CITY OF BELMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, June 1, 2021 – 7:00PM

Commission members participated in this meeting by teleconference as authorized by Executive Order N-29-20. The public viewed the meeting via live on Zoom, the city website or on Comcast Channel 27. Members of the public watching remotely were given the Cdev@belmont.gov email address to submit public comments.

ROLL CALL 7:00 P.M.
Planning Commission members present: Kramer, Latimerlo, Majeski, Meier, Pyrz
Commission members absent: Kelley, Kulich

**Commissioner Kulich was not present for roll call, but joined the meeting at 7:11pm.*

Staff Present: Community Development Director (CDD) Carlos de Melo, Principal Planner Damon DiDonato, Associate Planner Michael Dietz, Administrative Assistant Diane Lynn

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Led by Chair Pyrz

COMMUNITY FORUM
Chair Pyrz opened the Community Forum.
No items were submitted.
Chair Pyrz closed the Community Forum.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / AGENDA AMENDMENTS
There were no announcements or agenda amendments

CONSENT CALENDAR

5.A Regular Meeting Minutes for May 18, 2021

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Latimerlo, seconded by Commissioner Majeski to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 18, 2021.

Motion passed 4-0-1 (4 Ayes, 0 Noes, 1 Abstain, 2 Absent)

STUDY SESSION – NONE

PUBLIC HEARINGS

7 A. 2820 Ponce Avenue (Serendipity School project modifications-reduction in project scope)
Commissioners stated no ex-parte communications were made.

Associate Planner Dietz provided an overview of the staff report and presentation to consider a modification to reduce the scope of a previously approved project. The revised project would no longer include a portion of the interior renovation of the existing building or various site improvements that were shown on the approved plan.

The proposed modification would reduce the approved scope of work for Phase 2. A portion of the approved interior renovation of the existing building would no longer occur. Additionally, various site amenities would no longer be constructed or installed which includes a deck that would expand the hardcourt area, multiple raised planters, a greenhouse outdoor learning pavilion, and decorative accent lighting. The purpose behind the modification is due to the Covid-19 pandemic budgetary challenges, and prioritization of certain expenditures due to unforeseen revenue shortfalls. As a private school, they elected to prioritize staff retention and utilized funds that were reserved for the project.

Staff noted the following Design Review Findings:

- All COA's assigned to the original project would remain.
- Minor alterations to landscaping would occur, but the project would remain materially consistent with the overall landscaping approved for the site.
- The project would comply with landscaping standards consistent with the Belmont Zoning Ordinance (BZO) Section 13.3.1.
- The proposed modification is consistent with the underlying SE zoning district.
- The objective design standards identified in BZO Section 13.6 relate to the building design and do not apply.

Staff recommended approval of the project modifications subject to the Conditions of Approval.

Chair Pyrz invited the applicant to speak.
The applicant had no comment.

Commissioner Kulich joined the meeting.

COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Commissioners had no comments or questions.

Chair Pyrz opened the Public Hearing.
There were no public comments.
Chair Pyrz closed the Public Hearing.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

Commissioners made the findings in the affirmative.

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Majeski, seconded by Commissioner Meier to approve the modification to reduction in scope of work at 2820 Ponce Avenue, Application Number PA2017-0019.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes, 1 Absent)

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

7 B. 815 Old County Road (Design Review and Entitlements for construction of an apartment building with 177 units)

Commissioners stated no ex-parte communications were made.

Principal Planner DiDonato provided an overview of the staff report and presentation to consider construction of a 240,000 square foot five-story apartment building, which includes 177 apartment units, including 27 affordable units. The proposed project entitlements would include Lot Line Adjustment, Design Review, Affordable Housing Plan, Grading Plan, Transportation Demand Management Program, Density Bonus and Waivers to development standards.

Site Plan and Parking:

The site plan layout indicated the building location will be set back 180 feet from the street and include 10-foot setbacks around the building. The driveway would accommodate a fire apparatus and garbage truck turn around area. Parking would include 197 garage vehicle spaces, 3 vehicle parking spaces at surface level, 120 long term bike spaces and bike racks, 2 short term bike spaces, 25 electric vehicle spaces, 6 ADA spaces, and 2 loading spaces.

Landscaping would include 20% of the project site including 81 trees-preferred species, shrubs, and groundcover. The plan is compliant with water efficiency standards.

Environmental Impact Report Addendum

The project was evaluated for significant impacts and reviewed in accordance with the EIR that was adopted for the 2035 General Plan; all environmental resource areas were considered in Appendix G and staff made the findings in Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines. The project is within the EIR buildout, and the GP has not changed for the setting. No conditions requiring preparation of a subsequent EIR was needed and therefore the EIR Addendum would be the appropriate document for review of the proposed project.

Lot Line Adjustment:

A technical review of the plat map and legal description was performed for closure calculations. City staff evaluated the lot line adjustment for consistency with the City Subdivision Ordinance. The width and area associated is consistent with zoning. Staff stated all Lot Line Adjustment findings were compliant with all applicable policies of the General Plan and Belmont Village Plan.

Design Review:

The proposed project is in compliance with the SB330-Housing Crisis Act, and SB167-Housing Accountability Act. Staff stated all applicable objective standards found in attachment four of the Development Summary have been met. Adherence to limitation on blank walls, building module standards, and color and material variation largely address building bulk by projecting, recessing and visually breaking up large building walls. Additionally, a Technical Review has been made by all City departments, consultants, and outside agencies. No adverse impacts were identified for the proposed project.

Affordable Housing Plan:

The market rate and affordable units must be consistent and comparable in appearance and equal in amenities, comparable in average number of bedrooms, and access and enjoyment of the same amenities. After the construction and before the Certificate of Occupancy is issued, there will be a walk through to assure the units are consistent with the Conditions of Approval.

Density Bonus and Waivers:
The City is required to grant one density bonus when an applicant agrees to construct a certain type and percentage of affordable units. Since the base project shows 131 regular units and 27 affordable units (= 20% affordable), the applicant will receive a 35% density bonus for 46 market rate units that will total 177 units combined. To fit those units into the base project, two waivers were requested to the development standards. 1. Height: 60 feet (45 is maximum); 2. Bulk-modification to % of floor plate. This will allow the building to be tiered inward in height to add the additional floor and accommodate all the units. Waivers have been justified by the applicant, and in accordance with the City's application standards demonstrated that the base project and proposed project are substantially the same and are necessary to physically accommodate the density bonus units.

Transportation Demand Management Program (TDM):
The proposed TDM Program includes measures to reduce single occupant vehicle trips, information on transportation options, on-site ride matching assistance, credit for trip reduction measures based on location of the project site relative to transit, and inclusion of bicycle parking and unbundled vehicle parking. The TDM evaluation for trip reduction measures were found to be feasibly appropriate, consistent with City standards, and determined that the project could achieve a 35.56% short-term trip reduction and 36.41% long-term trip reduction exceeding the BVSP area-wide reduction goal of 15%.

Grading Plan:
There will be 15,600 cubic yards of grading for the underground garage. A Geotechnical Report and Peer Review will be provided for site stability. BMP's for erosion and water quality are compliant and no stream beds are present. The project is conforming use and grading amount is necessary for site improvements. Public Works reviewed the grading plan and provided Conditions of Approval to assure compliance with the Grading Ordinance. Tree protection measures are required for trees on adjacent site.

Staff stated the project is consistent with GP and BVSP; the adopted Environmental Impact Report is adequate to address impact, and all entitlement findings can be made to approve the project.
Staff recommended approval of the project subject to the Conditions of Approval.

Chair Pyrz invited the applicant to speak.

Greg Pasquali, Carmel Partners, provided a presentation on their company background, project team, project location, key data that included sustainability and affordable housing elements, and timeline. Mr. Pasquali also noted that the community listening process included meeting with stakeholders, HOA's, advocacy groups, as well as held two community meetings. A website was also created that allowed the public to receive updates, pose opinions, and ask questions. The information gathered from the community was compiled to help guide project goals. He also spoke on modifications to intersections and replacement/upgrades of deficient sewer infrastructure and the neighborhood sewer pump station.
Kevin Markarian, Pyatok Architects, provided an overview of project design details, renderings, and landscape plans.

COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS
In response to Commissioners comments, staff made the following statements:

- The project proposal included the base project with the density with the affordability level. The applicant is entitled to the density bonus and has demonstrated that it is needed in order to construct the project.

- A series of several studies were conducted to identify a screening level of contaminants in the soil at the site. The applicant reached out to the Department of Toxic Substances Control to review handling of contaminants. A Preliminary Environmental Assessment plan was prepared as well as a Health Risk Assessment. Measures to address the facility included installing a vapor barrier, measurements for ventilation, and testing. The levels tested were not high enough, therefore are not required. A soils management plan identifies measures that are needed to protect the surrounding the project site, construction crews, and future residents. The applicants Environmental Manager provides oversight and the conditions and reporting requirements related to the environmental portion of the project are included in the project documents for compliance.

- A residential project close to transit may impose traffic impacts to circulation. Conditions of Approval addresses these impacts, and mitigation measures to be taken. One of the conditions states the Applicant shall pay Transportation Impact Fees (TIF). The conditions also had the calculation for the TIF and the fee for the proposed project is $966,420. The applicant has a right to challenge and will have that opportunity during the Notice of Action period. The Commission can still approve the project and the Applicant can choose to appeal during the appeal period.

- The Transitional Daylight Plane provision is not applicable for this project, as the intent of a large project in the Belmont Village District is to increase the development potential. The Transitional Daylight Plane would apply more if a large project is next to a residential home, and thus determined that this provision was interpreted as not intended for adjacent R-3 and R-4 lots.

- After the building is constructed and before the Certificate of Occupancy is issued, there will be a walk through to assure the units are consistent with the Conditions of Approval.

- Unbundled parking is when the parking is sold or rented separately from a unit. It allows people who don't have a vehicle to have a lower rental price. It also provides incentive for people not to have vehicles since they are so close to transit.

- There will be 300 square feet of open space onsite that will be accessible to the public.

- The Belmont Zoning Requirements for parking and the BVSP applies both a minimum of 175 and over 400 for maximum parking. The project includes 200 spaces. There may be some point in time when an apartment may be more attractive to have two spaces. The extra 25 spaces over the minimum would also allow those additional parking spaces to be for those wishing to park and walk since there are no dedicated parking garages in Belmont.

- The intersection of Old County Road and Ralston will have an extension of a 150-foot left turn lane, a protected signal phase in the southbound direction, and signalization upgrades. The intersection of Old County Road and Masonic Avenue will include elimination of 2 parking spaces, restriping, and extension of the left turn lane by 40-feet. The applicant will pay $40,000 in fair share fees toward future improvements for that intersection and is due prior to issuance of the Building Permit.

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Chair Pyrz called for a 10-minute recess. Commissioners concurred.

Chair Pyrz opened the Public Hearing.

Josh Porter, stated he supported the project
Salim, stated he supported the project.
Kelsey Banes-YIMBY Action spoke in support of the project.
Kelli Fallon, Spoke in support of the project.

Chair Pyrz closed the Public Hearing.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION
Commissioner Majeski had reservations with the bulk and unbundled parking but liked the intent of the overall project. Other Commissioners stated their concerns had been addressed. Commissioners made the findings in the affirmative.

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Majeski, seconded by Chair Pyrz to approve an Addendum to the EIR at 815 Old County Road, Application Number PA2020-0034.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes, 1 Absent)

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Majeski, seconded by Commissioner Kramer to approve the Design Review and Entitlements for construction of an apartment building with 177 units at 815 Old County Road, Application Number PA2020-0034.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes, 1 Absent)

Chair Pyrz stated the item is appealable within 10 calendar days.

OTHER BUSINESS/UPDATES

8 A. Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)-Belmont 2035 General Plan and Belmont Village Specific Plan Consistency Review

Community Development Director de Melo provided an overview of the staff report for the Fiscal Year 2022 CIP-2035 Belmont General Plan and BVSP Consistency Review. The CIP is brought to the Commission every year for consistency before going to Council for adoption. The CIP includes 68 projects, equipment, facilities, and objectives. He stated the Commission oversees the General Plan consistency with the CIP program and the goals, objectives and policies to ensure they have been met. Staff stated the consistency to the GP and BVSP have been met and recommended approval.

COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS
Commissioners had no comments or questions.

Chair Pyrz opened the Public Hearing.
There were no public comments.
Chair Pyrz closed the Public Hearing.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION
Commissioners made the findings in the affirmative.

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Kulich, seconded by Commissioner Kramer to approve the consistency determination of the Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – Belmont 2035 General Plan and Belmont Village Specific Plan.

Motion passed 6-0 (6 Ayes, 0 Noes, 1 Absent)

Chair Pyrz stated this item will be forwarded to City Council.

OTHER UPDATES

Community Development Director de Melo stated there are no other updates.

Commissioner Majeski requested for an update on the Barrett Community Center Project and suggested an upcoming meeting to provide a status.

ADJOURNMENT at this time being 9:26 PM to a regular meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on June 15, 2021. Public Notice as required will be issued in advance of the Commission Meeting.

Diane Lynn - Administrative Assistant