



CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT/GVMID

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

JUNE 22, 2009

BRISBANE COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM, CITY HALL, 50 PARK PLACE, BRISBANE

CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers present: Barnes, Bologoff, Conway, Waldo, and Mayor Richardson
Staff present: City Engineer/Public Works Director Breault, Manager Holstine, Community Development Director Prince, City Clerk Spediacci, Principal Planner Swiecki, City Attorney Toppel

WORKSHOP

A. Review and provide direction on Baylands Community Alternative - Policy Issues

CM Waldo requested that the staff include page numbers on future staff reports. Mayor Richardson proposed that Councilmembers number the pages before proceeding.

Principal Planner Swiecki noted that at the June 8 meeting, the Council provided input on four of the seven Baylands issues identified by the staff. He encouraged the Council to discuss the remaining three issues: the location of the Caltrain station, alternative energy, and the retail/entertainment district.

Principal Planner Swiecki advised that the public space plan is being combined with the elements of the three alternatives identified by the City's consultant, and the result will be a final community preferred alternative for the Baylands. He said selection of the community alternative is the starting point of the environmental review phase of the Baylands project. He clarified that the City Council retains the ability to modify the community alternative after the environmental impact report (EIR) is completed.

Principal Planner Swiecki noted that the three alternatives developed by the City's consultants were based on the community's desire for a sustainable and environmentally responsible project with development concentrated at the north and open space at the south, connectivity with the rest of Brisbane, and energy neutrality.

Principal Planner Swiecki provided background on the three remaining issues. He displayed a diagram of the project site and pointed out the current location of the Caltrain station. He said the alternatives development by the consultants propose moving the station farther to the south where it would be closer to Brisbane and the multi-modal transportation hub.

Principal Planner Swiecki noted that alternative energy could take the form of stand-alone facilities or features integrated into the development. He welcomed direction from the City Council as to the nature of the alternative energy facilities and their location.

Principal Planner Swiecki commented that a retail/entertainment district could be a regional attraction or an area that serves the lifestyle and needs of the immediate community. He said that depending on the format desired, this area could be situated near the freeway or elsewhere in the development.

1. Caltrain Station Location

CM Conway recommended moving the station farther south to allow Geneva Avenue to be extended through the transportation hub. CM Waldo expressed his opinion that the present location and a southern site should both be studied in the community alternative.

CM Barnes advocated moving the station south, but not necessarily as far as Geneva Avenue to avoid intruding into the open space.

Principal Planner Swiecki asked if the Council wanted to propose criteria for a southerly limit.

CM Waldo commented that a transit hub will require substantial parking either north or south of the station, and he recommended that the EIR analyze the advantages of both locations.

CM Barnes observed that undersizing the parking could encourage people to walk or use mass transit instead of vehicles for commuting. He stated that he did not want to see large parking lots constructed. He expressed his opinion that a better option would be to provide bus and shuttle service to the railroad station.

CM Conway proposed studying locations from Geneva Avenue toward the north. He welcomed input from City Engineer/Public Works Director Breault.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Breault agreed with Councilmembers that the entire area

needed further study. He said Brisbane, San Francisco, and Daly City need to work together to estimate how many people would use transit, coordinate plans, and determine where facilities should be located.

Councilmembers concluded that the entire corridor should be studied before determining an exact site for the Caltrain station.

Mayor Richardson proposed that the Council discuss each issue before taking comments from members of the public. CM Conway recommended giving more time to speakers to address each item.

2. Alternative Energy

CM Barnes asked if the results of the wind study were available yet. Principal Planner Swiecki replied that a year's worth of data was collected and analyzed, and the next step will be a feasibility analysis. CM Barnes commented that without that information, it was difficult to make decisions about stand-alone facilities versus equipment on buildings. He asked if the site had enough wind to support a wind farm. Principal Planner Swiecki advised that the study characterizes the site as a low-wind site, but the consultant had not ruled out the possibility of a wind farm.

CM Conway noted the City's goal was energy neutrality for the Baylands development, and the Council had already set a parameter of 8 million square feet for the development. He recommended looking at a combination of wind, solar, and hydroelectric power in the EIR, as well as a combination of stand-alone facilities and equipment on buildings. He pointed out that there are wind turbines that can function well in low-wind environments and he had provided an examples to be distributed with the agenda packet.

Mayor Richardson recommended going beyond energy neutrality to an energy-positive project. She advocated including recycled water systems and a range of energy and water conservation features, including off-site energy generation. She said the more information the Council has about the site and possible alternatives, the more informed the Council's choices will be.

CM Barnes proposed setting certain parameters within which the EIR analysis can take place. He observed that if the site is a low-wind site, it is probably not a good candidate for a dedicated wind farm on the ground, but wind turbines could be placed on buildings. He suggested a better use of the land might be a solar farm.

Principal Planner Swiecki observed that the Council seemed to want to look at a maximum range of options to arrive at energy neutrality, which would include conservation, integrated buildings, and stand-alone facilities. He said that if the project has a stand-alone component, the Council does not need to determine what kind of energy would be generated at this time. He welcomed comments as to whether the facility should be included in the private portion of the development or within the public space.

CM Conway recommended studying various sites within the public land in the northern portion of the site. He noted that there might be more wind closer to Geneva Avenue than in the southern part of the site. Principal Planner Swiecki said data had previously been collected from the landfill site just north of the county line, and that study indicated that wind speeds were likely to increase going south from there.

CM Barnes said he wasn't sure he would want the windmill farm to be on public land because of general and infrastructure maintenance issues. He indicated that he would be more amenable to solar on public land if the City had to take care of it. He expressed that he would be more comfortable if it was privately owned the land was leased from the City.

CM Bologoff recommended moving on to discussion of the retail/entertainment district issue.

Michele Salmon, Brisbane resident, requested an opportunity to provide public input before the Council gives direction to the staff. Mayor Richardson indicated there would be time for comments from the public after Council discussion.

3. Retail/Entertainment District

CM Waldo expressed a preference for a pedestrian-oriented entertainment district rather than a vehicle-oriented district.

CM Conway agreed, and noted that a regional attraction would be a good option. He said he did not particularly care for movie theaters, and he suggested looking at a range of different-size venues for music, art studios, and live theater. He pointed out that these facilities should be close to the train station so people can use public transportation rather than cars. He noted that it would be helpful to have the facilities focused in one area rather than spread throughout the development for this reason.

CM Barnes commented that Brisbane has good economic diversity now and said that he would like to maintain that going forward. He expressed that retail would be a more viable and sustainable use than entertainment, and Brisbane needs more retail. He also expressed concern that entertainment would suffer during economic downturns. He said he was fine with studying entertainment but was concerned that it not take up too much of the site.

Mayor Richardson said she liked the idea of a pedestrian-oriented area with retail shops, restaurants, a performing arts center, and arts activities. She agreed with CM Conway that the district needs to be focused rather than spread out.

CM Barnes clarified that he was not opposed to a small number of large-format retail uses or big-box stores at the Baylands, as long as they were designed in a unique way. He suggested a European-style train station design motif to make the area architecturally interesting and unique.

Public Comments

Mayor Richardson welcomed comments from members of the public.

Michele Salmon said she commuted on Caltrain for two years, and most people using the train were traveling northbound to San Francisco. She noted that commuting southbound by train was difficult because of conflicting connection times. She pointed out that the train station in its present location serves people in the region well because of its close proximity to housing developments. She urged the City to consider regional needs, not just the convenience of Brisbane residents.

Ms. Salmon commented that people from Brisbane currently have to pay more to commute across county lines. She observed that until there is a multi-county transit hub with regionally based fares, people will not want to use public transportation. She recommended keeping the station in its existing location where it will benefit most people and allow the most convenient connections to other forms of transit.

Anja Miller, Brisbane resident, urged the Council to keep an open mind and not make decisions based on their own personal views. She cautioned that the high-speed rail system might take a large portion of Baylands through eminent domain, and she recommended analyzing this possibility along with other alternatives.

Ms. Miller remarked that there is widespread community support for the concept of wind and solar energy facilities at the Baylands. She commented that it will be difficult to make an 8-million-square-foot project energy-neutral without substantial alternative energy facilities and energy generation equipment on buildings. She pointed out that the community needs energy more than it needs a new development, and she recommended focusing on energy generation uses.

Ms. Miller presented a map illustrating a more energy-positive alternative for the Baylands, including an 80-acre area set aside for wind power generation. She identified areas that could be used for a high school, commercial development, a renewable energy research and retail campus, and a recycled water plant. She proposed keeping the Caltrain station at its current location to optimize its usefulness to the region. She asked the Council to review and consider this proposal for analysis in the EIR.

Cliff Lentz, Brisbane resident, said he had comments on all three issues. He encouraged the Council to consider the area between Geneva Avenue and the existing station as a possible site for the Caltrain station. He said he would prefer to move the station toward Geneva so it could serve as a better hub and connection point for other transportation services. He suggested targeting the 1/4-mile area around the station to try to get more people to use public transportation. Mr. Lentz pointed out that convenience is the most important factor that encourages people to use public transportation.

Mr. Lentz expressed appreciation to Mrs. Miller for providing the alternative energy proposal and recommended exploring those opportunities. He supported the idea of an eco-power plant and eco-sewage treatment facility, possibly developed in cooperation with the scavenger company. He urged the City Council to keep alternative energy in mind when making a final decision.

With respect to the retail/entertainment district, Mr. Lentz noted that if the City wants to develop an urban neighborhood, housing would be an essential to ensure the viability of that format. He emphasized the importance of making sure the land is clean and safe first, but said failing to analyze this possibility would be missing a great opportunity.

John Christopher Burr, Brisbane resident, commented that Mrs. Miller's proposal was a responsible solution because it minimizes environmental impacts in terms of pollution, exposure to toxins, and their associated health problems. He observed that an innovative wind and solar energy generation facility would provide a model for surrounding communities, and there is a recognized need for energy. He said data indicates there is no shortage of housing in this area, and the recent spike in foreclosures will make more units available. He added that common formats and big-box stores will not make Brisbane a creative and innovative

Mr. Burr recalled that Dr. Paul Fenn, one of Brisbane's guest speakers, talked about financing community benefits through mechanisms like community choice aggregation. He expressed support for focusing the project on alternative energy.

Carolyn Parker, Brisbane resident, said she was shocked to hear opposition to an entertainment district citing the failure of the Live at Mission Blue program, which was recently suspended. She pointed out that people in the community need ways of supporting the arts and entertainment. She recommended that the City consider entertainment, theater, and arts facilities at the Baylands as a way to attract people. Ms. Parker suggested using the historical roundhouse area as a focal point for the entertainment district.

Clara Johnson, Brisbane resident, spoke in favor of keeping the Caltrain station at its present site as the most convenient and accessible area. She recommended using the area south of the station to Geneva for parking and shuttle service improvements to address ongoing parking problems in the neighborhood.

Ms. Johnson encouraged the City to explore a range of alternative energy possibilities. She expressed appreciation to Mrs. Miller and Tony Attard for working so hard to get alternative energy for the Baylands. She advocated photovoltaic energy and using small windmills in attractive configurations on Geneva and along the Bay Trail. She agreed with Dana Dillworth's ideas about multiple uses of the land. She commended the City for having energy neutrality as a goal for the project, and she urged the City do everything possible to conserve water and energy, including use of recycled water and bioswales.

Ms. Johnson stated that she supported a clustered, pedestrian-oriented retail and entertainment

district at the Baylands. She noted that the necessary customers for retail uses would probably have to come from the freeway, making access a major point. She encouraged the developer to hide the parking to the greatest extent possible to reduce visual impacts. She recommended exploring uses in this district that generate revenues for the City.

Ms. Johnson said she would prefer using the roundhouse to celebrate Brisbane's history and background, and she expressed support for the historic railroad theme as an architectural style.

Ms. Johnson suggested placing alternative energy facilities in the locations where they will be most efficient, and planning the rest of the development around those areas.

Terry O'Connell, Brisbane, urged the City to use alternative energy as the focus of the Baylands development, as proposed by Mrs. Miller. She said most people in Brisbane object to 8 million square feet of developed area and would prefer open space, renewable energy, and less obtrusive buildings. She encouraged the City to be forward-thinking and innovative in exploring alternative energy possibilities. She advocated elements and designs that emphasize the unique and special character of Brisbane. Ms. O'Connell opposed freeway-oriented, big-box stores.

Ms. O'Connell commented that economics should not be the key determinant of feasibility. She said environmental impacts and energy usage should also be considered. She recommended that the City Council consider the alternative energy proposal presented by Mrs. Miller.

Michele Salmon commented that constructing an 8-million-square-foot development that is energy-neutral will be a huge challenge because of the energy demands this amount of building space will require. She advocated using the Baylands to create a state-of-the-art energy technology research center. She noted there is no water supply at the Baylands. She recommended that the Council focus on what is best for citizens and future generations.

Richard Cutler, Brisbane resident and member of Citizens for a Brisbane High School, expressed support for considering a high school at the Baylands. He said his group is in favor of some development, but buildings should be green and environmentally-friendly.

Michele Salmon stated that she liked CM Barnes' idea about incorporating the historic railroad theme in the retail and entertainment district. She talked about the Nakano area of Tokyo, an enclosed development with small specialty retail shops, restaurants, and an arcade that is surrounded by quiet neighborhoods. She noted that this kind of retail use would be most appropriate along the railroad corridor portion of the Baylands.

Laurie Graham, South San Francisco, said she has been a resident of the area for ten years and enjoys bird watching and hiking San Bruno Mountain. She agreed with Ms. Salmon that the retail portion of the Baylands needs to be unique and attractive. She expressed support for the idea of small shops rather than big-box, freeway-oriented stores.

Ms. Graham encouraged the City to consider uses that restore and maintain native habitat. She noted that Pacifica has a successful water recycling plant at Calera Creek that serves as a home for birds and native wildlife. She suggested expanding Visitacion Creek to create a wetlands there.

Dolores Gomez, Brisbane resident, objected to large stores and traditional malls at the Baylands. She recommended multi-purpose entertainment venue with art studios, and she cited the old Circle Star theater in San Carlos as an example of a place that attracted big-name entertainment.

Council Discussion and Direction

CM Conway recommended studying the renewable energy alternative presented by Ms. Miller. City Manager Holstine said the EIR will study a series of alternatives in addition to the community preferred alternative, and the renewable energy proposal could be one of those. He noted the applicant will be coming back in September with a revised project description.

CM Conway expressed concern about limited water resources at the Baylands and observed that water recycling and conservation will be a major part of any development. City Manager Holstine acknowledged that both water and transportation will be limiting factors on development.

CM Conway asked the staff to comment on the possibility that the high-speed railroad will take a significant portion of land at the Baylands. City Manager Holstine stated that Brisbane will have some input on the high-speed rail decision, but the location of the railyard will not be determined by Brisbane. He said the Baylands is an attractive site because it is still unplanned, and the EIR has not yet been completed. City Attorney Toppel added that studying the high-speed railyard in the EIR could create the impression that this would be a desirable use.

CM Conway asked about the timing of the next steps. City Manager Holstine said the staff anticipates completing the community preferred alternative in July. He noted the developer will submit a revised project description in September, and he estimated that the draft EIR would be ready four to six months after that.

CM Barnes recommended not including the railyard in the renewable energy alternative. CM Waldo agreed. CM Barnes proposed that the staff work with the group that developed the renewable energy proposal to eliminate the railyard portion and find a better use for that area.

CM Barnes asked how quickly the high-speed rail project was likely to go forward. City Manager Holstine replied that the project was only in the initial scoping stages. He observed that the Baylands EIR will probably be completed before the high-speed rail project advances to a more definite planning stage.

CM Barnes asked about the factors to be considered in defining feasibility. City Attorney Toppel advised that economics and funding are part of the feasibility equation because it will be up to a private developer to pay for the project. He said that although the California Environmental Quality

Act focuses on environmental impacts rather than economics, economic feasibility is one of the factors to be considered in determining the project alternatives because the alternatives selected for analysis in the EIR have to be capable of actually being built. He noted there needs to be a balance between the environmental objectives for the project and economic feasibility.

CM Barnes observed that the map of the renewable energy alternative shows a considerable amount of open space and alternative power generation facilities. He asked if the City could choose this alternative if it is not economically feasible. City Attorney Toppel said CEQA recognizes the objectives of the developer as well as the environmental objectives, so the feasibility factor cannot be ignored.

CM Conway pointed out that the no-project alternative must also be analyzed in the EIR, and he asked how feasibility is evaluated in that scenario. City Attorney Toppel noted there are certain uses, like receiving and selling fill, that can take place under the existing conditions and zoning. He clarified that the CEQA analysis uses the no-project alternative as a benchmark from which environmental impacts are compared. He noted that the project could include solar and wind facilities, but the size of those components will be influenced by feasibility.

City Manager Holstine stated that after the draft EIR is released, the City will hold hearings and enter into negotiations with the applicant about what the project will actually be. He said the applicant will weigh the public benefits against other aspects of the project to arrive at a development that will serve both the community's and the developer's needs.

CM Conway commented that a number of people spoke about leaving the Caltrain station in its present location. He observed that there was consensus among Councilmembers to study the entire corridor between Geneva and the existing station. Councilmembers expressed support for studying the whole corridor.

With respect to alternative energy, CM Conway noted that Cliff Lentz suggested an eco-power plant and eco-sewage plant, and he recommended exploring these possibilities. He proposed studying solar thermal and photovoltaic energy generation. He said he also liked the idea of an alternative energy research campus.

CM Conway encouraged the CREBL group and staff to revise the renewable energy proposal to replace the railyard with more appropriate uses.

CM Conway agreed with many speakers that the retail district should not be freeway-oriented and should not have big-box stores. He expressed support for Ms. Salmon's idea of an indoor retail center.

Principal Planner Swiecki said the staff is looking for direction as to the scale of the retail district and whether it should be regional-serving or local-serving. He noted there were a number of helpful comments about entertainment possibilities.

CM Barnes observed that there seemed to be agreement that the retail/entertainment area should be pedestrian-friendly and small-scale.

Michele Salmon recommended clearly defining “energy-neutral” in the EIR as having the project generate enough power to supply its own energy demands.

CM Conway asked the staff to provide a definition of the term “energy-neutral.”

Mayor Richardson thanked Councilmembers and members of the public for their participation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 p.m. with no announcements.

ATTEST:

Sheri Marie Spediacci
City Clerk