

**Saratoga City Council/Planning Commission**  
**Saratoga Village Redevelopment**  
**Study Session**  
**May 28, 2009**

Mayor Page called the meeting to order at 6:10P.M.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMEMBERS: Susie Nagpal, Howard Miller, Jill Hunter, Vice Mayor Kathleen King, Mayor Chuck Page

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:

Joyce Hlava, Manny Cappello, Mary-Lynne Bernald, Linda Rodgers, Yan Zhao, Doug Robertson, David Reiss

STAFF:

City Manager Dave Anderson, City Clerk Ann Sullivan, Community Development Director John Livingstone, Senior Planner Chris Riordan

Village Redevelopment Presenters: David Rossi and Naiilon.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mayor Page noted that he attended the Planning Commission Study Session on Wednesday evening so that he could personally thank the commissioners for all their hard work and for all the extra meetings they have had in order to complete all the extra tasks that have been assigned to them.

Director Livingstone presented a brief synopsis of the proposed development for the Saratoga Village Center.

Developer David Rossi presented a slide presentation overview of the proposed development noting they were sensitive to the traffic on Oak Street, which would be the primary entrance to the residential parking area of the proposed project.

Mayor Page invited comments and input from Council and Commissioners.

Vice Mayor King asked what the time line was for the proposed project.

Mr. Rossi noted they would like to spend the next 6 months designing construction plans; plan approval should occur by between January and February of 2010; receive clearance to begin construction in August or September 2010; and that it would take approximately 12 or 13 months to complete construction. He added he is currently in contract with the property owner, deposits have been paid, working on environmental liability issues, and that they would work with the City through each step of the construction phase.

Councilmember Nagpal asked for clarification on the existing commercial space and how much would be added with this proposal.

Mr. Rossi responded that currently there is about 25,000 square feet today and there is 20,000 to 22,000 planned for the new development.

Councilmember Nagpal raised the issue of environmental cleanup and if they would be removing any soil from a detected source.

Mr. Rossi noted that it is their intent to remove any contaminated soil.

Councilmember Miller raised the question about adequate parking and if they are working with Bank of America regarding their parking spaces.

Mr. Rossi noted they are working with Bank of America regarding an acceptable price for some of their parking space.

Councilmember Miller asked about the front façade on Big Basin Way and if they plan to build upwards as high as they could, adding that the drawing looked higher than the roof line behind it.

Mr. Rossi responded that they worked with the 35foot high requirement, took all measurements on Big Basin and worked with that. He added that in some areas in the front they are right at height limits and below the height limit in back.

Councilmember Miller asked how the residents would get from the parking garage to the residential area.

Mr. Rossi stated there would be an elevator and stairwell from the residential parking garage to both the residential and commercial areas. The general public will have no access to the residential housing areas or the residential parking garage.

Commissioner Cappello asked what the estimated square footage would be for the larger retail areas, such as for a grocery store.

Mr. Rossi responded that would be 7,000 square feet, adding that would be a nice area for a Trader Joes or a nice bakery, fish or meat market.

Councilmember Hunter commented that she thought our Municipal code didn't allow 3 stories on Big Basin.

Director Livingstone noted that is true, however, the code language is not well written and they could work with the applicant on the 35 foot height limitation.

Mr. Rossi added that the residential loft area in the front isn't really applicable to the 3-story concern as there isn't a "third floor" on the front side, and does meet the 35 foot height requirement.

Councilmember Miller inquired about delivery accommodations.

Mr. Rossi responded that they did consider deliveries and there are areas to accommodate deliveries and usually deliveries occur in the early morning hours and usage of the street also could also be used.

Councilmember Nagpal raised a question about how the proposed 48 parking allocations were derived considering the fact that there would be additional retail establishments.

Mr. Rossi stated they took advantage of the current parking ordinance waiver and used the numbers for the parking districts average, which resulted in the allocated number of 48 parking spaces per 450 square feet, adding that they would also encourage the retail establishments to promote non-employee parking in those areas.

Commissioner Robertson addressed the second floor setbacks and the “green space” Mr. Rossi referred to and asked what his vision was for that area and if they would be incorporating green architecture.

Mr. Rossi responded that this area is still in the initial concept stage and he doesn’t have floor plans for that area as of yet; however, they plan to make that area a neighborhood area, which would consist of a concrete deck, garden area, and fountain by using as much recyclable as possible.

Commissioner Robertson also inquired about fire access and if they have met with the fire department.

Mr. Rossi stated they have hired a private consultant to work with the fire department to work out these issues.

Commissioner Rodger asked if they would conduct the development in stages.

Mr. Rossi replied that they would develop the area all at once.

Mayor Page invited public comment.

The following people requested to speak:

Ted McGivens voiced a concern about the proposed 25 foot wall and the view from his backyard as well as the traffic flow off Oak Street.

Bob Reese also voiced concerns about the 25 foot wall height; the view from his backyard; traffic adjacent to his property on Oak Street; and employee parking.

Lillian Benson asked about the size and rental cost for retail spaces and noted the parking lot that she currently has behind her store.

Marc Benson voiced concerns about the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street egress and the traffic going through his private parking lot where he rents 10 parking spaces.

Gary and Diana Espinosa voiced concerns about Oak Street traffic; would like to see the Craftsman Victorian style on the front side; concerned about building height; traffic flow; and concerns about eventual number of people in the residential area and the number of cars per unit.

Diane voiced concerns about traffic on Oak Street.

Jackie Welsh stated that the project looks too residential – not like a business district; should have an anchor store, emphasize a market the size of Trader Joe's or Genes; should have a drug store; retain main street Saratoga and emphasize the historical concept.

John Hollingsworth commented about the commercial aspect and that there should be a mechanism in place to fill the commercial units; doesn't want to see another set of empty buildings.

Joyce Meuleson stated she is a new resident and felt people should be more concerned about their property values rather than with mountain views and that it was up to everyone to bring about a change; if everyone continues the way they are the Village will continue to decline.

Willys Peck was present and had to leave.

Jenny Young Taylor read Willys Peck's question regarding the total number of parking spaces for residential and onto Big Basin Way.

Jenny Young Taylor expressed concerns about the Oak Street residents that would look down on the project and that they shouldn't have to look at gravel roofs with mechanical equipment and antennas on top; should retain view of mountains; prefers the Arts & Crafts style mixed up with a Victorian style; is not in favor of the round turret; incorporate different roof pitches; use gables, varied windows, and stone.

J. J. Sahehnh stated he supports this project and recommended the developer not rush with the development as it affects 10 families. He added that when he purchased his home in Saratoga, City staff told his realtor it was a maximum height of 26 feet and no more than 2 stories – doesn't support the proposed 3 stories in the Village; was told 3-story on creek side is acceptable; there are parking problems with all the businesses; view is important; has soil contamination concerns and would like to know contamination source.

Bob Shepherd stated he supports this project and thanked the developer for his proposed project and his vision of vibrancy for the Village, adding that if it takes 3 stories to create this vibrancy, we have to do it.

Jim Schrempp stated he likes this project; has parking concerns on Oak Street; likes eclectic and this proposed design is not eclectic enough.

Tony Nora stated the project is not viable without residential units in it; the Village is dying and people have to expect change; would like to see a meat market or fish establishment; people have to be flexible and he supports this project.

Paul Hernandez advocated City participation regarding parking access to the center from Third Street but voiced some safety concerns with that recommendation and suggested egress

alternatives; doesn't support 3 story buildings; recommended off-setting buildings to achieve more articulation.

David Roliti stated that it is difficult to keep everyone happy and that he supports this project.

Jim Sullivan stated he supports this project.

Mayor Page closed the public hearing.

Mr. Rossi noted that they had met with the neighbors earlier in the week and addressed many of their concerns regarding:

- Oak Street traffic;
- Increased the number of retail parking spaces;
- May take pictures from neighbor's back yard to address the 25 foot wall concern;
- Stated retail alone would not make this center viable – it is the residential component that makes the pro-forma and is willing to rent retail space at \$1.50 square foot if necessary;
- Created more storage space in basement level;
- Important to have Village/community involvement;
- Mountain views wouldn't be compromised and will work with neighbors to protect views;
- Plans to have more of these types of meetings and will continue to ask for community input.
- There is no plan to have an access to the public parking structure from 3<sup>rd</sup> street via the parking lot behind the Benson's business.

Mayor Page closed public comment and asked for final comments from Planning Commissioners and Council members:

#### COMMISSIONERS:

David Reiss:

- Asked for clarification regarding the issue that was raised about the 26ft. height limitation versus the 35ft. limitation. [*Mayor Page noted the 26ft. requirement applies to residential and commercial is 35 feet*].
- Would like to work out the 2 story versus 3 story issue – using the 35 foot limitation;
- Prefers the eclectic concept more than the uniform look.

Doug Robertson:

- Prefers design on left side portion of drawing;
- Right side is typical of current development – not conducive to Saratoga's look – may become dated;
- Left side is more eclectic and has a more timeless look;
- Turret circular portion could be done really nice; may become dated, need timeless look;
- 35 foot limit – stay with 2 stories;
- Likes the public spaces for people to come together;

- Restaurant with a view – invites more people into Village;
- Concerns regarding fire access – turning radius etc;
- Supports the project.

Linda Rodgers:

- Prefers design on left side portion of drawing;
- Right side is typical of current developments and doesn't have much definition, doesn't fit the Saratoga look;
- Turret could be a Village landmark and could house a bookstore;
- Street slope and 3<sup>rd</sup> story appearance isn't an issue;
- Project generates a vision of vibrancy for Village;
- Would like to see some story poles at some point;
- Prefers timeless concept;
- Would like to see "views" maintained as much as possible;
- Corridors give feeling of light and airiness;
- Supports the project.

Joyce Hlava:

- Guest parking for residences, need to work out a security entrance and parking spaces for them;
- Address employee parking issue with merchants;
- Project could be a revitalization of the Village;
- Residential aspect may be just what village needs;
- Likes the public gathering areas and public restrooms;
- Young families seem to live in units for 5 to 6 years, then they move out – wouldn't create issues regarding extra vehicles per family;
- Elevators in residential area are fantastic for senior citizens living there;
- Project would attract some of the businesses that the community needs;
- Revisit Sign Ordinance;
- Supports the project.

Manny Cappello:

- Agrees with everything that has been said by preceding commissioners;
- Pleased to hear that developer is sensitive to concerns voiced by adjacent neighbors and has taken steps to address some of those concerns by making adjustments to the plans and roof lines;
- Likes the Craftsman styling;
- Would like to see the historical nature of Saratoga incorporated into the design or open spaces of the project;
- Maintain a large retail area;
- Key element to success of all retail in the center is to have a good solid anchor;
- Likes the open spaces;
- Supports the project.

Mary-Lynne Bernald:

- Likes the multiple frontage that comes with inner walkways;

- Prefers the Craftsman style design;
- Great retail area;
- Likes the turret – could be topped off more;
- Architectural beginning is exciting;
- Likes the upstairs restaurant and the view;
- Floral shop would be nice;
- Likes the open spaces and public restrooms;
- Commended the developer for trying to retain the existing tenants;
- Employee parking may be an issue and you will need built-in incentives for that to be successful.

Yan Zhao –

- Very excited about this project – could bring much needed incentives to village;
- Avoid an industrial appearance;
- Concerns about entering shopping center parking lot from Big Basin Way;
- Create employee parking incentive;
- Likes the public gathering area;
- Public restrooms are great idea;
- Supports this project.

Councilmember Nagpal;

- Very exciting project for this community;
- Appreciates the developers outreach to the community;
- Concerned about similarity to other local projects – more articulation;
- Would like to see some changes to make Saratoga look different from other communities;
- More “greening” – use of hanging flower baskets;
- Concerns regarding adequate guest and employee parking;
- Environmental issues;
- Supports this project.

Councilmember Miller:

- Redevelopment in a community like Saratoga is a key element in maintaining and improving vitality;
- Do all you can to mitigate the issues and concerns voiced by immediate neighbors;
- Employee parking issue is systematic in the Village and needs to be addressed overall;
- Regarding the total general parking structure, would like to see more interaction with neighboring parking areas;
- Could reduce traffic on Oak Street by eliminating left turns across Oak Street – creating a one-way traffic flow to the parking areas;
- Prefers the left side design concept – right side has a very linear look and needs height articulation;
- Likes the upstairs restaurant;
- Turret could be improved;
- Supports this project.

Councilmember Hunter:

- Likes the public restrooms and open spaces;
- Looks like many other developments – wants Saratoga to be special;
- Does not like the turret;
- Likes the interior space;
- Concern about the 3 story appearance;
- Feels the missing link is the historical aspect – incorporate more history;
- Likes the eclectic style;
- Supports this project.

[Mr. Rossi noted they are trying to do all that Councilmember Hunter just stated].

Vice Mayor King:

- We have a choice of living with what we have, a Village that is dying, or we accept something that is 35ft high with certain areas that are 3 stories;
- Very impressed with these developers – they listen and don't get offensive – that is a very positive sign;
- Bookstore would maybe be more popular than a market;
- Parking will be driven by the retail, they will make implement the requirement that employees park behind the bank, which is 2 acres;
- Develop area along the creek – city owns the property;
- Supports this project.

Mayor Page:

- Pleased that developers are working with the neighbors;
- Impressed with how they listen to the community;
- this is one property in village that doesn't need to look like rest of village;
- not enamored with the style now; first view maybe too much rock;
- eclectic is kind of eccentric;
- last chance to make grand entrance to village, appearance doesn't have to match what is in Village now, however it should blend;
- Likes open space and gathering spaces;
- Public bathrooms great idea;
- Parking concerns need more discussion and need to be worked out;
- 3 story less of an issue than the 35ft issue and preserving views;
- Supports moving ahead.

Vice Mayor King thought it was important for the developers to have consensus from the Council and Planning Commissioners on several things; 1) Should the project move forward; 2) type of style; and 3) whether everyone agrees to support three stories within the 35 foot height limit.

**THOSE IN SUPPORT OF:**

**35 FEET -  
3 STORY:**

Reiss, Robertson, Rodgers, Hlava, Cappello, Bernald, Zhao, King, Nagpal,  
Miller, Page.

Hunter does not support 3-story on Big Basin frontage.

**STYLE:**

Reiss – Eclectic/Mixed material/Craftsman  
Robertson – Multiple materials in different phases  
Rodgers – Multiple materials – high quality  
Hlava – Craftsman or Victorian  
Cappello – Eclectic/Historic  
Bernald – Quality varied textures, 1880’s look  
Zhao – Variation of roof line, multiple materials & colors  
Nagpal – Craftsman  
Miller – Will go with the experts  
Hunter – Uniqueness incorporating historical  
King – Supports Councilmember Hunters preference  
Page – Multiple materials with articulation

**MOVING FORWARD WITH PROJECT:**

All were in agreement to move forward with the project.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Sullivan, CMC