

CITY OF BELMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
SUMMARY MINUTES

TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2011, 7:00 PM

Vice Chair Mercer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Mercer, Horton, Mayer, Wheeler, d'Souza

Commissioners Absent: Reed, Parsons

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Associate Planner Gill (AP),
Interim City Attorney Kane, (ICA), Recording Secretary Turning (RS)

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

CDD de Melo asked that, under item 6, Reports, Studies and Updates, Item C be removed from the agenda, and that it be replaced with the Residential Design Guidelines project.

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4A. Minutes of March 1, 2011

MOTION: By Commissioner Mayer, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to accept the Minutes of March 1, 2011 as written.

Ayes: Mayer, Horton, Mercer

Abstain: d'Souza and Wheeler

Absent: Reed, Parsons

Motion passed 3/2/2

4B. Minutes of March 15, 2011

Referring to page 6 of the Minutes, Commissioner Mercer asked that the Motion made by Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, include the note that approval was conditional upon Commission approval of the text of the Residential Design Review Guidelines prior to being submitted to Council.

MOTION: By Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner d'Souza, that the Minutes of March 15, 2011 be approved with the above change.

Ayes: Horton, d'Souza, Wheeler, Mayer, Mercer
Noes: None
Absent: Reed, Parsons

Motion passed 5/0/2

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

5A: PUBLIC HEARING – 1056 Tahoe Drive

To consider a Single Family Design Review to construct a 716 square-foot addition to the existing 2,159 square-foot two-story single family residence for a total of 2,875 square feet that is below the zoning district maximum 3,500 square feet for the site. (Appl. No. PA 2011-0008)

APN: 043-144-120; Zoned: R-1B (Single Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption per Section 15301 Class 1(e)(2)(a&b)

APPLICANT/OWNER: Kosta and Stephanie Koutoulas

PROJECT PLANNER: Rob Gill, (650) 598-4204

Vice Chair Mercer determined that no one on the Commission had any ex parte communications with anyone associated with this project.

AP Gill thanked Intern Rina Shah for her considerable help in the management of this project.

AP Gill summarized the Staff Report, recommending approval of the application subject to the conditions of approval attached.

Responding to Commissioner d'Souza's question, AP Gill explained that the height of the building is calculated from the finished grade at all cross points.

Commissioner Horton's question regarding the band across the top of the garage door was deferred to the project architect.

Responding to Vice Chair Mercer's questions regarding the shed in the side yard, AP Gill stated that it will be moved since the ordinance requires that it be at least 5' away from the main house, and that it is greater than 6½' tall on the interior. Accessory structures are allowed to be 15' and must be fire treated if within 5' of the property line.

Robert Medan, project architect, gave background information on the applicant. He corrected previous information by stating that one of the photographs provided is actually of the neighbor's property, which is very similar to the subject property, but that the labels on the photos needed to be switched. He also confirmed that the band above the garage doors continues around the right-hand side of the house. He stated that after Commission approval he will schedule an engineer to commence work on the drawings, he should be ready to submit within 30 days, and construction will start around the beginning of July. The residents will be moving out of the home during construction and that after the first 4 weeks, construction noise will be reduced. He expects the project to take 5-6 months total.

Quincy Huoh, Belmont resident, stated his concern that the height and bulk of this project are detrimental to the neighborhood. He also expressed concerns about noise and dust mitigation, as well as security, and asked that the Belmont ordinance regarding smoking be adhered to by the construction crew.

MOTION: By Commissioner d’Souza, seconded by Commissioner Wheeler, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 5/0/2 by a show of hands, with Chair Reed and Commissioner Parsons absent.

Responding to Mr. Houh, Commissioner Horton explained the City’s laws that are applicable to this project, and stated that the applicant has complied with those laws. She supported the project.

Commissioner d’Souza had concerns about the bulk of the house, and felt that the Residential Guidelines should be revised to address public health and safety.

Responding to Vice Chair Mercer, CDD de Melo confirmed that dust mitigation is included in the Conditions of Approval, and the neighbors could call the Public Works Department if they are dissatisfied with the construction activities.

Commissioner Mayer concurred with Commissioner Horton’s analysis, stated that he was sympathetic to the neighbor’s concerns but that all of the guidelines in the zoning code are being followed.

Commissioner Wheeler concurred with all that had been said.

Vice Chair Mercer noted that there are other projects on the street that have been added onto, and that the addition of the porch does more to tie it to ranch homes in the area. She complimented the applicant on staying under the allowed square feet. She asked for diagrams of what they intend to plant, would like to see a taller tree than the red plum and asked that contact information be posted.

MOTION: By Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Mayer, to adopt the Resolution approving a Single-Family Design Review at 1056 Tahoe Drive (Appl. No. PA-2011-0008), with the addition of either the switch-out of the purple leaf plum or its relocation, and the addition of a larger tree, subject to review and approval by staff.

Ayes: Horton, Mayer, Wheeler, Mercer
Noes: d’Souza
Absent: Reed, Parsons

Motion passed 4/1/2

Vice Chair Mercer announced that this item can be appealed within 10 calendar days.

5B. PUBLIC HEARING – 100 Hiller Street

To consider a Single Family Design Review to construct an 873 square-foot addition to the existing 1,648 square-foot single family residence for a total of 2,521 square feet that is below the zoning district maximum 3,500 square feet for the site. (Appl. No. PA 2011-0005)

APN: 040-241-010; Zoned: R-1C (Single Family Residential)
CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption per Section 15301 Class 1(e)(2)(a&b)
APPLICANT: Jose Jimenez
OWNER: Joseph & Joy Kent
PROJECT PLANNER: Rob Gill, (650) 598-4204

Vice Chair Mercer determined that no one on the Commission had any ex parte communications with anyone associated with this project.

AP Gill summarized the Staff Report, recommending approval subject to the conditions attached.

Responding to Commissioner Mayer's question regarding square footage, AP Gill explained that the 1,648 square foot addition referred to in the project description does not include the shed, which is over 6½ square feet tall and brings the total square footage to 1,720 square feet.

Joe Kent, property owner, responded to Commissioner Wheeler's question regarding the chimney by stating that the existing fireplace and chimney will be removed.

AP Gill confirmed that the setback for this site is 15' and the house is at 14' so that any addition to the front would encroach into the front setback, except that an open design can encroach 30" into the setback.

Vice Chair Mercer opened the Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner d'Souza, seconded by Commissioner Mayer, to close the Public Hearing. Motion carried 5/0/2 by a show of hands, with Chair Reed and Commissioner Parsons absent.

Commissioner Mayer could make the findings. He had hoped that the front could be broken up by articulation of eaves of some kind over the door.

Commissioner Wheeler had no comments and could make all of the findings.

Commissioner Horton would have liked to have seen the addition moved to the left, and suggested that they try adding something over the front door.

Vice Chair Mercer echoed concerns about the front door and thanked the applicant for improving the home in this undervalued neighborhood. She could make all of the findings, but made several suggestions for realignment and shelter of the front door. She further suggested that larger shrubs be planted to soften the front of the house.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mayer, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to adopt the Resolution approving a Single-Family Design Review at 100 Hiller (Appl. No. 2011-0005) with the proviso that the owner consider devising some sort of architectural or structural feature to soften the front door entrance and/or to possibly move it, subject to Planning Department approval.

Ayes: Mayer, Horton, d'Souza, Wheeler, Mercer
Noes: None
Absent: Reed, Parsons

Motion passed 5/0/2

Vice Chair Mercer announced that this project may be appealed within 10 calendar days.

CDD de Melo again thanked Ms. Shah for her assistance on the 1056 Tahoe project, noting that she has also been working on the Residential Design Guidelines and is working for other cities.

6. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

6A. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project

No update at this time.

Commissioner d'Souza stated that he would like to see the bike lanes connected into Belmont from Redwood City Marina Shores Parkway. CDD de Melo noted that the landscape plan is merely a landscape plan for the four quadrants, does not include bike lane improvements along Ralston Avenue leading into the Redwood Shores area and that other bike improvements over the intersection and leading towards Oracle are not envisioned. Commissioner Mercer added that the idea for the bike bridge was to not have bikes and pedestrians on the overpass.

6B. San Mateo Development – North Road/43rd Avenue

No update at this time.

~~**6C. Parking Study – Downtown Village Areas – Removed from Agenda**~~

6C. Residential Design Guidelines

Asked that comments and edits be submitted to Senior Planner DiDonato as soon as possible.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of including how building heights are measured and the location of garages on steep slopes in the Residential Design Guidelines. CDD de Melo stated that staff will consider the request and rough out a schedule to see if some discussion on this topic can be included. Commissioner Mercer suggested that line illustrations that do not imply a particular architectural style should be included and Commission d'Souza questioned if volume of the front of buildings compared to adjacent structures will be included.

6D. Sixth & O'Neill – Street Reconstruction Project

On schedule. Council approved design bid of \$680,000 for the project plus 10% contingency. The project will include curb, gutter, sidewalk, trees, light fixtures, crosswalks, and narrowing of lanes; the whole corner will be completely reconstructed. Hope is that construction bids will be received by the end of May with construction to start in June or July. Peninsula Water District is already modifying water lines along 6th Avenue. Plans have been on display for at least four public events and the public will be notified of construction plans by mail, plus Teleminder and message board through the Police Department. Eventually 6th Avenue will not be a cut-through between Ralston and El Camino Real.

6E. US-101 Pedestrian/Bike Bridge Project

Still on track to finish by end of summer.

6F. High-Speed Rail (HSR)

The Ad Hoc Committee continues to meet regularly and will meet again on the second Thursday of May at 6:45 in the EOC room on the second floor. Vice Chair Mercer read excerpts from a joint press release from State officials Simitian, Eshoo and Gordon where they urged far-reaching changes to the High-Speed Rail Authority's plans.

Looking back at the disaster that resulted from County residents voting down a Bart extension many years ago, Commissioner Mayer commented that he hoped they do not stand in the way of a huge project that is going to be essential for the State and a huge opportunity. He hoped that some plan can be devised that can meet a lot of needs.

Commissioner d'Souza asked if the Commission wanted to provide input to the CalTrain Joint Powers and the Authority. CDD de Melo responded that as an individual Commissioner or as a Commission concerns could be forwarded to Council for its consideration. Council wants to be the body that makes the public policy stand. Commissioner d'Souza volunteered to join the Ad Hoc Committee as a representative of the Planning Commission.

6G. April 12, 2011 Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) Report to City Council

A copy of the City Council Staff Report was included in Commissioners' packets with the request for feedback and questions, and Commissioners were invited to attend the next Council meeting where it will be discussed further. Vice Chair Mercer believed that this report needs to be integral to finalization of the Belmont Village Plan process, referring to the draft Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) discussed on page 4, ABAG's plan to adopt the final RHNA by the end of summer 2012 and Belmont's next Housing Element update. She believed it is important that the City get involved early on in the process. Commissioner d'Souza concurred because a regional government agency should insure that any plans they put forward in the strategy will not disproportionately affect Belmont. The concern he had is that the SCS report is all about housing and does not discuss broader sustainability goals such as greenhouse gases, goals for energy, water ecology and health and wellness. He noted that the purpose of the planned development is to insure that the planned conservation areas are not impacted and by linking all of those things together they can apply money.

6H. Belmont "Villages" Districts Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Appointments

Council at its March 29th meeting discussed the zoning changes and requested establishment of an ad-hoc committee to work on the details associated with the zoning effort and then start public hearings later in the summer. The committee will be made up of 2 Councilmembers (who have already been appointed), 2 Planning Commissioners, 1 staff member each from the Community Development Department, Finance Department and Public Works Department, plus 1 each from Sterling Downs, Home View, Sunnyslope and Central neighborhoods, as well as 2 members of the business community. Vice Chair Mercer and Commissioner d'Souza expressed an interest on serving on the committee, and the remaining Commissioners, including the two who were absent, were asked to consider if they would like to be on the Committee so that the appointments can be confirmed at the next meeting.

Other Items

Vice Chair Mercer reported that at the April 12th Council meeting they did a Preliminary Design Review of a project proposed by the Crystal Springs Upland School to build a Junior High on Davis Drive, which would require rezoning from Executive Administrative to Planned Development. CDD de Melo stated that Council was supportive of the project and that a formal application will be submitted to the Commission.

Commissioner Mayer asked for the status of 1000 South Road. CDD de Melo stated that the project is done and the developer is welcoming tours of the facility.

7. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.

Liaison: Commissioner d'Souza

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Horton

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, April 26, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

Carlos de Melo
Planning Commission Secretary

*CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the
Community Development Department
Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.*

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