

Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2011

Present: All members of the CAC except for those listed below.

Absent: Alice Anderson, Ari Blum, Tony Catrino, Wolf Gutscher, Jerry Hauser, Helen Heitkamp, Mike Koepfel, Julie Leitzell, James and Virginia Moore, Nancy Nakai, Robby Ronayne, Elise Semonian, Nancy Spivey, and Richard Young.

Staff: Planning Director Nancy Kaufman, Senior Planner Neal Toft, Facilitator Ben Noble, and Contract Planner Julia Capasso.

1. Announcements

Mr. Noble announced that the Committee would discuss agenda items 6 and 7 before agenda item 3, due to some confusion as to when the discussion of the North Magnolia area would begin. Planning Director Kaufman announced that the City's Housing Element was certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development at the beginning of the month.

2. Public Comment.

There was none.

6. Minutes of April 11, 2011

James Holmes noted that on page 5, second paragraph of the Draft minutes, Planning Director Nancy Kaufman was quoted as saying the historic buildings in the former railroad right of way may be moved from their present location. He did not believe that this was what the Planning Director intended. Planning Director Kaufman confirmed that the draft minutes did not reflect her statement accurately.

Due to lack of a quorum, approval of the minutes of April 11, 2011 was continued to the May 9, 2011 meeting.

7. Next Steps

Planning Director Kaufman stated that the CAC will soon begin studying the Larkspur Landing Circle area, similar to their studies of the North Magnolia area and Redwood Highway area. They will host walking tours of the Larkspur Landing area on Monday, May 16 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. and Saturday, May 21 from 10:30 a.m. to noon. At their next meeting on May 9, the CAC will conclude their discussion of the Draft Land Use Element and begin their discussion of the Draft Natural Environment and Resources Element. All the draft Elements are available on the City's website: <http://www.ci.larkspur.ca.us/203-LarkspurGeneralPlan2030.html> .

She also stated that the City's application for a SMART Station Area Planning Grant would be reviewed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission on Wednesday, April 27. The application is on the consent calendar for approval. The CAC will be informed of the outcome of that application. If the grant is approved, the City will ask the CAC to stay on as an advisory committee for that project.

3. Presentation of CAC findings for North Magnolia commercial area

a. Summary of CAC initial observations from site tours.

Planning Director Kaufman provided a brief overview of the function of the General Plan and the General Plan update process. She summarized the CAC's findings of constraints of the area, including lack of parking, shallow lots, and lack of bike and pedestrian amenities, among others. She summarized the CAC's findings of opportunities for the area, including potential for being a second downtown, the fact that is a major thoroughfare with a lot of visibility, and the capacity to provide bike lanes and sidewalks in the existing public right of way, among others. (Refer to the "2030 Larkspur General Plan Update and North Magnolia Avenue Commercial Corridor" handout for a complete list of CAC findings of constraints and opportunities.)

She stated that the policies and programs in the Draft Land Use Element recognize some of these opportunities and constraints, but recommend the creation of a Local Area or Community Plan to provide specific design guidelines and landscaping standards for the area.

b. Explanation of proposed circulation improvements.

Planning Director Nancy Kaufman acknowledged CAC members Jared Polsky, David Sternberg, and Joakim Osthus for drafting the conceptual design.

Joakim Osthus provided a summary of the CAC's proposed circulation improvements for the stretch of Magnolia Avenue between Murray Avenue and Estelle Avenue. The resulting conceptual design was based on the constraints, opportunities and goals for the area as identified by the CAC. The CAC's main goals for the area were to make it easier to get to the area on foot or bicycle and make it more of a destination where people would want to spend some time and visit the businesses.

All the improvements on the road are within the existing right-of-way owned by the City, which means that the City would not need to acquire land from landowners to implement them. The design adds Class II bike lanes (separated from the vehicle traffic with a solid white stripe) in both directions. It also moves parking from off-street on the Rustic Bakery side to on-street parallel parking. This would allow for more free space in front of the storefronts which could allow for outdoor seating and gathering spaces. The design also improves the sidewalks by making them wider and more continuous along the right-of-way. There are also some opportunities to consolidate driveways, which would give additional room for on-street parking and allow more room off-street for public gathering areas and allow for better access management for vehicles.

The design retains the middle turn lane; the CAC did not consider its removal.

c. Reports by CAC volunteers of visits to area businesses.

Planning Director Kaufman recognized CAC members Jared Polsky, Mike Folk, Julie Leitzell, Cherie Daly, Nancy Nakai, Elise Semonian, David Sternberg, James Holmes, and David Esposito who visited the businesses in the North Magnolia area.

Planning Director Kaufman summarized some of the individual comments by business owners that the CAC volunteers received on their visits to the businesses. The most

common comment addressed the lack of parking in the area, which is detrimental to the existing businesses and makes it difficult for new businesses to open. Other comments addressed the City's permitting process, which some considered onerous, and the lack of attention from landlords, among others. (See the "Comments Heard from Property Owners and Businesses on North Magnolia" handout for list of individual comments.)

An audience member asked who owned the marsh area and the path along it that is heavily used by pedestrians. That path is not maintained during the rainy months. Planning Director Kaufman stated that portions of the marsh are owned by either the Marin County Flood Control District or the College of Marin. The CAC suggested constructing a boardwalk or other path along that area, though the habitat is extremely sensitive and would have to be protected.

4. Hear public comment regarding suggested improvements for North Magnolia Commercial Area; followed by a summary of comments and next steps.

Mr. Noble opened up the public comment.

Betsy McGee, 19 Frances Avenue, provided the following comments:

- Her first impression of this part of Larkspur is that it is barren with a lot of asphalt.
- It is not very attractive, with the exception of the area by R'Noh Thai, where there is nice landscaping and concrete pavers.
- She walks up and down that stretch of Magnolia Avenue all the time and she is concerned with safety for pedestrians due to the narrowness of the sidewalks.
- There is no safety for bicycles because the cars are whizzing right by; she often bikes on the sidewalk because it's the only way she feels safe.
- As to the turn lane, she isn't sure that it is altogether necessary. It may be used to access the residential areas to one side, but if it meant making it safer for pedestrian and cyclists and perhaps having parallel parking, she would vote to remove the center turn lane.
- Most of the residents in her area do a lot of walking, but they tend to walk up to Kentfield. If we can talk Woodlands market into having a second deli in our area, that would be a very good thing.

Karen Kissler provided the following comments:

- She thanked Carol LeValley for bringing Rustic Bakery to the neighborhood.
- She also walks every day, and the barrenness is very apparent.
- There is a Planning Commission hearing on Tuesday evening, with a project proposing to remove three redwood trees along Magnolia Avenue near the Rustic Bakery.
- That would add to the blight that has occurred.
- She agrees that having parallel parking on both sides of the street would add to Rustic Bakery's ability to increase their parking and divert a lot of the traffic concerns they have walking up and down the street.
- There is no real sidewalk, except for the one along the front of the strip mall.
- We have no control over what the new owners want to do with that property; we cannot control the economy; we can only control what we can.
- We can control the street use.
- She supports doing everything they can to make sure that Rustic Bakery continues to be successful and to bring more people into the area.

Tammy Vossler, property manager at Shops at Magnolia, provided the following comments:

- She suggests that the center turn lane should be removed; she doesn't see a lot of use for it and they need more parking.
- It would be extremely detrimental to this center to lose any parking; they need to increase the parking that they have.
- They are for adding a bike lane, but it should be accommodated by removing the turn lane, not reducing off-street parking.
- They have been working on upgrading that center.
- They have replaced two of the roofs of the three buildings, they are working with PG&E to increase the electrical capacity for all three buildings, and they put a small retaining wall behind the old Corbett's building but are still having some hillside issues. They have a plan to uplift the entire frontage of the center.
- Due to the economy they are having trouble leasing the space.
- They are on their second broker to help in leasing the space. Once they are leased out, they will move forward with the plan to uplift the front of the center.

Darius Nourafchan, property owner with Shops at Magnolia, provided the following comments:

- This is the first time he is here in the community.
- He is very happy to hear about the City wanting to revitalize that part of town and make it more pedestrian friendly with cafés with outdoor seating; that is the vision he had when he bought the property.
- As Tammy Vossler said, they are working on upgrading the properties and are currently working with PG&E.
- They hired a designer to upgrade the property and he has sketches with him for people to look at.
- They have talked with the City engineer to talk about the center turn lane. A bicycle path is great, and eliminating the center lane would create more parking on the street and preserve the off-street parking.
- They have a lot of interest from people wanting to lease the properties, but one of the issues they talk about is parking.
- He is trying to create more parking with the help of the City and the community.
- You can't revitalize that part of town if the parking is reduced or remains the way it is.

Ken Kramarz, 45 Frances Ave., provided the following comments:

- He may not be able to attend the Planning Commission hearing on April 26; when residents talk about wanting to revitalize this part of Magnolia Ave., removing the redwood trees goes in the opposite direction.
- He bicycled to the meeting from home and is a regular biker in the neighborhood.
- He doesn't think that conventional bike lanes on both sides of the street are necessary in this part of Magnolia Ave.
- Coming here tonight, about halfway here they had to move to the north side of the street because on the south side of Magnolia Avenue the bike lane dies right before downtown, and that's ok. You don't have to have striped bike lanes on both sides in his opinion.
- You do need to think about bike safety, it's very important.
- We are on a bicycle thoroughfare, and if we could bring in businesses that make sense for those folks that would be lovely.
- As a community, they need to think whether they want to make it a place that's good for the residents, or good for some other population of people that they think they are going to bring to their neighborhood. Is the decision making about making the area destination, or a place they want to live in?

- That is a discussion that should drive some of the things done down the road.

Andrew Silverman, 56 Hillcrest, provided the following comments:

- He has two kids and they bike in the neighborhood all the time.
- He moved to Larkspur in 2004 and shortly after talked with Planning Director Kaufman about the revitalization potential for this area.
- He was working with for a Sonoma developer doing mixed use developments in Sonoma County.
- As we talk about the vitality of this area, this is a partnership between the residents, the town, environmental documents, and all sorts of things that come into play in this.
- He zoned into this neighborhood because he loved the off-beaten path of this part of Larkspur; that being said, everyone likes to go downtown for the restaurants and vitality.
- This has so much potential but is a diamond in a rough because of the parking, the road width, and all these different things.
- After studying it for a year himself, he realized that whatever the solution is reached will be a negotiated solution between the residents, and the people coming in.
- It's a great transportation oriented development (TOD) site. Affordable housing is sometimes a third rail of development but is still a wonderful thing.
- He used to build workforce housing, which is above affordable but below market rate, and is for people who are just looking to get into the community; affordable housing by design.
- This is a great development site.
- Based on the things already discussed in this meeting it seems to be headed in the right direction.
- Doing the road improvements would be great.
- He is encouraged to see this meeting happen and looks forward to seeing how it evolves.

Kenlynn Wilson, owner of Embodies Organic Boutique, provided the following comments:

- One of the things she notices every day is the big traffic jam because of kids getting out of Kent Middle School, which backs up from the school almost to R'Noh Thai.
- Getting rid of the middle turn lane, which she would prefer to taking the off-street parking, would lead to traffic issues.
- Traffic issues need to be studied as part of this plan.
- When Branson students use the College of Marin field, people park in the business parking areas which leaves them without any parking spaces for their customers.
- The City should talk to business owners to see what they deal with on a daily basis.
- She opposes the removal of the heritage redwood trees, and will not be able to make the Planning Commission meeting on the issue on Tuesday; she would like her opposition to be noted.
- As a business owner, what's really been missing is any sort of activities, events, or anything held in this part of town.
- They are business owners, and they are part of Larkspur, but they are always excluded from the Food and Flower Festival, the wine festival, and all those other events.
- They are a vital part of the City, and there are great businesses here that would like to work together, but they are definitely missing from those events.
- As a resident and business owner, thinking about revitalizing the area, you have to think about what actually revitalizes an area- what brings people there?
- We do have sidewalks there, and the bike path ends for just those businesses.
- If you take away the off-street parking and put in parallel parking, that construction project, however long it should go on, might be the breaking point for some of the small businesses because customers will not have access to their premises.

- There are a lot of things to consider and as a business owner this is both concerning and exciting; she would like to see people come into the area but these construction projects, what does that do for our businesses?
- When the sewage spill happened around Christmastime, and there was a pipe going down the center of Magnolia, people couldn't access their businesses for weeks. As a retail store, that was a huge thing.
- She thanks the City for thinking about revitalizing but she would love to see first and foremost bringing people down to that part of town and having events there, because it's a great area.

Planning Director Kaufman noted that the Committee had initially considered removing a lane, which would require a traffic study, but the final concept allowed the improvements to be accommodated with the current lane configuration, which did not require a traffic study. She acknowledged a traffic study would need to be done if they proposed eliminating the center lane. She appreciates comments about the redwood trees, but stated that the Planning Commission hearing for that application was Tuesday night, and all staff can do is mention they received some comments. If anyone who could not attend that hearing wanted their comments to be formally entered in the record, they would need to contact staff in writing or by emailing Senior Planner Neal Toft (ntoft@larkspurcityhall.org).

Bob Fleming, property owner of 1001 Magnolia Ave., provided the following comments:

- He and his wife Janet own the property.
- Their comments are parking, parking, parking.
- There are three little islands between their property and the Swiss Garage.
- These islands were done 15 or 20 years ago.
- What they really do is prevent three more cars from parking there.
- He understands that Connie will be eliminating one of those bumps as part of his new project.
- If they were removed they could have three parking spaces in a day.
- Their tenants have always complained that no one can see their businesses.
- He has never gone to the City to apply for signage, but they understand the tenants have had problems getting signage.
- They are on a corner, and the sign regulations allowed them to place signage on Magnolia Avenue only, but restricted them from putting signage on Murray Avenue.
- The front signage, however, is hard to see.
- The signage standards seem to be pretty inconsistent.
- For instance, at Fabrizio's the restaurant name is repeated across the top and they also have a red-neon logo. He thinks it's great, but they were not allowed to do anything like that.
- M&G Burgers put up a "temporary" sign, which is fine; he suggests making it permanent so people can see it when driving north.

Planning Director Kaufman stated that the sign ordinance had recently undergone changes, and he should check with the Planning Department to see if that type of sign could be accommodated.

Karen Kissler provided the following comments:

- She would bow to what businesses want.
- She has a business in Santa Rosa and uses an A-frame sign in front of it.
- She personally thinks A-frame signs on the street look cheap.

- She would like other people's opinions on them, but she would not like them in her neighborhood.
- She would like rather have a higher building sign ordinance potentially that let people go up on their own property, with something tasteful.

Bob Fleming provided the following comments:

- The reason they use A-frame signs is because there is not enough signage on the other side.
- He thinks they look ugly too, but it's what people can see.

Planning Director Kaufman stated there is a provision in the code prohibiting A-frame signs, but because so many businesses have them, the City Council made a policy decision to place certain restrictions on them. Staff does need to get out in North Magnolia and make sure the A-frame signs comply with those restrictions, including that they are professionally made and don't block sidewalks. Staff realizes there is large opposition to A-frame signs, but the business community believes they need to depend on them.

Ken Kramarz provided the following comments:

- If everyone has the same peak traffic at the same time of the day, then there will be a traffic problem.
- If they have tenants with different peak times, that might give more beneficial use of the limited parking.
- When he first moved into this neighborhood there was the Black Oak Saloon where the bike store is now.
- If we are thinking creatively about asking the best use of limited parking, maybe we should try to attract a certain amount of businesses that have night time traffic and a certain amount that have daytime traffic.

Joan Lundstrom, City Council member and Murray Park resident, provided the following comments:

- At one time there were four lanes of traffic on Magnolia in that area.
- They went to three lanes to get some landscaping as there were no trees at the time; nothing was there.
- It was a landscape plan that was agreed to by the property owners.
- Those nodes removed existing parking to have some low level landscaping.
- The property owners did not want many trees because they felt the trees would block the view of the buildings.
- It's the same in the history of the Downtown; most of those property owners did not want trees downtown because they thought it would block their signage.
- It's a balance between trees and softening the landscape.
- The trees you see along North Magnolia were put in 15-20 years ago because there was nothing there.
- The landscaping at the time was purposely decided not to be the City's responsibility to maintain.
- The landscaping was designed to be low maintenance with low water requirements.
- In regards to Ms. Wilsons' comment about the parents of students using the COM fields parking in the off-street parking spaces, she will bring this issue up at the next City Council meeting.
- The school leases the field from COM, and it is COM's responsibility to manage that lease.
- There is an unpaved parking lot owned by COM that should be used.

Jan Byrum, property owner of 1001 Magnolia Avenue, provided the following comments:

- The landscaping bumps may have been a good idea at the time, but now they are not working; there are nothing but weeds growing there and it is only taking away parking.
- She has put hanging baskets and window boxes all around the front and side of her building, which doesn't take up any parking space or sidewalk space.
- She recommends that more businesses do that in the area.
- The hanging baskets and flower boxes are very attractive.
- The hanging baskets in Corte Madera referenced should also be considered.
- They need to get rid of the concrete bumps and replace them with parking now.

Planning Director Kaufman stated she wanted to acknowledge that the building owned by Ms. Byrum and Mr. Fleming is kept up very well, and is a good example of mixed use with two living units above the first floor retail space. It's something to think about when considering the potential for the area. The flowers and planter boxes could be done without taking up space in the street.

Kenlynn Wilson provided the following comments:

- That building is absolutely endemic of what is happening for our business area.
- It is a gorgeous building, but the Crystal Dolphin just went out of businesses.
- You can have a beautiful building, but the business is not surviving.
- It's not just about making the buildings pretty, but about signage and all the things that help a business survive.

Mr. Noble asked what form of new development the audience members would like to see if redevelopment were to occur in the area. They are talking a lot about improvements to the public right-of-way for pedestrian and bike amenities, but the General Plan also presents the community's vision for certain places in the City. Staff would like to hear any opinions on what forms of development on private property they like or would like to preserve or enhance, or how things could change for the better.

Ken Kramarz provided the following comments:

- He would like it to be family friendly.
- They raised three kids here, and when the City improved the Bon Air Bridge and the street was narrowed and the sidewalks clarified, all three kids were able to walk or bicycle to Bacich, Kent, and Redwood.

Karen Kissler provided the following comments:

- She would love to see a bookstore, but there isn't enough parking.
- Anything family friendly would be great.
- Restaurants that don't compete with the people who are still there.

Tristan Kissler, aged 4 and a half, provided the following comments:

- He would like to see a library or a bookstore.
- He would like the pizza place to move to the old Corbett's building.

A resident (declined to state her name), provided the following comments:

- She is a new resident of the area.
- One thing they would really like to have is a large coffeehouse with outdoor seating.
- They like to bike a lot and it would be nice to have something like that in the neighborhood.

Ruth Nash, 28 Bayo Vista Avenue, provided the following comments:

- She is intrigued by the idea of incorporating affordable housing in the area.
- Does the zoning allow housing above businesses?

Planning Director stated that the zoning code does allow residential development above first floor commercial, subject to development standards including height restrictions and parking requirements of one parking space per unit.

Pamela Hubbard, owner of Image Hair Designs at 1026 Magnolia Ave., provided the following comments:

- A florist in the area might be nice.
- Perhaps they could implement a community discount and give them a jumpstart on their businesses by being customers for them.

Pamela Forbes, Escalle Village resident, provided the following comments:

- She would really like to see housing above stores.
- That would really add to the vibrancy.
- If she is walking down to Ambrosia in the evening, and there were lights and people, she would do it more often.
- She would like to see more situations like the one at 1001 Magnolia Avenue.

John Browne, 51 Murray Ave., provided the following comments:

- Having a Peet's coffee would be nice, but one intriguing idea is to have sort of a theme, or something the commercial area is known for.
- That corridor is the Pacific flyway of bikers; every weekend there are hundreds of bicyclists going up and down there.
- San Anselmo benefits from that because a lot of bikers stop there, because there are places to shop- coffee shops, bagel stores and whatnot.
- There is a bike shop on Magnolia, which is great, but there isn't a whole lot else to stop for.
- If there were some gathering spots where bikers could stop at, that's a lot of people who are coming out of the area who are bringing dollars they could spend in the area and getting to know the area.

Joan Lundstrom provided the following comments:

- The owner of M&G burgers approached her about a year ago about the public space with the large tree adjacent to Hillview Gardens, which is across the street from his business.
- He suggested putting benches there so people could stop and use it.
- It is public land and could be a potential site.

Carol LeValley, owner of Rustic Bakery, provided the following comments:

- Rustic Bakery does attract bicyclists, but she is in favor of having a gathering spot to give them more reasons to stop by.
- She likes the idea to make it an image for North Larkspur.

Josh Harris, husband of Carol LeValley, provided the following comments:

- Along that bike theme, a staging area or launching point to Mt. Tam with trailhead maps, or even just a place for anyone to gather would be great.

Carol LeValley provided the following comments:

- They could really use a bike rack near their store; the bicyclists place their bikes against the window or elsewhere.

Dwayne Price provided the following comments:

- The bicyclists come from around the world, not just from around the area, which should be kept in mind.
- In terms of bicycle racks, there is a County program that will give you money to put in bicycle racks, which he would be happy to talk to anyone about.
- Another suggestion he had is to come up with a catchy name for the area.

David Esposito, CAC member, stated that he suggested the name “NOLA,” for North Larkspur.

Felicia Kramarz, 45 Frances Avenue, provided the following comments:

- She has lived there for 25 years.
- She is thinking of Europe and towns in England, where you come to a town that is very quaint and inviting where you want to stop in and walk around.
- That’s the feeling you get in downtown Larkspur, and that’s the feeling many people want to feel walking through “NOLA.”
- A parking lot or structure where there’s parking for all the businesses, like in San Rafael, would give plenty of parking for the people coming to use the area.
- If you try to eliminate parking where people want to walk and bike, and have people park a little farther away, that idea may brew a little bit.

Jan Byrum provided the following comments:

- A lot of comments have focused around cafés and coffee shops.
- How restrictive are the zoning laws regarding those uses?
- Someone approached them over the weekend interested in opening a café.
- Can all the commercial spaces be used for that?
- What are the parking standards?

Planning Director Kaufman stated that if the business has 20 or fewer seats, the parking requirements are the same as those for a regular retail space. If there are more than 20 seats, the parking requirements increase. One of the things the CAC talked about and staff suggested is to adopt parking standards similar to the Downtown parking standards, which are lower than those in the regular zoning code. However, the City has heard complaints about parking downtown, so they haven’t proposed that yet. There are opportunities in the General Plan to look at different parking standards. Right now the area is very under parked for any standard whether regular or downtown.

Senior Planner Toft stated that if the facility has more than 20 seats, the regular standard requires one space per four seats in a restaurant. It can also be based on the capacity of the customer area. It can be quite a bit higher than a normal retail use like a clothing shop because restaurants at peak times attract a higher demand.

Jan Byrum provided the following comments:

- She would like to relax the parking standards.
- If they want to attract those businesses, it won’t be possible to without reduced standards.

Planning Director Kaufman stated that when M&G Burgers opened, the City received many complaints about the parking in the neighborhood. It didn’t have to go through any process because there was a similar takeout restaurant before. The comment people made was, “How can the City judge the former Chinese restaurant with M&G?” The more successful a business is, the more parking it generates. However, the City doesn’t apply codes according to which businesses you are, but by the type of business. It is a dilemma and something the City can look at.

Karen Kissler provided the following comments:

- Perhaps as a condition of approval for the West America bank tenant improvements at 1115 Magnolia Ave., the City could require them to share their parking lot with the businesses in the building immediately adjacent to the left (Balloon Delights, Rustic Bakery, etc.).

Planning Director Kaufman stated that was something they could think about, but one of the problems is they are applying for a variance for parking as it is under parked for the bank standard they have, which is based on a more active bank. When they are asking for a variance already, and the City tells them they have to share their parking, it might be a conflict. The hearing is tomorrow night and staff can consider that.

Senior Planner Toft stated that it would be a difficult position to require one property owner to accommodate another's parking demand, but a shared parking program could be developed through the General Plan update process.

Karen Kissler provided the following comments:

- The City could prohibit signs that say "For Bank Use Only."
- The average visit to the bank is around five minutes.
- If there were no signs restricting parking to bank use only, then customers for the neighboring businesses could park in that lot and it will continue to be ok.
- People are currently doing this and will continue to do so.

Planning Director Kaufman noted that the bank's application did include signage restricting parking to bank only, which staff is recommending against. However staff can't dictate what's said on a sign; they can only dictate size. She encourages Ms. Kissler to come to the Planning Commission hearing Tuesday night to discuss the issue.

Mr. Noble stated that comments from property owners and merchants about barriers are valuable to staff, and encouraged further comments on City regulations and conditions that may be operating as a constraint to achieve the kind of vision the residents are describing.

Andy Wang, property manager with Shops at Magnolia, provided the following comments:

- He works with Mr. Nourafchan and this is his first visit to the City.
- When he first came here, he was amazed. It is a very nice neighborhood, and he wouldn't mind moving here when he is older.
- It seems everyone is talking about outdoor seating and cafés, and he wants to point out that they had a very strong tenant who wanted to put a nice café with outdoor patio and some retail, but they lost him because of parking.
- He is from southern California, and many cities down there are building parking structures and charging money for it.
- It is an option the City and the residents should look at.
- The residents are the best resources to identify the best site for a parking structure.

Josh Harris provided the following comments:

- He thinks that any new visitor to Larkspur isn't necessarily aware that this is a part of Larkspur.
- There should be some sort of way to attach the two through signage or some sort of promotion.

Carol LeValley provided the following comments:

- Several times a day they have to explain to people where they are, and often people say, “That’s not Larkspur.”
- They call it Upper Larkspur.
- When they first looked at the space, they drove past it three times because they didn’t know where it was.
- People think it’s Kentfield, or just don’t know where it is.
- The area has an identity issue.

Ken Kramarz provided the following comments:

- Plan A is a vibrant mixed use area- that seems to be what everyone wants.
- But if we discover that they can’t get the critical mass of parking needed, or there’s not enough commercial space to make it desirable to come to, or some other factor that negates that idea, what’s Plan B from a City process standpoint?

Mr. Noble stated that the goal was to come up with a consensus for a preferred plan that is realistic and feasible to incorporate into the City’s policy documents. The City will monitor it over time to see if it’s becoming realized, and if they’re seeing that it’s not being implemented how they hoped, the City will revisit the plan and make adjustments to it. Planning Director Kaufman stated Plan A isn’t fleshed out, so the alternative is unclear. The final plan will probably be somewhere between “Plan A” and “Plan B.” This is the beginning of a process and it won’t be a quick process, as there are so many difficult problems to address. The next step will be to develop some additional polices to incorporate into the General Plan that expresses some of the issues brought up tonight, and everyone who signed up for the email will be informed of that progress. She suggested that the business owners discuss some of the issues identified together, such as signage regulations, and provide their recommendations to the City.

David Sternberg, CAC member, provided the following comments:

- He wondered if there was a way individual property owners would allow ten or five feet on their frontage to accommodate angled in parking, which could get even more cars off the street, without removing the center lane.

Joan Lundstrom provided the following comments:

- Everyone coming together, the CAC, residents, property and business owners, has created a great dialogue.
- As a liaison from the City Council, she encourages the CAC to put together a short-term action program for “low-hanging fruit” that can be more easily accomplished.
- For example, the signage, identity, more appropriate landscaping, and parking opportunities.
- Also, she suggests the business owners get together in an ad hoc committee to collaborate together.
- Downtown historic Larkspur didn’t happen overnight.

Planning Director Kaufman asked the business owners to mark on the sign in sheet whether they would like the City to share their email addresses with other business owners. She noted that everyone who provided their emails will be added to the General Plan update email list.

Mr. Noble thanked everyone for attending and participating in the discussion. Planning Director Kaufman announced a five minute break.

5. Distribute Draft Community Health and Safety Element

Planning Director Kaufman thanked the volunteers again for visiting the merchants on North Magnolia. The success of this evening would not be possible without that outreach. Mr. Noble stated that the turnout was great for an event of this nature and it is a testament to the work of the CAC members and City staff.

Ms. Capasso stated that the draft Community Health and Safety Element does not significantly differ from the 1990 Element. She noted that Cherie Daly had provided staff with very helpful information about encouraging healthy lifestyles through land use planning. This Element focuses on protection of health from external natural hazards, such as earthquakes, excessive noise, or poor air quality. However, staff does want to incorporate those types of public health policies into the General Plan. The updated draft Land Use and Circulation Elements have a lot of the core public policies that encourage healthy lifestyles through providing pedestrian paths and bikeways, and planning walkable neighborhoods. That doesn't mean those policies can't be placed in the draft Community Health and Safety Element, but staff proposes referencing the policies in the Draft Land Use and Circulation Elements in the Community Health and Safety Element. Planning Director Kaufman stated that the Community Facilities and Services Element will address recreation programs, which are also a component of public health.

Ms. Capasso stated that there are no air quality or noise goals or background narrative in the draft, because the necessary technical studies will be completed during environmental review. The discussion on flooding was significantly expanded to have a more in depth review of past and proposed flood control improvements for Corte Madera Creek, and a new section on sea level rise was added. New policies and programs regarding sea level rise were also added.

The draft Element will be discussed a future date, yet to be determined.

David Sternberg referred to the hillside stabilization behind the old Corbett's building and asked who owned that hillside. Ms. Lundstrom replied that the courts had determined the hillside was owned by the property owner, not the City.

Planning Director Kaufman noted that the Shops at Magnolia property owners had requested to remove the wood that is covering the existing windows in the building's frontage. The Planning Department will likely be approving the request administratively. In regards to tonight's meeting, she stated that staff will try to work more policies into the North Magnolia section of the Land Use Element. She will have to give some more thought as to the best way to handles the matter. To even propose removing the center lane they would need a traffic engineer to look at it; they cannot pursue that without knowing more information. That study would need to be funded.

Nancy Weninger asked if anyone had ideas for a parking garage location. College of Marin has the only land available, but it is slated for development. Mr. Holmes referred to the sketch provided by Mr. Nourafchan. Planning Director Kaufman stated she had a couple copies, and it was the first time she had ever seen anything for that site. Nothing has been submitted except for the request for removing the boards

Mike Folk stated that tonight's meeting was terrific. He was surprised how many people thought the center lane should be removed. It seemed everything did turn on parking. How do you create parking and accommodate the sidewalks and bike lanes? He liked Mr. Sternberg's idea about property owners giving up some frontage to allow for more off-street parking. He was curious about how much more parking could be attained if they did angled parking at 45 or 90 degrees, as opposed to parallel parking. Mr. Sternberg asked how that strategy could be played out, and suggested an agreement between the property owners. Mr. Nourafchan's properties in particular

have a large stretch of frontage, and if he alone agreed to that it could accommodate more parking. He doesn't know how that would be done legally, but the parking would be credited toward their parking requirement. He sees it as a win-win situation. This applies to both sides of the streets.

Mr. Osthus said that without running the exact numbers, he estimated about a 20 percent increase in parking with 45 degree parking on the street as opposed to parallel. He doesn't know if 90 degree parking would be feasible because of maneuvering constraints. Mr. Sternberg stated that parallel parking takes up eight or 10 feet of a traffic lane anyway. Bruce Friedrichs stated that angled parking is much more convenient and more inviting than parallel parking. Mr. Folk noted that the efficiency of 45 degree parking would turn on how many driveways there are. Planning Director Kaufman noted that many of them are related to deliveries and loading for the businesses but there are some opportunities for consolidation. She stated that her impression was that the business owners would be supportive of increases in parking that they could get credit for through any means.

Mr. Esposito asked if there was any sort of continuing forum the community could take part in, such as on the City's website, to continue the discussion and provide some follow up on tonight's meeting. Planning Director Kaufman stated that the current website doesn't have those capabilities but the new website (currently under construction) may be able to accommodate something like that. Also, it seemed the business owners were very motivated to work together independently. Ms. Lundstrom stated that there are many simple things the business owners can do together as an ad hoc committee to address many of the identified issues. Planning Director Kaufman stated that the City could make the Council chambers available for them to meet in. Mr. Folk stated that Mr. Nourafchan's properties are effectively a gateway to Larkspur, and by sprucing up his properties with signage he has an opportunity to "brand" the area, as NOLA or another name that identifies the community. It would set the tone for everything else in the area.

Next meeting: May 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The CAC adjourned at 8:15 p.m.