

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 plusses and minuses depending on the sensitivity and knowledge of the individuals. Going with Objective Standards has its plusses 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

Mary Dooley AIA, Principal  
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@mad.architecture

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Dear Ms. Paul & GPAC members:

Thank you for all the time you've committed to the General Plan Update. I'm pleased to see many of the policies and goals you suggest for the new Historic Preservation Element and appreciate the opportunity to provide comments which are attached below).

Sincerely,

Katherine J. Rinehart

Historian

(707) 775-8843

[Kjrinehart.com](http://Kjrinehart.com)

GPAC Meeting January 19, 2023

Public Comments on Agenda Item 5

Submitted by Katherine J. Rinehart

Comments on Attachment B of GPAC 1/19/23 Slide Deck

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**Policy 1.4: Provide incentives**

Comments:

Replace the word “consider” with “pursue.”

Add another incentive – pursue the creation of a dedicated historic preservation fund.

### **Policy 1.6 Avoid demolition by neglect**

Comment:

Replace Avoid demolition by neglect, with **Prevent** demolition by neglect. How could demolition by neglect and destruction by fire at Cedar Grove have been prevented? What can be learned from this situation?

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### **Policy 2.1: Identify and designate historic resources**

Comments:

Change Prepare Historic Context Statement to Historic Context **Statements**

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### **Discussion Questions**

#### **Goal 2**

Historic resources that are currently unprotected and vulnerable include:

- Railroad tracks

- Historic signs, including “ghost” signs (i.e., Pinky’s, Buckhorn, LanMart, Poehlmann Hatchery, etc.)
- Historic tiled entries (commercial properties)
- Historic light wells

Historic resources that **have been identified** but are vulnerable include:

The city-owned Masciorini property on Lakeville Highway. As part of its compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the City of Petaluma identified this Masciorini Ranch as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. Today the property suffers from demolition by neglect.

The city-owned former Carnegie Library and current Petaluma Museum is a protected historical resource but is vulnerable because of seismic issues.

Historic residential resources on D Street and elsewhere were included in Dan Peterson’s 1977 survey, but I’m not sure that provides any protection. If not, several historic properties may be vulnerable, especially those located on Petaluma Blvd. north and south and East Washington Street.

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## **Discussion Questions**

### **Goal 3**

Policy 3.3 – add facilitate shared parking to encourage continued or new use for historic properties.

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Regarding heritage tourism, stakeholders who should be contacted include the Petaluma Downtown Association, Petaluma Visitors Center, and Petalumans of Yesteryear (Museum volunteers who lead walking tours).

Not sure how creative this is, but host a California Preservation Foundation conference or workshop(s) in Petaluma.

Find a way to bolster the efforts of Heritage Homes of Petaluma, which operates as a committee of the Petaluma Museum Association.

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Suzanne Grady <[suzi@petalumabounty.org](mailto:suzi@petalumabounty.org)>

**Subject:** Cotati's new Urban Ag Ordinance

Hi folks,

Happy new year! I'm pleased to announce that the City of Cotati's new urban agriculture ordinance is now effective, and we hope that you will help spread the word to Cotati residents and other interested folks about the new opportunities that are available for small scale farming and food production in Cotati.

Specifically, in Cotati one can now:

-Operate a Market Garden on residential property for sales of produce, eggs, and/or Cottage Foods, including operation of a small sales stand on-site up to 3 days/week, with no permit required (although we do need Market Gardeners to come to the City to receive a no-cost zoning clearance)

-Apply for a permit to conduct larger-scale Crop Production in the Rural Residential and Residential Very Low zoning districts, including a operating a Produce Stand, with reduced permit fees

-Operate a Community Garden on residential property with no permit required (once again, we do require a zoning clearance, no cost).

We have more information available on our website, and soon will have a simple application available for the zoning clearance. Anyone interested in learning more is also welcome to contact me directly. Here's a link to the webpage:

<https://www.cotaticity.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=36>

Thank you!

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**Autumn Buss**

Associate Planner

Community Development Department

City of Cotati

201 W. Sierra Avenue

Cotati, CA 94931

(707) 238-5276

<http://www.cotaticity.org/>

*Please note: I work part-time and am in the office on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.*

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Suzi Grady

Director of PETALUMA BOUNTY a Program of PPSC

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---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Dear, City of Petaluma Planning,

We are writing regarding the La Cresta Hill property. As you know, the west side Petaluma community has been using this property as open space for over 30 years and it is beloved by multiple generations. In the interest of preserving this as open space for the community, rather than fencing it off as private property, we request that you consider the following:

1. Change the General Plan Land Use Designation. It is currently "R-VL" (residential-Very Low Density) and needs to be changed to "Open Space".
2. Re-zone the property. In our current Zoning Ordinance (IZO) it is "R1" (Residential .6 – 2.5 Dwelling Units per Acre) and needs to be changed to "OSP" (Open Space-Park) which allows for un-developed open space.



**If you would like us to facilitate a petition, we are happy to do so. Most every home in the 1-2 mile radius (and likely beyond) of this property would sign.**

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kari Kittinger and Jason Edwards

402 Webster Street

Petaluma, CA 94952

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---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Dear City of Petaluma Planning,

I am a resident in the near vicinity of La Cresta Hill property that has recently been in discussion in our community. As you know, the west side Petaluma community has been using this property as open space for over 30 years and it is beloved by multiple generations. Working in concert with fellow residents interested in seeing this property to be preserved for open space, I am writing in the interest of preserving this as open space for the community, rather than fencing it off as private property. I am writing to request that you consider the following:

1. Change the General Plan Land Use Designation. It is currently "R-VL" (residential-Very Low Density) and needs to be changed to "Open Space".
2. Re-zone the property. In our current Zoning Ordinance (IZO) it is "R1" (Residential .6 – 2.5 Dwelling Units per Acre) and needs to be changed to "OSP" (Open Space-Park) which allows for un-developed open space.

Thank you for considering these requests.

Jennifer Stock

831 Western Ave

Petaluma, CA 94952

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**From:** Scott Fishman <[scottgfishman@gmail.com](mailto:scottgfishman@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 13, 2022 3:55 PM  
**To:** Hubbard, Kelsey <[khubbard@cityofpetaluma.org](mailto:khubbard@cityofpetaluma.org)>  
**Subject:** English Hill Property

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Hi Ms. Hubbard-

Just wanted to drop a line regarding the English Hill property located between English and Dana Streets on the westside. Until recently this property was used for decades as open space by community members of all ages. That use became prohibited by the owner earlier this year. While this property is currently designated as Residential Very Low Density in the General Plan and in the current zoning ordinance it is designated as R1 **it should instead be designated as “Open Space” in the General Plan and be re-zoned to “Open Space Park”**. These designations are much more reflective as to how this property has been used for over 50 years. More importantly, there are several reasons the city should protect this unique and special property as open space going forward.

First, the English Hill property is ideal open space in a suburban environment and is exactly the type of property that the city should strive to protect. It is within walking distance of thousands of Petaluma residents and contributes to the community as a healthy activity for residents with an extremely minimal carbon footprint.

Second, English Hill is an exceptionally gorgeous space that serves as a working wildlife corridor and is home to many plants and animals that deserve protection.

Third, the reality is that the property is unfit for residential use. There are geological issues, steep slopes, slide issues, lack of access to city services and high costs that have made this property impractical to build on despite its current designation.

I’m asking the city look closely at these issues and consider redesignating this property to Open Space across the board.

With appreciation for your time,

Scott Fishman

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**From:** STUART RABINOWITSH <[sturab@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sturab@sbcglobal.net)>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 9, 2022 3:16 PM  
**To:** Hines, Heather <[hhines@cityofpetaluma.org](mailto:hhines@cityofpetaluma.org)>  
**Subject:** English Hill land use rezoning

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Dear Heather

My name is Stuart Rabinowitsh. I live at 300 Hill Blvd. in Petaluma. I am writing to urge you to change the General Plan Land Use Designation of 910 English Street (Commonly known as English Hill) from R-VL to Open Space.

The zoning should be changed as well, from R1 to OSP (Open Space-Park). These moves would help to preserve this magnificent and historic piece of Petaluma.

Thank you for your consideration of this.

Sincerely

Stuart Rabinowitsh

[sturab@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sturab@sbcglobal.net)

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**From:** Taryn Obaid <[taryn\\_obaid@hotmail.com](mailto:taryn_obaid@hotmail.com)>

Sent: Friday, January 06, 2023 6:23 PM

**To:** -- City Clerk <[CityClerk@cityofpetaluma.org](mailto:CityClerk@cityofpetaluma.org)>; Ellis, Evelyn <[eellis@cityofpetaluma.org](mailto:eellis@cityofpetaluma.org)>; -- City Council <[CityCouncil@cityofpetaluma.org](mailto:CityCouncil@cityofpetaluma.org)>; Ann Edminster <[ann@annedminster.com](mailto:ann@annedminster.com)>; Bolt, Christopher <[cbolt@cityofpetaluma.org](mailto:cbolt@cityofpetaluma.org)>

**Subject:** flood risk: Payran area River drains remain blocked

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*Dear City Clerk -- This is a public comment to please be forwarded to GPAC members and Climate Action Commission. Thank you.*

Dear City Leaders,

The issues of 1) blocked storm outflow drains due to neglected maintenance and 2) diminished capacity of River caused by accumulated silt deposits due to neglect to dredge the Payran section of River has persisted for several years despite multiple emails and public comments about the ongoing flooding as well as increased flood risk caused by this situation.

I attach a new photo (taken just last week) to add to the other photos sent to City of these drains over the past years. This drain is ~30-50% blocked outflow, located just west of Payran Bridge.

While I know City recently prioritized and completed dredging of the tourist sections of River (turning basin and marina) at a cost of millions, I have not heard whether City has scheduled maintenance of this section of River, which has the history of disastrous flooding due to confluence of multiple creeks (most notably Lynch and Washington Creeks), and which is dangerously past-due for maintenance.

Can you please tell me when City will prioritize maintenance, including dredging, of this section of River for sake of citizen property and bodily safety?

Thank you very much and Happy New Year,

Taryn