

# ***MINUTES OF THE SOLANO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION***

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## **Meeting of January 15, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Solano County Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Chambers, Fairfield, California.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Cayler, Walker, Hollingsworth, and Chairman Boschee

**EXCUSED:** Commissioner Rhoads-Poston

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mike Yankovich, Planning Program Manager; Jim Leland, Principal Planner; Jim Laughlin, Deputy County Counsel; and Kristine Letterman, Planning Commission Clerk

**Items from the floor:**

There were no items from the floor.

**The Minutes** of the regular meeting of December 4, 2014 were approved with a correction to reflect Commissioner Hollingsworth as present at the meeting. The minutes of December 9, 2014 were approved as prepared.

1. **PUBLIC HEARING** to review and receive public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the **Woodcreek 66 project**, consisting of Rezoning Petition No. Z-11-01, Policy Plan Overlay No. PPO-11-01 and Major Subdivision Application No. S-11-01. The project proposes 66 residential units and supportive infrastructure. The proposed project would consist of approximately 20 acres of residential development, approximately 9 acres of open space, and approximately 5 acres of road right-of-way. The proposed project is located on 33.8 acres of land in the Rockville area of unincorporated western Solano County, approximately 1 mile north of the main campus of Solano Community College and south of Rockville Road between Suisun Valley Road and Oakwood Drive. (Project Planner: Jim Leland)

Jim Leland introduced the item by stating that this is an informational hearing to present the highlights of the DEIR. He stated that the public review period closes on February 17, 2015, noting that the review period was extended beyond the 45 days mandated by the State to 60 days. He said the extension was made at the request of a public agency. Mr. Leland said that this is not a required step in the process but an additional step the county is taking to facilitate public outreach on the project. Mr. Leland said that this will be back before the commission probably sometime in early spring.

Matthew Gerken, Consultant, AECOM, provided a brief presentation on the project. He reviewed the project description, the environmental process, highlighted the DEIR findings, and talked about the next steps in the process.

Chairman Boschee mentioned that this item was before the commission previously, and asked staff to provide some history and the reason why it is back before the commission.

Mr. Leland explained that this item was brought before the commission in 2010 which then went before the Board of Supervisors who approved the project for 33 homes at this site. Subsequent to the Board's approval there was some potential litigation and the applicant decided to withdraw the project. The applicant went back to the drawing board to figure out what kind of development might be appropriate for the site. They have now filed a new application but this time have prepared an EIR as the CEQA review instead of a negative declaration as was presented for the prior proposal.

Chairman Boschee stated that he is glad an EIR is being prepared for the project. He stated that this was one of his concerns when the item came before the commission the first time. He said that there were a number of issues and concerns that were raised by the public and he himself, and he hoped that those issues can be addressed through this process.

Since there were no further comments, Chairman Boschee opened the public hearing.

Linda Ellis, 4151 Oakwood Drive, Fairfield, stated that she resides directly across the street from the proposed site and will be impacted the most. She said that water will be a major issue and she did not believe the matter has been addressed properly. She was concerned as to how this is going to affect the ability of neighboring residents to maintain water in their wells. Ms. Ellis stated that the proposed density is not suited for a rural area. She said that there is a lot of wildlife and recreational areas that will be majorly impacted by this development.

Michael McKown, 4147 Oakwood Drive, Fairfield, stated that he is concerned with well water contamination and groundwater regeneration. He suggested providing water hookups for all residents who could be affected by this development as a mitigation measure. Mr. McKown stated that the DEIR says there is a plan that is going to be followed but the plan is never addressed. He said that this project would be adding to many homes to a rural area.

Chairman Boschee asked staff to clarify who would be providing the water hookups for the project.

Mr. Leland stated that the Solano Irrigation District (SID) is the proposed supplier of domestic water for each of the 66 lots. In addition, the water distribution system being installed by the subdivider will provide a trunk line extension over to a close proximity to Oakwood Drive so that in the future it is easier to extend that line further if desired to provide water to those homes.

Teri Luchini, 2208 Pacific Avenue, Fairfield, spoke on how the proposed project could potentially impact Rockville Park. She stated her concerns about wildlife and water. Ms. Luchini stated that she has personally seen mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, and deer in the park. They are uniquely dependent upon the habitat the area provides and are uniquely affected by light pollution, noise in the evening, and human presence. The addition of 66 residential units will have a significant impact on the wildlife that utilize the east side of the park which is a chaparral. She indicated that the chaparral is less than 500 yards from the proposed development and has the highest populations of wildlife due to cover and food sources. She said the volume of water

that flows from the watershed from above is significant. It flows not only during storm events but for weeks afterwards. She has seen the lake and pond levels in the park rise 2 to 3 feet in 24 hours after a storm event. Ms. Luchini spoke in some detail about drainage and the water flows in the area. She stated that the filling of the lower half of the Oakwood Drive ditch and installing a cement line ditch is detrimental to the residents currently living in the area. The ability of groundwater to recharge will be reduced as the water is carried away due volcanic bedrock at the proposed building site. She said that groundwater recharge for local wells is already slow and to couple that with drought conditions, local residents could experience problems with their wells. Ms. Luchini noted that there is currently no plan to address this issue. She said it would be unwise to approve a development until all the issues are adequately addressed. She strongly urged the commission to give consideration to the concerns being brought before them. Ms. Luchini asked the commission to deny the proposal for 66 units and honor the current zoning of 17 units per 1 acre parcel.

Veronica Cornett, 1864 Feathergrass Court, Fairfield, spoke about the impact to the birds of prey, specifically raptors. She spoke about the Golden Eagle. She said that while the DEIR specifically mentions that it looked at possible nesting sites, the area in which this project is planned is a very specific area where a Golden Eagle not only has been seen, but its mate has been injured due to increased traffic. That mate is now at a wildlife foundation and will no longer be able to be entered back into this particular area. There are other raptors and sensitive birds in this area and surrounding this project are cliffs in which these birds dwell and often frequent. Ms. Cornett commented that when the eagle was injured, the traffic, noise, and other congestion by human urbanization was one of the causes to that event. She said that raptors do not have the ability to learn or recognize these indirect impacts such as noise levels or light levels and when their primary food source is taken away, will make that animal search elsewhere for food. They are determined and are creatures of habit but they need a certain amount of area that they can depend on and the habitat that we are proposing to infringe upon is going to negatively impact that. Ms. Cornett asked the commission to consider these concerns because Rockville Park is very unique in its topographical environment, geography, and for what it provides in the entire aesthetics. She said the section in the DEIR with regard to aesthetics talked only about hard surfaces such as construction. She said that it should also encompass all of the ecological pieces to the aesthetic environment which include foraging of animals and their areas in which they continue to habitat.

David Martin, 4064 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield, stated that the density of the proposed project does not fit with the rural character of the community. He would like to see the project as originally approved for 33 home sites. Mr. Martin voiced his concern with the potential depletion of the water supply and questioned the capacity of the sewer system. He stated that traffic is already heavy in the area due to the density of the college. He commented that Suisun Valley Road is used as the main artery to the Valley as well as to Lake Berryessa. He said the addition of 66 homes will impact the egress and ingress off Suisun Valley Road. Mr. Martin stated that pedestrian traffic will increase as well. He wanted to know what the plan will be for ensuring safety when entering and exiting the project. He wanted to know the whereabouts of the funds that homeowners were required to pay when they purchased their property and were earmarked for future improvements to Suisun Valley Road. He said if this project moves forward Suisun Valley Road would need improvements such as widening, a turn lane, storm drains, sidewalks, traffic controls, and signage for decreased speed limits. He said that the entrance to the project

at Rockville Road is equally as dangerous. Mr. Martin said that this project is turning Rockville, which is a historical rural community, into an urban area. He said if the project is approved without the necessary road improvements at the very least, the county should be held responsible for the lives of people that are hurt because of the lack of concern and judgment made at the beginning of this project.

Commissioner Boschee wanted to know from staff what the plan will be for sewer hookups. He also wanted to know if a traffic study was prepared and if it will be included in the Final EIR.

Mr. Leland explained that the project proposes an extension of the sanitary sewer facilities provided by the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District to serve the 66 homes. Mr. Leland stated that a traffic study has been prepared and will be an appendix to the Final EIR. He noted that there is some discussion with regard to traffic in the DEIR.

Jerry Moore, 4129 Oakwood, Suisun, stated that the proposal for 66 homes is not in keeping with the character of the area and should be reduced to a smaller number.

Larry Herzig, 4094 Oakwood Drive, Fairfield, voiced concern about the groundwater recharge. He said the DEIR states that little detailed information is known regarding groundwater recharge in the Suisun Valley basin. He said that the wells in that area rely on the groundwater recharge and it takes some time for that groundwater to percolate. He said another of his concerns is that the retention basins will be located above his well and he is concerned about possible water contamination or failure of the basins.

Pam Hedrick, Rockville Road, Fairfield, stated that she uses the Rockville area for recreation and moved into the valley to enjoy its beauty. She said that the project would ruin the rural character that exists. Ms. Hedrick said she would like the county to honor the current zoning and be considerate of the people that come to Rockville to recreate and enjoy the rural nature of the entire valley.

Roy Pearson, 4167 Oakwood Drive, Fairfield, stated that the number of homes proposed is too many. He asked the commission for consideration because this is a rural area. Mr. Pearson made note that there are already problems that exist in the valley, one being the issue with storm water drainage. He questioned how the project will handle the drainage. Mr. Pearson also voiced his concern with well water and sewer impacts.

Larry Welch, 2266 Rockville Road, Fairfield, voiced his concern about the increase in density. He said that the county should stick to what was approved in the general plan. He commented that there are already drainage issues that exist in the area. He said the drainage culverts drain onto private property and the natural drainage that used to run onto Suisun Valley Road is now blocked due to the Tower Market and gas station.

Sergio Sanchez, 718 E. Tabor Avenue, #5, Fairfield, stated that he cycles in the area and has for many years. He rides Rockville Road at various times of the day and week including nighttime. In recent years he has seen the influx of traffic increase and it has taken a toll on cycling in the area. He said the development would add additional cars to the road and the rate of speed vehicles travel from north to south on Rockville Road is not safe. The corners on either

side of the proposed entrance will make it dangerous for both oncoming vehicles as well as cyclists. Mr. Sanchez urged the county to abandon the idea as far as the entrance at this location and to honor the current zoning of 17 units per 1 acre parcel.

Esther Pryor, 4089 Oakwood Drive, Fairfield, stated that historically the parcel of land proposed for this project has never passed a perk test. She wanted to know if a perk test has been recently done and if so when and what were the results. She inquired if the DEIR did any investigation into the results of the past perk test and made any comparison of what the weather was during those times. She noticed that throughout the document where significant impacts are noted, there are no specific plans in place for mitigation; there are proposed plans but not specific plans. She wondered how significant impact issues can be considered to be mitigated when plans will not be developed until the problem occurs. Ms. Pryor stated that the corners of Rockville and Suisun Valley Roads are considered to be the Gateway to the Suisun Valley, and the county has been diligently working to promote agritourism in the valley. She questioned why the county is considering putting a suburban development at the gateway of this rural agricultural community. She said the rural characteristics cannot be maintained when there is a suburban development that has suburban offsets. Ms. Pryor stated that the DEIR offers Alternative No. 2 which calls to maintain the 1 acre parcel lot size. She asked the commission to give serious consideration to Alternative No. 2 as the best direction for this community.

Steven Siegal, M.D., 4303 Rockville Heights, Fairfield, stated that 66 homes are absolutely out of character with the community. He stated that Suisun Valley is a hidden jewel and people want to come here, and are slowly finding their way. He said that it is part of the commission's mission to think largely about what is going to happen to Solano County, and if part of that mission is to think about the economic health of Solano County, the commission should take that into account. Dr. Siegal said the 66 homes would increase the light pollution at night and change traffic flows on the road between Rockville Park and Rockville Trails. He said that people come to this area to use the recreational resources. Dr. Siegal stated that he had heard a rumor that during construction of the local Tower Market that several Indian artifacts were unearthed. He believed there are also Indian artifacts in the Rockville Trails area. He inquired if there has been an independent archeological evaluation on the proposed site.

John Alfiers, Oakwood Drive, Fairfield, stated that this project as proposed will cause a negative impact on property values. He commented that a home was built recently on Oakwood Drive on a 1 acre parcel. It is a beautiful home and enhances the neighborhood. He said that having a house on a 1 acre lot is going to enhance property values. Mr. Alfiers stated that not only will this project have environmental impacts but economic impacts as well. He urged the commission to keep the 1 acre parcels as currently allocated.

Since there were no further speakers, Chairman Boschee closed the public hearing.

Chairman Boschee announced that all written comments received will be addressed in the Final EIR. He reiterated that the comment period closes on February 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. He said a public hearing on the Final EIR and the project will come before the commission probably in March or soon after.

Commissioner Hollingsworth asked if the utility district is the same source for water that the individual property owner have.

Mike Yankovich stated that SID will be providing the water, both domestic and irrigation for all of the homes in the proposed development, and so it would be an offsite source. The Oakwood Drive residents all have well and septic systems. Mr. Yankovich stated that one of the proposals is the developer will provide a stub out for both sewer and water hookups for residents on Oakwood Drive for future use.

Chairman Boschee requested that the developer provide cost information associated with the water and sewer hookups for the subdivision and residents on Oakwood Drive.

Commissioner Cayler stated that it may be difficult to determine a cost that would qualify for everyone due to the cost of inflation if hookups were to occur in the future.

Mr. Leland stated that it would be a bit more complex than a just a hookup. He explained that the trunk line for both sewer and water would need to be extended down Oakwood Drive; there would be an additional cost of a hookup fee for the agency and the extension of laterals to the home, installation of a meter, and the like. He said that staff can ask for a rough estimate of what that project would cost on a per lot basis assuming it was all done at the same time.

Jim Laughlin, deputy county counsel, clarified that the purpose of this hearing tonight is to take comments on the DEIR, but the conversation has now taken a turn where there is discussion of how infrastructure might be provided to the surrounding area. He said that this goes beyond the scope of the EIR. He said that staff can provide the requested information to the commission at the time the project comes back for their consideration, but it will not be included as part of the EIR itself but as part of the staff report.

2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS and REPORTS**

3. Since there was no further business, the meeting was **adjourned**.