

**Fort Bragg, California  
July 9, 2008 (Special Joint Meeting)  
Town Hall**

The City Council of the City of Fort Bragg and the Fort Bragg Planning Commission met in special session on the above date at the hour of 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall, southwest corner of N. Main and Laurel Streets (363 N. Main Street), Fort Bragg, with Mayor Doug Hammerstrom presiding.

**ROLL CALL as acknowledged by Mayor Hammerstrom.**

**Present:** Councilmembers Dave Turner, Meg Courtney (arrived at 7:08), Dan Gjerde, Jere Melo, and Mayor Hammerstrom; Commissioners Burley Cox, Milt Kuhl, Georgia Lucas, and Chair Mark Hannon.

**Absent:** Commissioner Becky Ellis.

**1. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

**A. Receive Presentation and Provide Input to Hi-Seas Inn Property Owner Robert Hunt Regarding the Proposed Hi-Seas Condo-Hotel Development; 1201 North Main Street; APN 069-241-27**

Community Development Director Jones said that the Hi-Seas application is incomplete, but the developer would like to get a read from Council and Commission as to whether Council would entertain an amendment to the Local Coastal Program (LCP) to increase FAR (floor area ratio) and maximum building square footage to build a hotel-condo. Staff needs input of what to analyze for the environmental impact report (EIR).

Bob Hunt, applicant/owner, reviewed the timeline since the Hi Seas Motel burned in June last year. The insurance company took almost eight months to investigate, and he has not yet received full payment. After reviewing the burned structure, Hunt decided that there was a better use at that location. Hunt met with City staff in August and started dialog about a four-star condo-hotel project. Jones suggested that Hunt contact the Coastal Commission so that he did not go down a road that they would not accept. Hunt met with Coastal Commission staff and was told that they were concerned about there being affordable lodging in the area. Hunt told them that many local hotels are affordable. The other issues they raised were being open and friendly to the coastal area and having access to the ocean. Hunt retained Epikos Design, a firm that specializes in hotel resorts. The plan shows 24 condo units that would be individually sold to 24 owners. Owners could use their unit six to nine weeks per year. Owner would have private storage areas. When they are not using it the unit would be put back in the rental pool. Owners would get a return on investment from a portion of the rental income. Decorations are not provided by the owners and would be what one would find in a typical hotel. Facility renovations and maintenance are provided by the management company. Condo-hotels yield more jobs than motels, higher bed tax revenues, and retail sales tax. Property values increase as well.

Wayne Ruemmele, Epikos Design, said that one key piece of improving this gateway from the north is enhancing pedestrian connectivity along the trail. They created the horseshoe layout to open on ocean views and the trail to make it a welcoming experience to the trail and its users. They are requesting a variance from the existing .4 FAR to allow for a four-star accommodation and its amenities. Ruemmele read a list of features the facility would have including a pool/spa, fitness center, restaurant, lounge/bar, business center, garden area, and retail space. In general, 30% of square footage in a four-star hotel is dedicated to circulation space and amenities. If you remove these amenities, the four-star rating goes away. The existing well on the site and rainwater cisterns would be used for landscaping. The community would benefit from job creation, increased bed tax revenue, and a project sensitive to the environment and water issues. Having a restaurant and lounge adds to the social aspect of the community.

Lisa Beck, Epikos Design, stated that FAR is measured from the exterior walls. Anything outside the exterior walls is not included in calculating FAR. She compared this site with three neighboring hotels and said that the FAR limit results in the effect of a continuous wall against the Haul Road even though

the buildings are separate. This might not be the kind of growth the City is striving for in its LCP.

Public comment on this matter was received from Douglas Chouteau and George Reinhardt.

During discussion of this matter, it was noted that:

1. Turn pockets, eight foot sidewalks, and a 30' contiguous view corridor are necessary.
2. The plans technically show four buildings separated by firewalls.
3. Connectivity through the project to and from the sidewalk on Main Street and the Haul Road will be an important thing to analyze for the project.
4. The EIR should analyze the impact of the project on the wetlands on the site as well as the visual impact of the 35 foot height of the structure.
5. Individual amenities such as the restaurant, lounge, and spa should be analyzed in the traffic study and in considering water usage.
6. The EIR and project analysis should look at both the parking for the rooms as well as parking needed for the restaurant and bar.
7. Restaurant take-out food containers could result in increased debris on the Haul Road.
8. Design elements should be considered to break-up the linear design and maybe add some more perpendicular design elements especially on the Main Street facade. The visual analysis should also include recommendations to reduce the visual impact of the process, such as breaking up the front facade, exploring the effect of using a variety of different types of materials, different floor to ceiling heights on different floors, and stepping back the development on the top floor to reduce massing.
9. The visual analysis should analyze the project from both the Haul Road and Highway 1.
10. The applicant might consider providing adequate turnaround room in the parking area.
11. Green design elements are always appreciated and might be incorporated into the project.

**Mayor Hammerstrom recessed the meeting at 8:25 p.m., reconvening at 8:35 p.m.**

**B. Receive Report and Discuss Possible Local Coastal Program Amendment to: 1) Increase the Floor Area Ratio and Maximum Building Size for All Highway Visitor Commercial (CH) Zoned Parcels North of Pudding Creek and West of N. Main Street (Highway 1), and 2) Limit Length of Stay in Condo-Hotels**

Community Development Director Jones said that a Local Coastal Program (LCP) amendment can take months to process and much staff time. The applicant would have to pay for City staff time. Staff wants an indication as to the appropriateness of an LCP amendment, what it would address, and what to consider. The Hi Seas application is incomplete, but there are two changes that the developer is requesting to the City's Local Coastal Program: increasing floor area ratio (FAR) limits from .4 to .6 and eliminating maximum square footage for a single building from 15,000 square feet to the maximum allowed under FAR. Staff would like to hear Council and Commission's concerns about condo-hotels as they are not allowed or disallowed in the Land Use & Development Code. An LCP amendment would affect all highway visitor commercial (CH) lots north of Pudding Creek west of Hwy 1. It could also apply to CH properties south of Noyo and west of Hwy 1. Jones stated that she researched ordinances of other coastal cities and found three that addressed hotel-condos. They generally limit stays to less than 30 consecutive days so they can collect transient occupancy taxes.

During discussion of this matter, it was noted that:

1. Developers want to maximize their FAR and are not always concerned about design. If the City processes an LCP amendment to increase FAR, it should stipulate that halls and service areas be incorporated indoors.
2. Changing the FAR would apply to all CH land uses unless it is worded to restrict it to just lodging.

3. Applications for an increase in FAR or building sizes should have a visual analysis of photo simulations to show how maximum build-out would impact the view corridor.
4. Large buildings should be articulated, use windows, and increased landscaping to make them more attractive.
5. The analysis should consider the impact of the proposed amendment on lots that are currently zoned industrial, because at some point these lots are likely to be rezoned as CH and then these amendments would apply to these industrial areas too.
6. Gateway projects should not be over-scaled. The visual analysis that looks at the impact of these LCP amendments should also include the 30% view corridor in the analysis.
7. Larger projects that are enabled with a higher FAR will require more articulation, fenestration, more opportunities for trees, landscaping.
8. Small buildings that are closely spaced to each other do not necessarily result in any additional views to the ocean. The need to break up building massing can be achieved through building articulation, window and balcony placement, and effective landscaping.
9. The 30% view corridor should be in a concentrated location.
10. This may not be the time to undertake an LCP amendment because the City just completed an extensive LCP amendment process. The document should stand for a while as it is, and maybe we could consider an LCP amendment in the future. These very items were discussed in detail during the last LCP amendment, and the City shouldn't keep changing the LCP every time a new development comes along.
11. Council expressed general support for an LCP that retains the FAR of 0.4 as the base standard but provides the ability to grant an increase to the FAR up to 0.5 or 0.6 if a project meets specified design criteria, landscaping, and green development standards.
12. Incremental increases in FAR could be earned by an applicant that: 1) incorporates all circulation and amenities into the building interior; 2) incorporates site amenities such as a restaurant, bar or pool in the building interior; and 3) creates a project with many green building attributes.
13. Use the American Automobile Association's Diamond rating system to develop language to encourage development that meets 4-star standards.
14. If an LCP amendment is pursued it should not include properties south of the Noyo bridge as high-end development is unlikely to occur there.

City Manager Ruffing summarized that it sounded like it would be okay to amend the LCP to address FAR and maximum building size.

- Council expressed a range of opinions regarding the elimination of the 15,000 SF maximum building size, with some Councilmembers in support and some wanting to keep the wording as it currently exists. For those Councilmembers willing to consider a change to the policy, such a change would need to be coupled with requirements for excellent design incorporated into the City Design Guidelines for hotels to cover topics such as material use, articulation, fenestration, green building, landscaping, etc.
- Council expressed general support for an LCP that retains the FAR of 0.4 as the base standard but provides the ability to grant an increase to the FAR up to 0.5 or 0.6 if a project meets specified design criteria, landscaping, and green development standards. Incremental increases in FAR could be earned by an applicant that: 1) incorporates all circulation and amenities into the building interior; 2) incorporates site amenities such as a restaurant, bar, or pool in the building interior; and 3) creates a project with many green building attributes.

The next step would be for staff to craft language and bring it back to a joint Council/Commission workshop. When staff gets something that can be supported they will talk to Coastal Commission staff before initiating the process. At a certain point the developer will have to decide if they want to pursue an LCP amendment.

Mayor Hammerstrom adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

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**DOUG HAMMERSTROM, Mayor**

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**MARK HANNON, Chair**

**ATTEST:**

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**Nancy Philips  
Administrative Secretary**

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