San Quentin Reuse Planning Committee Minutes

Wednesday, September 11, 2002
San Rafael Corporate Center

Committee Members Present:

Sim Van der Ryn
Annette Rose
Alex Amoroso
Dana Miller
Al Boro
Steve Kinsey

Staff and Consultants Present:

Kristin Drumm Collins, Marin County CDA
Dan Dawson, Marin County CDA
Michele Rodriguez, CDA
Alex Hinds, Marin County CDA
Dan Potash, DVP Associates

Process Timeline and Outcomes

The minutes from June 12, 2002 were reviewed and accepted.

Process Check-In

Committee members each provided a brief update on their activities since the last meeting in June and on upcoming activities. Dana Miller offered to conduct a biological survey of the San Quentin site, while Sim Van Der Ryn indicated that he is going to be designing an off the grid solar hotel in Tibet.

Historic Resources: Priorities and Preservation

Bob Mackensen from the State Historic Preservation Office talked about potential preservation policies, priorities, and options for historic structures on the San Quentin property.

Bob provided a review of the four criteria needed for a historic resource to be considered significant (which are listed in the Technical Appendix distributed to committee members at the initial meeting). Buildings are evaluated for their relevance in contributing towards California's history.

There was a question on whether the interiors of buildings could be evaluated and ranked. Bob responded that building interiors can add to the historic significance and should be considered. Not everything must be preserved but it is important to retain a representative sample. It was his opinion that a museum is needed at San Quentin to preserve the property's legacy.

Bob was not sure whether the death row facilities or areas used for executions would be considered significant, although he mentioned the death chamber is unique in and of itself and may be worth preserving. In the end, CEQA will provide the ultimate analysis on preservation issues.

Green Building Practices

Sim Van der Ryn gave a presentation on green building and energy conserving design principles. The presentation focused on case studies involving rehabilitation possibilities to provide examples of what may be done at San Quentin. According to this presentation:

- Green buildings consume less energy because they are responsive to the climate, have efficient equipment, have fewer ducts and pipes, and require less maintenance.

- Raised floors have several benefits compared to overhead HVAC systems, including improved indoor air quality and lower energy consumption control.

- Green building is "comfortable" because it has more daylight, has fewer leaks, it is "switch-rich" with plenty of user controls, and it provides "thermal delight." It is more productive.

- A green building has better indoor air quality because: 1) it has more fresh air, 2) it has no chemical odors, and 3) it has few indoor pollutants. It is healthier.

- A green building does not damage the land because: 1) it does less damage to the water supply and waste stream, and 2) it reduces the impact on municipal systems of transportation, garbage collection, and other utilities. It is good for the city.

- Ecovillages offer several benefits. In terms of energy use, buildings will use either 25 percent of the local residential average, or 60 percent of the energy of a resident complying with ASHRAE 90.1, whichever is less. For water use, the Ecovillage will use 25 percent of the average per capita water use of the region; the quality of all water leaving the site will be equal or better than levels for open water permissible for swimming.

- In an Ecovillage, solid waste will be reduced by 50 percent through recycling and composting.

- A green building does not spend down natural capital because: 1) it does less damage to forests, streams, and oceans, and 2) it uses primarily abundant or renewable resources. It is good for the region.

- A green building reduces pollution because: 1) it contributes fewer green house gasses, and 2) it reduces pollution of the waterways and oceans. It is good for the planet.

- "Green" is about value, where lifecycle value equals value over time. Value is increased because of lifecycle budgeting, reduced annual operating costs, and higher building value.

- Economic opportunity areas with green building occur in the areas of: energy efficiency, water efficiency, waste efficiency, litigation and insurance, O & M savings, productivity, energy supply, green finance, green procurement, building value, and return on investment.

Community Workshop

The committee discussed possible approaches for the upcoming public workshop, to be scheduled in November. Staff is to return with a proposed meeting date and methodology for the workshop by the next meeting in October.

Members of the public commented that they would like to see the meeting be open ended without any constraints. Committee members were encouraged to define their expectations for the workshop.

Another comment suggested that the purpose of the workshop would be to ask the public what they envision for the property at San Quentin. The workshop should focus more on obtaining a community vision, rather than on the design of whatever is built on the property.

The workshop should allow participants to express their feelings on the character, principles, and value that they have on the site. There should be exercises and presentation styles that promote this.

It was also suggested that the workshop include a presentation of Marin's unmet needs.

Next Steps

Next Meeting: 6:00, Wednesday, October 9, 2002, San Rafael Corporate Center