

Woodland City Council Meeting
City Hall, Council Chambers
300 First Street
Woodland, California

MINUTES

JOINT CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD SPECIAL/STUDY SESSION

JANUARY 29, 2008

6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

At 6:06 P.M. Vice Mayor Davies called the regular meeting of the Council to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Mayor Davies invited all in attendance to join in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Flory.

ROLL CALL

COUNCIL MEMBERS/ REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	Marlin Davies, William Marble (left the meeting at 6:10 p.m.), Jeff Monroe, Artemio Pimentel, David Flory
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COUNCIL MEMBERS/ REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:	None
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STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mark Deven, Gary Wegener, Sue Vannucci, Joan Drayton, Barry Munowitch, Jimmy Stillman, Brent Meyer, Bob MacNicholl, Cynthia Shallit, Paul Hanson, Evis Morales, Cynthia Norris, Jamie McLeod, Bruce Pollard.
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Council Member Marble asked to be excused because of a prior commitment. At 6:10 p.m. he left the Council meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR

REVISED JOB DESCRIPTIONS-INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGER AND HUMAN RESOURCES ANALYST I/II

On a motion by Council Member Monroe, seconded by Council Member Pimentel and carried by the members present, the City approved revised job descriptions for Information Systems Manager (re-titled Technology Services Manager) and Human Resources Analyst I/II.

REPORTS OF CITY MANAGER

UPDATE-DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN IN ADVANCE OF UPDATE TO GENERAL PLAN

Assistant City Manager Munowitch said the City needs to update two critical planning documents that will guide Woodland's future growth and development, the General Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan. Staff suggests the City immediately start the update process for the Specific Plan prior to updating the General Plan. The City should start actively facilitating and supporting efforts and working with the downtown business community to promote the downtown, provide funding for infrastructure in the Downtown and take steps to enhance the appearance. Staff should be assigned to guide high priority development projects, public and private development, and to start implementing a vision for the Downtown. The vision is critical for the City to make positive steps forward in the area. California law requires each City to adopt a comprehensive General Plan consisting of maps, policies, and proposals to guide the City's development in the future. By statute a General Plan has seven specific elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety. These elements need to work together so that they create a consistent plan for the community. The Specific Plan is a tool to implement the general policies contained in the General Plan. A specific plan establishes a link between the policies of the General Plan and the individual development proposals in a specific area. Through the Specific Plan City staff, the Planning Commission and the City Council can implement the long term policies and objectives in a short term time frame.



Mayor Flory left the Council meeting temporarily at 6:20 p.m. and returned to the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Assistant City Manager Munowitch said the plan could be organized into a set of concise development policies, which include land use regulations. A Specific Plan could also include a capital improvement and financing programs within the Specific Plan document. Future development proposals can benefit from the foundation created in the Specific Plan. When a Specific Plan is properly prepared, a program Environmental Impact Report will fulfill the plan's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) obligation, and that EIR can streamline the processing of future approvals and eliminate the need for lengthy and costly environmental reviews. The Specific Plan creates a good tool for developing a community sense of place. Woodland had its last major General Plan update more than eleven years ago, and most recent minor revisions were five years ago. In June of 2006 there was a voter approved measure that established an Urban Limit Line around the City. There were specific policies and other provisions in the voter approved measure that relate to future land use. Since the last major revision there have been many changes on the ground in the City. There are significant new residential and commercial developments, major new civic facilities constructed, such as the Community and Senior Center and the new rebuilt Fire Station 1 and since the last General Plan update there has also been voter support of two major tax measures and the failure of one measure. There have also been questions about the City's current General Plan and the economic feasibility of some of the policies in the current General Plan.

The City is in the midst of its second update to the housing element since the last General Plan update. It was time to look at a comprehensive revision to the General Plan along with an economic feasibility analysis that will test the feasibility of the policies in the Plan. Staff believes that a more immediate need today is to start the update of a streamlined Downtown Specific Plan as there are several projects going through the review process now; City Center Loft, the Downtown court project and other rehabilitation projects. Some of these projects are going to generate additional development proposals. There is a focus on economic development, streamlining development services. The City needs to be in a position to efficiently and effectively respond to proposals with the foundation of an up-to-date streamlined Downtown Specific Plan that has been analyzed comprehensively for fiscal impacts, its infrastructure impacts and environmental impacts. A possible focus could be to enhance the Downtown's role as the government, dining, entertainment, cultural, and retail/specialty center of the community. The vision needs to be established by the community, ratified by the Planning Commission and the City Council. There needs to be some outreach to the community. Some of the potential steps that could be



implemented include: (1) allocating some of the Redevelopment Bond money to stimulate development and projects that are consistent with the projected downtown vision; (2) utilizing the \$1 million in the Redevelopment Agency budget for City vision; (3) identifying a staff person to help push projects forward in the downtown, working with private developers or downtown merchants; (4) hiring a part-time Downtown Coordinator to help the City move forward in meeting the vision for the area; and (5) actively engaging downtown stakeholders.

Council Member Monroe asked how the downtown stakeholders would be contacted. Assistant City Manager Munowitch said he anticipates knocking on doors and inviting them to speak with City staff either through the downtown businesses or through a sub-committee of the Chamber of Commerce. Council should consider approval to approve proceed with the updated Downtown Specific Plan. Staff will report back to Council with a vision and plan for working with the downtown neighbors, and identify projects for the use of bond funds, as well as, other redevelopment funds.

Mayor Flory said there are many people who have been involved in the Downtown Specific Plan process. Staff can report back to Council about public outreach, but the City has been talking about outreach for years. He needs some assurance if the City goes ahead with the Specific Plan, there will be timelines set. It would be important to do an urban decay study as a part of the General Plan update, but he said does not see any clear direction. The Chamber of Commerce and a downtown association has the responsibility of telling stores how to market their businesses; it is not the City's place to be doing that. The City's position is to encourage businesses to come downtown, to stay downtown and to provide infrastructure, aesthetics, safety and services. He is not in favor of hiring a Downtown Coordinator.

Assistant City Manager Munowitch said the current Downtown Specific Plan is a great document, but falls far short of being a document that enables the City to proactively deal with development proposals. There are some wonderful concepts in terms of site plans and fantastic policies about design, but there is no comprehensive development done. Projects cannot be developed with the City's inadequate infrastructure downtown. Redevelopment Agencies can go forward and assist businesses in downtown areas, which Cities normally do not get involved with.



Council Member Pimentel is skeptical about spending some additional funding on the Downtown Specific Plan. His interest is in considering one-way streets, parking, and stoplights versus stop signs. If the City is just looking at the building and infrastructure, it does not need the additional expenditures

Director Wegener said a key aspect of the Downtown Specific Plan is to study what the water and sewer infrastructure needs are and identify a funding source which would eliminate a major road block to any project that comes in.

Council Member Monroe does not want the City to get into a position of telling the downtown businesses what to do, but he liked the idea of going door to door asking businesses what they like or do not like about the Downtown Specific Plan to get a consensus before the City moves forward.

Vice Mayor Davies said he supports the idea of going forward and redoing the Downtown Specific Plan. He hears constantly that the EIR for the last Plan was not sufficient.

Council Member Monroe left the Council meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Vice Mayor Davies asked if there are funds in the sewer and water funds or Redevelopment funds to contribute to the cost of the Downtown Specific Plan.

Council Member Monroe returned to the Council meeting at 6:44 p.m.

Assistant City Manager Munowitch said the update of the Downtown Specific Plan and the General Plan are two projects listed in the current Capital Budget. He said if Council directs staff the go ahead with the update, staff will firm up the estimates. Revenue sources are tight, but Redevelopment Funds can be used for the Downtown Specific Plan update. The 10-year budgeting for most of the City's funds allows the City to use bond funds for project implementation but not for planning. Staff can look at the Enterprise Funds to see if Master Plan updates are forthcoming. A major General Plan update could take 18 to 24 months or more. A Specific Plan update could take 12 to 18 months maximum.

Mayor Flory suggested staff take the elements from the proposal they wish to address and give Council an explanation of why staff wants to do that.

Assistant City Manager Munowitch said the current Downtown Specific Plan has some great design elements, but failed as there was no analysis done on whether the design was feasible. The Plan did not deal with traffic impacts.



Council Member Pimentel thought the City had done a lot of analysis. Last year staff requested approval of spending several thousand dollars on a facade program, and that money still has not been spent. The Council and the City want to improve the look of the downtown, but the City does not need a \$250,000 study to tell the Council what it needs to focus on. The existing Specific Plan indicates the City focus for the next 10 to 15 years.

Vice Mayor Davies said facts do not get the City any closer to completing projects. There is no EIR for the Downtown Specific Plan. Without an EIR all projects are held up. Before an EIR can be completed the Downtown Specific Plan must be reaffirmed. The City needs a completed EIR for the General Plan so that projects cannot move ahead.

Assistant City Manager Munowitch said the Specific Plan is a good one, but he would like guidance indicating whether the Council wants to use the existing Plan as a base and build upon that rather than starting over. There have been comments from the Planning Commission, staff and the Council that conceptually everyone likes the City Center Lofts project, but that does not mean the project can happen. It has taken hundreds of thousands of dollars and more than two years to process the project. If the community is going to be efficient in to development requests and proposals, there are certain obligations the City needs to undertake to insure that the process is followed in a systematic fashion. One requirement is that the City prepare the infrastructure, fiscal and environmental analyses to identify potential problems before people invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in our community. The community should be involved in the update. City and Redevelopment Agency resources should be spent to do proactive planning. If the Council wishes, the developers could be charged for some of the expenditures.

City Manager Deven said from comments heard, he has concluded that the Downtown Specific Plan, the design and other elements, are acceptable to the Council. Staff can come back to Council to provide them with some specific analysis of what needs to be updated. If the City begins to update any part of the Specific Plan, the City should do some level of community outreach. It is not clear on Council wishes in relation to a Downtown Coordinator position. The position would be part-time and would not be telling businesses how to promote themselves or what to do, but staff does see a role for a Downtown Coordinator to help the City work with the business community downtown on events.

Vice Mayor Davies said the Council is not ready for a Downtown Coordinator position at this time.



Council Member Pimentel asked what the City's policy is on charge backs of the EIR.

Assistant City Manager Munowitch said the City does not currently have a specific policy. With Council direction, staff could come back with a recommendation.

On a motion by Council Member Pimentel, seconded by Mayor Flory and carried by the Members present, Council approved the update of the Downtown Specific Plan in advance of the update to the General Plan and agreed to complete the EIR for the Downtown Specific Plan, taking the current Specific Plan in terms of the policies approved by the Council, and updating some of the issues discussed at this meeting.

Mayor Flory said the City will prepare the infrastructure, fiscal and environmental analyses.

Council also agreed to discuss at a later date a charge back policy.

David Wilkinson said there have been some great things done in the Downtown. Everyone feels an upscale condo project on Main Street across from the State Theater would be a good project, but the housing market for that type of project is very cyclical. The City should make an effort to attract all kinds of housing downtown, affordable and senior housing. He works in the affordable housing industry for Mercy Housing which is a large developer of affordable housing in California. The housing cycle does not really affect affordable housing, and he said in today's market there is a lot of money available to build affordable housing. When the Downtown Specific Plan is updated, the City should try to attract a hotel downtown, but the City would have to subsidize that project. Regarding the State Theater he said he feels Woodland could do a much better job of promoting Woodland's historic resources. He would like to report back to the Council with a proposal for seed money to start a study of the State Theater matched by funds from other sources, such as the Historical Society. The project could be done in phases, and the owner is willing to sell the property to a non-profit group. He would hope the Council would support a modest amount of money, approximately \$10,000, for the project.

Vice Mayor Davies said there is a lot of competition for General Fund dollars for this fiscal year, but he would encourage the historical groups to get involved. He would support some fundraising for a study of the State Theater and would welcome a report back from Mr. Wilkinson on his efforts.



Council Member Pimentel said he would support some seed money in the amount of \$10,000 or more to promote a study of the State Theater. It would be good to get the community to support a non-profit organization that would take the State Theater and renovate or redevelop it.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:10 p.m., Mayor Flory adjourned the regular meeting of the Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan L. Vannucci, Director of
Administrative Services

Transcribed by: Jean Kristensen, Deputy City Clerk

Adopted by Council: March 17, 2009