



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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Study Session Summary of December 15, 2015 - Discussion of Potential Uses of City-owned Property located on Charles Street and Mathilda Avenue near Iowa Avenue

Call to Order:

Vice-Mayor Martin-Milius called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

City Councilmembers Present:

Mayor Jim Griffith
Vice Mayor Tara Martin-Milius
Councilmember David Whittum
Councilmember Pat Meyering
Councilmember Jim Davis
Councilmember Glenn Hendricks
Councilmember Gustav Larsson

City Councilmembers Absent:

None

Study Session Summary:

Assistant City Manager Hanson Hom summarized the status of the Downtown Specific Plan and discussed possible land use options for the City-owned Charles Street property and the process for sale or lease of the property.

Councilmembers made the following comments:

- Define the success criteria for the future use of the property.
- Seek public input from adjacent residents on the future use of the property as it will affect the neighborhood.
- Some Councilmembers expressed interest in renting out the existing dwellings during the interim period, while others felt the dwellings should be removed.
- A suggestion was made to explore having Habitat for Humanity purchase the isolated single-family lot, but it was cautioned that this might impede the future development of the block.
- Preference was expressed for holding onto the property as a long-term asset and entering into a long-term ground lease rather than selling.
- Priority should be placed on establishing a use that would provide a public benefit instead of just selling the property (e.g. for market rate housing).
- The existing residential designation in the Downtown Specific Plan should be retained, but it may not be suitable to develop the property at the maximum capacity allowed in the Plan.

- Preference was expressed for affordable housing, either a senior housing project or a mixed project with a portion targeted for seniors. Housing for developmentally or physically disabled seniors should be considered. Councilmembers were interested in seeing proposals.
- Ambivalence was expressed about County involvement in the project.
- Consider a financing strategy similar to the Armory site where the long-term ground lease would be funded with Housing Mitigation Funds, which would then be deposited into the General Fund.
- Consider holding onto the property for property appreciation and acquiring and assembling adjacent parcels as the opportunities arise. Consider for a possible land swap also.
- Regarding number of potential residents, if the units are smaller (e.g. studios) the occupancy will be lower. Density can be deceiving as it depends on the type and size of the units.
- Site is not a good location for a park.

Public Comment:

- The site is unique and would be ideal for affordable housing and could serve several client groups.
- With the rise in rents, there is a strong need for affordable rental housing in the community.
- Pleased to hear the Council's interest in prioritizing the site for affordable housing.
- Consider housing for extremely low income (less than 30% average median income) to meet the City's Housing Element goals.
- Site is at a great location with good walkability and transit.

Adjournment:

Vice-Mayor Martin-Milius adjourned the study session at 6:50 pm.