

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

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 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  
Commissioners Absent: Wheeler, d'Souza (Commissioner d'Souza arrived at 7:04)

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Planning Intern Nelson (PI),  
City Attorney Rennie (CA), Recording Secretary Turning (RS)

**2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS - None**

**3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None**

**4. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**4A. Minutes of November 1, 2011**

**MOTION: By Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, to accept the Minutes of November 1, 2011 as presented.**

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

**Motion passed 4/0/1/2**

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**5A. 2708 Monte Cresta Drive – Request for Second/Final Extension of Approval – Single Family Design Review and Variance**

CDD de Melo summarized the staff memorandum, noting that staff believed this second and final extension request was warranted and that the findings could be made in the affirmative.

Commissioner d'Souza arrived at 7:04.

Commissioner Mayer recalled that some time ago construction of a related project was delayed so long that neighbors were concerned about that happening again with this project. CDD de Melo felt that the new Construction Time Limit Ordinance will keep that from happening.

Gurpreet Sachdeva, property owner, thanked the Commission for its earlier support and confirmed that it is his intention to build the property as soon as financing can be obtained.

**MOTION: By Commissioner Mayer, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to adopt the Resolution approving an Extension of a Variance and Single-Family Design Review for 2708 Monte Cresta Drive (Appl. No. 2011-0054)**

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

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

Chair Reed announced that this decision can be appealed to City Council within 10 calendar day.

## **6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

### **6A. PUBLIC HEARING – 304 South Road**

To consider a Single Family Design Review to construct an approximately 1050 square foot second story addition to the existing 2,066 square foot single family residence for a total of 3,116 square feet. (3,500 sq. ft. maximum building size permitted for this site). (Appl. No. 2011-0046)

APN: 044-181-090; Zoned: R-1B (Single Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303

OWNER: Gregory and Susan Whited

APPLICANT: Sean Rinde

PROJECT PLANNER: Julia Nelson, Intern (650) 595-7453

Chair Reed determined that no one on the Commission had any ex parte communications on this item.

PI Nelson summarized the Staff Report, recommending approval of the project subject to the conditions attached.

Commissioner Horton noted that it appears from the plans that the existing home has 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, and that there is a legal, non-conforming garage. CDD de Melo stated that this correction will be made to the Staff Report, adding that the garage does meet the minimum size and there is a floor area reserve in place.

Responding to Vice Chair Mercer's conclusion from looking at the cover page of the plans, IP Nelson confirmed that the total hardscape for the 10,000 sq.ft. lot will be 62%; 43% paved surfaces and 19% for the building.

Chair Reed opened the Public Hearing. There were no requests to speak.

Owner Greg Whited thanked the Commission for its review, noting that his neighbors have been supportive of the project.

Responding to Vice Chair Mercer's question, Architect Rinde stated that the planting plan attached is a documentation of the existing landscaping and irrigation, noting that the footprint of the building is not changing in any way nor is the hardscape design.

Responding to Commissioner Parsons, Mr. Rinde stated that for the most part the patios are impermeable – they are not all concrete. The front driveway and approach are asphalt concrete, the side yard and rear yards are a mix of exposed aggregate concrete with some brick accent.

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

Commissioner Mercer stated that she had initial concerns about the home being 20' above the down-hill neighbor's roof, but the neighbor submitted a slip saying they had no complaints except for a concern about the run-off, which will be addressed by the Planning Department. She believed the 43% hardscape, aside from the small footprint of the house, to be excessive and felt that, in order to be responsible to the community and the environment, this is the appropriate time to see it taken out.

Commissioner Mayer could make all of the findings. He thought it was an attractive design and agreed that there is a large amount of hardscape. He suggested that the applicant consider converting some of the patios from an impermeable to some sort of permeable surface.

Commissioner Parsons' only concern was the amount of hardscape. He asked that they add a requirement for fully documented landscaping. He felt that tearing up the existing hardscape might cause more of a mess in the yard and suggested that the applicant work with staff to change some of the patios to something that will absorb runoff.

Commissioner Horton thought it was a great project and could make all the findings. She thanked the architect for providing so many vantage points and keying them to the plan and the amount of documentation made it very easy to understand. She thought they did a great job of neighborhood outreach and that the house will be a great addition to the neighborhood. She suggested that over time it will probably become a requirement to replace the hardscape with a semi-permeable surface but would not require it at this time.

Commissioner d'Souza could make all the findings and would like to see the applicant work with staff to reduce some of the hardscape.

Chair Reed could make the findings and agreed that it will be a great addition to the neighborhood. He did not have a problem with the hardscape since it is not changing.

He believed he heard that the majority of Commissioners suggested that some of the hardscape be replaced with a permeable surface, but that is should not be a requirement.

**MOTION: By Commissioner Horton, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, to adopt the Resolution approving a Single-Family Design Review at 304 South Road (Appl. PA 2011-0046), with attached conditions and photo documentation of the landscaping.**

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

**Motion passed 6/0/1**

Chair Reed announced that this decision can be appealed to City Council within 10 calendar days.

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

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

### **7A. North Road Right-of-Way**

Planet Granite problems have been solved and the property across the street is completed. Staff has sent no less than two follow-up letters to the property that had the units constructed in the rear and has received an unsatisfactory response. He had not heard anything from the City of San Mateo relative to the mixed-use project previously proposed at the Chao Praya property.

### **7B. Ralston/US 101 Landscape Project**

Now that the bike bridge is completed, the Public Works Department has been asked to start a conversation with the City of Redwood City as it relates to the City of Belmont taking over this project. He spoke to the City Engineer from Redwood City at a recent High-Speed Rail meeting, and learned that he is open to the proposal to shift the funds from Redwood City to Belmont. City Councils would also need to be involved. It will be a funding challenge because Redwood City has approximately \$450,000-\$500,000 for this project, but the construction estimates of about two years ago were in the \$700,000-\$750,000 range, which means that Belmont would need to come up with the difference.

Commissioner D'Souza asked if the person to whom he spoke mentioned the 5' crushed gravel path on the northeast side. CDD de Melo stated that they did not get into project specifics. He noted that about a year and a half ago they were looking at the budget and trying to determine what they could do without and how to maintain it going forward. There is a two- to three-year contractor guarantee on landscape maintenance and after that the project management would fall on CalTrans, who has stated rather clearly that funding challenges exist for them to maintain existing intersections much less take on a new one with a very grandiose planting plan. Belmont may need to focus on drought-tolerant species, less flowering plants, significant trees, more ground cover, and maybe use of rock or boulders so that the maintenance is reduced. He added that one of the key challenges of doing a project of this nature is that there is a lot of money that goes into prepping, and the plantings are not the expensive component; it is what is needed in terms of creating maintenance pads for vehicles, electrical equipment for the irrigation system, and noted that CalTrans specs are pretty challenging and jack up the cost. Roughly 2/3 of the \$750,000 cost was concentrated on the stuff below ground, not the plantings. Commissioner D'Souza asked if the pond on the south side is a natural wetland. CDD de Melo responded that the plan is to maintain it at its current state. The Community Development and Public Works Departments are

committed to try to get a project going but they are not dealing with just a single entity and this is not a high priority for Redwood City.

CDD de Melo confirmed for Commissioner Mayer that an irrigation system was part of Belmont's portion of the proposal.

**7C. Sixth & O'Neill Reconstruction Project**

The street opened the day before Thanksgiving, with some punch list items still to be completed.

CDD de Melo confirmed for Commissioner Mayer that the sidewalk on the Emmett side will go all the way around, and further explained reasoning for the materials used for the sidewalks.

**7D. US 101 Pedestrian/Bike Bridge Reconstruction Project**

The project is completed. City Council will continue to receive monthly reports on touch-up items. Grand opening was November 19<sup>th</sup>, which was very well attended, and he expressed pride in the completed project.

**7E. High-Speed Rail (HSR)**

The Ad-Hoc Committee continues to meet and staff is taking cues and work from the Committee to draft a comment letter on the HSR business plan, which will be presented to City Council at their next meeting. Comments are technically due by the end of this year but it will most likely be extended until the middle of January.

Vice Chair Mercer further explained the recent work of the Committee and the status of the overall project, and announced that she has officially stepped down from her position of facilitator after doing it for a year. A new facilitator will be appointed at the January meeting.

Commissioner Parsons and CDD de Melo thanked Vice Chair Mercer for all of her efforts in dealing with this issue over the past year.

**Other Items**

Chair Reed asked that a discussion of the possibility of **issuing Planning Commission packets electronically** be placed on a future agenda. He is uncomfortable with the amount of paper that is being used. Vice Chair Mercer further suggested that at the same time they consider moving to half-scale plans. CDD de Melo will put it on an agenda for a discussion item at one of the next two meetings.

Commissioner d'Souza asked if they could also provide 3-dimensional walk-throughs with the electronic document. It was pointed out that some architects have the ability to do that and others do not.

Commissioner Parsons felt that they need a copy of the staff report in front of them at meetings.

**8. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.**

Liaison: Commissioner Mayer  
Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Parsons

Commissioner Horton stated that she will not be at the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, December 20, 2011, 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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