reduced cost).

Ella Warnock (has a business in the subject area; opposed to roundabouts; expressed concern regarding pedestrian safety, access to business, traffic volume).

Maria Glass (property and business owner in downtown Cotati; supported 2-lanes with roundabouts).

Richard Senghas, (property owner in the subject area; supports working with local business on a variation of the Village Main Street alternative due to character, increased safety, reduced emissions).

Elyse Lord (supported 2-lane with roundabout contingent upon it being a viable option for all and continued discussion with special interest groups).

Neville Hormuz (supported Oliver's roundabout variation or a safe 4-lane alternative).

Eric Kirchmann (commented on the proposals, presentation graphics and safety).

Ben Boyce, with the Accountable Development Coalition (supported Village Main Street alternative).

Dennis Rosatti on behalf of Sonoma County Conservation Action (indicated support for the 2-lane option with roundabouts and described the group's discussions with residents, noting that he was also commenting on behalf of 60 citizens who also supporting 2-lanes with roundabouts).

Joyce Garcia (indicated her belief that there was a lack of community input for the proposal; supports leaving Old Redwood Highway as is).

Willard Richards (indicated support for 2-lane with roundabouts variation).

Roger Carillo (supported the Village Main Street due to increased multi-modal safety).

Rick Thies (indicated support for the Village Main Street alternative).

There being no one else wishing to speak, Chair Moore closed the public hearing.

Staff responded to questions as follows:

- ◆ Regarding traffic simulations: traffic queues were simulated.
- ◆ Arch's Glass parking situation would remain the same with the Village Main Street alternative; roundabouts designed to accommodate trucks, including delivery trucks. The City Boulevard alternative would reduce parking because of the need for bike lanes.
- ◆ Regarding project funding questions, staff summarized the legal challenges regarding redevelopment funds, noting that if redevelopment funds are not available there would be no project. The City anticipates the ability to retain the Redevelopment Agency pursuant to the State of California requirements. Staff also described the grant funding.
- ◆ Regarding Rancho Adobe Fire District's (RAFD) response to the alternatives: Staff reviewed correspondence between City and RAFD to indicate the City's ongoing communication with RAFD regarding the project. Staff met with Fire Marshal Mike Bechtold on September 23, and he had no issues with either alternative presented. Chief Parish met with Chief Treanor the following week, and Chief Treanor did not express concerns with either alternative. RAFD's concerns emerged at their October 19 Board Meeting as noted in the minutes. Staff provided copies of correspondence between the City and RAFD on the project, in addition to the RAFD Board Minutes.
- ◆ Either alternative has a capacity of 2400 cars per peak hour and that it is envisioned that the composition of traffic may change to include destination traffic that will become part of the visiting the area. He noted that the grant funds are to be obligated by February 2012 and that staff is confident that an extension will be obtained.
- ◆ Staff believes that a dedicated right-turn lane into the new St. Joseph's way is doable and that 2 lanes between roundabouts doesn't work because there's not enough room between intersections to merge from 1 lane into 2 and back again. Slower traffic means less gap needed; traffic is metered by signaled intersections at each end and by traffic moving within roundabouts.
- ◆ The bottlenecks are at the intersection of Old Redwood Highway and 116 and at East Cotati Avenue; the intersections in between don't congest the traffic.
- ◆ The signalized intersections at either end and not the roundabouts that would contribute to traffic congestion, which in turn may contribute to a driver perceiving a possible faster alternative on side streets.
- ◆ Regarding the recent catastrophic event (fuel spill) on Highway 101, staff noted that streets and roads are not designed to a single catastrophic event; they are designed to an average. When such events occur they are handled as best as possible.

Discussion ensued:

Commissioner Hancock noted that the goal is to slow traffic down to 25 miles per hour and that statistics on fatal accidents is significant. He expressed appreciation for Oliver's Market. He noted that the first priority is safety and he indicated support for the Village Main Street option A.

Vice Chair Ritter indicated agreement with Commissioner Hancock, for Village Main Street option and due to price, safety and aesthetics.

Commissioner Brady indicated that she is listening to the public and hears that they are supporting the character of Village Main Street alternative.

Commissioner Ford expressed support for the Village Main Street alternative due to safety and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. He noted that he understands the concerns regarding the impact of the project on the developer. He indicated that he doesn't think Cotati wants increased traffic even if we could somehow change the intersections at either end. He supported 2-lanes with roundabouts with potential for increased capacity north of St. Joseph's Way, perhaps with a dedicated right-turn lane.

Chair Moore indicated agreement with the rest of the Commissioners. She commended the attendees and encouraged the affected business to work with staff.

Moved by Commissioner Ford, seconded by Commissioner Hancock and passed unanimously to recommend that the City Council approve the Village Main Street alternative for the Old Redwood Highway rehabilitation project, and to consider including additional traffic capacity, if feasible, north of St. Joseph's Way.

VII. REPORTS BY STAFF

None.

VIII. REPORTS BY COMMISSION

None.

MEETING ADJOURNED by Chair Moore at 10:35pm

Tamara Taylor
Deputy City Clerk