



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 11/3/2022

File #: 22-1493

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

North Coast Hitching Post Coastal Development Permit & Special Permit
Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 308-131-033
Record No.: PLN-2022-17766
Table Bluff area

A Coastal Development Permit and Special Permit to authorize a seasonal venue for special events (primarily weddings) between May and October. A maximum of 200 guests per event and 18 events per year are proposed. Events are mainly expected to occur during weekends (Friday through Sunday) and only occasionally on a weekday. During the day of an event, activity will begin no earlier than 10am and end no later than midnight. Events will be staged from an historic barn and grassy areas around the structure. A nearby small cottage on the property will also be available for short-term rental both during and separately from events. Portable toilets will be used during events and on-site parking will be made available in several areas of mowed grass/pasture. Alcohol and food will be served during events. Food for events will be provided through mobile food trucks, catering with off-site prep, or on-site barbequing from an existing gravel area in back of the barn.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Describe the application as part of the Consent Agenda
2. Survey the audience for any person who would like to discuss the application.
3. If no one requests discussion, make the following motion to approve the application as part of the Consent Agenda; and
4. Adopt the resolution (Resolution 22-__). (Attachment 1) and thereby doing the following:
 - a. Find the project exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Section 15301 and 15304(e) of the State CEQA Guidelines
 - b. Make all of the required findings for approval of the Coastal Development Permit and Special Permit; and
 - c. Approve the North Coast Hitching Post project subject to the recommended conditions.

DISCUSSION:

Project Location: The project is located in Humboldt County, in the Table Bluff area, on the West side of Table Bluff Road, approximately 0.7 miles South from the intersection of Quinn Road and Table Bluff Road, on the property known as 2190 Table Bluff Road.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Agriculture Exclusive/Agriculture Grazing-160 acres (AEG 160) Eel River Area Plan (ERAP); Density: 160 acres per unit

Present Zoning: Agriculture Exclusive (AE-160) / Archaeological Resource Area Outside Shelter Cove (A), Coastal Wetlands (W), Transitional Agricultural Lands (T)

State Appeal: The project is appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

Major concerns: Neighborhood Compatibility

Geologic Suitability: Slope Stability: Low Instability (1), Moderate Instability (2)

CEQA/Environmental Review: Categorically Exempt pursuant to the Class 1 and Class 4 exemptions found in Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) and 15304(e) (Minor Alterations to Land) of the CEQA Guidelines

Executive Summary: Owners of an agriculturally zoned parcel in the Table Bluff area are seeking a Coastal Development Permit and Special Permit to authorize hosting of weddings and similar types of public events from the property. The parcel is approximately 6.5 acres in size and is developed with a barn and several residences.

Venue: Built in 1914, the large barn on the property will serve as the base for all events. A variety of interior improvements have recently been completed including construction of a 16x30 wooden dance floor and a 20-foot long redwood bar and western themed saloon area. Earlier this year the facility hosted several private events, including a wedding as well as a celebration of life. The applicant has hired a local civil engineer and has been working with staff from the department to develop a plan for compliance with ADA accessibility requirements and understands that structural certification of will be required by a civil engineer before the barn can be authorized for occupancy by the general public. Development of a paved parking space and ADA path of travel will likely occur near the rear of the structure. Similarly, there are a handful of items in need of address to satisfy Fortuna Fire Protection District, who performed an inspection of the facility on July 15th of this year. The Fire Marshal has determined the maximum occupant load of the barn is 200 persons.

Access/Parking: A variety of paved publicly maintained roads provide access to the project site. Eel River Drive and Table Bluff Road will likely serve as the primary access route used by event attendees. Eel River Drive occurs within a portion of the former state highway. It is divided by a centerline stripe and hosts a fog line and paved shoulders throughout its entirety. Table Bluff Road also has a centerline stripe but is not as wide and with few sections containing paved shoulders. Copenhagen Road and Hookton Road also provide secondary access routes to and from the site and feature similar levels of improvement. Parking will be made available in several areas of mowed grass/pasture. The site plan shows the property can accommodate upwards of 100 spaces in three discrete areas. In all likelihood only two of these areas will be needed to accommodate guest-related parking demand. Three existing driveways provide separate access to the property and parking areas identified. The Land Use Division of Public Works has reviewed the proposal and recommends that the applicant be required to pave the first 50 feet of all driveway entrances used by event traffic.

Noise: Most events will feature amplified music. The recommended conditions of approval include restrictions on event-related noise requiring that speaker be directed inward (away from the property lines) and that noise levels not exceed 60 decibels at any of the property lines. The applicant/operator is also required to collect and log noise measurements and include this information in the annual monitoring report.

Neighborhood Contact/Notice: Recommended condition of approval B-11 includes requirements for public notice to neighboring landowners and tenants at least 72-hours prior to an event. Notification is required to be provided to all owners/occupants on properties within 300 feet of the parcel or with homes on parcels abutting Table Bluff Road between Eel River Drive and the property where the home is located within 100 feet of the road. The notice is required to provide a contact number for the event operator, the dates and time period of each event, the expected number of guests, as well as the days and times for set-up and clean up. A calendar schedule of events for each season will likely be the method by which this condition is satisfied.

Annual Monitoring Report: Recommended condition of approval B-13 requires submittal of an annual monitoring report during the first three years where operation occurs. The report is subject to review by the Planning Director and is intended to enable County staff and the applicant to review the adequacy of the operational restrictions, and refine ways to better address any unexpected neighborhood issues that arise.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): Categorically exempt pursuant to the Class 1 and Class 4 exemptions found in Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) and 15304(e) of the CEQA Guidelines.

The Class 1 exemption covers the operation, permitting, repair, maintenance or minor alteration of existing public and private structures or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of the former use. Alteration of the site, ground disturbance, and new construction will be very limited. Minor improvements to interior and exterior features to comply with ADA and health & safety requirements are anticipated. Existing grassy areas and pasture will dual as parking areas during events and one or two existing driveway encroachments along Table Bluff Road will be paved to comply with requirements set by the Land Use Division of Public Works.

The Class 4 exemption covers “*minor or temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment*”. The project proposes use of the property for a total of 18 events per year during a 6-month period (May and October). It is reasonable to view the use as “temporary” given the frequency and limited duration of the activity seeking a permit.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was referred to responsible agencies and all responding agencies have either responded with no comment or recommended approval or conditional approval. (Attachment 4)

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Alternative One - The Commission could elect to add, delete, or amend conditions of approval
2. Alternative Two - The Commission could deny approval of the requested permits if unable to make all of the required findings. Planning Division staff is confident that the required findings can be made based on the submitted evidence and subject to the recommended conditions of approval. Consequently, planning staff does not recommend further consideration of this alternative.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
 - A. Conditions of Approval
 - B. Public Works Department Conditions of Approval
 - C. Revised Site Plan
2. Location Map

3. Applicant's Evidence in Support of the Required Findings
 - A. Project Description
 - B. Photos of Site
4. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations
 - A. Fortuna Fire Protection District Assembly Occupancy Inspection Report

Owner/Applicant

North Coast Hitching Post, Erik & Heidi Rubalcava
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Please contact Steven Lazar, Senior Planner by email at slazar@co.humboldt.ca.us or (707)268-3741, if you have any questions about the scheduled public hearing item.