

SPECIAL JOINT TOWN COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSIN MEETING, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, MAY 7, 2002, TOWN CENTER, HISTORIC SCHOOLHOUSE, 765 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Ms. Howard called the roll:

Present: Councilmembers K. Comstock, Merk, Driscoll and Mayor Davis  
Commissioners Elkind, McIntosh, Toben and Zaffaroni

Absent: Councilmember G. Comstock and Chairman Breon

Staff Present: George Mader, Town Planner  
William Cotton, Town Geologist  
Ted Sayre, Senior Engineering Geologist  
Angela Howard, Town Administrator  
Leslie Lambert, Planning Manager

ORAL COMMUNCIATIONS: None

REGULAR AGENDA

- (1) Presentation and Recommendation from Ad-Hoc Geologic Setback Committee

Councilmember Driscoll reviewed his memorandum on the summary of context of Ad-Hoc Geologic Setback Committee's work, noting that the Committee did great work, adding we learned a great deal and found our current rules work pretty well and don't need much updating. As noted in his memorandum, he clarified the goal of the committee to examine current fault setback rules and procedures and current geologic investigations in Town, noting they learned that the field of fault investigation and location continues to have great uncertainty. He added there is no substitute for trenching, and that geologic investigation of faults remains very unpredictable and an inexact science. Driscoll referred to the uncovering of new complex forms of deformation and faulting, i.e., en echelon faulting. Driscoll did note that structural engineering has significantly improved in the past few decades and building codes are leading to new constructed that is more than twice as resistant to earthquake damage as were buildings construction in the 1970's. Driscoll noted the committee tried to simplify the process, by streamlining implementation, and provide for a level of judgment when encountering difficult situations. Driscoll stressed that the committee did not undertake review of current regulations to improve the situation regarding placement of Town Hall.

Town Geologist Cotton provided Council and Commission with additional background on the seven meetings conducted by the Ad Hoc Geologic Setback Committee, indicating recommendations proposed include the Town administering the provisions of the Alquist-Priolo Act with a provision that the 50' fault setback be superseded by a 100' setback on faults classified on the Town Maps as "inferred". In addition, Town Maps would be revised using the most up-to-date fault information and shall show "known" and "inferred faults" and shall be shown on the new Town digital map. Bill Cotton referred to area maps and graphs of the Sakarya Segment from the 1999 Turkey

Earthquake and area maps depicting the San Andreas Fault System, including Trancos and Woodside Traces. Bill Cotton described the findings encountered over the years of trenching along the San Andreas Fault. Council, Commission and staff discussed width of rupture zones and how they would relate to the Town's proposed regulations for setback requirements from "known" and "inferred" faults.

Town Planner Mader described the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act and its associated policies and criteria, noting the Act requires fault investigations for subdivisions of five or more parcels and developments of four or more houses. The Act provides that no structure can be placed closer to a fault than 50' unless studies support a closer location. George Mader noted the Town's fault setbacks were established prior to Alquist-Priolo and require setbacks of 50' from "known" for single story residences and 125' for major buildings for human occupancy, if the fault is classified as "inferred" the setbacks are increased by 50'. Mader further indicated that all developments in Portola Valley must adhere to the state law as well as any more restrictive requirements that the Town might adopt. Mader also noted, as commented by both Driscoll and Cotton, that the Committee found that faulting is not completely understood, that there is more sophisticated trenching, and stricter building standards, which now exist.

Responding to questions regarding zoning ordinance amendments, Mader said the fault setback map included in the zoning ordinance will be deleted, the new regulations would direct the user to the Movement Potential of Undisturbed Ground Map. Also, the zoning ordinance would be modified that all structures for human occupancy must be located outside of the Pf zone, but could be closer than 25' under certain circumstances as outlined in the Ad Hoc Committees recommendations. The Movement Potential and Geologic maps would be revised to show "known" and "inferred" and modify the "Pf" zone.

Council and Commissioners discussed potential land use impacts due to zoning ordinance amendments and map revisions, and implementation.

Commissioner Zaffaroni questioned if there was adequate monies set aside in the budget for the commission to pursue zoning ordinance amendments.

Commissioner McIntosh said the work accomplished by the Ad Hoc Committee was pretty impressive and that the recommendations proposed seemed logical.

Commissioner Elkind concurred with McIntosh and noted concern over prioritizing certain portions of the map and their updates. Responding Mader indicated that the Movement Potential and Geologic Maps would both be completely updated with all modifications approved over the past years, including new information gathered. Supervising Engineering Geologist Sayre said that the map revisions would take approximately 50 hours total.

There was general discussion over potential impacts to landowners from the recommended changes. In particular it was suggested that impacts on existing residential lots and houses as well as potential subdivisions be investigated.

Councilman Comstock moved to refer Ad Hoc Geologic Setback Committee report dated "Revised, April 18, 2002" and recommendations to the Planning Commission. Councilman Merk seconded and motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

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Mayor

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Town Clerk