

**Community Development Committee
February 20, 2008
City Hall**

The Fort Bragg Community Development Committee (CDC) convened a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 20, 2008, at 3:10 p.m., at Fort Bragg City Hall, 416 North Franklin Street, Fort Bragg, CA.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Mayor Doug Hammerstrom and Councilmember Dave Turner.
Staff present: Marie Jones, Community Development Director, and Nancy Philips, Administrative Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the January 16, 2008 special meeting were approved by consensus of the Committee with the modification to omit the word "advertising" from the last paragraph at the bottom of the first page.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

1. Receive Report on Amnesty Program for Illegal Second Residential Units and Provide Direction to Staff

Director Jones reviewed the staff report for this item.

Public comment on this item was received from Barbara Clark and Gayle Bowman.

During discussion, it was noted that:

- Second unit amnesty programs: bring residences up to minimum health and safety standards; establish homes as legal, non-conforming units; allow the City to collect fees; add market value to the units; and perpetuate a supply of low income housing. Adversely to homeowners, property taxes may increase.
- Amnesty programs would not apply to new units. It would not be guaranteed that all units who apply would receive amnesty, but code enforcement efforts for illegal units would be suspended unless there were immediate health and safety issues.
- Successful 2nd unit amnesty programs: encourage homeowners to have a third-party pre-inspection so that applicants are aware of costs associated with legalizing the building; require good collaboration between building & planning depts.; have a program deadline to create a sense of urgency and inspire participation; publicize the program widely; and do not severely restrict the income level of tenants.
- Some jurisdictions offer reduced impact fees with the idea that it is better to get some fees than none.
- The homeowner would have to provide proof when a unit was built. If the unit was built some time ago the Building Department would determine whether it has to meet today's code or that of when it was constructed.
- It is unknown how many illegal 2nd units there are in Fort Bragg. Years ago someone researched lot splits and locations of 2nd units in Fort Bragg. There should be a complete inventory from that time.
- Redevelopment Agency funds could be used to offset reduced impact fees for low income housing. Perhaps the Housing Rehabilitation program could complement the 2nd unit amnesty program.

Committee consensus for staff to discuss program with County Building Inspector, research how the housing rehabilitation funds may be used and housing inventory, and come back to CDC for recommendation to Council.

2. Receive Oral Report Considering Ways to Attract and Retain Retail Tenants in Downtown and Provide Direction to Staff

Public comment on this item was received from Barbara Clark and Gayle Bowman.

During discussion, it was noted that:

- Members of the Promotion Committee and Community Development Advisory Board have inquired about the City doing something to stimulate and retain downtown businesses. Since then it was learned that the Promotion Committee will discuss this at their next meeting.
- Over the last year, downtown businesses have closed for a variety of reasons. Streetscape improvements last summer might have hurt businesses on the margin of success, but rising rents, a poor economy, and other factors contributed as well.
- Streetscape directories located around downtown could spur shoppers to visit more stores.
- Community events can draw shoppers to an area.
- Uniform business hours can stimulate spending habits. Businesses being open the same hours makes it seem like there are more shops open.
- When someone comes to the City for a business license or to inquire about the business climate in the area they are referred to the Business Advocate team.
- Clark, who is a real estate broker and Business Advocate, recently referred a client to the City for zoning information. That referral led to the client's name being provided to all Business Advocates, some of whom are competitors in real estate.

Committee consensus to put business retention and referrals on the next agenda.

MATTERS FROM COMMITTEE/STAFF

Responding to a question from the Committee, Director Jones reported that Community Development workload has been affected by the vacant planner position. Priorities are given to planning applications that have timelines set by law. In addition, the Mill Site Specific Plan and remediation, environmental clearance, historical clearance, Local Coastal Program, and RDA amendment are all currently being addressed by the department. The bicycle master plan, coastal trail master plan, skate park, Guest House, and the industrial arts feasibility study are all on the back burner until another planner is hired or time allows. Daniel Salazar has committed to starting in May on the greenhouse gas emission analysis.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.