



**City of Petaluma, California**

City Council Chambers  
City Hall, 11 English Street  
Petaluma, CA 94952

Telephone 707/778-4301 / Fax 707/778-4498

E-Mail [planning@ci.petaluma.ca.us](mailto:planning@ci.petaluma.ca.us)

Web Page <http://www.ci.petaluma.ca.us>

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2 **Planning Commission Minutes**

3 **April 9, 2002 – 7:00 PM**

4

5 Commissioners: *Present:* Barrett, Glass, Monteschio, O'Brien, von Raesfeld, Vouri

6 *Absent:* Dargie

7 \* Chair

8

9 *Staff:* George White, Planning Manager

10 Betsi Lewitter, Project Planner

11 Jan Tolbert, Administrative Secretary

12

13 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes of **March 26, 2002** were reviewed but requested  
14 return to the next meeting with corrections.

15

16 **PUBLIC COMMENT: Patricia Tuttle Brown** – Entire Magnolia Place site should be  
17 park with bicycle path through to cemetery.

18

19 **DIRECTOR'S REPORT: George White** – Status update of Development Impact Fee  
20 Study indicated that the study was being conducted, however, would not be available  
21 before Fall 2002.

22

23 **COMMISSIONERS' REPORT: Commissioner Barrett** – Invited all to attend film  
24 this Friday at Petaluma Coffee Company – “Back from the Brink”; **Commissioner Vouri**  
25 – Received traffic model from General Plan Administrator – It is complete and includes  
26 Frates Road and Adobe Road traffic counts – most state of the art tool available for use;  
27 Add this as a discussion item regarding using this traffic model on all future development  
28 proposals **George White** – Cumulative results not available now. They are not adequate  
29 for evaluating development projects for CEQA purposes. **Commissioner O'Brien** –  
30 Traffic model accurate for today but land use not accurate for today – inaccurate model  
31 for future planning – Council is waiting for census data. **Chair Glass** – Would like to  
32 have model to review. **Commissioner O'Brien** – Census data will not be ready by July.  
33 Vote to add to agenda – **Motion/Commissioner Vouri** – **Second/Commissioner Barrett**  
34 (add as last item on agenda). **Commissioner Glass** – April 23, Petaluma Village  
35 Marketplace project (EIR) will be 2<sup>nd</sup> item on agenda.

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3 **CORRESPONDENCE:** 29 letters/postcards regarding Magnolia Place Subdivision.  
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5 **APPEAL STATEMENT:** Was read.  
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7 **LEGAL RECOURSE STATEMENT:** Was noted on the agenda.  
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10 **NEW BUSINESS;**

11 **PUBLIC HEARING:**

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13 **I. MAGNOLIA PLACE SUBDIVISION, 1120 Magnolia Avenue/1111 Gossage**  
14 **Avenue.**

15 **AP Nos: 048-141-012; 048-132-027**

16 **File Nos: ANX00001; TSM00002; PRE00011; PUD00006**

17 **Project Planner: Betsi Lewitter**  
18

19 Applicant is requesting approval for 47 residential lots on 2 contiguous parcels  
20 outside City limits totaling 24.42 acres. Development to occur on 16+ acres; 8.28  
21 acres to be dedicated to the City of Petaluma for parkland. Requires amendments  
22 to General Plan Map, rezoning to Planned Unit Development, approval of  
23 Planned Unit Development Plan, approval of Tentative Subdivision Map and  
24 Annexation.  
25

26 **Betsi Lewitter** presented the staff report.  
27

28 **Chair Glass** – (To Jim Carr, Parks and Recreation Director) Would the proposed annuity  
29 amount be sufficient for maintenance?  
30

31 **Jim Carr** – First five years maintenance amount would be minimal – \$5,000 to \$6,000  
32 per year since park will be passive use.  
33

34 **Chair Glass** – Would like to see financial analysis to make sure this annuity would be  
35 adequate with future inflation; will the City be able to take over if annuity is inadequate?  
36

37 **Jim Carr** – This annuity will give us a buffer during this fiscal problem time – then  
38 general funds will take over.  
39

40 **Commissioner vonRaesfeld** – Will City design the park?  
41

42 **Jim Carr** – The community will have opportunity for design input.  
43

44 **Commissioner Barrett** – Will this park be similar to any other park in City?  
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46 **Jim Carr** – McNear open space - does not have wetlands that this site has.

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**Commissioner Barrett** – Does City have information regarding park maintenance expenses for each park?

**Jim Carr** – Because of nature of the park – no turf, minimal irrigation – expenses would be half of park with amenities; for first 5 years, developer would have to maintain; City would have weed abatement, tree pruning, vandalism.

**Commissioner Monteschio** – How much would it cost to maintain park if entire site were a park?

**Jim Carr** – Probably 4-5 times the amount.

**Commissioner Monteschio** – where does park money come from?

**Jim Carr** – Development impact fees – can only be used for acquisition of park lands – not maintenance.

**Commissioner O’Brien** – Can we afford to buy this property as a park?

**Jim Carr** – We would have to defer other projects/parks already promised in other areas.

**Commissioner Barrett** – (to Ms. Lewitter) – The applicant would be replanting with native trees – would that be in the park area and within the residential project site?

**Betsi Lewitter** – Native trees in park – combination of native and non-native trees in residential areas.

**Commissioner vonRaesfeld** – Sidewalk from bridge heading west only? Sidewalk is not shown along entire frontage to cemetery property as required by conditions.

**Betsi Lewitter** – Conditions would change plans – plans haven’t been updated.

**Commissioner Monteschio** – Ground water is contaminated – any tests done?

**Betsi Lewitter** – Wells have been tested, some were contaminated, don’t know what is being done about this.

**Commissioner Barrett** – The cul-de-sac bulbs as shown on drawings are smaller than conditions dictate – will that be revised?

**Betsi Lewitter** – Yes.

**Commissioner Barrett** – Regarding tree removal – how many trees slated to be removed are greater than 6 inches?

1 **Betsi Lewitter**– Need to refer you to arborists report.

2

3 **Dan Aguilar** – Applicant, Mission Valley Properties – Lives in Novato – Has developed  
4 some relationships with people living in area – has vested interest in how this area is  
5 developed; has tried working with the neighborhood – thinks this proposal is a win/win  
6 solution; asked members of audience in support to stand up (15-20 persons).

7

8 **Steve Arago** – Applicant Planning/Engineering Firm (CSW Stuber-Stroeh) – Was a  
9 member of Tree Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation Committee – offered  
10 brief history of past proposals, eucalyptus tree removal by previous owner; Parks  
11 Committee looked at possible purchase of property with help from Open Space District  
12 funds – monies slated to be spent on Lucchesi soccer field could have been used (\$1.4  
13 Million) but City decided against doing that; a sub-committee was formed to look at  
14 development of a partial portion of the site – natural, passive park was preferred; high  
15 point of knoll offers good views of area – drainage/boggy area can be enhanced and also  
16 used as a detention pond area; preliminary plans submitted in summer of 1999 – City  
17 Council did give project one housing allocation; City can obtain a substantial portion of  
18 this project free of charge to be dedicated as a park with this proposal; 2.21 acres should  
19 be held as open space with detention basins; private open space areas proposed for  
20 maintenance reasons; feels private maintenance will probably be of better quality than  
21 what the City could provide; there won't be any soils removed or added to site; SPARC  
22 review required several split-level units, units staggered back and forth on curvilinear  
23 streets, retaining walls reduced to only 3 small (3') walls, setbacks pulled back from  
24 existing homes, wider connection between proposed park site and units by clustering 30  
25 units to minimize grading (20-30 trees were saved by doing this).

26

27 **Betsi Lewitter** – Clarifies vehicle access off Gossage for two homes and emergency  
28 vehicles.

29

30 **Commissioner Barrett** – (to Steve Arago) – Conditions state some grading needs to be  
31 eliminated, but plans do not show this.

32

33 **Steve Arago** – Some conditions not yet reflected on plans.

34

35 **Commissioner Monteschio** – How are you proposing to keep private open spaces  
36 private?

37

38 **Steve Arago** – Landscaping, etc.

39

40 **Commissioner Monteschio** – You are calling these areas private as far as ownership, not  
41 who could enter property?

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43 **Steve Arago** – Yes, ownership would be private but allow public access.

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45 **Chair Glass** – Would developer be willing to design and develop this park as a  
46 condition?

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**Steve Arago** – Mr. Aguilar should respond; but must be done in conjunction with neighbors.

**Dan Aguilar** – Has stayed away from designing anything on this site, but would consider installing an all-weather trail along with cleaning up the site and planting trees, would also be required to pay \$180,000 in Park Fees.

**John Patoski** – Architect - Petaluma is a pedestrian oriented town, sense of place; incredible architectural heritage in Petaluma – pleased to see so much public participation; took designs of homes from heritage homes in Petaluma (mix of styles, garages staggered and taken to back in some cases); sleeping porches and sun porches included; low maintenance xeriscape landscaping materials; “sunslate” roofing that generates solar energy, other energy units.

**Steve vonRaesfeld** – Can all units be stepped up or down depending on lot?

**John Patoski** – Yes.

**Darlene Whitlock** (Traffic Engineer) – Level of service standard “C” in this fairly rural area; looked at impacts from 48 new homes; all intersections would continue to operate at levels of service A or B during peak hours; added impacts less than significant; stopping site distance looked at – round-about is proposed – would introduce a calming movement – speeding is an issue now, unsafe speeds for conditions exist now; character of roadway will be changed – speeds will be reduced; students will be able to walk to Cherry Valley Elementary.

**Christine Pillsbury** – CSW Stuber-Strough – Discussed watershed areas of project; several watersheds identified on site – proposed storm drain system and detention ponds described; no net increase in peak flows will result.

**Commissioner Glass** – What data was used?

**Christine Pillsbury** - Data from Sonoma County Water Agency.

**Commissioner Glass** – FEMA information is different from studies of 1986; what storm data was used?

**Christine Pillsbury** – SCWA – defined “C” factors based on slope and type of surface; modeled on 10 year and 100 year storms – intensities of storm based on SCWA charts.

**Commissioner O’Brien** – Did you say there would be no net runoff increase?

**Christine Pillsbury** – No net runoff with proposed detention design.

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The public hearing was opened.

**SPEAKERS:**

Letter from **Patricia Graham** – in support of project.

**Bill Phillips** – 824 Blossom Court – Representing Committee for Magnolia Park – large number of supporters identified in audience (over 50); displayed proposed park “the last best park chance”; only two parks (other than Shollenberger) are large parks, others are small neighborhood parks – fairly flat; proposes a “nature park” for this whole site; Urban Growth areas are primarily in west part of City; Urban Growth area for planned growth will create another part of City as large as existing west side of City; presented petition with over 1,000 signatures in support of park; Advisory Board of Senior Center unanimously signed original petition; from experience with parks around the City, almost 100% of adjacent neighbors want this to be a park; presented projected parkland required to year 2020 – current park deficit 103.6 acres – will grow up to 162.1 by year 2020; educational nature park – nature garden, maintenance of oak trees, live on-going experiences with nature and habitat for schools in area; this should be a community park to bring parkland into adopted minimum standards; General Plan Workshop participants want Magnolia Park as a preservation area; showed slides of hydrology with “full park plan” and with housing and park as proposed by applicant; described proposed “full park” showing a water storage tank, on-site parking (proposal does not have adequate parking); area along border with cemetery not suitable for housing; proposed funding for “full park” – 1) zone 1 water storage tank; 2) public/private partnership similar to Santa Rosa’s “A Place to Play” Field Trust; 3) evaluate and pursue funds from just approved Proposition 40; 4) Sponsorship of trail building and construction projects by community organizations, businesses, City and County and individuals; what is proposed: Deny application; City of Petaluma work with Magnolia Park non-profit corporation to develop community park; seek additional funding or grants from: Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma Community Foundation, Trust for Public Land, Coastal Conservancy, Bay Institute of San Francisco, San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy. Need time to create this great park; granting agencies might be interested since we are now a “poor city”.

**Jim Becker** – 953 Gossage Ave. - Adjacent to Gossage part of proposal; supports project because it would eliminate chicken ranch – concerns regarding nitrates and odor; quality of life has been diminished – odor on warm days horrible; very impressed with quality of proposed project; Mr. Aguilar is a quality developer – working on a win/win situation; developer agreed to supply (City) water to properties adjacent (with contaminated wells); wants to see small passive park, maybe dog park.

**Ray Petersen** – 636 Gossage Ave. – The area between Gossage/Magnolia/Petaluma Blvd. South should be subject to a Specific Plan; City policy in water and flood control would be changed if this project is approved as proposed; Jesse Lane Creek has a tremendous amount of water flow; opines that since General Plan designation for this property is public park, allowing this development would be giving public lands to

1 developer; a replacement area needs to be found if this is given away; Gossage is narrow  
2 country street, speeding is prevalent now – traffic is so bad that it is part of “Call CHP” to  
3 report speeders license plate numbers; putting City Limits in center of public street is  
4 really not a good idea.

5  
6 **John Fitzgerald** – 1010 Lakeville Street – Past Parks and Recreation Commissioner –  
7 developer has done a very good job answering early Parks and Recreation Commission  
8 questions. Supports proposal.

9  
10 **Rick Ramstead** – 955 Gossage – General Plan calls for diminished density as  
11 development goes toward Urban Growth Boundary - would be lost if this project goes  
12 forward – density inappropriate; chicken ranch is part of country atmosphere.

13  
14 **Mark Atkinson** – 757 Elm - Magnolia Park is County land, if annexed General Plan  
15 states this should be parkland; greatest value is as a park, educational value to City;  
16 traffic concerns; this land needs to be a park; City could generate revenue by citing  
17 speeders in this area; Petaluma doesn't need more housing in this area – counter to what  
18 Council has said.

19  
20 **John Mills** – 1315 D Street – also owns house on Keokuk (3 blocks from this property) –  
21 past Parks and Recreation Commissioner – park land proposed has grown and number of  
22 houses has gotten smaller compared to previous proposals for this site; we do need more  
23 parks but we need to look at reality; parks money is collected only through housing  
24 development – we do not have money to purchase and develop now; look to other ways  
25 to obtain parkland – developer is now willing to design, develop park and maintain it –  
26 we need to use these public/private partnerships to get parklands that we need; slope is  
27 too great to allow for a disabled path without much greater expense than Mr. Phillips is  
28 projecting; Proposition 40 money is non-existent for City of Petaluma – too late to write  
29 grants; Sonoma County Land Trust probably won't even fund McNear Island which is a  
30 very viable project; realizes there are trade-offs – this developer is proposing a win/win  
31 situation.

32  
33 **Dr. Guy Gillian** – Involved in this since eucalyptus trees were cut four years ago; thanks  
34 everyone for being so polite; proposed project is unacceptable; this is not a win/win  
35 situation for anyone; Magnolia Park Committee should be given 2 years to come up with  
36 the money; pedestrians, bicycles, are already in danger on these roads.

37  
38 **Judy Reynolds** – 210 Paula Lane – Representing 60 families in the area - Paula Lane  
39 Action Network – traffic concerns, more traffic would be generated onto Paula Lane –  
40 very much against this project; (to Mike O'Brien) – regarding literature put out during  
41 election – he stated he was in support of protecting neighborhood character and  
42 supporting the General Plan.

43  
44 **Arisha Wenneson** - 1189 Gossage – Housing shortage in Petaluma – this is in-fill  
45 project within the Urban Growth Boundary – appropriate for housing; this should be built  
46 for the greater good of the community.

1 **Stan Gold** – 615 King Road - Quality of life – whose quality of life is paramount – out of  
2 town developers or existing citizens of Petaluma? Parks and Recreation Commission  
3 voted 5 to 1 against this project; follow the General Plan designation and keep this as a  
4 park for the future; City’s financial state is not pertinent – they are not making land  
5 anymore; only land already having a designation on General Plan – where will you  
6 substitute?  
7

8 **Pat Sensency** – 934 Samuel Drive – What is the compelling reason to include this in the  
9 City Limits? Houses will be prohibitively expensive; views will be toward existing  
10 houses; how much unimproved open space will there be?  
11

12 **Geoff Cartwright** – 56 Rocca Drive – Attended Water Agency meeting – housing  
13 developments in planning stages throughout Sonoma County will exceed water available  
14 now – Water Agency is already asking for a 15% reduction in water usage; regarding  
15 flooding problems already in Petaluma – submitted many documents regarding existing  
16 flood conditions; present General Plan has not completed water element – cumulative  
17 effects not yet known; proposed Factory Outlet expansion, Redwood Technology Center  
18 both in flood areas; this project would be at a cost City cannot afford.  
19

20 **Meg Locati** – 1351 Mountian View – Regarding City Limit line in middle of street –  
21 insurance/liability problems.  
22

23 **John Briscoe** – (Applicant’s Attorney) - 111 Sutter Street, San Francisco – five items to  
24 act on – tonight’s discussion has gone far toward narrowing the issues; extensive  
25 staff/peer review – well done; land use entitlements are the hard issues – question is  
26 whether land classification should be changed (62% park) project approved.  
27

28 **Chair Glass** – This is not about anyone’s integrity, it is totally a land use issue; staff  
29 report is most comprehensive that has been presented in last four years on Planning  
30 Commission.  
31

32 Public Hearing closed.  
33

34 **Commissioner Vouri** – (to Jim Carr) - is City benefactor to any trusts, etc.?  
35

36 **Jim Carr** – Yes, Prince Park (\$3 Million).  
37

38 Commission discussion regarding General Plan aspect of proposal.  
39

40 **Commissioner Monteschio** – Applicant’s proposal was very easy to follow, good  
41 proposal, but still thinks a park is needed; doesn’t have problem with Gossage side being  
42 developed; amount of park land needs to be developed; Magnolia Committee not asking  
43 for money, just time, should give them that.  
44

45 **Commissioner Vouri** – Thanked Mr. Aguilar and project team, very professional  
46 project; thanked community for their participation; as elected officials, take issue with

1 annexing land already designated in General Plan as park; we would be giving a gift of  
2 enabling developer to develop land – park area is of low value to developer; if we do not  
3 annex any of this property, the open space undeveloped land is like a bank account – this  
4 land needs to be kept “in the bank” to be able to develop at a later date – current deficit of  
5 park land already exists; regarding statements that there is no money to purchase park  
6 property is not accurate – this project would not ease our housing shortage (\$500,000  
7 homes!); chicken ranch was there before existing homes; developer does not have right to  
8 extend City water and sewer to existing surrounding properties; the citizens of Petaluma  
9 have spoken tonight – cannot consider annexing this land.

10  
11 **Commissioner O’Brien** – There is only one elected official here tonight – Mr. Vouri  
12 misspoke.

13  
14 **Chair Glass** – Homes need to be on a different parcel; were there grave sites on this  
15 property at some time? Is that why it appears as a park on current General Plan? report  
16 states high possibility of finding human remains on this property; cannot make a General  
17 Plan Amendment finding; in terms of financing – this is political – Petaluma is short on  
18 receiving Open Space District money – with political pressure, we should be able to  
19 come up with money to save this property – confident that community could point that  
20 out to Supervisors if given time; General Plan promised that this area would be Open  
21 Space; this property should be a park; (read from McCutchen Report) – this space must  
22 be preserved – Petaluma needs a park.

23  
24 **Commissioner vonRaesfeld** – This is a GP issue; Planning Commission is the keeper of  
25 the General Plan; this parcel was designated as public park very clearly in General Plan –  
26 no choice but to support the General Plan – cannot support this project.

27  
28 **Commissioner Barrett** – Sat through two SPARC meetings, agrees applicant tried to  
29 mitigate effect of development; does not believe this is the right place for this project,  
30 does not support a General Plan Amendment; should look at a western area Specific Plan  
31 (put on agenda for a future Planning Commission meeting) for cumulative effects  
32 (drainage, traffic, etc.)

33  
34 **Commissioner O’Brien** – Excellent project, reserves comments since project will be  
35 going to City Council. Wants to check on some legal issues.

36  
37 Discussion closed on General Plan Amendment.

38  
39 **Motion Commissioner Vouri/Second Commissioner Barrett** to recommend denial of  
40 Mitigated Negative Declaration on the basis that the project is not supported by the  
41 General Plan.

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43 **Commissioner Barrett: Yes**

44 **Commissioner Dargie: Absent**

45 **Commissioner Monteschio: Yes**

46 **Commissioner O’Brien: Abstain**

1 **Commissioner vonRaesfeld: Yes**

2 **Commissioner Vouri: Yes**

3 **Chair Glass: Yes**

4

5 GP Amendment

6

7 **Motion Commissioner Barrett/Second Commissioner Vouri** to recommend denial of a  
8 General Plan Amendment based on lack of consistency with General Plan – Bicycle  
9 Committee and Parks Commission twice voted against; the General Plan identified this  
10 parcel as special park – a “treasure” in the City, no compelling need for development,  
11 possible to conserve this land.

12

13 **Commissioner Barrett: Yes**

14 **Commissioner Dargie: Absent**

15 **Commissioner Monteschio: Yes**

16 **Commissioner O’Brien: Abstain**

17 **Commissioner vonRaesfeld: Yes**

18 **Commissioner Vouri: Yes**

19 **Chair Glass: Yes**

20

21 PUD Rezoning, PUD Development Plan and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map.

22

23 **Motion Commissioner Vouri/Second Commissioner Barrett** to recommend denial of  
24 the PUD Rezoning, PUD Development Plan and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map  
25 based on the previous recommendation to deny a General Plan Amendment.

26

27 **Commissioner Barrett: Yes**

28 **Commissioner Dargie: Absent**

29 **Commissioner Monteschio: Yes**

30 **Commissioner O’Brien: Abstain**

31 **Commissioner vonRaesfeld: Yes**

32 **Commissioner Vouri: Yes**

33 **Chair Glass: Yes**

34

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36 **III. LIAISON REPORTS:**

37

38 • **SPARC** – Basin Street – requested several changes to proposed downtown  
39 project – SPARC requested more information from applicant/staff  
40 to future meeting.

41 • **Petaluma Bicycle Advisory Committee** – no report

42 • **Tree Advisory Committee** – 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row Petaluma nominated to  
43 Tree City USA

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**III. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.**

**Not discussed.**

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**Adjournment: 11:05 PM**