

Community Development Committee
August 20, 2008
City Hall

The Fort Bragg Community Development Committee (CDC) convened a regular meeting on Wednesday, August 20, 2008, at 3:05 p.m., at Fort Bragg City Hall, 416 North Franklin Street, Fort Bragg, CA.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Committee Members Doug Hammerstrom and Dave Turner.
Staff present: Linda Ruffing, City Manager; Marie Jones, Community Development Director; and Nancy Philips, Administrative Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the July 16, 2008 special meeting were approved by consensus of the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

1. Discuss Implications of Allowing Retail Uses in Heavy Industrial Districts

Director Jones summarized that the Hospice planned to open a thrift shop in an industrial area; however, second hand stores are not a permitted use in that zone. Committee Member Turner owns property across the street of the proposed location so it is not appropriate for this Committee to discuss it. Staff will schedule a meeting with Mayor Hammerstrom and Hospice.

2. Discuss Potential Formation of a Joint Powers Authority, the Mendocino Community Energy Authority, and Provide Direction to Staff

Tony Orth, a representative of the Renewable Energy and the Mendocino Activists for a Dependable Economy (REMADE), gave a presentation asking that the City consider forming a Community Energy Authority (CEA), formed as a broad based joint powers authority (JPA), to create a local strategic energy plan program. The CEA would support regional planning and implementation strategies pertaining to energy efficiencies and greenhouse gas reduction in utility systems. Orth commended the City for being the first in the County to complete a Municipal Service Review (MSR). The MSR shows deficiencies in the City's water serving capacity and may open doors for the City to obtain funding to implement energy programs identified in a strategic action plan. Orth claimed that Pacific, Gas, & Electric does not support CEAs as they can create energy options that compete for PG&E's business. A CEA could ultimately be funded by offering consumers a choice of energy options. A CEA could be formed to work through the strategic plan process and then disappear. A JPA would allow all players to be in one room so there is coordinated effort, community buy-in, and a transparent process. Constituents have expressed their frustration by what they see as a lack of action in addressing comprehensive energy issues at a local level. A JPA would help entities be prepared when they are required to implement an energy-saving program. Orth recommended that the City consider making the Home Energy Link Program available so that consumers could apply for assistance through the City.

During discussion of this item it was noted that:

- Energy production, distribution, and sale are complex issues, and staff does not have required expertise in energy matters to take a lead roll on this initiative.
- Time constraints could prohibit the City from taking on a new project of this magnitude.
- The City has no funding available. The project would need seed money if the City were to go forward. Funding sources may be more achievable through a County program.

- It is uncertain what powers would be granted to a JPA. There is concern about creating a new bureaucracy.
- Community Development Director Jones met today with her counterparts in the County and Cities of Ukiah and Willits to discuss developing green building ordinances. When there is an opportunity to collaborate on matters the cities do so.
- Biomass and wave energy are local hot button issues.
- Some energy ideas have far reaching benefits but would not produce immediate results.
- The County General Plan's energy element or the City's Greenhouse Gas Action Plan could be used as a mechanism for conversation to reduce energy.
- We need to look beyond energy sources to lifestyle changes. We do not always do broad discussions well.
- Developers have expressed interest in installing an energy system that serves needs beyond their property.

Committee consensus to recommend that Orth refine his proposal to identify one or two key local initiatives and ask public agencies to agree to create a strategic energy plan. Then the public agencies could decide whether a joint powers authority is needed. Find funding to alleviate staff work.

3. Discuss Trash and Bathrooms at Glass Beach and Pudding Creek Trestle, and Provide Direction to Staff

TRASH:

Jim Larson explained that the sole trash receptacle at the Glass Beach parking area was recently modified by a citizen to reduce the size of the hole used to deposit trash. The hole is so small people cannot use it. Larson picks up bags of trash at Glass Beach and the Pudding Creek Trestle regularly, but he has nowhere to deposit it. Trash cans are not clearly marked, and there are not enough of them for the volume of trash at these popular tourist locations. The Police discourage the public from putting any marks on the bins to identify them. The City empties the trash bin from time to time but not often enough.

Public comment on this item was received from: Amy Wynn, Tony Orth, Jim Larson, and Susan Larson.

During discussion, it was noted that:

- State Parks owns Glass Beach, but the City has an easement for the dirt parking area where the existing trash bin is located. Waste Management has the City franchise to empty the trash bin on a weekly basis.
- The City owns the trash bins. Some are faded and worn looking but could be spruced up.
- A neighborhood stewardship program, with State Parks approval, would be beneficial to help keep the area picked up.
- An unlocked dumpster would create an attractive nuisance where people would take household trash.

Committee consensus was for staff to review the Waste Management agreement to see about getting a small locking dumpster at the Glass Beach parking lot area. Provide Larson and other locals who clean up the area with a key to the dumpster. The existing trash bin will be restored to its original configuration and additional, nicer looking receptacles will be placed at the Glass Beach parking lot area and Pudding Creek Trestle.

BATHROOMS:

During discussion, it was noted that:

- The City and State Parks are in a planning process that requires an environmental impact report. Plumbed bathrooms will not be built anytime soon.
- There is currently one accessible portable toilet on the Haul Road.
- The Pudding Creek access road is owned by Caltrans, but the City has an easement to the pumping station on the beach. State Parks owns the beach.
- Caltrans agreed to fund a permanent bathroom but would only do so if it is built right off the highway, not down on the beach. State Parks agreed to maintain a restroom but only if it is on the beach. The City's pumping station would serve as a sewer/water source.
- A temporary solution would be to have a portable, accessible restroom at the Glass Beach parking lot and Pudding Creek Beach.
- The City offers huge discounts for water and sewer service to MacKerricher State Park.
- Hotels enjoy significant benefits from visitors to State parks. Perhaps voters should have the opportunity to consider increasing the transient occupancy tax by 1% to support improvements to recreational facilities (trash bins, restrooms, etc.).

Committee consensus was for staff to identify funding for a permanent restroom near the Pudding Creek lift station, perhaps partnering with State Parks for half of the funding. In addition, staff will work on ensuring that a temporary restroom solution is provided for both Pudding Creek and the Glass Beach Headlands.

MATTERS FROM COMMITTEE/STAFF

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.