MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
PITTSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION

October 14, 2003

A regular meeting of the Pittsburg Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Mark Leonard at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, October 14, 2003, in the City Council Chambers of City Hall at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Dolojan, Garcia, Harris, Kelley, Ramirez, Tumbaga, Chairperson Leonard
(Commissioner Kelley arrived after roll call)

Absent: None

Staff: Director of Planning and Building Randy Jerome; Planning Manager Melissa Ayres; Associate Planner Noel Ibalio; and Senior Civil Engineer Alfredo Hurtado.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Commissioner Ramirez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

DELETIONS/WITHDRAWALS/CONTINUANCES:

Planning Manager Melissa Ayres reported that the applicant for agenda item one, 77 Lorraine Avenue, New Single Family Home, had submitted a written request to continue the item to a date uncertain. The applicant had decided to redesign the application to be in compliance with the regulations pertaining to the property.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

BRUCE OHLSON, Pittsburg, expressed concern that the Planning Commission had not met on the second and fourth Tuesday of September, as usual. He reported that he [and four other citizens] had come to City Hall to attend the meeting on the regular schedule. He reported that there was no signage posted to advise of the date change nor had there been any notification provided in the local newspapers. Mr. Ohlson added that the City’s web page hadn’t been updated since the month of August.

Planning Manager Ayres explained that the City Council and the Planning Commission’s meeting dates were scheduled in January of each year and there were times when the
Planning Commission was scheduled to meet on dates other than the second and forth Tuesdays of each month, sometimes as a result of holidays or conflicts with other meetings. Ms. Ayres agreed to provide a copy of the 2004 meeting dates to Mr. Ohlson. She stated that the September meetings were scheduled and had been held on the third and fifth Tuesday of the month of September, that the agendas were posted in the police lobby because it is open 24 hours a day. She also noted that the top right hand corner of the August 26th agenda would have shown the two September meeting dates.

Ms. Ayres also reported that City had lost its webmaster for the City’s website and there was currently no one to replace that person. An in-house City staff person would be trained to take over those duties in the future.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

There were no presentations.

**CONSENT:**

There were no consent items.

**CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**Item 1: Lorraine Avenue New Single Family Home. AP-03-47 (UP/VA).**

Continued public hearing on an application by Michael Orlando requesting a use permit to construct a 922 square foot single family residence on an undeveloped 5,000 square foot sub-standard lot and an exception to the substandard lot development standard which limits the area of a second story element of a building at 77 Lorraine Avenue, RS (Single Family Residential) District; APN 087-123-003.

As earlier reported, the item had been continued at the request of the applicant.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**Item 2: Housing Element Update.**

A public hearing on a City-initiated amendment to the General Plan to update the Housing Element.

Associate Planner, Noel Ibalio, made a staff presentation on the proposed housing element covering State Requirements, census information, public participation in the preparation of the housing element, key concerns voiced by the public at three community workshops, and an overview of the goals, policies and actions which were being proposed to meet the City’s fair share regional housing allocations assigned to the City by the Association of Bay Area Governments.
Mr. Ibalio recommended that the public hearing be opened to allow for public comment before any action by the Planning Commission. He noted that staff had identified numerous technical corrections staff would like to make to the document prior to Planning Commission approval. Mr. Ibalio advised that while a resolution of approval to recommend that the City Council approve the Housing Element Update had been prepared for Commission review, he preferred that the public comments be taken and that the item be continued to the next Commission meeting scheduled for October 28 to allow the proposed corrections to be made.

In response to Commissioner Tumbaga, Ms. Ayres clarified that not all of the items in the Pittsburg Together Affordable Housing platform had been incorporated into the draft housing element. She noted that she had recently met with Pittsburg Better Together and had reviewed the list of concerns that group had with the Housing Element. Some of their priorities had had been addressed in the Housing Element while others had not. She had suggested that representatives attend the public hearing and seek Commission feedback on any additional changes they would like to see incorporated into the final document.

Chairperson Leonard spoke to the matter of overpayment and noted that the Federal Standard of affordable housing as not paying more than 30 percent of household income on housing costs was unrealistic in this economic climate.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

GREGORY OSORIO, 325 Cumberland Street, Suite F, Pittsburg, representing Pittsburg Better Together, a coalition of faith, labor and community non-profit organizations that worked together to improve education, housing and economic development, spoke to the Housing Element. He referred specifically to the statement: “This element addresses provisions of safe, decent, and affordable housing for all segments of the City’s population regardless of age, race, sex, marital status, family size, income, or disability,” and “Housing is a basic human necessity and the need for housing is shared by all residents.”

Mr. Osorio also referred to the statement which read in part “This document therefore should be used by local decision makers, housing advocates, lenders and developers to (1) clarify City’s existing housing conditions, analyze the City’s existing projected housing needs including those of special needs groups and establish policies and actions to address the issues of future housing availability and affordability.”

While Mr. Osorio agreed with the stated objective of the Housing Element, in terms of its implementation, he did not believe the document satisfied the need for a large portion of the community. Having participated in the community workshops on the Housing Element, he suggested that the main priorities and concerns were not those identified in the staff report. Mr. Osorio expressed his belief that the highest priorities identified by community workshop participants had been a need for rental units to accommodate Very Low Income households and a recommendation for a new bracket identified as Extremely Low Income households.
Referencing Section 13.4-3, Mr. Osorio noted that the median housing value from 1980 to the year 2000 had been presented. For the year 2000, an average housing price of $165,000 had been identified. Contrary to that, a recent listing in the *Contra Costa Times* had shown the lowest home sale at $175,000 with the highest at $548,500, and with a median price of $285,000. The average was $312,000. He requested that data be added to the housing element to illustrate what was actually occurring now in the housing market.

While Mr. Osorio suggested there had been some drop in the rental rates in this area, he characterized the adjustment as minor compared to South Bay communities. He added that new units being constructed were only affordable to higher income families and that the City was not accommodating the bottom tier households contrary to the Housing Element mission statement.

Referencing text pertaining to the Redevelopment Agency Low to Moderate Income Housing Set-aside Fund, Mr. Osorio noted that the City of Pittsburg was one of only two cities in the State that had an exemption from setting aside 20% of its tax increment funds for affordable housing each year. While the City had spend more than 20% of the tax increment on housing in previous years and could justify the exemption, he suggested that the reality was the City still had an affordable housing shortage. He referenced the loss of 327 rent restricted units that had been converted to market rate since 1999.

Mr. Osorio encouraged the Commission to examine the document carefully and to determine whether or not it was really designed to meet the needs of the City’s entire population.

EVELYN STIVERS, Liveable Communities, Associate Director, Greenbelt Alliance, explained that the group worked on the protection of greenbelt open space and ensured that urban areas were livable. The Greenbelt Alliance was also a member of Pittsburg Better Together, which was a great organization to tackle education and housing issues. She commented that the Housing Element update should he used as an opportunity for the City to reexamine its housing policies and to look for opportunities to grow better, to create a community that would remain diverse, to make the downtown more vibrant, to help make the BART system function better with possible high density development adjacent to transit.

Ms. Stivers presented a 10-point affordable housing platform of Pittsburg Better Together. She confirmed that the group’s comments had not been integrated into the Draft Housing Element now being reviewed by the Commission even though their comments had been provided to staff in July. Copies of the 10-point affordable housing platform were provided to the Commission at this time.

Speaking to the ten recommendations, Ms. Stivers identified three specific recommendations for inclusion into the document:

- Starting immediately the City should set aside at least 20 percent of all redevelopment funds for lower income housing.
The City should commission a professional study of the feasibility of inclusionary zoning to increase more mixed income units in new development projects.

The City should adopt as its policy objective that it will target funds (especially redevelopment funds) in proportion to the ABAG “fair share” of housing needs, and will add an Extremely Low Income within the Very Low Income category, so that its housing programs better match the incomes of Pittsburg residents.

Ms. Stivers added that the Housing Element lacked specifics, particularly the inventory of sites, which was not clear that there were sites available to meet the housing needs as identified in the Regional Housing Needs Determination. It was also not clear that the sites had been designated at appropriate densities and had the adequate zoning to support such development.

CRAIG CASTELLANET, Attorney for the California Affordable Housing Law Project, explained that he been working with Pittsburg Better Together over the past couple of months and had attended some of the workshops. He spoke to the State requirements for the Housing Element for consistency with the General Plan. He suggested that the City would restrict its ability to approve any sort of development if its General Plan was not compliant with State law, particularly if one of the mandatory elements of the General Plan, such as the Housing Element was not compliant.

Mr. Castellanet suggested that actions the City could take could become challenged by developers or community groups who could be unhappy with an approval or denial of a project. To avoid such an occurrence, he suggested that it was important to take the time to have the input and deliberation required to provide a compliant Housing Element.

Mr. Castellanet also noted that there was some funding that was also tied to having a valid General Plan approved by the HCD. He commented that the Housing Element was required to be updated every five years, although there were some extension periods available. When the Housing Element was updated it must be approved by the HCD to verify compliance with State law. If certified by HCD, the City could have some preferences for tax credits for State and federal subsidies that would permit housing developers to build bring more money and jobs into the City, with more regulation on the development. Uncertain whether or not HCD had reviewed the City’s Housing Element, he noted that the deadline for the Housing Element update was December 31, 2001.

Noting that the City had held hearings in June 2001 and had sent the Draft Housing Element to the HCD, Mr. Castellanet expressed his understanding that the HCD had indicated that the document must be changed in order to be compliant with State law. In November 2001, without making changes, staff had decided to have a placeholder element. Any adopted elements were also required to be forwarded to the HCD for review as well. He suggested that had not been done, which was one of the concerns of Pittsburg Better Together. He was otherwise pleased to see the City commence with the current review process.
BRUCE OHLSON, Pittsburg, related his first memories of living in the City on Robinson Avenue where his father had a home and where his family had resided until 1955 when the family moved to Massachusetts. The home payments at that time were $70 and the family was hard pressed to make the payments with a large family. The family later returned to California and bought a new home on Ventura Drive and Harbor Street, and paid $24,949 for the property in 1965. He commented that a home located across the street from the home he grew up in on Robinson Avenue had recently sold for $246,000. His father’s current home had a 30-year mortgage that had been paid off. A home in the neighborhood of that property had recently sold for $460,000.

Mr. Ohlson commented that his father’s home had increased in price 18 times. Nationwide, including housing inflation between 1970 and the year 2000, inflation had increased only four times. He referenced a quote by Will Rogers who stated “Buy land, they ain’t making any more of it.”

Commissioner Tumbaga spoke to Table 13.2-5, on Page 13-10 of the Housing Element and the racial distribution of the City. She questioned why the Hispanic population appeared to be counted differently than everyone else.

ROSALYN STEWART, Senior Planner Dyett and Bhatia, explained that because of the high percentage of second and third generation Hispanics in the nation, the 2000 Census had chosen to separate out and quantify as Hispanics all persons having some Hispanic blood, even those which considered themselves primarily some other racial group. The table in the Housing Element had been prepared based on the way the census information had been collected.

Commissioner Tumbaga also spoke to the three-percent vacancy rate in the City and commented that it was clear there was less opportunity for people to be housed adequately when the vacancy rate was low. Speaking to home ownership opportunities, she commented that the data gathered by the consultants appeared to show that home ownership was more readily available to those who migrated into the community than the lower income residents of the City.

Commissioner Tumbaga referenced Table 13.2-8 and noted that the table does not show the number of rental units that had been constructed between 1990 and 2000. Ms. Ayres explained that the number constructed would be the net difference between the numbers in both columns.

Commissioner Tumbaga inquired if the reference to number of rooms in a household discussed on Page 13-17 were the actual “number” of rooms including kitchen, bathroom, living room, and bedrooms. Ms. Stewart stated the number of rooms did not include bathrooms or closets, but did include kitchens and living rooms.

Regarding Page 13-19 and the discussion on homeless, Commissioner Tumbaga clarified that Pacific Community Services, Inc. (PCSI) and Pittsburg Housing and Economic Planning Commission Minutes October 14, 2003
Development Corporation (PHEDC) did not provide homeless services. She also noted that the acronyms for both firms should be corrected throughout the document.

Ms. Stewart acknowledged that the acronyms would be corrected throughout the document.

Speaking to Page 13-20 regarding farm workers, Commissioner Tumbaga questioned where landscape service personnel would be categorized since the City had a very large Hispanic population that was employed in the landscape industry. She inquired whether or not those workers would be included in the agricultural section.

Ms. Ayres commented that those workers were not classified as farm workers or by the State as a separate special needs group, and as such they were not discussed in detail.

Ms. Tumbaga requested that more discussion be added about the problem of lead based paint noting that some 10,745 units had been constructed before 1979. She emphasized that children under the age of five could be at serious risk of lead poisoning in some of those 10,745 units constructed prior to 1979.

Ms. Ayres explained that there was a policy regarding lead based paint in the draft element; she agreed that the discussion supporting that policy could be strengthened.

Commissioner Tumbaga further spoke to Page 13-20 and the Median Housing Value. She agreed that while the 2000 Census data was only three years old, the current realities of home prices were different and should be analyzed. She indicated she was pleased with the amount of senior housing that had been produced during the reporting period, while noting that there were many families in the community who needed to be housed and should also be given those opportunities.

Ms. Ayres explained that the Housing Constraints section of the Housing Element discusses current housing prices in both the rental and for sale market; she stated that staff could prepare an analysis that looked at current trends in addition to 2002 census information.

Commissioner Dolojan inquired whether or not the community of Bay Point, which was located within the City of Pittsburg’s Sphere of Influence (SOI), could be considered to meet the City’s low and affordable housing needs.

Ms. Ayres advised that Bay Point was located within the County’s jurisdiction that also had been assigned its fair share of regional housing growth. As such, housing in Bay Point was counted toward meeting the County’s regional needs allocation.

Commissioner Garcia pointed out that the City had a good stock of affordable housing up to five years ago, such as the area of East Ninth Street, Tenth Street, the Central Addition, and Eighth Street all the way to the railroad tracks. Due to the prices of homes located to the west and east of Pittsburg, those home prices had increased and were no longer
considered to be affordable. He agreed with Mr. Ohlson in regards to the increase in home prices over the years.

Commissioner Garcia expressed concern that by the time the City completed the Housing Element, even the existing affordable housing could be gone, unless the City, State or federal government was willing to allocate additional funds for that purpose. He was uncertain how affordable housing could be built. He questioned the price range of a unit that was actually affordable for a family of four with an annual income of $35,000. Unless developers were provided a number of incentives, he was uncertain how the affordable housing needs could be achieved.

Commissioner Harris commented that ten years ago he had built 33 town homes in the community of Bay Point for $129,950. Those units had consisted of 1,500 square feet, with two and a half baths and a two-car garage. One of the original owners had recently sold their unit for $269,000. As a resident of the Central Addition, he noted that many of the homes in his neighborhood had been selling for between $250,000 and $425,000.

Commissioner Harris suggested that the City had enough rental units. He also disagreed with the ABAG projections.

Ms. Ayres requested through the Chairman that the Commission provide feedback on whether it supported changes to the draft housing element recommended by Pittsburg Better Together (PBT), so that any changes supported by the Commission could be incorporated into the draft document before it was represented to the Commission for formal recommendation to the Council. Ms. Ayres requested specific feedback on PBT requests for a mandatory 20% set-aside and inclusionary housing.

She added that staff did not envision making the requested changes to the draft Housing Element, unless they were supported by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Tumbaga stated that her position had always been for a strong document to give staff and the community something to fall back on, which was something she would support. She agreed that the language should be strengthened in some areas of the document. She also suggested that the City had been exempt for 20 years and she supported a position by the City to make a true commitment for affordable housing to accommodate the needs of the community. Commissioner Tumbaga expressed support for inclusionary housing and a 20% set-aside housing fund.

Commissioner Garcia suggested that unless the City was prepared to waive approximately $40,000 in fees, bonuses would not resolve the situation since the cost of the land would remain a factor and every unit built would still include the required fees. A bonus would not reduce the cost of the land. Given the current City Council and the current economic situation, he did not see support for a waiver of fees, particularly since the City Council had raised the traffic mitigation fees to almost $7,000 per home. Commissioner Garcia pointed out that the City owned property on the west side of the downtown that was in a redevelopment area. If the City wanted to provide low cost housing, he suggested that
the City could develop several units on that property.

Commissioner Tumbaga commented that there was no desire to impact any given neighborhood with all low-income housing. She suggested that developers, particularly non-profit developers needed to be challenged to provide affordable housing, although the City would have to provide the necessary tools and ability to encourage the development of affordable housing.

Commissioner Tumbaga stated the City needed to look to the non-profit developer who did not need to make the profit and who were in the business of providing or building housing for low income communities to meet the City’s affordable housing demand.

Commissioner Tumbaga noted that there was more than one non-profit developer who had built low income and market rate housing adjacent to each other and that you could not tell one from the other. She stated that would be the challenge, to build housing that was needed that would not be distinguishable from any other housing in the community.

Commissioner Garcia did not support the recommendation for 20 percent set-aside funds, inclusionary housing, or that every developer include affordable housing. He did not want to stop building in the City.

Commissioner Harris commented that there were seven acres along Harbor Street which belonged to the Pittsburg Unified School District (PUSD) and which could be used for the development of affordable housing. He stated he was not in support of the recommended 20 percent set-aside, inclusionary housing, or that every developer be required to provide affordable housing.

Ms. Ayres advised that the City Council had recently waived parkland fees for the Delta Hawaii Senior Apartments project. She noted that the Council did not typically waive all fees on a given project.

Chairperson Leonard commented that the City had tried to assist a builder to build homes in the downtown that had led to seven price increases and property values over $380,000 in the Marina Walk development. In that case, the home prices had started at $220,000. The Chair added that property located along Herb White Way had been sold to a developer for approximately $4,000 per lot in land costs, and it was likely the developer would take advantage of the market trends. He recognized that economics would determine what could be built and where.

As to the 20 percent setaside funds recommendation, Chairperson Leonard stated it was unlikely that 20 percent of that housing stock in the foothills would be dedicated to low income households. In his opinion, subdivisions were ruined if developed without some uniformity.

Chairman Leonard suggested that the market was changing and that presently there were more rentals available in the community, than indicated by the 2000 census. He stated he
had noted as much as a 20 percent reductions in local rental rates and that sometimes there was still no activity for at least six months. He did not support either the 20 percent set-aside of redevelopment funds nor the recommendation for inclusionary housing.

Commissioner Dolojan emphasized the need to consider what had occurred in the past. He could not see any more affordable housing being development unless developers were strongly encouraged to provide such housing. If a 20 percent inclusionary housing requirement would not be feasible, he could support a 15 percent or even lesser percentage inclusionary requirement. He was supportive of a 20 percent set-aside of redevelopment funds.

Ms. Ayres explained that City staff had been discussion with Pittsburg Better Together regarding 15 percent inclusionary zoning. If the Commission desired to pursue inclusionary housing, it could recommend to the Council any percentage it was comfortable with.

In response to Commissioner Harris, Ms. Ayres clarified that the Housing Element covered the period from 1999 to 2006 although the State had indicated that period might be extended another year. The Housing Element included a map that identified all of the land that could be developed with housing during that time period.

Commissioner Harris understood that the City did not have the funds available to set-aside for affordable housing projects every year and he questioned where the money would originate to address the recommendations to waive fees and provide the affordable housing that was being discussed.

Ms. Ayres commented that the Redevelopment Agency was fairly cash rich and oftentimes would reimburse the City for fees that could be waived. The monies, however, were typically bonded by the Agency and turned into capital improvements for the City. The Agency did not bond every dollar that would come in, per recommendations from the Finance Director. The Agency did have cash that would come in during different years.

Commissioner Harris noted that the Agency had lent monies to the Brendan Theater and that efforts were being sought for the California Theatre. He expressed concern that all of the money was being designated and he questioned how more funds could be dedicated for affordable housing.

Ms. Ayres stated the Agency would have to evaluate whether or not there were additional monies available to set aside for affordable housing projects.

Mr. Osorio explained, when asked, that he had been a resident of the City in the early 1970’s and had moved back 18 years ago when his children had gone through the PUSD school system. He reiterated his previous comments, spoke to the diversity of the City and the uniqueness of the fact that many residents of the City grew up in the City and remained in the community. He emphasized that the cities of Pittsburg and Richmond were the only two cities that had applied for an exemption in the State. He questioned why the City had
done that to begin with although he recognized that it had been a different period of time when that decision had been made.

Mr. Osorio emphasized the need for more affordable housing in the community and the need to realize what was happening to lower income households in the community. He pointed out that the 20 percent setaside funds he was speaking to were monies received from the State and were not from an outside source. He suggested that those funds be used for what they had originally been intended, to create affordable housing.

Mr. Osorio otherwise spoke to Page 13-44 of the Housing Element that had shown the approved housing stock in the City. In particular with respect to the Low Income category, he noted that Delta Hawaii Senior Mobile Homes had shown 24 units coming on line from 1999 to 2002, with Presidio Village coming on line with 104 units. He stated that only 128 units have been approved/built during this reporting period for Very Low-Income Households. The Low-Income category only had a total of 15 units for the same time period. On the other hand, 327 units had converted to market rents. He emphasized that the housing supply was shrinking for those in the lower income categories. He stressed the need to create housing for all categories.

Commissioner Ramirez supported providing what could be done for those who had a need. As the owner of a couple of apartments on Section 8 for the past several years he explained that he had struggled to own the property and was now living off of the income from the property. He emphasized the need to consider the reality since the City, State and federal government did not have the monies to provide the necessary housing, yet the City was receiving directives from the State as to what to do and how to provide such housing with no funding to back up those directives.

Commissioner Ramirez suggested that the City of Pittsburg was probably ahead of its neighbors in providing housing for low-income families. Noting that years ago developers had approached the City with projects that included State and Federal assistance; he stated that was no longer the case. He was uncertain how the 20 percent setaside funds would help, and he questioned how a developer would be able to build homes with a low margin of profit. He did not support the 20 percent setaside funds and he was not in support of inclusionary zoning.

Commissioner Tumbaga acknowledged that the discussion was not new. She commented that between 1984 and 1985, PCSI had built a new subdivision in the City of Brentwood, which consisted of 145 units of single family detached homes. Sixty-five of the units had been earmarked for Low-Income households and 21 had been earmarked for Very Low-Income households. Over 600 interviews had been conducted to find the 65 people who would occupy those units. Of the 65 original homeowners assisted by PCSI, there had not been one single default on the homes. The highest cost home that PCSI had sold at that time was $86,000. One of the original property owners was in the midst of selling the property that was now worth $272,000.

Commissioner Tumbaga pointed out that at $272,000, the original families would not have
been able to afford those homes today and had not been able to afford the homes at that time without some type of subsidy, assistance or mechanism built into the financing structure to allow the purchase of the homes.

Commissioner Tumbaga commented that another developer desired to build a similar project adjacent to the PCSI subdivision in Brentwood and that there had been a great deal of opposition to that proposal. She emphasized that people had to start somehow and the families that had been helped were very low income and were hard working people. She emphasized that the Commission had to look beyond the surface and realize that it could truly make a difference by increasing the possibility of home ownership.

Commissioner Harris commented that the City had received $50 million years ago for low income housing at low interest rates, although there were few who qualified for the program at that time.

Commissioner Kelley recognized the need for low income housing in the City although she was uncertain how to go about it given the current economic constraints.

Ms. Ayres suggested that she be allowed to meet with the Finance Director to review the Redevelopment budget and determine whether there was redevelopment money available to set-aside for housing projects that was not already committed. She noted that the Redevelopment Agency currently exceeded its percentage of required low-income housing within the redevelopment project area, which encompassed 75% of the City.

Chairperson Leonard agreed that input from the Finance Director would be helpful. Commissioner Garcia recommended that the item be continued to the October 28 Planning Commission meeting where additional public input could be taken. A resolution of approval could then be agendized for the following meeting in November.

Ms. Ayres explained that could be done, although the staff goal was to have the item approved by the City Council before the end of the year. The City Council would not be meeting in December. If the Commission were to make a decision on October 28, that decision could be forwarded to the City Council for review and action by the Council on November 17. She also clarified that the first Planning Commission meeting in the month of November would be on November 12, a Wednesday due to the Veteran’s Day holiday.

Ms. Ayres expressed her hope to be able to address everything the Commission would like to see for discussion on October 28. If the draft Housing Element with proposed edits satisfied the Commission, it could be approved at that time.

**MOTION:**

Motion by Commissioner Garcia to continue the Housing Element Update to the Planning Commission meeting of October 28, 2003. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kelley and carried by the following vote:

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Ayes: Commissioners Dolojan, Garcia, Harris, Kelley, Ramirez, Tumbaga, Leonard
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Director of Building and Planning Randy Jerome reported that a memorandum had been included in the Commission packets regarding the status of Fort Knox Storage. The applicants had been given a deadline of November 1, 2003 to meet all conditions of project approval. Staff would report on the status of the project after that time.

Mr. Jerome reported that the Building Division would also be meeting with the contractor for the Bethel Baptist Church project on Central Avenue sometime this week to ensure that project was proceeding.

The City Council would also be having a Commission/Committee Workshop on November 3, 2003, tentatively at 5:00 P.M., although the meeting time had yet to be confirmed. All Planning Commissioners were invited to attend.

Further, Mr. Jerome reported that the Planning Commission Appreciation Dinner had been scheduled for November 4, 2003 at 7:00 P.M.

Commissioner Tumbaga suggested that the dinner be held at a Pittsburg restaurant. She stated that there were a number of restaurants in Pittsburg that could use the City’s support.

All Commissioners indicated that he/she and spouses would like to attend the Appreciation Dinner.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Commissioner Garcia reported that he had attended the recent TRANSPLAN Committee meeting where discussions were held on the ridership issue for eBART since BART demanded a certain amount of ridership before the project could be built. The TRANSPLAN Committee had also approved a list of Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) projects including eBART, Buchanan Road Bypass, Widening of State Route 4 from Somersville Road to Hillcrest Avenue, State Route 4 Bypass, and a number of additional projects. The list of approved projects was made available to staff.

In addition TRANSPLAN had discussed the recommendation for the reorganization of the Committee, although it was likely that the TRANSPLAN Committee would remain the same while the Joint Exercise of Powers Agencies (JPAs) of the East Contra Costa Regional Fee and Financing Authority (ECCRFFA), the East County Transportation Authority (ECTIA) and the State Route 4 Bypass Authority might merge.
COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Tumbaga encouraged everyone to attend the current art exhibit at The Impulse Gallery which would run over the next two weekends from 12:00 Noon to 5:00 P.M.

Commissioner Harris requested that the proposed Indian Casino for the City of Antioch be agendized for the next Planning Commission meeting to allow a discussion of that proposal. He requested that the item be agendized as a Commission Consideration item. In addition, he requested that staff review the traffic signal located at the intersection at Yosemite Drive and the Shell Station on Railroad Avenue, which should be modified to allow a better flow of traffic.

Commissioner Ramirez noted that the traffic signal at Marks Boulevard and Railroad Avenue had been experiencing the same problems with a lack of synchronicity in the traffic signal operations.

Senior Civil Engineer Alfredo Hurtado understood that the traffic signal at Railroad Avenue and Yosemite Drive functioned properly between the morning hours after which it was set for a different time.

Commissioner Garcia reiterated a previous request that the property owners for the Pep Boys site on Loveridge Road be contacted to maintain the landscaping on the site, which had been a condition of approval for the property. Further, he questioned the lack of traffic control on Bliss Street and Railroad Avenue this date where traffic had been backed up to Buchanan Road since the traffic signals were out of operation and there was no traffic control.

Mr. Hurtado understood that PG&E had been working at the Bliss Street and Railroad Avenue intersection. He agreed that traffic control should have been provided. He expressed the willingness to review the situation.

Commissioner Kelley reported that the traffic concerns she had for the California Avenue and Harbor Street intersection had improved. She otherwise announced that Charlie “Buster” Spears had recently passed away. A service had been scheduled for Saturday October 18 at 11:00 A.M. at First Baptist Church.

Commissioner Harris reported that City employee Keith Kingsley had recently passed away.

In response to the Chair, Ms. Ayres commented that the City Council had recommended that any comments on traffic concerns submitted after the disbanding of the Traffic and Circulation Advisory Committee (TCAC), be forwarded directly to the Traffic Division. The Community Advisory Commission (CAC) could still be used, however, as a venue for the public to address its concerns. She added that traffic concerns expressed during the
Planning Commission meetings were recorded by staff and would be forwarded to the Traffic Division.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:06 P.M. to a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on October 28, at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

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MELISSA AYRES, Secretary
Pittsburg Planning Commission