

CITY OF BELMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
SUMMARY MINUTES

TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2011, 7:00 PM

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

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Reed, Mercer, Parsons, Horton, Mayer, Wheeler, d'Souza
Commissioners Absent: None

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

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

Chair Reed stated that, under Reports, Studies and Updates, Commissioner d'Souza will give a brief report on a Net-Zero energy-efficient house he had recently toured in Palo Alto.

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4A. Minutes of May 3, 2011

Commissioner Mercer asked for the following edits:

- On page 7, 3rd bullet point, last sentence, strike the word "not."
- On page 10, 3rd paragraph, change the word "Gladwin" to d'Souza
- On page 12, 4th paragraph, change "Vice Mayor Mercer" to read "Vice Chair Mercer"

Commissioner Mayer asked for the following edits:

- On page 5, under Commissioner Mayer's testimony, last sentence in 1st bullet point, should read: "At the beginning, we felt that anything that we could do to simplify the difference would be beneficial...."
- On page 5, under Commissioner Mayer's testimony, 3rd bullet point, change to read ".... the City of Belmont has taken ownership of every single tree *of that size* in Belmont...."
- On page 10, 4th paragraph, change "Meyer" to "Mayer"

MOTION: By Commissioner Mayer, seconded by Vice Chair Mercer, to accept the Minutes of Tuesday, May 3, 2011 with the above corrections.

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

Motion passed 6/0/1

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

5A. PUBLIC HEARING – 1506 Harbor Boulevard (continued from May 3, 2011 Meeting)

To consider a Single Family Design Review to construct an 852 square foot addition to the existing 1,970 square foot single family residence for a total of 2,822 square feet that is below the zoning district permitted 3,500 square feet for the site. (Appl. No. PA 2010-0060)

APN: 045-281-030; Zoned: R-1A (Single Family Residential)

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

APPLICANT: Libby Raab, AIA, Ana Williamson Architect

OWNER: Eric & Amy Goldfarb

PROJECT PLANNER: Rob Gill (650) 598-4204

Chair Reed determined that no one on the Commission had any ex parte communications with anyone involved with this project.

AP Gill summarized the Staff Memorandum, recommending approval subject to the conditions attached to the draft resolution.

Using a slide presentation, Amy Goldfarb, owner, described the landscaping of the property. She added that she had talked to Coast to Coast Development, who estimated there would be 9 truck loads over the course of 3 days that would most likely take place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Eric Goldfarb added that they had also reduced the size of the upper terrace.

Commissioner Mayer asked if the arborist had said that there is no way the trees that are not going to be saved could survive this construction. Mrs. Goldfarb replied that the arborist had recommended that they be removed and believes that the roots at the existing retaining wall are already compromised.

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

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Mayer, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 7/0 by a show of hands.

Vice Chair Mercer thanked the applicant for successfully addressing the concerns of the Commission. She believed that the plan still has all of the positive attributes of the original plan, and that they made a good choice of trees and appreciated that they are saving the biggest Oak. She could make all the findings.

Commissioner Mayer noted that he had been able to make all of the findings on the first round and did not see that all of the changes that the Commission placed on the applicants accomplished that much. He was sorry to that extent but pleased that the project is apparently going to go forward. He thanked the

applicants for having gone to the extent that they did to respond to the will of the majority of the Commission. He could again make all of the findings.

Commissioner Parsons thanked the applicants for taking the Commission's comments seriously because some of them believe that the value of one tree means a lot and that anytime the amount of cut and fill can be reduced is an asset. He could make all the findings.

Commissioner Horton approved the project before and had no issues this time.

Commissioner Wheeler thanked the applicants for their thoughtful consideration of the Commission's previous comments. All of her previous concerns had been addressed and she could make all of the findings.

Chair Reed stated that he could easily make all of the findings.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to adopt the Resolution approving a Single Family Design Review at 1506 Harbor Boulevard (Appl. 2010-0060) with the conditions attached.

Ayes: Parsons, Horton, d'Souza, Wheeler, Mayer, Mercer, Reed

Noes: None

Motion passed 7/0

Chair Reed noted that this action can be appealed within 10 calendar days to the City Council.

6. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:

Reporting on his visit to a **Net-Zero house** recently constructed in Palo Alto, Commissioner d'Souza explained the concept of the construction, the basis of which is that homes can be designed that are insulated so well that they do not need to be heated, and described the home in some detail. He explained the process required for gaining Palo Alto Planning Commission approval, and asked the applicant to provide a list of the issues that came up. The applicant for this house chose not to take advantage the State solar access law, but there is a study underway to determine how it could have been used.

6C. Residential Design Guidelines

SP DiDonato noted that suggested revisions had been forwarded to the Planning Commission by email the previous Monday, and that staff had hoped to get Planning Commission comments on the material at the next meeting.

Commissioner Mayer expressed his concern that what they are hanging the Guidelines on in the actual Zoning Code is very, very basic, and that they are extrapolating all sorts of concepts and conclusions that are not in any way warranted by the Design Guideline criteria. He questioned if the Guidelines should be incorporated into the Belmont Zoning Code (BZO), or at least be referenced as being the definitive interpretation of the design.

Commissioner Horton explained that the task of the Permit Efficiency Task Force of several years ago was to put together examples that staff could use in helping an applicant through the design process. Commissioner Mayer believed that the Commission has to agree that all these are guidelines or that they should receive some recognition in the BZO as being in existence and possibly even devising a procedure whereby it is recognized that the Planning Department plus the Planning Commission have the authority to revise these Guidelines as time goes by. SP DiDonato stated that at an earlier meeting there was talk about adopting an ordinance change that would incorporate a reference to the Design Guidelines into the BZO and that the actual Guidelines themselves could be adopted by resolution of the City Council that could be changed from time to time. CDD de Melo added that these Guidelines will go a long way to assist planners at the counter to get a fresh start with an applicant and that the finding that has been proposed to be added to the list of 8 findings is generally not that it is mandatory compliance with all design guidelines but rather it is in general compliance or substantial compliance.

ICA Kane stated that the plan is to locate a source of authority in the zoning by adding a new finding that would be substantial compliance to the design guidelines, and then the guidelines themselves would be something that could be changed.

SP DiDonato stated that Commissioners should comment by email or at the next meeting to the text-only, landscape-oriented document that includes comments from Vice Chair Mercer, Chair Reed and Commissioner Mayer.

Chair Reed recommended that the City consider some type of document-sharing system where we could all work from the same document and reserve it, mark it up, and load it rather than sending things through email.

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

6A. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project

Now that the Bike Bridge project is nearing completion, staff is in the process of coordinating meetings with Redwood City to get this landscape project back on track.

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

No update at this time. (see below)

6E. US-101 Pedestrian/Bike Bridge Project

Now expect the bike bridge to be completed in August or September.

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

Construction bids have been received that are less than the engineer's estimate. Construction expected to start by the end of this month.

6F. High-Speed Rail (HSR)

The Ad Hoc Committee scheduled to meet at 6:45 the following night in the EOC. San Mateo Rail Partnership meeting scheduled for June 20th. Vice Chair Mercer added that at the State level, both the Senate and Assembly passed bills substantially restructuring the California High-Speed Rail Authority, taking it out of its own independent domain. It looks like, if it continues, it will be under the guidance of a governmental agency instead of a free-standing, completely independent rail authority.

Other Items

Had sent an email to the Commission suggesting a **date change for the first meeting in July** to Thursday, July 7th. This could potentially be the date for the NDNU/Koret hearing. By a show of hands, all Commissioners agreed to the date change. Chair Reed recommended that, if at all possible, the NDNU item be the only item on the agenda.

The City has hired a **new Public Works Director**, who will start on July 18th. Chair Reed thanked CDD de Melo for “keeping the wheels on the bus” for an extraordinarily long period of time (16 plus months). CDD de Melo complimented the Public Works Department staff on their dedication and he looked at the assignment as a tremendous learning experience.

Will be **out of the office** for the next two weeks.

ICA Kane stated that she will be out of the office the second of those two weeks. Marc Hynes will cover the next Planning Commission meeting.

Regarding the **Belmont Village Zoning** effort, CDD de Melo hopes to have the Ad Hoc Committee completely formulated in July. He still needs reps from three homeowner’s associations and the business community.

Met with two consultants to provide a scope of services for the **General Plan Land Use Element and Circulation Element updates**. He expects to bring the scope of work and services for those two Elements to Council at its first meeting in August, with the potential of having it wrapped up by the end of 2012.

Regarding item 6B, **San Mateo Development – North Road/43rd Avenue**, Commissioner Parsons asked if staff has done anything about the San Mateo people that have paved all the way up to the curb, questioned why fencing had not been installed at the project that has a housing unit above it, and noted that there are 3 dumpsters there, some on Belmont’s property. CDD de Melo stated that, by the first meeting in July, he will have a memo prepared that provides all the components associated with this item.

7. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.

Liaison: Commissioner Wheeler

Alternate Liaison: Chair Reed

8. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, June 21, 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) 595-7417 to schedule an appointment.*