

WORKSHOP

1. Baylands Public Space Planning

Community Development Director Prince explained that the purpose of the Baylands public space planning workshop was to provide an opportunity for Commissioners to engage in dialogue with the City's open space planning consultant and for members of the public to provide input. He introduced the consultant, Peter Dangermond, and gave a brief summary of his background.

Mr. Dangermond gave an introductory presentation about the possibilities for open space at the Baylands. He discussed the community's vision for the Baylands site, focusing on sustainability and extensive open space. He reviewed guiding principles and goals, showed a map of the site, and identified its major features and constraints.

Mr. Dangermond discussed the need to connect the Baylands with the surrounding hills, the rest of Brisbane, and neighboring communities. He talked about ways to mitigate some of the constraints by building earthen mounds to screen the development from the freeway and the tank farm and to protect the site from wind, rerouting Tunnel Road to create a distinct entryway, and careful placement of recreational uses to avoid areas subject to contamination and uneven soil settlement.

Mr. Dangermond noted that his firm has expertise in park master planning, trails, and habitat preservation and restoration, all of which will be important components of the Baylands development. He identified areas of natural habitat and suggested using these as a framework for the overall development. He pointed out possible locations for parks, recreational facilities, trails and road connections, and open space uses.

Mr. Dangermond reviewed a list of ideas for open space and recreational uses that were proposed at previous meetings and workshops. He noted that the items on the list are grouped in terms of active and passive uses, indoor and outdoor facilities, and youth and adult-oriented activities.

Mr. Dangermond welcomed feedback from Commissioners. He encouraged the Planning Commission to make comments about general open space planning issues, noting that more specific details will be addressed in later stages of the process.

Commissioner Munir recommended taking public comments before Commission discussion, and other Commissioners agreed.

Chairperson Maturo invited comments from audience members.

Dana Dillworth emphasized that not every inch of open space needs to be filled in. She suggested retaining open areas for interesting landforms, public art, and natural habitat.

She expressed concern that too many active recreational uses will bring unwanted traffic and crowds to an area subject to liquefaction during major earthquakes. She also suggested making sure that recreational and open space uses are compatible with each other. She noted that mountain biking, for example, does not work well with sensitive habitat.

Ms. Dillworth recommended using reservoirs and retention basins to capture rain and runoff. She objected to putting a roadway through the wetlands and advocated creating more wetlands at the site. She suggested taking advantage of the opportunities to create new manmade lagoons and wetlands.

Ms. Dillworth cautioned that language in the development plan allows the developer to alter the uses at will based on market conditions.

Commissioner Munir asked Ms. Dillworth to elaborate on the example she gave about not boxing the land in. Ms. Dillworth explained that Centennial Square in Boston was supposed to have a large open area, but the complicated planning process eventually resulted in much less open space.

Commissioner Munir questioned placement of reservoirs on top of contaminated land. Ms. Dillworth said the land underneath the reservoir would need to be capped. She noted that wetlands can be used to remediate contamination, and she recommended exploring that possibility.

Mr. Dangermond agreed with Ms. Dillworth that undisturbed habitat and natural open space should be preserved. He said he liked the idea of using open natural areas to attract people interested in enjoying passive uses like walking and observing wildlife, and noted that public art could enhance those experiences. He expressed support for using wetlands to clean contaminated water.

John Christopher Burr said his primary concern was that an attractive nuisance might be created on a toxic waste dump. He commented that people cannot depend on government regulatory agencies to protect them from harm, as evidenced by the recent scandals involving the Food and Drug Administration's ineffectiveness in dealing with contaminated peanut products. Mr. Burr expressed his opinion that the best solution would be to zone the entire site as open space.

Mr. Burr noted that people in the community have clearly expressed a desire to keep the area south of the creek open. He recommended that the consultants rethink their plans to allow any development in that portion of the site. He noted that having restaurants and other amenities might encourage people to fish in the area, which could be a major health hazard. Instead, he suggested restoring wetlands and enhancing habitat wherever possible. Mr. Burr proposed working with the California Academy of Science and ecology experts to find better ways of using the Baylands.

Mr. Burr noted that the entire Baylands could be underwater if sea levels rise in the future due to global warming. He said there are numerous earthquake faults running through the area, and the Baylands will be subject to strong shaking in earthquakes. He expressed concern about the safety of the site, given its contamination and seismic potential.

Mr. Burr observed that besides open space, passive wind and solar energy might be the best use of the Baylands. He encouraged the City to explore alternative energy options and other more responsible uses.

Commissioner Parker asked Mr. Burr to identify suitable sites for alternative energy facilities. Mr. Burr said the entire site has strong winds. He suggested the area north of Ice House Hill along the Geneva Avenue corridor as a possible location, and he recommended using efficient wind turbines.

Tom Heinz said the area south of the creek should be kept open. He objected to the idea of building mounds or berms in sensitive areas. He pointed out that berms can make areas less visible, causing security concerns.

Mr. Heinz stated that he would like to see the Baylands become a model for public art, similar to the wood sculptures that used to be on the Emeryville mudflats. He noted that berms and mounds would block these views.

Vanessa Villacarlos, owner of the 7 Mile House, a business overlooking the Baylands, stated that she and her husband have been talking about ways to make Bayshore Boulevard a more attractive entryway to Brisbane. She encouraged the City to use the historic structures in the area as a theme and focal point.

Todd Curtis acknowledged that the City has a tremendous responsibility to create a development at the Baylands that will meet the needs of the community. He agreed with previous speakers that not every inch of the open space should be filled. He expressed support for exploring options for alternative energy facilities.

Mr. Curtis asked when the environmental impact report for the Baylands project will be completed. Director Prince said some aspects of the environmental review have begun, and the draft EIR will be prepared once the community defines its preferred alternative. He estimated that the draft EIR would probably be ready by the end of 2009.

Mr. Curtis asked about the distinction between “open space” and “open areas.” He expressed his opinion that a golf course would not be a good idea for the Baylands because of its high costs. He pointed out that there are other good golf courses in the region. He suggested a driving range as a more realistic option for the Baylands.

Mr. Curtis noted that at a previous workshop meeting, an audience member talked about

a soccer field and emphasized the need to include a place around that facility for people to congregate before and after matches. He expressed his hope that some of the excess dirt at the Baylands can be used to construct contoured berms in some areas. He noted that small berms on either side of a soccer field would provide a place for spectators to lounge while they watched the games. He encouraged the City to design open space and recreational facilities that people can use.

Tom Heinz noted that this meeting was advertised as a workshop, but the format seemed to be a presentation followed by comments. He asked if there would be an opportunity for informal brainstorming. Chairperson Maturo stated that the Planning Commission was interested in hearing public comments on the ideas presented by the consultant. She said the goal of these sessions was to arrive at some consensus regarding uses for the open space.

Mr. Heinz noted that the Baylands offers an opportunity to integrate many kinds of activities within a single area. He suggested a 9-hole, par-3 chipping course instead of a full-size golf course, and observed that this kind of facility could be combined with a bike course and trail.

Mr. Dangermond pointed out that some kinds of uses, such as golf course, require a considerable amount of space. He said a driving range or chipping area could work well in some locations, but not others. Mr. Dangermond clarified that about two thirds of the open space should be kept as natural habitat, and about one third will be available for other uses. For that one third, he advocated identifying synergistic uses that serve both employees and visitors, and he cited a workout gym, driving range, bike course, and running track as possible examples.

Commissioner Parker asked where there would be enough space for a soccer field. Mr. Dangermond identified three major areas not prone to uneven settling that could accommodate a soccer field.

Commissioner Parker noted that many people in the community would like to have a wind farm at the Baylands, and she asked where such a facility might be. Director Prince said one of the three alternatives identified by the consultants includes a wind farm. He stated that wind studies are underway to determine where wind is the strongest, and that information will be used to determine specific locations where a wind energy facility might be appropriate.

Dana Dillworth observed that land to the north and south of Ice House Hill seems to have the strongest winds. She noted that the best place for a wind energy facility would probably be along the Geneva Avenue corridor close to the PG&E Martin Service Center. She expressed her opinion that the area identified by the applicant along Harney Way would not be a good place for wind energy. Ms. Dillworth added that none of the three alternatives propose good locations for wind energy facilities.

Robert Howard said he liked the idea of a chipping course, but noted that any type of golf course will use a considerable amount of water. He recommended investigating water consumption to determine whether this use would actually be viable.

Mr. Howard noted that mammals and raptors cross Bayshore Boulevard at various locations, and thought should be given to providing crossing points for wildlife. He advocated preserving migrating bird habitat in the wetlands areas. He suggested providing mountain bike tracks as an alternative to mountain biking on San Bruno Mountain. Mr. Howard asked what would happen to the existing small businesses along Industrial Way and the 7 Mile House after the Baylands is developed.

There being no other members of the public who wished to address the Planning Commission, Commissioner Munir made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lentz, to close the public hearing. The motion was unanimously approved and the public hearing was closed.

At 9:15 p.m., the Commission took a brief recess. Chairperson Maturo reconvened the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Chairperson Maturo advised that the applicant for the 3836 Bayshore Boulevard project requested a continuance to the next meeting, and she proposed taking that item out of order.

Chairperson Maturo indicated that Dana Dillworth had submitted written comments on the two "New Business" items.

NEW BUSINESS

2. **PUBLIC HEARING: 3836 Bayshore Boulevard;** Design Permit DP-6-07 and Use Permits UP-8-07 and UP-9-07; Showroom/office/warehouse with three two-bedroom units above and with uncovered parking, within the jurisdiction of the San Bruno Mountain Area Habitat Conservation Plan; Mitigated Negative Declaration; Joseph Xu, applicant; Lun Hong Wong, owner; APN 007-553-180

Commissioner Parker moved to continue this matter to the February 26 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lentz and unanimously approved.

WORKSHOP (Continued)

1. Baylands Public Space Planning

Chairperson Maturo welcomed comments and discussion from Commissioners.

Commissioner Lentz thanked Mr. Dangermond for his informative presentation and said he looked forward to seeing the open space master plan. He said he liked the concept of protecting regional ecology and connecting the Baylands with the surrounding area.

Commissioner Lentz commented that the construction of dirt mounds or berms is a new idea that has not been suggested before.

Commissioner Lentz observed that curving the entry to the Baylands from the freeway could help slow traffic down, similar to the curved road at the entrance to downtown Brisbane. Mr. Dangermond noted that a straight road would provide more space, but a curved roadway has other advantages, such as slowing down traffic and creating a sense of arrival. He said the consultants will consider this possibility.

Commissioner Lentz expressed concern that closing off the railroad tracks with fencing could block wildlife crossings. Commissioner Munir advised that the law requires high-speed rail tracks to be fenced securely. Mr. Dangermond noted that a wildlife underpass could be created, and he identified a possible location. He added that there are a range of solutions to this type of engineering and technical problem.

Commissioner Lentz said some members of the public advocated connecting some of the open space at the Baylands to create large green corridors and expansive views throughout the development. Mr. Dangermond said the consultants are looking at ways of providing access routes to the open space within the development. He emphasized the importance of making the green spaces usable. He commented that the entryways to the Baylands can create a distinct sense of place, and internal paths and trails can lead to the green areas. Mr. Dangermond remarked that the kinds of buildings and uses within the development will help determine the kinds of open space uses nearby.

Commissioner Lentz observed that there are horses grazing on Ice House Hill, and he expressed support for the idea of having agricultural uses in close proximity to urban developments. Mr. Dangermond suggested doing habitat restoration work on Ice House Hill to remove invasive species and plant native species that attract butterflies. He recommended analyzing the impact of horse grazing to determine whether grazing animals are helpful in controlling unwanted plants. He noted that the flat area around Ice House Hill might be a suitable location for an urban farm.

Commissioner Lentz asked about the possibility of free bike-sharing programs. Mr. Dangermond said bike-sharing has been very successful in Amsterdam. He commented that a bike-sharing program between the transit hub and the Baylands might work well.

Commissioner Lentz advocated using the historic roundhouse area for museums and historical exhibits. Mr. Dangermond pointed out possible locations for interpretive centers, museums, and displays about green technology. He noted there might be places within the development for exhibits about the industries within the Baylands.

Commissioner Lentz asked whether Mr. Dangermond knew about any new developments with tree-lined main streets and pedestrian-only paths. Mr. Dangermond stated that the main street concept seems to work well in many developments, including commercial areas, and he recommended exploring this option. He noted that Riverside and Fresno developed pedestrian malls in the 1950s and 1960s, but they were not very successful commercially. Mr. Dangermond advised that pedestrian-only areas work best in areas with retail and food service uses. He said there are places in Europe with active pedestrian areas.

Commissioner Lentz indicated that he would provide Mr. Dangermond with sketches illustrating some of his ideas.

Commissioner Munir questioned how well mounds would screen freeway noise, and he expressed concerns about the aesthetics of those features and how much they would obstruct views. He said high-speed trains will cause considerable noise and vibration, especially through open space areas. He cautioned that the fences will have to be designed with these problems in mind, and the fences themselves should be disguised with plants and other landscaping treatments. Commissioner Munir noted that pedestrian bridges over the railroad tracks will be both expensive and unattractive. He recommended screening the tank farm and providing containment to prevent leaks into the surrounding open space.

Commissioner Munir advocated additional studies to identify the best locations for a wind farm. He noted that the community first needs to decide what uses it wants in the open space areas, and then the specific sites can be determined. He suggested holding workshops with the community to develop a list of desired uses.

Mr. Dangermond showed the list of uses identified at previous meetings. He said the uses need to be prioritized, and then the space requirements and possible sites for those uses can be identified. Commissioner Munir expressed support for this approach. He noted that the community also needs to decide what kinds of alternative energy facilities should be included.

Commissioner Munir said many people in the community are interested in organic food products and farmers' markets. He suggested looking at Pike's Market in Seattle and open-air markets and food stalls in other countries to see if these kinds of facilities would be viable in Brisbane.

Commissioner Munir observed that whatever is done with the open space at the Baylands, the contaminated soil must be addressed to protect people using the space. He recommended looking at the integrity of the lagoon and its relationship to the rest of the Baylands.

Commissioner Munir noted that the roads and circulation system need to be designed to avoid interfering with sensitive habitat and to provide connections from areas within the Baylands and surrounding areas.

Commissioner Parker emphasized the need to first identify the best areas for alternative wind and solar energy facilities, and then building the rest of the development around those areas. She said she liked the idea of pedestrian trails, lots of open space, bike-sharing, and a soccer field. She proposed putting the soccer field in the area next to the freeway and close to Central Brisbane.

Commissioner Parker asked about the feasibility of building tunnels to accommodate the high-speed rail system. Commissioner Lentz noted that the tank farm is built on solid ground that might safe for a tunnel. Commissioner Parker observed a system of elevators over the tracks might be a better option. Mr. Dangermond suggested using the existing bridge as a pedestrian connection. Commissioner Munir expressed concern about pedestrian safety. Director Prince pointed out that the central drainage system will go under the tracks and might have room for a pedestrian trail.

Commissioner Parker expressed support for protecting natural habitat and connecting the Baylands with the surrounding areas.

Chairperson Maturo suggested putting active recreational uses along the freeway and close to Central Brisbane to promote better traffic flow and connectivity, but stated that she had concerns about potential contamination. She said she liked the idea of a cultural center and interpretive facilities around the Roundhouse, preserving natural open space and wetlands, limiting uses around the lagoon, and creating a gateway element.

Chairperson Maturo thanked the consultant for helping the community focus its vision for the open space at the Baylands. Mr. Dangermond recommended focusing on identifying priorities in terms of active and passive uses before planning specific facilities or choosing sites.

At 10:30 p.m., Commissioner Lentz moved, seconded by Commissioner Munir, to continue the meeting until 11:00 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Munir expressed interest in seeing Commissioner Lentz's sketches and hearing more about his ideas. Mr. Dangermond offered to meet with Commissioner Lentz the following week to review his materials.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **PUBLIC HEARING: (2801) Bayshore Boulevard;** Use Permit UP-1-09; Temporary use of vacant property as parking (+/- 75 vehicles) for members of "The Laf A Lots" and "The Last Originals" local car clubs attending Cow Palace