

**MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MONTHLY MEETING OF THE**  
**TRINIDAD PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**WEDNESDAY MAY 16, 2012**

**I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL (6:09pm)**

Commissioners Present: Johnson, Pinske, Vanderpool, Becker

Commissioners Absent: Rotwein

Staff: Parker, Caldwell

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*April 18, 2012*

Page ½, strike “to correct” regarding contacting the Trinidad Rancheria about the General Plan. Nothing has been done to need correcting.

Commissioner Johnson asks Planner Parker about the Staff Report and if the ADU and VDU Ordinance situation is completed. Planner Parker notes that the City Council approved it and she is finishing the Coastal Commission application.

***Motion (Becker/Pinske) to approve the minutes as amended.  
Passed unanimously.***

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Agenda is approved.**

***Passed unanimously.***

**IV. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR**

None.

**V. AGENDA ITEMS**

1. **Leach 2012-01:** Design Review and Coastal Development Permit to add 382 sq. ft., including a new 296 sq. ft. second story 3rd bedroom, to an existing 1,115 sq. ft. 2-bdrm, single-family dwelling. The project also includes demolition of a detached, nonconforming second dwelling unit that was destroyed by a fire and construction of a conforming 768 sq. ft. structure that will include an office, one-car garage, ½ bath and storage. Located at 565 Trinity Street; 042-101-10. *This item will be continued to the June 20 regular meeting, but public comment will still be taken.*

Planner Parker introduces the project and notes that Keith Stearns, the designer, is present to answer questions. This project will be continued to the next meeting because the applicant is waiting on soil testing and specifications from LACO regarding the septic system design, which may change the building design and site plan.

Commissioner Becker asks about the status of the accessory unit in the back that burned down, and Planner Parker responds that that is not known; there are no files or records—the unit could be pre-1980.

Keith Stearns (agent) adds that the back unit was not in compliance with setbacks and they plan to bring it into compliance with the rebuild, but that it will not be a separate accessory unit. The

design and placement will depend on the septic system design. They are going to speak with the neighbors and install string lines prior to the next hearing.

Commissioner Johnson and Planner Parker discuss regulations regarding rebuilding after a fire. Planner Parker believes that if the fire destroys over 60 percent of a building or if it is abandoned for over a year that the structure must be brought into conformance.

The applicant responds to a question from Commissioner Johnson that yes, he is working with the County to meet septic requirements. He will also install string lines for a week before or by the end of the week before the Planning Commission meeting at which his project is reviewed.

*The Leach project is continued to the June 20, 2012 Planning Commission meeting.*

**2. General Plan Update:** Review Draft Circulation, Public Safety and Noise Elements, Figures, background reports. Consider upcoming review of housing element.

Planner Parker preps the Planning Commission for the upcoming review of the Housing Element. She is considering dismissing the current draft in lieu of using the City of Arcata's Housing Element as a template; it is concise while still meeting HCD requirements as opposed to Trinidad's draft Housing Element which seems to have included many extraneous facts and numbers.

Commissioner Becker questions whether Trinidad is built-out already, and Planner Parker states that the amount of vacant developable land is somewhat surprising. She also explains that in order to meet Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirements, the City does not have to build more housing, it just has to show that it can provide the space and remove barriers to development. Planner Parker clarifies that the regulations and requirements come from the State. RHNA allotted 11 residential units to Trinidad and 3 affordable housing units. The State laws for the Housing Element are really applicable more to larger, metropolitan cities and not written for small, rural cities, especially somewhere like Trinidad which is constrained by environmental factors. Commissioner Becker is afraid that affordable housing sounds like tract housing, but Planner Parker states that affordable housing comes in many forms and if the ADU Ordinance passes, ADUs can be used to meet that requirement. Economic conditions ultimately dictate housing construction.

Commissioner Johnson wonders if the Housing Element will force Trinidad to explore limiting vacation rentals. It will be a challenge to meet the criteria, depending on what it is based on permanent residents, density, etc. Planner Parker states that Trinidad actually has a high vacancy rate with 40 vacant homes and 15 permanent rentals on the market. The VDU Ordinance also has to be shown as consistent with the Land Use Element. Vacation rentals do not provide affordable housing but do bring in Transient Occupancy Tax and they are supported by the Coastal Commission.

The last Housing Element was updated in 1998 and there is a scan of it online. It was updated then so the City could apply for California Block Grant (CDBG) Funds, which require an updated, approved Housing Element. However, post-approval, it was discovered that Trinidad's median income was too high to qualify for CDBG funds.

Commissioner Pinske confirms that this is the last of the State required element to review and understands that the review should be quick since the Housing Element meets requirements by listing, analyzing and quantifying data.

The Planning Commission enters workshop mode to review the Circulation Element. Changes to figures will be presented at the next meeting. Commissioner Pinske will collect streetlight data

and Brian will be asked for water data. The Commission discusses meeting Brown Act requirements in regard to editing the element outside of public meetings.

**Motion (Johnson/Becker) to approve the draft Circulation Element pending final, minor revisions and amendments provided by staff and agrees that the Circulation Element is acceptable in this draft form for submission to the City Council. Passed unanimously.**

**VI. CITY COUNCIL REPORT BY A PLANNING COMMISSIONER**

The new ordinance numbering for the ADU/VDU was approved for submittal to the Coastal Commission.

May is national bike month and there is a bicycle commuting event tomorrow.

Consolidation of the North Coast State Park Tsunami signs was approved so that it can be processed under one Coastal Development Permit directly through the Coastal Commission.

Verizon wants to upgrade to 4G technology and public comment was taken at the City Council meeting.

The updated planning contract with the City was reviewed. The Council was concerned that the General Plan update is taking too long and is willing to add more money to make it go faster. Final approval will happen sometime in June.

**VII. STAFF REPORT**

The General Plan should be a priority and if more money is earmarked toward this, it might mean workshops in between regular meeting or starting meetings early in order to keep progressing.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 7:49pm

**Submitted by:**

**Sarah Caldwell**

Secretary to Planning Commission

**Approved by:**

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**Richard Johnson**

Planning Commission Chair