

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2021

The Larkspur Planning Commission was convened at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Wagstaff via teleconference due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Commissioners Present: Chair Brock Wagstaff, Natasha Chalmers, Daniel Kunstler, Jeffrey Swisher

Commissioner Absent: Laura Tauber

Staff Present: Planning Director Neal Toft
Senior Planner Kristin Teiche
Assistant Planner Aaron Matthews

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Staff continues to deal with a number of challenges under covid but finds a way to conduct business as usual.
- Staff has been engaged with a number of parties regarding second units and potential housing projects. He will discuss this more during the discussion of the first Business Item.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Annual Progress Report on the Larkspur General Plan and Housing Element for Calendar Year 2020

Planning Director Toft presented the staff report and gave a presentation, noting that the Commission is needed to review the APR as required by State before final approval by the City Council.

Commissioner Kunstler referred to the safety improvements at the corner of Magnolia Avenue and Madrone Avenue and noted the revised version was no longer posted on the Website.

Commissioner Kunstler had a question about the procedures within the Planning Department to guide applicants in developing accessory dwelling units (ADU). He asked if staff could “nudge” or encourage applicants to include in the plans the future development of an ADU or junior accessory dwelling unit (JADU). He noted property changes hands and circumstances change. Planning Director Toft stated staff would need to structure some type of incentive. There are instances where it is more favorable to do an ADU as opposed to a JADU. The Commission might want to review the ADU Ordinance and think of ways to provide incentives such as exempting ADU’s from the floor area ratio calculations.

Commissioner Kunstler asked about the reference in the staff report to State audits and inspection programs. Planning Director Toft stated this was an issue several years ago. The State was auditing programs that were doing Resale Reports and asked municipalities to be more informative and implement more oversight. He briefly discussed Larkspur’s Resale Inspection Report Program which now includes a vegetation management component.

Chair Wagstaff stated the cost of construction is very high and it would take a while for a property owner to recoup the cost of building an ADU. He stated they need to be modularized in order for it

to work. Planning Director Toft stated from a zoning point of view there are few obstacles. There is a lot of interest in conversions (garages, basements, etc.).

Chair Wagstaff stated another obstacle seems to be neighbor opposition to the idea of an ADU. Commissioner Kunstler agreed- there were pre-conceived notions about noise, parking problems, etc.

Planning Director Toft stated there is a Strategic Plan Meeting tentatively scheduled for Friday, February 26th with the City Council. The discussion will be about housing issues, updating the General Plan, etc. He encouraged the Commission to watch the meeting.

Chair Wagstaff asked when the next Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) cycle starts. Planning Director Toft stated it was an eight-year cycle and would run from 2023 to 2031 (if the City is compliant). The intent of the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) is good, but the "one size fits all" approach is not always practical or reasonable.

M/s, Kunstler/Swisher, motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Tauber absent) to recommend that the City Council accept the Annual Progress Report on the Larkspur General Plan and Housing Element for Calendar Year 2020 and send it to the State Office of Planning and Research and the State Office of Housing and Community Development.

2. Approval of minutes- January 26, 2021

M/s, Swisher/Chalmers, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 approve the minutes from the meeting of January 26, 2021 as submitted.

3. Planning Commissioners Reports

There were no reports.

Planning Director Toft stated there will be a Planning Commission meeting on February 23rd.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Larkspur Planning Commission on February 23, 2021.



Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner