

From: Joyce Greenberg <greenberg.joyce@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 3:35 PM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Planning commission

Re: story poles

Dear members of the Calabasas planning commission.

I am requesting that you keep the current policy with regards to Story Pole and add the orange netting so that citizens of Calabasas can get a true view of what each and every project will look like.

Please remove the edits relating to "Potentially excessive costs or unreasonable financial impact". It's vital that you continue to put the interests of the citizens above the builders.

With the varied topography in our city it's imperative that we get a true vision of the impact of projects.

Thank you for putting the story pole requirement in effect , as it has made a huge difference for those of us in the community.

Thank you for all your hard work.

Joyce Greenberg
26918 Deer Trail Ct.
(31 year resident)

From: ncitron <ncitron@pacbell.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 3:00 PM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Response to Item 3 on the September 10, 2020 Agenda

TO: Commissioners Washburn, Kraut, Fassberg, Harrison, Mueller and Alternate Sikand

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the proposed amendments to the Story Pole Procedures.

- While we understand that Commissioner Mueller wanted to "clean up some unclear language" we have to respectfully say that there is the elevation of the Community Development Director (CDD) to the level of the ultimate decision maker. It is never a good idea to have one person making unilateral decisions.
- Under the **Plan Components** section, we would like to see the first sentence changed to reflect to whom the story pole plan must be submitted. In the three places where the word "staff" or "City staff" is used, it would be better understood if the applicable titles were used: Staff Planner or CDD or if both are to be involved, use the term "both the Staff Planner and the CDD."

- Under the **Purpose** section the sentence that begins “Story poles are intended to help decision makers . . .” and there is a list that follows which includes “decision makers.” I believe that group should be defined. To which group of decision makers are you referring?
- Under **Story Pole Determination** it is stated that the CDD “at the CDD’s sole discretion” would “seek advice from the Architectural Review Panel.” If the CDD needs assistance with story poles, solutions should **only** be provided by a professional story pole installer. Additional assistance for items a) through f) should be requested by the CDD in writing to the Planning Commission for direction, stating the reason for additional decision-making assistance. Story poles are of vital importance to the citizens. Decisions regarding story poles should be transparent and reflect that importance.
- Additionally, under the **Story Pole Determination** category, item f) states “Potentially excessive cost or unreasonable financial impact . . .” which, again, illustrates the ongoing protection offered developers. At a recent Planning Commission meeting, to paraphrase a comment made by a Commissioner, he stated that he “was concerned that the cost to the developer would be too expensive.” There should never be a time when consideration of the developer’s financial interest would supersede the citizens’ right to know. The key is to ensure the citizens’ ability to easily visualize the proposed project.

In conclusion, the suggested revision has added some uncalled-for changes. One of the suggestions is the CDD is being handed sole discretion rather than given the opportunity to act as a partner with the Planning Commission and the citizens in the decision making process.

Thank you,
Norma and Mark Citron
24668 Via Tecolote

From: John Suwara <johsuwa@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2020 7:52 PM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Planning Commission 9/10/2020 Item 3: Modification of Story Pole Policy

Please give a copy to the Planning Commission and put in the Public Record.

Re: Item 3 on the Agenda. Modification of the Story Pole Policy.

First, I would like to Thank the Planning Commission for agreeing in 2019 that the original story pole plan proposed for West Village was inadequate and sent it back to the developer for a better plan. The new plan, which is currently installed, approximately doubled the number of story poles from what was originally proposed.

It makes the point that the current story pole policy is working. The recommendation to use netting instead of flags to improve visibility is a good one. Anything that makes a proposed development easier to see including its impact on the view is a plus.

When I read the blue, green and red line version of the proposed story pole policy in the staff report I was expecting to see some changes. But I was surprised at the number of changes proposed. Some are major and change the intent of the current policy. It makes the policy less transparent, more developer oriented, more concerned about developer costs and less concerned about the residents who have to live with these projects.

In March 2015, the City Council decided to develop a new more transparent story pole policy for Calabasas. It came about because residents of Calabasas were not happy about the existing story pole policy. Decisions to not install story poles were being made by the Community Development Director and the process was not transparent.

Planning Commission and City Council Meetings were all well attended. The City Council reviewed the policy in detail and after much discussion many compromises were agreed upon and included in the policy. Is all that work going to be undone by this proposed new policy? I hope not!

I am against making any substantial change to the current story pole policy. It works.

Thank You,
John Suwara

From: tamiko fuote <tfuote@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2020 5:34 PM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Story Pole Procedures

I can only say that I second the following :

Story Pole Procedures. The City's Story Pole Procedures policy is applicable to projects meeting certain characteristics. Such projects have a potentially significant impact on the view shed where they are located. Given those considerations, I suggest and submit that the following comments be given appropriate consideration. Duration IF the story poles are not replaced in sufficient time to permit a significant period of viewing before the Planning Commission ("PC") hearing, the hearing should be postponed to allow such a significant period of viewing. Construction Method and Material Wherever and whenever possible, materials used in the construction of story poles should be standardized, and not left to the likes or dislikes of the planner, staff or Community Development Director ("CDD"). In this regard, the CDD should prepare and submit to the PC for its approval a "tool box" to be used in determining the appropriate materials. Story Pole Determination The Architectural Review Panel has not demonstrated expertise in the area and should not be used to determine pole installation feasibility. The PC should review and approve "professional story pole installers" which the CDD can use in assisting in this determination. In no way should this be left to the CDD's sole determination. Planning Commission Review It is the developer's responsibility to protect the story poles from vandalism, no less than it is their responsibility to protect the project itself from vandalism. Vandalism is too easy an "out" which can be used to prevent the public from viewing the potential view shed impact of a project. The poles should be replaced and guarded where necessary. Notification The photo simulation referenced in this section should be made available "online" so as to permit a wider viewing by the public. The above is taken from a post on Nextdoor. Hope it's ok to second this.

Tamiko Fuote

To: Commissioners Washburn, Kraut, Fassberg, Harrison, Mueller and Alternate Sikand

Re: Item #3 on September 10, 2020 Agenda

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in regarding the latest proposed amendments to the City's Story Pole Procedures.

According to the staff report the two areas that the Commission should be reviewing at this time are (1) requiring netting or other visible material and (2) placing renderings to help the public understand the full scope of a proposed project.

Additionally, it was noted that Commissioner Mueller would forward some suggested amendments to "clean up some unclear language". In reading his proposed edits I am distressed to see that the essence of transparency that was an important part of the process in revising the old policy in 2015 is being diluted.

In particular, I find several disturbing changes under Story Pole Determination. In the introduction to the section the original text reads "The Director shall evaluate the following factors in their determination of whether or not a site is suitable for poles." Now it has been edited to read "...whether **it is feasible for the project applicant to install story poles at the project site.**"

Determining the feasibility of a site is totally different than determining the feasibility for a project applicant to install story poles. If a site is feasible then the applicant is required to install story poles. Period! This re-wording shifts the feasibility determination from the site itself to the developer, who may be more than happy to find some reasons for not putting up story poles. The City should be strong in its efforts to be as transparent as possible during the entire application process.

In (f) of this same section which originally read "Excessive cost or financial impact." It now reads **Potentially** excessive cost or **unreasonable** financial impact **of designing, installing and manufacturing story poles for the subject project.** This is not "cleaning up some unclear language." This is changing the whole meaning and does not fall into the directive given to the Commission.

The entire statement is subjective. What constitutes unreasonable financial impact? Any answer is based solely on opinion, not fact. It opens the door for developers of big projects to try to opt out of the obligation to put up story poles. I strongly feel that the public's right to see in person what is being proposed outweighs any cost incurred by the developer.

The existing policy has been in place since 2015. It has worked. Developers have followed the rules and the people have seen what is being proposed. It took a lot of work to get where we are now. With limited parcels left to build on we need to make sure every effort is made to keep the public informed. There is no better public notification than those very visible story poles!

In addition, the last paragraph in this section originally read "The Director MAY seek advice from the ARP **and/or** professional story pole installer. It now reads "The CDD, SHALL, at the CDD's sole discretion, seek advice from the ARP **and/or** a professional story pole installer. If you are going to use the word "shall", which is much stronger than "may", it leaves open whether to include the ARP in this decision-making process. The ARP, comprised mainly of architects, does not have the experience or expertise that a professional story pole installer has. If it's advice the CDD needs then going to someone who does it every day makes the most sense.

Last, but not least, this edit regarding “sole discretion” puts too much power in the hands of the CDD and treats the decision as being ministerial when it is not. This kind of decision-making was a big part of the problem with story pole policy prior to 2015. Having public hearings about plans for story poles and having story poles visible for all to see during the application process has made a difference. Let’s keep going in that direction.

Thank you.

Joanne Suwara

From: Samuelsohn-Pofsky, Karin <Karin.Pofsky@fox.com>

Sent: Monday, September 7, 2020 4:30 PM

To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>

Subject: Story Poll policy

Good Evening,

I’m writing to express my opinion that the Calabasas Story Poll policy should remain in tact, with no exceptions. This policy is integral to our community’s development process and provides much need clarity to the community. Developers should be required to adhere to this policy without exception. I’m a Calabasas resident AND voter.

Thank you.

Karin Pofsky

From: jaycee64@aol.com <jaycee64@aol.com>

Sent: Monday, September 7, 2020 11:42 AM

To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>

Subject: To Planning Commission, RE: Agenda item #3, 9/10/2020 Meeting

Dear Calabasas Planning Commission,

At your upcoming Planning Commission meeting, you will be considering changes to the existing Story Pole Policy with agenda item #3.

I am genuinely concerned that the City is considering unraveling the Story Pole Policy that has been in place since 2015, especially as it is working for the community.

You are all fully aware that here in the west portion of our City, we have been under siege by development since 2015 and it is far from over. I drive past those poles at the proposed development at Agoura Road and Las Virgenes Road and I’m reminded that I, as a Community member, can participate in the discussion on future development in our City. Story Poles are for the Community and not the developer, which is why the current policy must stay in place and even be strengthened to support transparency where appropriate.

These are the main reasons why the current Story Pole Policy works:

* Policy regulations are clearly outlined for developers.

* Policy alleviates the burden to the City to have to judge a developer's reasons not putting up story poles.

* Enforcement is unbiased and the City does not take on liability for decisions that would hinder transparency for the community.

There has never been a more important time for our City Council, Commissioners and Staff to make transparency of decisions made in Calabasas a priority. I urge you to keep the City's Story Pole Policy in place and do not spend time and effort dismantling something that is working.

Sincerely,

Jacy Shillan

President, Stonecreek HOA

Long Time Calabasas Resident

From: Robert Lia <robertlia@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, September 7, 2020 9:53 AM

To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>

Subject: Story Pole Procedures

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The City's Story Pole Procedures policy is applicable to projects meeting certain characteristics. Such projects have a potentially significant impact on the view shed where they are located. Given those considerations, I suggest and submit that the following comments be given appropriate consideration.

Duration

IF the story poles are not replaced in sufficient time to permit a significant period of viewing before the Planning Commission ("PC") hearing, the hearing should be postponed to allow such a significant period of viewing.

Construction Method and Material

Wherever and whenever possible, materials used in the construction of story poles should be standardized, and not left to the likes or dislikes of the planner, staff or Community Development Director ("CDD"). In this regard, the CDD should prepare and submit to the PC for its approval a "tool box" to be used in determining the appropriate materials.

Story Pole Determination

The Architectural Review Panel has not demonstrated expertise in the area and should not be used to determine pole installation feasibility. The PC should review and approve "professional story pole installers" which the CDD can use in assisting in this determination. In no way should this be left to the CDD's sole determination.

Planning Commission Review

It is the developer's responsibility to protect the story poles from vandalism, no less than it is their responsibility to protect the project itself from vandalism. Vandalism is too easy an "out" which can be used to prevent the public from viewing the potential view shed impact of a project. The poles should be replaced and guarded where necessary.

Notification

The photo simulation referenced in this section should be made available "online" so as to permit a wider viewing by the public.

Sincerely,

Robert J Lia
27096 Esward Drive, Calabasas

From: Priscilla Lee <ratatatboom@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2020 1:50 AM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Story Pole policy changes

Dear Planning Commissioners,

We are writing to request that you make an addition to the existing Story Pole Policy. That is, we would like to have orange netting added to the poles to make it easier to see the indication of where the final project will be built and how tall they will be. In addition, please do not change the policy and reject the developer's wish to add the phrases saying "potentially excessive cost or unreasonable financial impact". That would give all developers a way to escape having to place story poles and negate the existing Story Pole policy. The residents of the City of Calabasas have indicated in the past that we want Story Poles.

Thank you in advance for attending to these 2 issues: 1. request for orange netting and 2. remove requested edit of adding the phrase "potentially excessive cost or unreasonable financial impact".

Kind regards,

Priscilla, Mel & Celene Lee
Calabasas residents

From: Susan Ellis <srellis8@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 8:27 PM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Please forward to the Planning Commission re Story Poles

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Please add orange netting to the Story Pole policy. It is an improvement.

And please remove the addition of the ability of developers to not use Story Poles due to "potentially excessive cost or unreasonable financial impact". If that is in the policy, you can bet every developer will use it.

The community needs as much information as possible regarding development and Story Poles are an important part of the information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Ellis
26329 W Plata Lane
Calabasas, CA 91302

From: mini kacker <minikacker@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 7:21 PM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Story Poles

Hello there,

I am a resident in Calabasas. I live on Las Virgenes.

I would like to see the orange netting on the story poles on the proposed developments.

Also please remove the edits regarding excessive cost or unreasonable financial burden. These developers have deep pockets.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best

Mini Kacker

From: Jolie Willett <joliewillett@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 4:38 PM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Story Pole Procedure

Dear Planning Commissioners:

I am requesting that the Commission keep the current policy regarding the story poles and add the orange netting that improves visually the size and scope of the project.

I am also requesting that the edits regarding "potentially excessive cost or unreasonable financial impact" be removed.

is a cost of doing business for the developer. This is our community and we, as citizens, have the right to know and fully see what the proposed development(s) will look like.

Regards,

Jolie Willett

26003 Redbluff Dr.
Calabasas
310-488-4510

From: McGinnis, James F. (HSC) <James-McGinnis@ouhsc.edu>
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 1:06 PM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Cc: Tina McGinnis <tina1angel@aol.com>; James Bozajian - External <jrbozajian@earthlink.net>
Subject: Story Poles

Dear Councilmembers, please keep the story pole policy and add the orange netting that improves it. Please remove the statement "potentially excessive cost or unreasonable financial impact". The netting gives a much more visual representation of proposed projects. This dollar amount for the netting/poles is simply the cost of doing business in Calabasas.

Thank you very much,

James F. McGinnis
26071 Adamor RD
Calabasas, CA 91302

From: Joe Chilco <joe.chilco@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 10:16 AM
To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>
Subject: Planning Commission 9-10-20 meeting - agenda item#3 - Public Comments

With regard to agenda item #3, please consider the following comments:

"Story poles are intended to help decision makers, staff, neighbors and other interested parties visualize the location, mass and/or height of a proposed building(s), as part of the review of the project's relationship to its surroundings."

In the proposed changes/redline document, there's one word in particular of concern. It's in the factors that the Community Development Director ("CDD") would cite in support of any recommendation.

The word "Possible" is proposed to be inserted before the words "excessive cost...".

Either there is excessive cost or there isn't. Anything could be "possible". That's a subjective measurement and decision. I suggest the word "possible" be deleted.

There is nothing in the Story Pole Procedures on what expected costs might be, providing some sort of means to determine a baseline. It's dependent on the size and scope of the proposed project. I get that.

However, the applicant should expect a certain level of cost pertaining to compliance with the Story Pole Procedures. They must have budgeted for that. Let them make their case for costs being excessive with real dollar figures compared to their verifiable budgeted costs.

I don't want this to become "wiggle room" for an applicant to be excused from having to meet the requirements.

In the last paragraph of the Story Pole Determination section the proposed change reads: "The CDD shall, at the CDD's sole discretion, seek advice from the Architectural Review Panel and/or a professional story pole installer in arriving at a determination of pole installation feasibility."

"Shall" means "must" but to include "at the CDD's sole discretion" is to make it voluntary. If "must" is the intent, then delete "at the CDD's sole discretion".

In addition, the "and/or" in that text should be changed to "and". If the intent is to arrive "at a determination of pole installation feasibility", which includes excessive cost, then the Architectural Review Panel may not have expertise in determining that but a professional story pole installer would.

Should the developer's costs outweigh the right of citizens to know and see what development is being proposed? I think not.

The CDD/applicant should have to provide proof of such excessive cost in the form of actual dollar figures that are confirmed by the company/individual responsible for erection of the story poles, considering accepted industry standards.

As written, there is far too much power in the hands of the Community Development Director. The determination of whether or not story poles should be/can be erected is being treated as a ministerial decision. It is not, nor should it be.

There should be a Public Hearing if the Planning Commission is considering adopting any recommendation of the CDD that includes modifications to the Story Pole Procedures requirements.

Also, there's a typo in the first paragraph of the Applicability section - it currently has "story poles stall" when it should be "story poles shall". This is in the current Procedures document and it needs to be corrected.

The concerned residents of Calabasas have fought hard to have the Story Pole Procedures enacted. All residents have a right to be informed on development projects. It is the Planning Commission's duty to protect the interests of those residents.

I ask that the Planning Commissioners please take all of these comments into consideration when making their recommendation to the City Council.

Thank you.

Joe Chilco
Calabasas resident
(address on file)

To: Members of the City Planning Commission:

Re: Item 3 on the Agenda. Modification of the Story Pole Policy.

From what I've seen as submitted by the voting public regarding the proposed changes to the current Story Pole policy, the consensus seems to be on the side of NOT making many of the changes to the policy as proposed. I whole heartedly agree. With one exception, those proposed changes are too much in favor of the developers and not reflecting the interests of the public. The policy is working as is and shouldn't be changed.

The one exception consists of the use of orange netting between the poles to increase visibility of the proposed construction. By "between the poles" I mean the vertical area from the ground to the roof lines. This will greatly increase the true visibility of the bulk and mass of the proposed building(s) and also highlight the resulting view scape of the finished project. A before and after example is shown below. Note that the poles are barely visible in the first image.



One can easily see what an improvement in visual impact this approach would yield, even to the casual passers-by, as opposed to a combination of skinny poles and small roofline flags.

Carl Ehrlich, Calabasas