

**RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

Resolution Number 24-

**GECK-MOELLER COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT
PROJECT NUMBER PLN-2022-17700
ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER 308-231-002**

MAKING THE REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR CERTIFYING COMPLIANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AND CONDITIONALLY APPROVING THE GECK-MOELLER COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

WHEREAS, the owner submitted an application and evidence in support of approving the Coastal Development Permit request; and

WHEREAS, the County Planning Division has reviewed the submitted application and evidence and has referred the application and evidence to involved reviewing agencies for site inspections, comments and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Division as the Lead Agency has determined that the project qualifies for categorical exemptions found in Section 15303 (New Construction) of the CEQA Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, a public notice was sent via mail to all owners and occupants of property within 300 feet of the boundaries of the project, including interested parties; and

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2024, a public hearing was held before the Humboldt County Planning Commission during which the Planning Commission reviewed, considered, and discussed the application and reviewed and considered all evidence and testimony presented at the hearing; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved, determined, and ordered that the Planning Commission makes the following findings:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- 1. FINDING:** A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the construction of a new approximately 2,024 SF two-story residence, 456 SF uncovered deck, 40 SF entry deck, gravel driveway with paved apron, a detached two-car garage constructed on an existing 25x25-foot concrete slab, and 48 SF pump house. The CDP will

also authorize 1.75 acres of brush clearing for the home site, and north of the residence for the planting of fruit trees, berries, and a residential garden area. The project will be served by an onsite well (either the existing well, or a new well pending approval by DEH) and an existing on-site wastewater treatment system. The existing OWTS tank will be replaced. The Coastal Development Permit for this project is exempt from further review under §15303 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

EVIDENCE: a) Project File: PLN-2022-17700

CEQA

2. FINDING: **CEQA.** The requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act have been met. The Humboldt County Planning Commission has considered the project and finds the proposed construction of a Single-Family Residence and vegetation removal is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Sections §15303 (New Construction) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

EVIDENCE:

- a) The Class 3 exemption consists of one single family residence. The driveway encroachment along Hawks Hill Road will be paved to comply with requirements set by the Land Use Division of Public Works.
- b) A project can be disqualified from using a Categorical Exemption if any of the exceptions listed in 15300.2 apply. However, none of these exceptions apply to the proposed project.
- c) Two Botanical Surveys, a Wetland Delineation, a Registered Professional Foresters Evaluation of the parcel and subject activities, and an Archeological Investigation, all submitted by the applicant, provide sufficient evidence that the proposed project will not have an adverse effect on the environment.

312-1.1.2 Legal Lot Requirement

3. FINDING: The lot that was created in compliance with all applicable state and local subdivision regulations.

- EVIDENCE:** a) The project parcel is eligible for an Unconditional Certificate of Subdivision Compliance pursuant to section 66499.35(c) of the Subdivision Map Act due to the issuance of a building permit #82-0178 B4.

FINDINGS APPLICABLE TO ALL PERMITS

- 4. FINDING:** The proposed development is in conformance with the certified Local Coastal Plan, the Eel River Area Plan (ERAP).

- EVIDENCE:** a) §5.3 Agricultural Exclusive, 3.34 Agriculture – Eel River Area Plan (ERAP)

The property is planned Agriculture Exclusive, reflecting the existing land uses in the area. Ag Exclusive is intended for prime and non-prime agricultural lands for long-term productive agricultural use. Nonagricultural development must not impair agricultural viability or diminish the productivity of prime agricultural lands. The production of food, fiber or plants and an incidental single-family residence occupied by the owner/operator are specifically identified as principal uses within the AE plan designation.

§30250 (a) Lands that are prime agricultural lands based on the adopted definition of prime lands of the State of California shall be planned for continued agricultural use, and no division or development of such lands shall be approved which would lower the economic viability of continued agricultural operations on them.

The proposed single-family residence and vegetation removal would allow for the continued agricultural use of lands north of Hawks Hill Road. Vegetation removal will allow for the property to return to utilization of prime soil/grassland. The applicant/owner will be planting berry and fruit trees and ancillary gardening areas north of the residence. These lands were historically used for grazing but have since overgrown. Clearing of these lands will allow for the construction of a home and revitalization of agricultural grassland north of Hawks Hill Rd.

Measures will be taken to protect the agricultural potential of the parcel. The productivity of the pasture area will be maintained to prevent the overgrowth of the area and maintain agricultural viability. Areas proposed for vegetation removal shall be maintained to prevent invasive species proliferation and restore the integrity of this prime ag land. The only improvements proposed are the building site for the single-family home and surfacing at the driveway encroachment(s). The cement pad for the 25x25 garage is existing.

- b) §3.29 Archeological and Paleontological Resources – development that would impact archeological or paleontological resources shall require reasonable mitigation.

§30244 Where new development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Office, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required.

A Cultural Resource Investigation Report was prepared by Roscoe and Associates in November of 2016 which concludes that no historical or cultural resources, as defined in CEQA, Article 4, 15064.5 (a), were identified in the project area. The Tribal Historic Preservation Officers of both the Wiyot Tribe and the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria responded that the report was sufficient to address archaeological resource concerns.

The project is subject to the standard condition of inadvertent discovery protocol for both archaeological and paleontological resources.

- c) §3.41 Environmentally Sensitive Habitat - Designated habitats and natural resources shall be protected.

§30240(b) Development in areas adjacent to ESHA shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts that would significantly

degrade such areas and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas.

Botanical field assessments were conducted on May 19, 2022, and June 20, 2022, by two TransTerra staff biologists concluding that no sensitive communities were identified on the project site. These findings are consistent with findings within the SHN Botanical Survey from August of 2016.

A Wetland delineation was executed in August of 2016 by SHN identifying that no wetlands were located on the subject parcel. There are no mapped wetlands within the proximity to the project.

No ESHA has been identified on the project parcel. Additionally, Botanical Survey from TransTerra and SHN concur that there is low probability of sensitive species due to lack of habitat. No sensitive species were identified in both technical reports submitted by the applicant.

The project area is adjacent to a grass field that duals as grazed pasture. Review of the California Natural Diversity Database reveals that the property lies near the range of a local population of Siskiyou Checkerbloom and Western Lily. Complete Botanical Assessments executed in 2016 by SHN and 2022 by TransTerra identified that no special status species were observed on-site, and that the potential of presence is low.

A Registered Professional Foresters Report on file does not identify major vegetation removal in the amount of 1.75 acres total to the north of Hawks Hill Road, to facilitate the development of a single-family home and restore prime ag lands for the planting of berry and fruit trees, as timber harvest. The property does not have any commercial trees within the clearing area, therefore not requiring a less than 3-acre conversion exemption.

All three technical studies identified that there are no hydrophytic vegetation, hydrophytic soils, presence of

standing water, or sensitive species within the project area at APN 308-231-002. No impacts are associated with the proposed development of a single-family home and associated major vegetation removal.

- d) §3.42 Visual Resource Protection - New development shall protect special communities which have unique visual characteristics.

The property is not within a mapped coastal scenic view area. The property lies almost 0.75 of a mile south of the closest mapped coastal scenic view area. This area covers Table Bluff Road and Hookton Road north of the project site. Hills and other landforms obstruct views to and from this area. The project would not result in any permanent significant changes to views along Table Bluff Road or from Hawks Hill Road as a result of new residential structures with respect to designated coastal view areas.

A visual buffer of vegetation will remain along the fence lines on the northern and southeastern borders of the western portion of APN 308-231-003 bordering Hawks Hill Road. This will provide privacy to parties to the east. Additionally, the applicant has moved proposed locations for the well pump house and fire suppression water tank so that they are not within neighboring views to the east. They have also relocated the driveway further north on Hawks Hill Road, away from the neighboring driveway directly south and further out of the view of the neighbor to the east. The eastern portion of APN 308-231-002 will remain undeveloped.

5. FINDING: The proposed development is consistent with the purposes of the existing Agriculture Exclusive (AE) zone in which the site is located.

EVIDENCE: a) §313-163.1.9.9 allows for single family residential as a principally permitted use but is not considered principally permitted for the purposes of appeal to the California Coastal Commission pursuant §312-13.12.3 and 30603(a)(4).

Consistent with Section 313-43.2.4.3.2 of the Humboldt County Code, as a Condition of Approval the applicant/owner is required to sign a "Right to Farm" declaration.

6. FINDING: The proposed project will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

EVIDENCE: a) The surrounding area is developed with agricultural and residential uses similar to the proposed project. The property is located on a County-maintained Road and has existing infrastructure to support the project.

The applicant has relocated the existing driveway further north to address neighboring concerns related to safety. The new driveway entrance will allow for further visual lines of site when entering and exiting the property. The County Department of Public Works has reviewed the proposed driveway location and found it to be approvable with conditions.

The existing wastewater treatment system has been inspected by a licensed septic professional and the tank will be replaced to support the new residence.

Dry weather pump testing for the existing well showed a drawdown of approximately 58 feet after 8 hours with recovery to the approximate static water level in under 3 hours when pumped at 5 gallons per minute, indicating that the well is capable of producing the required 720 gallons per day for Health Department standards. Multiple water quality tests submitted by the applicant identify that the well and ground water are safe for domestic use. The well is drilled to a depth of 466 feet and is screened between 458 and 461 feet below the surface and is unlikely to have any direct hydraulic connection to any adjacent surface waters to the distance and elevation difference between the water-bearing unit of the well and adjacent surface waters, all of which are over 1,400 feet away and well above the elevation of the water-bearing unit of the well. Given the lack of any connection to surface

waters, the use of the well is unlikely to have any adverse impacts on public trust resources.

As conditioned, the proposal of major vegetation removal to accommodate the development of a single-family home and agricultural area north of Hawks Hill Road will not result in detrimental impacts to public health, safety, and welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

7. FINDING: The project does not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining compliance with housing element law.

EVIDENCE: a) The parcel's General Plan land use designation and zoning (AE-160) allow residential development. The proposed residential development on the property is consistent with the density of the parcel. The project will be consistent with Housing Element law.

DECISION

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the above findings and evidence, the Humboldt County Planning Commission does hereby:

1. Approves the Coastal Development Permit (Record Number; PLN-2022-17700), subject to the attached conditions of approval.

Adopted after review and consideration of all of the evidence on **August 1, 2024**.

The motion was made by Commissioner _____ and Seconded by Commissioner ____ and the following ROLL CALL vote:

AYES: Commissioners:

NOES: Commissioners:

ABSTAIN: Commissioners:

ABSENT: Commissioners:

DECISION:

I, John H. Ford, Secretary to the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct record of the action taken on the above-entitled matter by said Commission at a meeting held on the date noted above.

John H. Ford, Director
Planning and Building Department

ATTACHMENT 1A

Conditions of Approval

APPROVAL OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT ARE CONDITIONED ON THE FOLLOWING TERMS AND REQUIREMENTS WHICH MUST BE FULFILLED BEFORE A BUILDING PERMIT MAY BE ISSUED OR USE INITIATED:

A. Conditions of Approval:

1. All development shall be in accordance with the approved plot plan and project description.
2. The owner(s) is/are responsible for demonstrating that the proposed development complies with applicable provisions of the Fire Safe Regulations, including but not limited to, setbacks for defensible space, driveway width and turnaround areas, siding & roofing materials, and required design features.
3. The owner(s) shall execute and file with the Planning Division the statement titled, "Notice and Acknowledgment regarding Agricultural Activities in Humboldt County," ("Right to Farm" Ordinance) as required by the HCC and available at the Planning Division.
4. The applicant/owner shall secure a capacity to serve/will-serve letter from Pacific Gas and Electric Co. No building permit will be issued without confirmation of adequate service to the parcel.
5. The applicant shall secure all building and electrical permits from the Humboldt County Building Division for all proposed development outlined in Coastal Development Permit PLN-2022-17700.
6. The recommended conditions provided from the Department of Environmental Health dated May 24, 2023, included herein as Attachment D, shall be completed or secured to the satisfaction of the department. Prior to performing any work, contact the Department of Environmental Health (DEH). Satisfaction of this condition should be provided in writing from DEH.
7. As recommended by the Department of Environmental Health, the proposed building sewer line that runs from the house to the tank should be "traffic rated" wherever it goes below the driveway to prevent the line from getting crushed due to vehicle loads. Additionally, there should be cleanouts installed in the sewer line for every 100' feet of run and wherever there are any changes in direction.
8. The recommended conditions in the Department of Public Works memo dated May 10, 2022, included herein as Attachment C, shall be completed or secured to the

satisfaction of that department. Prior to performing any work on the improvements, contact the Land Use Division of the Department of Public Works. Satisfaction of this condition should be provided in writing from the Land Use Division of the Department of Public Works.

9. The applicant must obtain an encroachment permit for the construction of a residential driveway on Hawks Hill Road. The permit will require the driveway entrance to be surfaced with asphalt concrete or portland cement concrete. The paved area shall extend a minimum of 20 feet back from the edge of the existing roadway pavement and be flared a minimum of 30 feet at the intersection with the County Road. The driveway shall intersect the County Road at a 90 degree angle. The driveway shall not exceed 2% in the first 20 feet.
10. All parking must be located on-site and be constructed prior to occupancy of building or “final” issued building permit.
11. Site visibility must be maintained at the driveway entrance and at the intersection of the two County maintained roads

B. On-going Requirements/Development Restrictions Which Must be Satisfied for the Life of the Project:

1. Changes to the project, except for Minor Deviations per Section 312-11.1 of the Humboldt County Zoning Regulations, shall require modification of this permit.
2. No new development is authorized to lands located southeast of Hawks Hill Road. All development activities authorized within this Coastal Development Permit are for lands northwest of Hawks Hill Road. Maintenance of vegetation at the intersection of the two County Roads is allowed and required consistent with PLN-2022-17700.
3. All vegetation removal and grubbing shall occur outside of the nesting season (March 15 – August 15) to avoid impacts to native resident and migratory birds
4. The applicant shall maintain the cleared area by mowing and other means to prevent the regrowth of vegetation, discourage future avian nesting, and maintain the agricultural integrity of the property. Maintenance of these areas shall be required for the life of the project to prevent proliferation of invasive species, identified in TransTerra’s Botanical Survey (2022) submitted on behalf of the project.
5. The applicant shall manage invasive Scotch broom (*Cystisus scoparius*) and French broom (*Genista Manspessulana*) in accordance with the invasive species management recommendations within the TransTerra Botanical Assessment (2022) submitted on behalf of the project to prevent further degradation of native vegetation communities.

6. All outdoor lighting shall be compatible with the existing setting and directed within the property boundaries.

C. Informational Notes

1. If cultural resources are encountered during construction activities, the contractor on site shall cease all work in the immediate area and within a 50-foot buffer of the discovery location. A qualified archaeologist as well as the appropriate Tribal Historic Preservation Officer(s) are to be contacted to evaluate the discovery and, in consultation with the applicant and lead agency, develop a treatment plan in any instance where significant impacts cannot be avoided.

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) can provide information regarding the appropriate Tribal point(s) of contact for a specific area; the NAHC can be reached at (916) 653-4082. Prehistoric materials may include obsidian or chert flakes, tools, locally darkened midden soils, groundstone artifacts, shellfish or faunal remains, and human burials. If human remains are found, California Health and Safety Code 7050.5 requires that the County Coroner be contacted immediately at (707) 445-7242. If the Coroner determines the remains to be Native American, the NAHC will then be contacted by the Coroner to determine appropriate treatment of the remains pursuant to PRC 5097.98. Violators shall be prosecuted in accordance with PRC Section 5097.99.

The applicant is ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with this condition.

2. The applicant is responsible for receiving all necessary permits and/or approvals from other state and local agencies.
3. This permit shall expire and become null and void at the expiration of one (1) year after all appeal periods have lapsed (see "Effective Date") except if temporary events have occurred before such anniversary date. The period within which the temporary use must commence may be extended, as provided by Section 312-11.3 of the Humboldt County Code.