

# ***MINUTES OF THE SOLANO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION***

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## **Meeting of August 3, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Solano County Planning Commission was held in the Solano County Administration Center, Board of Supervisors' Chambers (1<sup>st</sup> floor), 675 Texas Street, Fairfield, California.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Rhoads-Poston, Walker, Hollingsworth, Bauer, and Chairperson Cayler

**EXCUSED:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mike Yankovich, Planning Program Manager; Davina Smith, Deputy County Counsel; Jim Leland, Principal Planner; Karen Avery, Senior Planner; Nick Burton, Public Works Engineering; and Kristine Sowards, Planning Commission Clerk

Chairperson Cayler called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a salute to the flag. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

The Agenda was approved with no additions or deletions.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the regular meeting of July 6, 2017 were approved as prepared.

### **Items from the Public**

There was no one from the public wishing to speak.

### **Regular Calendar**

#### **Item No 1**

**PUBLIC HEARING** to consider Minor Revision No. 1 to Use Permit No. U-06-23 of Elmira Baptist Church for the construction of a new 5400 square foot sanctuary, re-model of existing church facilities and parking lot improvements located at 6111 California Pacific Road, in the unincorporated community of Elmira, in an "RTC-20" Residential Traditional Community Zoning District, APN 0142-041-030. (Project Planner: Karen Avery) **Staff Recommendation:** Approval

Karen Avery provided a brief presentation of staff's written report. The report stated that the applicant is proposing to construct a 5,400 sq. ft. sanctuary as a phased construction project. The proposed sanctuary will be adjacent to the two existing buildings. The proposed sanctuary will accommodate a 230 non-fixed seat auditorium, staff offices, bookstore for church members and a break room for staff and church members. Upon completion of construction of the proposed sanctuary, the applicant proposes to modify the existing stucco building (former sanctuary) to accommodate the need for classrooms and additional restrooms. None of the existing buildings on the site are to be demolished. Ms. Avery also

provided some detail with regard to ingress and egress, parking, and the phasing of the project.

The staff report indicated that Church services are held on Sunday with two main services; one at 9:45 a.m. and the second at 11:00 a.m. The smaller services are held at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday and 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday. Current attendance at the smaller services is 40-60 parishioners; attendance at the main services is between 100-125 parishioners. No changes to the schedule of services are being proposed.

Since there were no questions of staff, Chairperson Cayler opened the public hearing.

The applicant, Jesse Harder appeared before the commission. He stated that they are excited to get the project underway due to their need for a larger facility which allows them to better function as a family church. Mr. Harder agreed with all of the conditions as recommended by staff.

Ms. Avery noted for the commission that condition nos. 4 and 6 in the resolution were duplicates and therefore condition no. 6 would be removed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hollingsworth and seconded by Commissioner Kelly Rhoads-Poston to adopt the Negative Declaration and approve Minor Revision No. 1 to U-06-23 subject to the recommended findings and conditions of approval. The motion passed unanimously. (Resolution No. 4648)

#### Item No 2

**PUBLIC HEARING** to consider Use Permit Application No. U-16-04 of Caymus Suisun Winery for the construction of a large winery and related uses located at 4991 Suisun Valley Road, approximately 450 feet north of Mankas Corner Road in an "A-SV-20" Agriculture-Suisun Valley Zoning District. (APN's: 0149-060-080 and 0149-060-050). The Planning Commission will also be considering adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact as recommended by the Solano County Department of Resource Management. (Project Planner: Jim Leland) **Staff recommendation:** Approval

Jim Leland provided a brief overview of the written staff report. The report indicated that Caymus Suisun Winery is proposing to construct a large winery with related uses, including tasting, retail sales, marketing and special events on two parcels totaling approximately 29 acres located at 4991 Suisun Valley Road. The proposed winery will have an ultimate production capacity of 200,000 gallons of wine per year and will be built in two phases. This project will allow Caymus Vineyards to introduce new production capacity in Solano County from vineyards under contract, owned, leased and in development from local and other sources. The staff report described in detail the phasing of the project. During harvest season (July through October) the facility will operate 24 hours a day and seven days per week. During non-harvest season (November through June) the facility will operate from 5:00 am until 11:00 pm, seven days per week.

Mr. Leland noted that several letters were received from the public with regard to the negative declaration that was circulated for review. He summarized the comments that were raised in the letters which included concerns about the scale of the proposed development; deficiencies in the County's General Plan, the Suisun Strategic Plan and Zoning with respect to wineries and agritourism; inadequate enforcement of existing permits and regulations; the need for

mitigation for traffic and noise impacts; and the need for an impact analysis for the wastewater system. Mr. Leland stated that in order to resolve ambiguity that was brought out by the public comment period staff made several changes to the conditions of approval to clear up where there were some inconsistencies that made it unclear to the reader exactly what was being approved. The revised conditions were distributed to the commission prior to the hearing.

Commissioner Walker spoke to a comment in the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan that states planned improvements for Suisun Valley will handle the expected increase in vehicle traffic volumes over the next 20 years. He wanted to know if there is actually any work being done from the time the plan was published in 2011.

Mr. Yankovich responded by saying that there are currently some improvements taking place at Mankas Corner where signage is still being installed. He said the plan itself calls for other extensive type improvements but considering the infrastructure at Mankas Corner it is limited. He said the idea in terms of the strategic plan was to identify what type of improvements would be required and start putting forth a plan that would address those through some type of resource, either identified through federal or state or even local funding. He said this would be something that will take time and the improvements would be incremental.

Nick Burton, Public Works Engineering, spoke further on the subject of area improvements currently taking place. He noted that road improvements for bicycle paths have been made with the widening and overlay of roads along Rockville Road from the city limit to Abernathy Road. He stated that Mankas Corner would be the next phase in a few years. Mr. Burton said that by the end of the plan the full pavement width will be extended out to include 5 to 6 foot bike paths with new overlay.

Commissioner Rhoads-Poston inquired about the reference made in the strategic plan regarding parking in the Mankas Corner area. Mr. Burton noted that there have been a few stalls added at Mankas Corner. He stated that the plan does not include for any additional parking to be constructed. He explained that the county has looked into a few options but have been unable to pursue them due to the inability to acquire the necessary land. He believed there is still discussion taking place privately to expand parking off-site which would be outside of the right-of-way, but was not able to speak specifically on the subject.

Commissioner Rhoads-Poston inquired if there were any other locations along Suisun Valley Road where stop signs were anticipated.

Mr. Burton noted that staff is presenting a proposal to the Board of Supervisors at their next meeting asking for approval to install a three-way stop at the Mankas Corner location. He briefly spoke to the criteria used to establish a multi-way stop commenting that once a particular threshold is reached a multi-stop would be established as a safety enhancement.

Commissioner Hollingsworth spoke of the applicant's plan to accommodate overflow parking and wanted to know if that parking area already exists. Mr. Leland explained that should the permit be approved, the next stage would be the submittal of building permits for the phases. He stated that each time a building permit is submitted staff would perform a parking analysis. Mr. Leland noted that the site has plenty of room onsite to handle overflow parking for their largest event.

Commissioner Hollingsworth wanted to know if after the project is built out if the applicant would be required to turn the intersection into a four-way stop. Mr. Leland responded by saying that at the present time there will be a three-way stop because those roads are public streets where the county can erect stop signs. When the property owner connects the private road to the county's system, then they would be required to put in the fourth stop sign on their property.

Chairperson Cayler opened the floor for comments from the project applicant.

Mike Carlson, vice president and general counsel to Caymus Vineyards and Cordelia Winery, LLC, appeared before the commission. He stated that when they first evaluated this site as a potential winery and tasting room one of the things that was critical was not only that it is in a central location in Suisun Valley, but the idea of taking an old historic dry yard site with existing buildings and impermeable surfaces and converting that to a winery with a tasting room was more attractive to them than taking a vineyard away from the valley. They felt that this was a nice feature to the property with the history lending itself to the valley and preserving the old pole barn look. Mr. Carlson stated that the barrel building that they envision preserve that look and they feel that is a nice fit with the area. He noted that they have spent a lot of time looking at traffic and safety and with the four-way stop that will eventually be installed and an entrance into the Anselmo property as well as their property is an improvement that will benefit the public at large. Mr. Carlson spoke briefly to the types of events, phasing of the project and product production.

Both Charlie Wagner and Jenny Wagner spoke before the commission. They shared some family history and noted their excitement to become a part of the valley and to explore the area and experiment with different planting varieties. Ms. Wagner stated that farming and winemaking is a major focus for them and they have a long term vision. Mr. Wagner stated that they care a lot about aesthetics and have given a lot of thought to making sure this winery fits into the surroundings and becomes part of the community.

Chuck Wagner, proprietor of Caymus Vineyards stated that they started their search in Solano County for a location of a winery in 2012. They were lucky and relocated some of their production from Napa Valley and elsewhere to a site along Cordelia Road. He said very soon after that the Suisun Valley drew them in; the beauty of the Upper Valley, the wines, the climate and all the rest. He said in 2014 they began making wine from Suisun Valley grapes. He said they believe in the future of the Suisun Valley as a premier wine region of California, noting that exceptional natural conditions exist in the valley for making fine wine along with a great community of people. Mr. Wagner stated that their efforts in Solano County represent a long term investment and deep commitment by him and his family. He felt Suisun Valley may be at a critical turning point. He commented that with the agricultural preserve in place, the strategic plan allowing for ATC's, the valley's natural beauty, and with the community of farmers, the valley is perfectly positioned for even greater success. He hoped the diversity of farming would continue.

Commissioner Bauer inquired about the hours of operation during crush season and if the operation will be noisy. Mr. Wagner stated that the facility would generally operate during the daytime unless, due to inclement weather, operate over night. Mr. Wagner noted that he currently lives in close proximity to his winery in Napa which is about the same distance from Caymus Suisun Winery to its closest neighbor and he did not feel it was noisy, commenting that he sleeps very well at night.

Chairperson Cayler opened the floor for public comment.

The following individuals spoke in favor of the project *(the names were transcribed from speaker cards that were submitted by the public therefore some misspellings may occur in the translation)*: Brad Rowland, Suisun Valley; Roger King, Suisun Valley Vintner Growers Association; Kim and Ron Loney, Fairfield; Cliff and Lisa Howard, Fairfield; Linda and Stephen Tenbrink, Fairfield; Wayne Senalik; Brett Johnson; Suzanne and Lee Pilipson, St. Helena; Chris Livadas; Laura Brasfield, Napa; Jeff Anselmo, Fairfield; Brian Babcock, Fairfield; Dan and Marguerite Capp, Fairfield; Frank Andrews, Suisun Valley; Howard Babcock; Gary Falati, Fairfield; Ron Lanza, Fairfield; Derrick Lum, Fairfield.

There were various reasons given in support of the project. The reasons stated were, but are not limited to, the project applicants being long time area winemakers who have contributed to the local community and are an asset to the Valley by helping create jobs. They draw in customers to complement the existing wineries, restaurants and merchants and positively impact the economy. They are a benefit to the local school due to the educational opportunities and hands-on learning they can provide. They help with the preservation of agricultural land and are active in community fundraising activities. There were several comments made with regard to traffic and how the amount of traffic is generated mainly from the school and area commuters. It was also stated that noise is not an issue and the operation would not increase the noise levels that already exist. The resident that would reside the closest distance to the winery was not worried about noise. One speaker stated that Suisun Valley is unique to grape growing and noted the importance of branding Suisun Valley in order for it to be successful.

The following individuals spoke in opposition to the project *(the names were transcribed from speaker cards that were submitted by the public therefore some misspellings may occur in the translation)*: Mary Browning, Fairfield; Annie McDonnell, Fairfield; Valerie Dodini, Fairfield.

There were various reasons given in opposition to the project. The reasons stated were, but are not limited to, concern with noise, an increase in traffic, and health and safety risks to the children of Suisun Valley School. One speaker noted the attractive nuisance that would exist by the applicant's proposal to place a historic tractor on site in plain view of the school. There was concern about the danger of people driving under the influence, the impacts of ongoing construction due to dust and noise and traffic, and with the construction taking place immediately across from the school, the construction site could become a further attractive nuisance to school children. There was concern about groundwater impacts if there is need for additional wells in the area. One speaker noted that Wooden Valley Road is already saturated with traffic not to mention the increased danger to cyclists. There was reference made to a past lawsuit that was settled by Caymus for overproduction of what their permit allowed. She wondered what would stop that from happening at this site. There was concern about adequate road width and funding to support infrastructure, also possible long term effects of the use of pesticides. One speaker commented that the proposed location is inadequate and is larger than anything originally allowed for in the Strategic Plan and General Plan. She said there is enormous infrastructure cost that will never be recouped and there is no road funding. There was a mention made that not all profits from the winery will remain in the area if wine is exported out of state. One speaker suggested forming a citizens committee to share ideas and options to address some of these issues.

Since there were no further speakers, Chairperson Cayler closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Rhoads-Poston stated that this proposal sounds like a great project. She commented that when the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan was adopted there was a great amount of public comment and a lot of discussion that took place so that it would be a great plan for the Suisun Valley.

Commissioner Walker thanked staff for all their follow up work and for making modifications to the conditions as a result of public input. He stated that public comments are important to the commission and helps in the decision making process and leads to further research and better understanding among the commission. Commissioner Walker stated that this project sounds like it will be a big win for Suisun Valley.

Commissioner Hollingsworth said that this is the first time he has seen this many people come forward to support a project. He stated that he drove out to the site recently and observed that the facility is old but is organized and the fact that the applicant is going to restore the area without adding to the footprint is a major reason he thought the objections to the size was not relevant. Commissioner Hollingsworth commented that since discovering the wineries in the Suisun Valley he was amazed at the affordability of the wines compared to Napa. He said that he agrees the three-way stop is necessary because traffic in the area does appear to be bad.

Commissioner Bauer stated that she sees a lot of very positive aspects about this proposal. She said she likes the idea of this operation being family run and that it would create jobs and help keep revenue in the valley, but she noted her concern with the amount of traffic and the size of the facility and therefore could not vote in favor of the project as it stands.

Chairperson Cayler thanked the audience for attending and for the positive feedback. She stated that she feels this project is a plus for Solano County and a plus for Suisun Valley.

Commissioner Rhoads-Poston said that she would be interested in knowing if any studies have ever been done with regard to putting a stop sign on Suisun Valley Road at Wooden Valley. Public Works staff noted that they would put together information with regard to that request and provide it to the commission at a later date.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kelly Rhoads-Poston and seconded by Commissioner Hollingsworth to adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve Use Permit Application No. U-16-04 subject to the recommended conditions of approval as amended. The motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Bauer dissenting. (Resolution No. 4649)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS and REPORTS**

There were no announcements or reports.

Since there was no further business, the meeting was **adjourned**.