

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES
OF THE
SALINAS PLANNING COMMISSION
August 4, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m. in the City Council Chamber Rotunda.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

WELCOME AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

PRESENT: Chairperson Meeks, Commissioners Donohue, Commissioner Farias (Joined meeting at 3:52 p.m.), Gonzalez, Griffin, Manzo (Recused herself at 3:35 p.m.), and McKelvey Daye

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Community Development Director, Megan Hunter; Senior Planner, Thomas Wiles; Administrative Aide, Maira Flores

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Chairperson Meeks opened for public comment at 3:33 p.m.

No public comments were received.

Chairperson Meeks closed for public comment at 3:33 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: July 21, 2021

Upon motion by Commissioner Manzo, second by Commissioner Gonzalez, the minutes of July 21, 2021 were approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Chairperson Meeks, Commissioners Donohue, Gonzalez, Griffin, Manzo, and McKelvey Daye

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Farias (Joined meeting at 3:52 p.m.)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

General Plan Amendment 2020-001 and Rezone 2020-001; Request to amend the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Map and Rezone a 73 acre site from Agricultural - Flood Overlay To Parks - Flood Overlay Located At 618 Sherwood Drive

Thomas Wiles, Senior Planner, presented a PowerPoint presentation, which is on file at the Community Development Department.

Jeanette Tuitele-Lewis, President and CEO of Big Sur Land Trust, provided comments in support of the project and welcomed questions or comments from the Salinas Planning Commission.

Chairperson Meeks opened for public comment 3:50 p.m.

Laura Solorio, Physician, provided public comment in support of the project and spoke of the positivity that open space has on the overall health of the community.

Gary Karnes, Salinas resident, provided public comment in support of the project as it would provide an open recreational space for young families.

Vicky Ficken, Salinas resident and property owner, provided comment in opposition to the project as the open space would only invite homeless presence in the project area and encourage criminal activity.

Meade Fischer, Big Sur Land Trust Volunteer, provided public comment in support of the project and indicated that this project would be a win for both Salinas residents and the environment.

Jason S. Retterer, Attorney representing the Higashi and Hibino families, informed of concerns that both families have regarding fencing around the project site perimeter, insect control in the project due to potential adverse effects on neighboring crops, and sediment build up that may occur after significant storm events. Mr. Retterer encouraged that conditions addressing these concerns be outlined should the project be recommended for approval.

Luis Juarez, Neighborhood Organizer with Building Healthy Communities, provided public comment in support of the project. Mr. Juarez also read a statement of support on behalf of Pastor Artis Smith of Hope Baptist Church.

Sabino Lopez and Azucena Barrios, Center for Community Advocacy, provided public comment in support of the project. Ms. Barrios presented two documents; Exhibit A: a report of 1,103 signatures for Salinas residents in support of the project, and Exhibit B, 101 letters of support for the Carr Lake Project.

Stacy Palmerin, Salinas resident, provided public comment in support of the project.

Columba Rios, Salinas resident and Center for Community Advocacy (CCA) member, provided public comment in support of the Carr Lake project as is it would provide an accessible open space for residents and youth.

Veronica Torres, Salinas Child Care Provider, spoke in support of the project and encouraged approval by the Planning Commission. Ms. Torres noted the current limited accessibility of open space and park areas for children of Salinas.

Erika Mendoza, Salinas resident and CCA member, spoke in support of the project and the positivity that the proposed open space will have on children and the community overall.

Alfred Diaz-Infante, Salinas Resident and President/CEO of CHISPA, spoke in support of the project. From personal experience on the access of open recreational space, Mr. Diaz-Infante, requested support of the Planning Commission in moving the project forward.

Mike McCullough, Monterey One Water, informed of concerns with flow restrictions that may result from the project and wanted to ensure that the Planning Commission was aware of the concerns outlined in the comment letter previously submitted by Monterey One Water.

Athena Ereno, provided public comment in support of the project and indicated that such project is essential to the quality of life of Salinas residents. Ms. Ereno also acknowledged some of the organizations that have been supportive of the project.

Airam Coronado, Salinas resident and MILPA Program Leadership Assistant, provided public comment in support of the project as it will provide green open spaces that will be beneficial to both the physical and mental health of Salinas residents.

Joanna Devers, Salinas resident and former employee of the Big Sur Land Trust, spoke of the importance of having an accessible space to recreate and decompress in the heart of the City would be a huge accomplishment for Salinas residents.

Roy Gunter, Attorney, submitted public comment in opposition of the project via email to PublicCommentCD-P@ci.salinass.ca.us on June 27, 2021. Mr. Gunter outlined concerns primarily with the conversion of farmland, potential habitation of homeless population in the proposed park, and park accessibility related concerns.

Lorri A. Koster, CCA member, submitted public comment in support of the project via email to PublicCommentCD-P@ci.salinass.ca.us on July 19, 2021. Ms. Koster indicated that an accessible open space for Salinas residents would offer many mental and physical health benefits.

Colin Simpson, former Salinas resident, submitted public comment in support of the project via email to PublicCommentCD-P@ci.salinass.ca.us on August 3, 2021. Mr. Simpson wrote of the enrichment opportunity the project would bring to the Salinas community.

Ana Toledo, CCA member, submitted public comment in support of the project via email to PublicCommentCD-P@ci.salinass.ca.us on August 4, 2021. Ms. Toledo indicated that the park would provide Salinas residents with much needed open space which would not only add value and beauty to the City, but that would also be beneficial for residents of all ages.

Oscar Gantes, Salinas resident and Physician, submitted public comment in support of the project via email to PublicCommentCD-P@ci.salinass.ca.us on August 4, 2021. Mr. Gantes indicated that he would like to see an accessible open space within the City which would provide many mental and health benefits for Salinas residents.

Chairperson Meeks closed for public comment at 4:19 p.m.

Commissioner Gonzalez motioned to affirm the findings and approve a resolution recommending that the City Council adopt the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, approve General Plan Amendment 2020-001 and Rezone 2020-001. Commissioner Farias seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Chairperson Meeks, Commissioners Donohue, Farias, Gonzalez, Griffin, Manzo, and McKelvey Daye

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Manzo (Recused herself at 3:35 p.m.)

OTHER BUSINESS

FOLLOW UP REPORTS

Megan Hunter, Community Development Director, informed that City staff plan to return to the Planning Commission in September with an overview for a design review board and added that Commissioner McKelvey Daye had expressed interest.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Wiles informed of two upcoming alcohol license Conditional Use Permits that are expected for presentation to the Planning Commission in September 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Meeks confirmed attendance for the next meeting and adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

JOHN MEEKS
Chairperson

COURTNEY GROSSMAN
Executive Secretary