

HOS & Soquel Village Business Meeting

06/09/10

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Table 3

1. Need to improve business facades – Laundromat and market on north side of Soquel, could be upgraded
2. Parking lot looks good. Business facades look good.
3. Heart of Soquel area is problem. RDA should get “property owners” to upgrade the areas at the back of their properties.
4. Some safety and loitering issues are a concern at Bargetto Bridge.
5. Many businesses don’t participate in promotion programs, but more “synergy” in cooperating benefits everyone, for example Tortilla Flats and Tire Shop – sending customers back and forth.
6. Area should advertise on web for special events – extra fees for village promotions would be okay.
7. Make downtown Soquel more like Los Gatos

Table 4

1. Back of businesses near the Heart of Soquel – need improved pedestrian facilities.
2. Table had mixed feelings regarding amount of parking. Circulation is a problem. Okay – or need more?
3. Open space is appropriate and important for the Heart of Soquel. Need to provide money for adequate maintenance. Loitering will be an issue.
4. Commercial image needs upgrading. Traffic makes it hard for pedestrians.
5. Better pedestrian connections around parking would help the area.
6. Could parking be underground?
7. Advertising should be cooperative. Print is better. Promotion fees are okay.
8. Capitola/Soquel Chamber of Commerce doesn’t do enough for Soquel. Bigger advertising budget should be available to Soquel. “Think Local First” is good.
9. Want a museum for Soquel.

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Table 7

1. Aesthetics – Buildings should have more murals.
2. Will improvements lead to more businesses in Heart of Soquel?
3. Parking is okay, but needs organization.
4. Vandalism is a problem for PO vehicles, some loitering, pot smoking, school kids hang out in the area.
5. Current residence could be a retail business.
6. Need to find a way to connect Main St. businesses with Heart of Soquel.
7. RDA should facilitate business cooperation.
8. Promotions are good. Would support more fees for advertising and events.

Table 5

1. Similar sentiments to other tables.
2. Heart of Soquel – Clean-up of fronts and backs of buildings would be major improvements.
3. Loitering.
4. Good communication is important among businesses in Heart of Soquel quad.
5. Parking is okay except at peak times.
6. Opening Heart of Soquel to creek would be a positive step.
 - Take down fences
 - Connect to existing businesses
 - Existing residences are questionable structures.
7. Events in area would be positive for business.
8. Constraints
 - Loitering
 - Lack of night lighting
 - Improve facades
 - Better mix of businesses
 - Bring back events like “Soquel-O-Rama” (More special events are good).

- Who would bear the financial costs of promotions would need to be clarified.

Table 6

1. Echo other tables comments. Trying to get to nice pictures is a lot of work.
2. Need to identify what key components are necessary to accomplish goals – 50% of key improvements needed to be accomplished to make sure to achieve major essential components. Don't start until key areas have been identified. Don't spend time or money on low priority items.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS / DISCUSSION

1. County Planning – There are constraints caused by government policies. Could flood standards be changed? Are there incentives that could be provided from county to get private owners to cooperate?
2. "FEMA" policies are the major road block. We should work with what we have. It would take years to deal with FEMA.
3. Property owners issues with floodway are still obstacles. Creating a Heart of Soquel park isn't going to be game changing for businesses. Owners ask: "It's how does it affect my business." How do we change nature of businesses buildings. Which will have an effect?
4. There are a lot of cars which go through Soquel. How do we get more people to stop in Soquel? Need to get them to spend more money in the village.
5. Could the park have amphitheater – for people to stop? Get FEMA to loosen standards.
6. Heart of Soquel is county land. Will need to identify funds for long term maintenance. RDA can't fund operations.
7. More parking and events could fund long term costs.
8. How to make Soquel a destination? Should prepare surveys to ask:
 - Who's passing through?
 - Who wants to stop? (keep those in Soquel)
 - Look at the possibility of undergrounding through traffic.
9. Need to distinguish between commercial real estate and residential properties when looking at alternatives.

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10. Some businesses depend on traffic and pedestrians. Other services don't rely on pedestrians, e.g. small offices. This is a key to invigorating Soquel. More retail would increase vitality.
11. Can RDA earmark more funds so that they can be retained them locally? How do we keep state from taking local funds.
12. Is there FEMA money for Heart of Soquel? What could be done to make floodway more compatible with FEMA requirements?
13. People have discussed this for years? When will Heart of Soquel begin? It will still take years for design and permits. Will need cooperation of property owners. Some people and businesses would support cross easements for parking and access.
14. Introducing new businesses in county are very hard because of "use permit" process. It's expensive and time consuming. Planning needs to change policies.
15. Need better information for property owners regarding FEMA maps and county flood maps. Owners are told to "pay for surveys", and bear the costs of mapping.
16. Look at other communities where flood issues were addressed. Other examples could help identify issues and solutions like "Guadalupe Parkway in San Jose".