

City Hall News

From the desk of
Fort Bragg City Manager Linda Ruffing
September 13, 2007

1. **Mill Site Update.** City staff and attorneys met recently with Georgia-Pacific (GP) representatives and attorneys and State Coastal Conservancy staff and attorneys. While a six-hour meeting with eight attorneys in the room can be a bit grueling—a great deal was accomplished. The main topic was the purchase and sale agreement for the coastal trail and parkland acquisition. We spent a considerable amount of time talking about:

- The Coastal Trail Corridor segment around Soldier Bay and issues surrounding timing for acceptance of the offer to dedicate, safety issues with the Mill Pond dam, uncertainty regarding the final configuration of the beach/wetlands, etc.
- The proposed relocation of the Glass Beach Parking & Staging Area parcel to a location at the northwestern corner of the site, as shown in the draft Coastal Trail Master Plan.
- Issues regarding the location of the south extension of the Coastal Trail Corridor between the South Parkland parcel and Main Street.
- The definition of “passive recreation” as it pertains to the City’s anticipated uses of the parkland, the Coastal Conservancy’s limitations per the State bonds that will fund the purchase, DTSC clean-up standards for parks and recreational uses, and GP’s concerns about potential impacts of parkland facilities on views and/or adjacent land uses.

We also discussed the status of the Polanco Cost Advancement Agreement and GP provided the long-awaited “schedule” for the remediation that will be attached to the agreements between the City and GP and the City and DTSC. We are anticipating that these agreements will be brought forward for City Council and Redevelopment Agency adoption within the next month. GP also provided an update regarding their thoughts on moving forward with the Specific Plan for the Mill Site. GP appears to be prepared (finally) to move forward with a specific planning process without a “master developer” in the wings. They have concluded that the sheer size of the property, coupled with market constraints and absorption issues, points towards a phased development/disposition strategy. GP is interested in preparing a fairly general Specific Plan that meets all of the requirements of State planning law but preserves flexibility for developers to obtain additional entitlements that flesh out the details of future development.

2. **Franklin Street Project.** As you may have noticed, the stamped asphalt crosswalks are completed. The contractors are working through the punch-list of corrections, washing the sidewalks, repairing cracks in the concrete, cleaning the drop inlets, etc. PG&E has installed all of the street lights and rotated the photocells to the south side of the lights to reduce the length of time the lights are on each day. The bollards on the 400 block of Franklin Street have been installed, but we may not have occasion to use them until next year when the Farmer’s Market returns. The tree grates will be here within a couple of weeks,

as will the new parking and street signs. All in all, the project is winding down and the Public Works Department should be commended for their diligent efforts to keep the contractors on task for months on end as this very complex project was constructed.

3. **Wave Energy.** The news of the week re: the Wave Energy preliminary permit applications that were filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for locations of the Fort Bragg and Mendocino coasts is that Chevron withdrew its application on August 31st.
4. **LCP Amendment.** Community Development Director Marie Jones and I had a lengthy conversation with Coastal Commission staff to discuss the City's comprehensive LCP Amendment application that is awaiting certification by the Commission. It appears that they are progressing in their review of the City's new LCP, however it is also clear that they are grappling with the immensity of the task. We agreed that Marie and I will spend a day in their Eureka office in late September to help sort through issues that are identified. The LCP Amendment will be heard by the Coastal Commission at their December 12th -14th meeting in San Francisco.
5. **Condo Hotel at Hi Seas.** Bob Hunt, the owner of the burned-out Hi Seas Motel, has approached City staff about the possibility of constructing a high-end "condo hotel" on the property. A condo hotel is a development that has the outward appearance and amenities of a traditional hotel but whose rooms may be sold as individual condominium ownerships. The Coastal Commission issued a memorandum in December 2006 expressing concerns about enforcement of length-of-stay restrictions for condo hotel owners to ensure that the hotels are in fact visitor-serving. The memo states that condo-hotels should not be considered unless a City has specific provisions in its LCP allowing such projects. North Coast District Manager Bob Merrill has informed City staff that an LCP amendment would not be needed for the City to process a coastal permit application for Mr. Hunt's proposed condo hotel project, but that, in the long run, the City may want to prepare an LCP amendment to establish regulations for such projects rather than addressing them on a case-by-case basis.