

Minutes of the Planning Commission Regular Meeting of Tuesday, May 21, 2019
Council Chambers, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, CA

ROLL CALL 7:00 P.M.

Planning Commission members present: Meier, Kramer, Finley, McCune, Majeski, Pyrz

Planning Commission members absent: Goldfarb

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo, Senior Planner Gill, Associate Planner Dietz, Assistant Planner Shek, and Administrative Assistant Lynn

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Commission Chair McCune.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Chair McCune opened the Community Forum.

Nathalie Runcie, Belmont resident spoke on her family's recent experience with Belmont Police Department (PD).

Chair McCune closed the Community Forum.

Staff informed the speaker that her item was not within the purview of the Planning Commission, however, staff would forward her communication to Belmont PD for follow-up.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

Regular Meeting Minutes May 7, 2019

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Majeski, Seconded by Commissioner Finley, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2019.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

7 A. 907 Academy Avenue – (Single-Family Design Review)

Commissioners stated no ex-parte communications were made.

Assistant Planner Shek provided an overview of the staff report and a presentation to consider a Single-Family Design Review. The project consists of a 1,082 square foot second story to include a second master bedroom suite, two additional bedrooms with a loft and bathroom. In conclusion, staff findings showed the second story addition is well designed and articulated, there is no impact to public views, no grading on site, it is well landscaped and existing landscaping will be maintained, and the project is in compliance with Residential Design Guidelines and Residential Design Criteria. Staff recommended approval.

Chair McCune invited the applicant to address the Commission. The applicant provided no additional comments and stated he would answer any questions from the Commission.

COMMISSION QUESTIONS TO STAFF

Chair McCune invited Commission questions to staff.

In response to Commissioner Majeski, staff stated the covered parking meets the requirement for this project.

Chair McCune opened the Public Hearing. There were no public speakers.
Chair McCune asked the Applicant to respond to public speaker comments.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioners concurred the project was a good design and the project meets requirements. The findings were made in the affirmative.

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Majeski, seconded by Commissioner Pyrz to approve the Single-Family Design Review for 907 Academy Avenue; Application Number PA2019-0029.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes)

Chair McCune stated this item is appealable within 10 calendar days.

7 B. 50 Notre Dame Place – (Single-Family Design Review)

Commissioners stated no ex-parte communications were made.

Associate Planner Dietz provided an overview of the staff report and a presentation to consider a Single-Family Design Review to construct an addition totaling 1,214 square feet, including a new detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to an existing 2,707 square foot single-family residence. The project consists of demolishing the existing garage and constructing a new detached accessory structure. The ADU would be compliant with all development standards. The project is well-designed and articulated, it would not impact public views, the project minimizes necessary grading, the site would be well-landscaped, and it is compliant with residential guidelines and criteria.

Staff stated all findings were made in the affirmative and recommended approval.

Chair McCune invited the applicant to make a presentation.
The applicant provided no additional comments and stated he would answer any questions from the Commission.

COMMISSION QUESTIONS TO STAFF

Chair McCune invited Commission questions to staff.

In response to Commissioner Finley, Steve Albert, applicant, stated the construction parking and staging would be onsite since the driveway is expansive and also contains a circular portion that can accommodate vehicles.

Chair McCune opened the Public Hearing. There were no public speakers.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioners concurred the project was a good design and the project meets requirements. The findings were made in the affirmative.

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Pyrz, seconded by Commissioner Meier to approve the Single-Family Design Review and Accessory Dwelling Unit for 50 Notre Dame Place, Application Number PA2018-0110.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes)

Chair McCune stated this item is appealable within 10 calendar days.

7 C. Vacant Lot on Ralston Avenue (Assessors Parcel Number 044-260-160) Single Family Design Review and Permanent Encroachment Permit

Commissioners stated there were site visits but no ex-parte communications were made.

Senior Planner Gill provided an overview of the staff report and a presentation to consider a Single-Family Design Review, a tree removal permit and Permanent Encroachment Permit. The project consists of the construction of a new 4,495 square foot home, tree removal of 12 trees and replaced with 18 15-gallon trees, and a retaining wall in the public right-of-way along the frontage for driveway support. Additionally, a driveway study was conducted to provide guidance on a proposed design for driveway/curb cut, and adjacent merge/acceleration lane along Ralston Avenue. The project also would include continuous sidewalk along the site and the merge/acceleration lane. New streetlights and roadway markings for the bike lane will also be included. Public Works has reviewed the Permanent Encroachment Permit and recommended approval.

Staff stated all findings were made in the affirmative and recommended approval of the Single-Family Design Review and recommended City Council approval of the Permanent Encroachment Permit.

Chair McCune invited the applicant to make a presentation.

Steve Kellond, Architect, elaborated on the project design with the steeply sloped lot and how the home sits into the hillside hidden from Ralston, the extensive traffic study for improved safety, and stated ADA upgrades would be made to cross driveway opening.

COMMISSION QUESTIONS TO STAFF

Chair McCune invited Commission questions to staff.

In response to Commissioners, the following responses were made:

Biologist Report- The project Civil Engineer stated a drainage basin is below where all the development will take place, between the lowest retaining wall and the property line where a swale enters an inlet. The Biologist had observed the area around the rainy time and stated no standing water was found on the property. Senior Planner Gill stated the Biologist Report noted a natural feature that resembled a swale offsite. The biologist report referenced site visits after rain events, and no aquatic plant life or aquatic animal life was found on the site where the natural drainage feature was located. Additionally, staff stated the significance of aquatic species and related vegetation would pertain to CEQA and if it rises to a category exemption. The Army Corp of Engineers would be involved when there are creeks or streams on the property, therefore a JARPA application was not needed.

Permanent Encroachment Permit-The applicant covers all the modifications in the public right-of-way. Additionally, once installed, the property owner will be responsible for maintenance and repair of the retaining wall, sidewalk, curb and gutter. Extension of sidewalk installation are implemented as part of new development that occurs. Should Ralston ever be widened in the future, the permanent encroachments will be handled appropriately according to the location and project details.

Chair McCune opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Dababo, neighbor, had concerns with damage to his trees during the retaining wall installation.

Chair McCune closed the Public Hearing.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

In response to Chair McCune, Staff stated there was an error in the project data matrix for setbacks, and it should read greater than the requirement, not less than.

Commissioner Kramer responded to Mr. Dababo noting that there is a 20' setback and should not be in the drip line of any trees and asked staff to comment. Commissioner Majeski stated there is an 8'-9' setback at the 6' arching retaining wall nearest his property. Staff stated an arborist was retained and in the conditions of approval there are compliance measures for tree protective fencing.

Commissioner Pyrz stated she can make the findings, however, that having dealt with wetlands cases, she was not completely satisfied with the analysis of the biologist report. She would like the City to address that in the future.

The Commissioners concurred and made the findings in the affirmative for the project.

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Kramer, seconded by Commissioner Majeski to approve the Single-Family Design Review and Tree Removal Permit, with text corrections for the Vacant Lot on Ralston Avenue, APN 044-260-160, Application Number PA2018-0043.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes)

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Kramer, seconded by Commissioner Majeski to recommend City Council approval for the Permanent Encroachment Permit for the Vacant Lot on Ralston Avenue, APN 044-260-160, Application Number PA2018-0043.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes)

Chair McCune stated both of these items are appealable within 10 calendar days.

OTHER BUSINESS / UPDATES

Director deMelo stated the following upcoming items:

Tuesday, May 28-

- The City Council will be conducting the City's annual budget.
- The City Council will review the Firehouse Square Project.
- City Manager Greg Scoles will attend his last City Council Meeting before his retirement on June 8th.

Tuesday, June 4-

- The City's Annual confirmation of General Plan Consistency of the Capital Improvement Project Program budget will be on this Commission Agenda.

ADJOURNMENT at this time being 8:06 PM to a regular meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on June 4, 2019. Public Notice as required will be issued in advance of the next Commission Meeting.

Diane Lynn - Administrative Assistant