

Fortuna City Council
Fortuna Planning Commission
March 6, 2007 6:00 PM
River Lodge Conference Center

PRESENT

Mayor John Campbell
Mayor Pro Tem Patrick Whitchurch
Councilman Mel Berti
Councilman Dean Glaser
Councilman Doug Strehl

STAFF

City Manager
Deputy Community Development Director
Assistant City Planner
Deputy City Clerk

PLANNING COMMISSION

Chairman Travis Low
Commissioner Tami Gillam
Commissioner Arden Henry
Commissioner Neal Kesterson
Commissioner John Marshall
Commissioner Marvin Schwartz
Commissioner Darren Tomasini

BUSINESS

RECEIVE PUBLIC INPUT AND COMMENT ON THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Mayor John Campbell said that at the last meeting we came up with a preferred alternative, and tonight we will hear the voice of the public.

Ken Zanzi said he fully supports the planned alternative. He said it looks like Area 8, the Airport Area is the only area for quality jobs and said he thinks there should be more emphasis on jobs. He closed by stating he was offended by a flyer he received in the mail.

Erin Wall read a letter which suggested the City include percentages for each component of mixed use and a square footage requirement to ensure development be of an appropriate scale.

Jack Wells a Biologist said from his experience, hiking/biking trails along the river protect wildlife. He also expressed concern that the new traffic signals have no provisions for bicycles.

Huey Long said we are looking at two options, move forward or the other alternative is to move backward. He spoke of two towns in Alabama that prospered with the development of big box and encouraged Council to go forward with the preferred alternative.

Ed Brennenman gave examples of two towns with and without big boxes and said it's a quality of life. He indicated he doesn't go to the mall, that his first choice is Fortuna.

Martha Spencer said she worked as a Planner for the City of Willows and when WalMart came in, the downtown stores went out of business and the downtown became a ghost town.

Bob Chaves said noise, light and traffic has been talked about enough, it will be a congested mess and said he thinks a mixed use is a beautiful idea.

Kevin Toler said the reason Humboldt County has a hard time is the infrastructure, the highways and railroad. He said Katz wants to develop and there will be hundreds of good paying construction jobs for the short term and a new WalMart will keep more money and people in Fortuna. He said there are two choices, no growth or go forward with Alternative C.

Don Mayden said he doesn't see how we can grow a City when it takes 3 years to build a garage.

Colleen McQuown said there has been an attempt to look at the picture without looking at WalMart. She indicated she sees a problem of land being developed by private people and the project will be designed by whoever owns the land and expressed concern the numbers do not work out.

Jane Buckley said she is so upset we are even thinking about a big box for this beautiful town.

Tracy Benbow agreed 100% with the idea of pedestrian friendly along Fortuna Blvd and agreed there will be potential traffic problems. She said we need to be careful about the type of development we bring to Fortuna and encouraged taking care of the kids in our community.

Jon Sapper said he has followed the General Plan process since being appointed by the late Tom Cooke. He said we currently have vacant buildings and we can and need to do better and we need good paying jobs.

Sharon Vinum asked that we don't lose site of downtown, that hopefully we can enhance what we have.

Janell Egger indicated it was stated the selling point of the Palco property was the easy off-easy on for the freeway. She had concern that the open space at Riverwalk has a series of commercial dots.

Bill Nash said the projects that developed in Eureka were extremely eager to please.

Debi August questioned if the Planning Commission would hold separate meetings and Mayor Campbell said there will be separate public sessions with the Planning Commission and then it will move up to the City Council.

Debi August questioned plans for annexation and she questioned where the plans are to put these people. She said we need to move on.

Marsha Maxwell questioned the opinion of the majority of the people in Fortuna and questioned Councilman Glaser's suggestion about a survey with the water bill. Mayor Campbell indicated there was no formal action taken for a survey.

Councilman Glaser said that when he walked through Fortuna 5 years ago campaigning he asked the residents about their reception of a big box and there was an overwhelming desire for a big box.

Sharon Shaffer said she is here because of the flyer and would like to have a vote. She also said she would like to see Main Street develop.

Ron Queen said he is in favor of development of the Palco site for retail/commercial and said he is not in favor of mixed use. He said that's not someplace to develop for residential.

An unidentified woman expressed concern about traffic and said she would like to see the traffic deflected from Rohnerville Road. She also referred to the large senior population in Fortuna and said the ability to shop exclusively in Fortuna will be increasingly important.

John Hansen said it would probably be worth an election for \$10,000 to put this to rest. He said he supports mixed retail on the Palco site and said WalMart will have a major impact on this community. He closed by saying his greatest fear is that this democratic process will be in vain.

Dean Lewis said we have a depressed economy and said he wants the biggest box we can get.

Steve Kioukis said there is nothing available to build on and said he thinks the Mill Site is the perfect site for industrial commercial property.

Sean O'Day said nobody has made an effort to speak with him and he told Council they need to empower staff to talk to people.

Council thanked everyone for attending and the workshop adjourned at 7:45 PM.