

DRC notes – April 3rd

The meeting started with comments from the DRC members. After some initial statements about spelling and grammar, concerns about passageways, “it can’t all fit”, and lack of specificity, it became apparent that nothing had been prepared to address the four issues Alex had raised at the meeting two months ago (there was no meeting last month).

Coverage

Open Space

Light Access

Mass & Scale

Alex provided some information on the process going forward – that the DRC is charged with making recommendations to Planning Staff, which will evaluate them and pass them on to the applicant to be considered by them for incorporation into successive drafts of the Specific Plan and Appendix B.

Alex also stated that this will be an iterative process; a “series of changes” will be incorporated. “There will be another draft” of Appendix B. He stated he would like the new versions to have a table of contents and more “user friendly” tabs. He said the adopted Appendix B will supersede or replace the existing DR guidelines for the 100+ acres. He said that Appendix B “should set a standard but allow variation to end up with a good design. It will be the benchmark standard that should be sought.”

There will be photo simulations as part of the dEIR; those simulations cannot be shared prior to the release of the dEIR, but Alex will work with the applicant to see if the applicant can generate other architectural renderings of the project for the DRC.

In response to his comment about “supersede”, the point was made and agreed upon by Alex that if the DRC (or public) want to make sure some design element from the existing Guidelines are preserved, they should be explicitly included in the DRC recommendations.

The forum was opened to public comment, and the representatives of the Friends of Squaw Valley took turns addressing the first three of the issues using the document sent out in the previous email to the Friends mailing list. They were taken in turn with comments and questions from the DRC members in between.

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1. On "Coverage", and restricting its comments to the Village Commercial - Core, the FoSV recommended 50% of the total area shall be open space and that all building sides not fronting on a public gathering area must be softened by landscaping - minimum 15 feet in width along pedestrian ways, 25 feet along roads. There shall be a 40 foot minimum 'foliage buffer' along parking lots.

The DRC members discussed whether to say 50% of each lot or leave the 50% of the total area, and left it as total area.

2. On "Open Space", and restricting its comments to the Village Commercial - Core, the FoSV recommended a host of ideas, with the key ones being a central gathering place of at least 1 acre, smaller gathering places throughout the Village, building separations ranging from 25 to 80 feet depending on type of walkway and view corridor, and the ability to move from one building to another throughout the Village without crossing a road.

There was not too much discussion from the DRC members, and we moved on.

3. Light Access, and restricting its comments to the Village Commercial - Core, the FoSV recommended that new buildings must not cast a shadow on other buildings or on primary plazas and primary pedestrian corridors using 10 am to 4 pm, December 21st as the standard day and time.

This recommendation solicited quite a few responses concerning "should" (standards, rigid codes) vs "shall" (guidelines, flexible goals) since it might be very difficult, if not impossible, to meet this standard throughout the Village. Alex agreed that "should" provides some flexibility, but the counter argument was that on these key issues, the sense of the DRC should be clear. Alex also pointed out that these are ultimately recommendations made to the applicant, and they might well say they cannot achieve them all or throughout the design.

4. Mass & Scale - was postponed until the next meeting

A motion to accept the Friends recommendations was made, but was halted, as these were not actionable items on the agenda.

Alex then again clarified the steps going forward from this meeting. The DRC's recommendation would be that the applicant use the FoSV document as a design benchmark for suggested changes to the project's design guidelines. In other

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words, the applicant will be encouraged to incorporate as many of the suggested changes and design principles as practical. Some of the suggestions are probably not achievable for various reasons (eg shading) but that doesn't mean that they should be ignored. He also said that County Staff is having discussions with the applicant on what they want to see in the next iteration of the Specific Plan & Appendix B, and County Staff is also making its own recommendations.

Peter VZ reminded the DRC that they have 3 choices: (1) approval, (2) approval with conditions and modifications, or (3) denial

The topics for next meeting are

- Building mass & scale
- East parcel
- Parking & Circulation