

**RANCHO BERNARDO
COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD**
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Regional Issues Committee
Meeting Notes
August 1, 2006

Members Present: Vicki Touchstone, Joyce Tavrow, Dave Kreitzer, Rich Belzer, Richard House, Jim Denton, Robin Kaufman, Dorothy Rischeberger

Others Present: Approximately 60 members of the community, primarily representing Bernardo Heights, attended the meeting and many provided comments regarding Agenda Item 1. Speakers included Joseph Traxler (CABH), Cynthia Haas (CABH), Tom Kluczynski, Mary Shea (Recreation Council), Joseph McHugh, Mike Moser (representing the Poway Unified School District), Doug Mann (Poway Unified School District), Patti Perna (Vista de Bernardo HOA), Bob Pliner, Pauline Romanowski, Kelly Contratto (Bernardo Vistas HOA), and Nick Muller (Plaza Bernardo HOA).

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Community Plan Amendment – Bernardo Heights Elementary School Site

The committee reviewed the request by the Poway Unified School District to initiate an amendment to the Rancho Bernardo Community Plan to redesignate a 10.88-acre proposed elementary school site in Bernardo Heights to medium density (14 to 29 dwelling units per net acre) residential use. Committee members and the public were reminded that the July Regional Issues Committee Meeting Notes, which are posted on the Planning Board website, describe in detail the initiation process and the direction provided in the Community Plan about such plan amendments.

Briefly, the following criteria must be met an amendment to a *land use plan* may be initiated:

- (1) The proposed *land use plan* amendment is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Progress Guide and General Plan;
- (2) The proposed *land use plan* amendment appears to offer a public benefit to the community or City;
- (3) Public services are available or are planned to be available to serve the proposed change in *density* or intensity of use; and
- (4) City staff is available to process the proposed *land use plan* amendment without any work being deferred on General Fund-supported programs or on-going *land use plan* updates.

The Community Plan states in the Community Facilities Element – School Sites (page 56) that any public school site in Rancho Bernardo, not needed for a school, should be considered first for a community park or recreational facility. School sites should be considered for residential

housing only if the City determines, after a public hearing, that a particular site is not currently needed and will not, in the foreseeable future, be needed for public use. A residential use of a school property should be further conditioned upon a determination that adequate public facilities exist to serve the additional units proposed and that there would be no significant traffic impacts from the proposed development. A Planned Residential Development Permit should be obtained for any residential development proposed on the site currently designated for school use. The Community Plan also states that multi-family developments should reflect the community character.

The draft Facilities Financing Plan that was received by the Committee in the last week identified a need for additional park space in the community. This is new information that is very relevant to the proposed request for a plan amendment initiation because of the language in the community plan regarding use of unneeded school sites.

Debra Sharp from the City of San Diego's Park and Recreation Department presented information regarding Rancho Bernardo's population based park needs. Currently, the community has 35.10 acres of community park land and 54 acres of private recreation land within our community recreation centers for a total of 89.10 acres. Based on community's total population-based acreage need per the General Plan, which is 115.53 acres, the community currently has a park acreage deficit of 26.43 acres. The need for additional park land has been included in the draft Facilities Financing Plan and the vacant school site in Bernardo Heights has been identified as a potential future park site. However, no funding for acquisition of the site has been identified. The site was originally given to the school district for an elementary school site by the developer of Bernardo Heights, Genstar.

Brian Schoenfisch, City of San Diego Planning Department, indicated that a public hearing was currently scheduled for September 7 to determine if the designated school site is needed, currently or in the foreseeable future, for public use.

The plan amendment process, including opportunities for public input was addressed. Public input can be provided at various times throughout the process including at the Planning Commission hearing where the request to initiate the plan amendment will be heard – if the amendment is initiated, additional opportunities for public comment would occur when the environmental document is provided for public review and comment, at future Planning Board meetings on the subject, and at future Planning Commission and City Council hearings to consider the amendment language, rezone, and specific development proposal.

Mike Moser, a real estate representative for the Poway Unified School District, indicated that the interest in the site for park land was new information. He reviewed the thought process that went into the determination that the site was not needed for school purposes and indicated that allowing residential use on the site would permit the district to obtain needed administrative facilities.

Doug Mann, Director of Facilities for the school district was also present. He stated that Bernardo Heights does not generate enough elementary school students to support a school within the community. He thought the Bernardo Heights generated about 300 to 350 students; however, he stated that the figures were about five years old. In response to a question regarding the presence of a water tank above the site, it was stated that measures could be taken to ensure that a school or future residents would not be adversely affected should the tank sustain damage and rupture.

Cynthia Haas, representing the Community Association of Bernardo Heights (CABH), stated that Bernardo Heights includes 3248 dwelling units on 491.44 acres. The average gross density of existing single family homes in Bernardo Heights is 5.82 dwelling units per acre and the average gross density of the existing multi-family dwelling units is 8.14 dwelling units per acre. The Overlook Apartments, located to the south of the school site, has a density of 13.1 dwelling units per gross acre and Bernardo Greens has a density of 12.34 dwelling units per gross acre. The gross density of the school district proposal is 15.99 dwelling units per acre, more than double the average density of existing developments in Bernardo Heights. She indicated that if the property had been developed for residential use when the community was developed, that development would have been subject to the architectural guidelines developed for the Bernardo Heights community and would have been required to contribute to the recreational and landscaping enhancements provided within the community. Issues identified by CABH include a density that is significantly higher than other multi-family developments in Bernardo Heights; membership in CABH has not been addressed and the residents would benefit significantly from the landscaping and maintenance provided around the development and paid for by the surrounding residents; increased traffic congestion as Avenida Venusto is only a two-lane street; there are existing parking problems in the area and this proposal could add to those problems; and the School District has not provided adequate information about the proposal to CABH. CABH's first preference for the use of the site would be for a park. If the site is not determined to be a feasible park site, CABH could support the change from a school site to residential development provided the density is consistent with the other developments in Bernardo Heights. Additionally, the project should be conditioned to join and contribute to the Community Association of Bernardo Heights.

Mary Shea, representing the Recreation Council, described the need for more land to accommodate the many youth sport groups in the community and indicated that the school site had value to the community as park land.

Low density residential development is a reasonable use of the land and could be supported.

Pauline Romanowski, Kelly Contratto, Bob Pliner, Nick Muller, and Patti Perna, representing the Villages HOA, Bernardo Vistas HOA, Los Rios HOA, Plaza Bernardo HOA, and Vista de Bernardo HOA, all expressed concerns regarding the effects that a 16-dwelling unit per acre development could have on the surrounding residents. Traffic, parking, and visual and density compatibility were all discussed. No parking is permitted on Avenida Venusto; therefore, excess parking would be forced to use adjacent residential streets, which are already impacted by existing multi-family developments that do not have adequate on-site parking to accommodate its residents.

Tom Kluczynski raised quality of life issues related to traffic, parking, and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. He suggested seeking outside assistance such as from the Trust of Public Lands, in acquiring the land for a park site.

Bernardo Vistas HOA stated that morning traffic congestion is a significant issue on Avenida Venusto and adding 170 plus units would exacerbate this existing problem.

Los Rios HOA expressed similar concerns with the proposed density of the project because of associated parking and traffic problems, as well as compatibility issues.

Joseph McHugh expressed concern with the way in which the School District currently maintains the site and stated that the site needed to be cleaned up.

Joyce Tavrow, a member of the Regional Issues Committee, asked if there was any information regarding the costs to the city of supporting residential use on the site versus a park. Residential development represents long term costs to the city in terms of the delivery of public services, such as fire, police, library, parks, etc.

Jim Denton made a motion and Robin Kaufman seconded that:

The request to initiate a community plan amendment be denied until the issue of whether or not the property can be acquired to provide additional park land in the community has been resolved, and further, that City staff be directed to continue their research into how the property could be acquired and developed as park land.

The motion received unanimous approval.

2. Facilities Financing Plan Update

The draft Facilities Financing Plan was reviewed (The draft report is available at www.RBPlanningboard.com). The overall plan was much improved and contained good background information. The Committee reviewed the proposed projects and noted that the two MAD projects had not been incorporated into the plan as requested. In addition, several projects seemed to overlap and others that we thought were completed are not indicated as such. The committee's questions and comments will be forwarded to the City and requested that the Board not take an action on the proposal until these final issues are resolved.

3. Draft Lease between the City of San Diego and the San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority for Phase 1 of the Lake Hodges Pedestrian Bicycle Bridge

A condition of constructing the Lake Hodges Pedestrian Bicycle Bridge is approval of a lease from the City of San Diego to construct the bridge on land owned by the Water Department. The committee reviewed the lease conditions for consistency with the Board's previous action on this proposal. A copy of the lease is posted on the Planning Board website.

The following conditions were previously approved by the Planning Board for this project:

- a. Approval of the portion of the project that extends from the south end of the trail staging area south to the Community Park shall be delayed until an appropriate alignment has been identified. This part of the project shall be separated from the rest of the Site Development Permit and processed as a second phase of the project.
- b. Construction of the trail leading from the bridge to the staging area shall be conditioned upon the approval of the second phase of the Site Development Permit.
- c. The River Park staff shall continue to work with the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Board and City staff to identify an alignment for the southern segment of the project that does not impact the visual quality of the Community Park entrance or the existing pedestrian uses in the area.
- d. The Site Development Plan and City Lease shall include a condition that requires the maintenance and monitoring of the willows and mule fat to be planted as screening material in front of the cantilever trail's concrete piles. These activities shall be implemented for the life of the project to ensure the long-term health of this screening vegetation. Dead or dying vegetation shall be replaced in a timely manner. If the hydrology in the area changes and the plantings die due to a lack of water or from too

much water, than this vegetation shall be replaced with other appropriate screening vegetation that can tolerate the changed conditions.

- e. The Site Development Plan and City Lease shall include a condition that requires the development and implementation of a program to monitor the use of the bridge by various user groups. If a conflict between users is identified, measures shall be implemented in a timely manner and in consultation with City staff to ensure the quick resolution of such conflicts.
- f. The Site Development Plan and City Lease shall include a condition that prohibits the opening of the pedestrian/bicycle bridge until bike lanes are provided along West Bernardo Drive, a signalized intersection is operational at the south end of the bridge, and there is a opening in the center median at the intersection to permit access to and from the bridge from the south side of West Bernardo Drive.
- g. The City lease and the JPA Board of Directors shall acknowledge that the Rancho Bernardo Community Plan designates West Bernardo Drive as a four lane major street and that at sometime in the future the road may have to be widened to accommodate additional traffic. Widening may result in the temporary closure and/or replacement of the pathway that is proposed to extend from the bridge to the trail staging area. In addition, the lease shall acknowledge that bike lanes will be maintained on West Bernardo Drive following widening and the median will remain open for bicycle access at the intersection with the south end of the bridge.

The Committee determined that the draft lease addresses all of the Board previous conditions and unanimously approved a motion to recommend approval of the lease.

4. Redirection of Flow Study for the East Bernardo Trunk Sewer in Green Valley Creek

Mike Bajoua from the City's Metropolitan Wastewater Department provided a PowerPoint presentation that described the process of determining when sewer lines in canyons should be considered for relocation outside the canyons. The costs of redirecting the flow versus maintaining the line in the canyon were presented for the trunk sewer in Green Valley Creek, east of I-15. Based on those costs, the City has determined that the line should remain in the canyon. The committee agreed and unanimously supported the City's determination. The committee did request that the City work with the committee in developing the access plan that will permit City crews to maintain the line.