

**CITY OF BELMONT**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**SUMMARY MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2010, 7:00 PM**

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

**1. ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Frautschi, Parsons, Horton, Mercer, Mathewson, Mayer  
Commissioners Absent: Reed

Staff Present: Community Development Director and Acting Public Works Director de Melo (CDD), Associate Planner Gill (AP), City Attorney Zafferano (CA), Recording Secretary Turning (RS), Finance Director and Acting City Manager Fil (FD), Deputy Finance Director Tu, City Treasurer Violet

**2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

Under Item 7, Reports, Studies and Updates, CDD de Melo added Item 7G regarding the Carlmont Townhomes project.

It was agreed that Item 6, New Business, Proposed Budget Correction Plan, would be moved to be discussed before Item 5, Public Hearings.

**3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments)**

Norm Land, neighbor of Barrett Community Center, addressed the Commission regarding the disposition of Barrett Community Center in future budget planning. He currently sees Barrett as a gathering spot for many uses, and has ideas what could make it more profitable for the City, and wants to see it continue to be the jewel that it is for the City of Belmont.

**4. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**4A. Minutes of February 16, 2010**

Commissioner Mayer asked that the word "Chai" near the bottom of page 3 be changed to "Chaat."

**MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to accept the Minutes of February 16, 2010 as corrected.**

**Ayes: Parsons, Horton, Mayer**  
**Noes: None**

**Abstain:** Mercer, Mathewson, Frautschi  
**Absent:** Reed

**Motion passed 3/0/3/1**

#### **4B. Minutes of March 2, 2010**

**MOTION:** By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Mercer, to accept the Minutes of March 2, 2010 as presented.

**Ayes:** Parsons, Mercer, Horton, Mayer, Frautschi  
**Noes:** None  
**Abstain:** Mathewson  
**Absent:** Reed

**Motion passed 5/0/1/1**

#### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **6A. Review Proposed FY 2010 and FY 2011 Budget Correction Plan**

**Thomas Fil, Finance Director and Acting City Manager provided the Commission with a Power Point Presentation overview of the 2011 Budget Correction Plan. Director Fil encouraged suggestions and comments from the Commission which would be considered by City Council.**

**Community Development Director and Acting Public Works Director, Carlos de Melo shared recommended revenue increases for the Community Development Department and encouraged suggestions from the Commission for Council as well.**

Chair Frautschi asked Commissioners for any substantial budget correction suggestions they might have that could be passed along to Council. He commented as follows:

- Referring to the \$10,000 fee for plant maintenance, perhaps the Cottage Auxiliary could be approached to take on this task.
- A possible permit counter fee to recapture staff's time.
- He supported staff's recommendation regarding public noticing.

Commissioner Mayer did not support the idea of a permit counter fee, but rather believed people should be encouraged to ask questions. CDD de Melo concurred.

Commissioner Parsons suggested that all Commissioners could waive their reimbursement for transportation when visiting sites – i.e., their \$25 per meeting stipend.

CDD de Melo suggested that any ideas could be e-mailed to him, and FD Fil stated that the report to Council would be finalized the following Thursday.

Commissioner Horton commented as follows:

- She did not believe the City's road infrastructure could support a long-term renter such as another private school at Barrett.
- She and Commissioner Reed have already waived their Planning Commission stipend.
- Packet delivery could be eliminated. Packets could be picked up at the Police Department.
- Commissioners could voluntarily pay for mandated classes they are required to take.
- Repair and maintenance reductions should be evaluated carefully; the City could end up paying far more because they are deferred.
- Voluntary work schedule reduction and/or job sharing work well in the private sector, however, if two part-time people work just enough hours to both get benefits it may not save any money.
- No pay raises is pretty typical in the private sector.
- She displayed an "Eco Font" that has been shown to save on printer ink.
- She displayed and handed staff a popular book "here comes the guide" that is used for planning weddings and other events, which includes Ralston Hall and the Palmer House in Atherton. Her suggestion was that if some of the City's facilities were spruced up, perhaps by local contractors, they could produce more revenue.
- 4H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other community groups could be asked to adopt a street or a portion of a street to pick up trash and trim vegetation.

Commissioner Mercer asked if the earlier suggestion that the number of Commission meetings be reduced to once a month had already been included in the proposal. CDD de Melo responded that it had not, but that whenever there is an opportunity to push items out two weeks he will do that. He would rather give them notice that there will not be a meeting on a certain date, which could result in some cost savings.

Commissioner Mercer volunteered to pick up her own packet and would drop off some for other Commissioners if desired. Commissioner Mayer concurred. It was agreed that any that were not picked up at closing time could be left in the Police Station.

Commissioner Mayer asked if they could decide as a group to waive the stipend. RS Turning stated that they should individually send her an email requesting that the stipend be waived.

## **5. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **5A. PUBLIC HEARING – 2520 Buena Vista Avenue**

The applicant requests Single Family Design Review approval to construct a 598 square foot addition to the existing 957 square foot single family residence for a total of 1,555 (2,838 sq. ft. maximum building size permitted for this site). (Appl. No. 2010-0002)

APN: 043-281-130; Zoned: R-1B (Single Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303

Applicant: Stephen Wu

Owner: Ngayin Ngai

Planner: Rob Gill – 650-598-4204

AP Gill summarized the Staff Report, recommending approval of the proposed Resolution subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.

Commissioner Mercer questioned what appeared on the plans to indicate that the excavation for the new addition would result in grade level being 4' below the grade level of neighboring property on the east side. Stephen Wu, applicant/owner, explained that there is an existing retaining wall along the east side of the property with a fence on top of it that supports the subject property from falling into the neighbor's property. They would excavate up to the edge and not touch the neighbor's existing retaining wall along that side. Commissioner Mercer stated that the elevation change between the neighboring houses needs to be clearly spelled out in the plans.

Mr. Wu concurred with Commissioner Mercer that the color of the addition could be called "off white" as opposed to "matching the existing colors" as specified in the Staff Report.

Commissioner Mercer asked the applicant if they had considered construction alternatives that would reduce the amount of required grading. Mr. Wu said that they had, but the alternative would have exceeded their construction budget and would have required stairs inside the home, which they do not want due to the possible danger to visiting in-laws.

By a show of hands, Chair Frautschi opened the Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak.

**MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 6/0/1 by a show of hands.**

Chair Frautschi asked that the standard paragraph regarding notice to neighbors about the hauling schedule be added to the Resolution, and that it be coordinated with the drop-off of kids at the nearby school.

Commissioner Mercer concurred, and asked for the return of a landscape plan that will show where the new tree is going, the species of the tree, and clarification of the permeability of any surfaces. She was concerned about the water run-off and how the change of grade might affect neighboring properties. She also wanted the record to show that the color will be off white, not lemon yellow. In addition, she expressed disappointment with the 10 truckloads of cut and fill that will impact the neighborhood, that there are no provisions for a second car garage, and hoped that in the future there is not an application to add bedrooms without a garage addition. She wanted the staff report and plans to stipulate very clearly that this is a two-bedroom home.

Commissioner Parsons believed they should be able to find a way to reduce the cut and fill by putting a few steps in the house but also could understand the issue of dealing with a senior. He believed the landscaping needs to be documented and come back with a plan that shows what they will have to restore.

Commissioner Horton used this application as a selling point for an ordinance that allows for tandem parking garages on lots of this size. In the spirit of cost cutting, she would allow staff to approve a landscape plan rather than have it come back to the Commission.

Chair Frautschi asked staff to clarify if it is possible to "chain develop" the property without having to upgrade parking, etc. CDD de Melo responded that it is not easy with the changes that have been made to the threshold standards, that they are approving what is before them, and that it safely does not go over any of the four thresholds.

**MOTION:** By Commissioner Mercer, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to adopt a Resolution approving a Single-Family Design Review at 2520 Buena Vista Avenue (Appl. No. 2010-0002) with the added conditions that:

1) The applicant shall submit a hauling plan and notice to neighbors of such plan, and the plan will avoid the school beginning and ending times in order to alleviate traffic concerns.

2) The applicant shall submit a landscape plan to staff designating the grade separation between adjacent properties with respect to the new retaining walls in the back, the optimal amount of permeable surfaces to mitigate runoff and the location and species of trees and plants.

**Ayes:** Mercer, Horton, Mathewson, Parsons, Mayer, Frautschi

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** Reed

**Motion passed 6/0/1**

Commissioner Parsons announced that this project can be appealed within ten calendar days.

## **7. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:**

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

### **7A. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project**

He continues to work diligently with the City of Redwood City. It is hoped that the project will start during the summertime, on the assumption that the funding issues get resolved.

Commissioner Mercer added that the weeds in the southwest quadrant are 6' tall. She feels that Belmont is Caltrans' stepchild, because they have no problems maintaining interchanges in Menlo Park, Palo Alto and Burlingame. Somebody needs to get out there with a weed whacker before they dry and become a fire hazard. CDD de Melo will see what can be done.

### **7B. San Mateo Development – North Road/43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**

Still trying to find a solution with the Planet Granite folks to relocate the dumpsters. Has not yet received an encroachment permit for the property that had the units added to the rear.

Commissioner Parsons added that trash is being strewn all around the dumpsters and he believes other people are using them. Regarding the other property, he feels the City should go in and tell them to remove their asphalt off of Belmont's property.

### **7C. Parking Study – Downtown Village Area**

No report at this time.

### **7D. High-Speed Train (HST) Project – San Francisco to San Jose**

The Alternatives Analysis was due to be released on the following Thursday and will be posted to the HST website. There will be a board meeting that morning in Santa Clara. He is the City's representative to the Technical Working Group, which will be going over the Alternatives Analysis on Monday, 4/12, and he

expected that the City will host an outreach meeting to discuss the issue. He will continue to meet with the Mayor and Vice Mayor to continue to represent the best interests of Belmont.

#### **7E. Emmett House**

He invited Commissioners to look at the wood cabinet samples he had with him at the end of the meeting, and thanked Commissioners Horton and Parsons for the time they spent reviewing the materials and colors proposed for the interior of the building. The Mayor and Vice Mayor will be invited to look over the materials when it is all pulled together.

#### **7F. 1000 South Road**

Awaiting the building permit for the rehab of the apartments. He still has the landscape plan and hopes the permit will be issued by the end of the month, after which it will be about a 2-month job.

#### **7G. Carlmont Townhomes (Agenda Addition)**

The project is basically completed and final inspections are being scheduled. Responding to neighbors' concerns, the Council Infrastructure Subcommittee and the Parking, Traffic and Safety Committee have reviewed the placement of bulb-outs and site distance issues. Based on that action, the bulb-outs will be removed and there will be a red zone curbing installed on that section of the property, as well as some parking restrictions relative to vehicles over 6' in height. This item was scheduled to go to Council the following Tuesday. The work can be done in-house by the Public Works Department.

Responding to Commissioner Mercer's concern about the safety of people parking across the street and crossing in a very dangerous location, CDD de Melo stated that that issue was discussed at a Parking, Traffic and Safety Committee meeting and will be taken up again relative to a cross walk or stop sign.

Commissioner Parsons wondered if they considered reducing the depth of the bulb-outs so they were only a couple feet deep, which would allow for some landscaping along there.

Commissioner Mercer asked where the two mitigation trees that were required to be planted in the bulbs would go. CDD de Melo stated that they are trying to get them inserted within the property itself. He added that this should be viewed as a learning situation; they need to be more prudent in the future when talking about bulb-outs on a street that has any curvature or site distance condition.

Commissioner Mayer added that his original concern was not with the bulb-outs but with the fact that the original plan called for three driveways – one for each unit – and he did not understand how the obsession with safety caused all the driveways to be reduced into one. He did not understand how the unit on the far left will get out of their garage.

#### **Other Items**

Chair Frautschi reminded CDD de Melo that he had intended to add an Item 7 regarding the **bicycle bridge project** to future agendas.

Commissioner Parsons reminded CDD de Melo that the 20-year-old **Comcast green boxes** that are scattered all over Belmont are badly in need of repair, paint or replacement. He asked that the franchise agreement be checked to determine responsibility for maintenance of the boxes and that action be taken to get them cleaned up.

Chair Frautschi relayed a request from Human Resources for a member of the community to sit on the **interview panel to select the new Public Works Director**, which is tentatively scheduled for April 30 at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Parsons volunteered, and RS Turning will send his name to HR.

Chair Frautschi encouraged Commissioners to look at the negative declaration for the environmental impacts of the Housing Element on the City's website.

Chair Frautschi announced that the City of Belmont again received the **Tree City USA** award, and noted that there will be a tree-planting day on April 30<sup>th</sup> at the top of Oak Knoll Drive. Volunteers will be welcomed.

## **9. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2010**

Liaison: Commissioner Parsons

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Mayer

## **10. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

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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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