

City of Petaluma

Public Comment: GPAC December 19, 2023 Meeting

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**From: Mary Dooley AIA, Principal (and GPAC member)**

Hi Christina and All:

Dear Christina:

I hope to make it on Thursday, but I am not 100% due to another meeting that night. Downtown Petaluma is a topic in my wheelhouse. My comments and questions as follows:

1) Isn't CEQA 50 years old? And probably would be good to inform GPAC that buildings must have architectural or historical significance. Policy 1.2 should include the above language of significance.

2) The downtown historic district is considered as whole rather than individual buildings. Any exterior alterations are required to be evaluated by Planning or Historic SPAR. The review is discretionary. This has its pluses and minuses depending on the sensitivity and knowledge of the individuals. Going with Objective Standards has its pluses and minuses as well. Inevitably, an individual must decide if Objective Standards are being met. No easy answer and worthy of deeper debate.

3) Policy 2.1 - Conduct citywide survey. Is that typical for towns and is it reasonable if half the town is a subdivision aka suburban sprawl? Is that responsible spending? The policy also says "recent past" and that should be omitted or revised.

4) Policy 3.3 says 'encourage the retention of the original use' of the building. I am not sure this should be in the GP. It is limiting and does not create a flexible adaptable future. Maybe in the case of the Dairyman's and Hunt and Behrens? But should Line and Twine still be making parachute cords?

5) High on the historic district priority list are the following:

A) Putnam Plaza. It sucks. Let's re work it to be one level fully accessible and redo or eliminate the fountain.

B) Center Park - it's too small and should be expanded to eliminate the diagonal parking on the one way street. Yes, it would be an inconvenience to some. Bu it would be in front of some of our best buildings downtown.

C) Kentucky Street between Western and Washington -close it down to cars except emergency vehicles.

D) Create incentives to build on the empty parcels east of Weller and Copeland so we activate the land between the river and the downtown train station. They have been inactive for decades because there is no pressure to develop.

E) To show pride in our public spaces, plant street trees consistently in the historic districts as a municipal responsibility. Fix the sidewalks for a consistent look at least within one block if not for entire neighborhoods.

F) Budget capital improvements to the River Walk in the historic downtown district.

G) Regarding the Trestle, as a river walk for pedestrians, bikes and scooters, okay. But not restoring the working trestle for a train. Why would we need a train there anymore? Fixing the river walk in this area is high priority.

6) Comments on Goals and Policies: Policy 1.6 - Avoid demolition by neglect. Not sure how this is a policy. Is it more about making sure we don't have derelict buildings in the historic district? How to write that?

Thank you for the information in advance!

Best Regards,

Mary

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