

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, OCTOBER 19, 2016, SCHOOLHOUSE, TOWN CENTER, 765 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028

Chair Hasko called the Planning Commission regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioners McKitterick, Targ, and Von Feldt; Vice Chair Gilbert; Chair Hasko
Absent: None
Town Council Liaison: Craig Hughes
Town Staff: Debbie Pedro, Planning Director

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Director Pedro said that on October 12 the Town Council discussed housing in Portola Valley. One of the outcomes was the creation of an Ad-Hoc Committee to review and recommend potential housing on Town-owned properties. Planning Director Pedro asked for two Planning Commissioners to serve on the committee. Commissioner Targ and Chair Hasko volunteered.

- (a) Preliminary Review/Study Session of Conceptual Design of New Clubhouse, Renovation of the Historic Roadhouse, and Site Improvements, Alpine Hills Swim and Tennis Club, 4139 Alpine Road, File #s: 35-2016 and X7D-13.

Chair Hasko explained that three Commissioners are members of the Alpine Hills Swim and Tennis Club and need to be recused from this agenda item. However, since three Commissioners are needed for a quorum, the club members will draw straws to determine who will remain and participate in the discussion. After the straw draw, Commissioner McKitterick drew the short straw and remained on the dais. Commissioners Targ and Von Feldt were recused and left the room.

Planning Director Pedro presented the staff report. She said the ASCC and two members of the Planning Commission participated in a field meeting this afternoon, accompanied by several neighbors and club board members.

In response to Commissioner McKitterick's question, Planning Director Pedro said the use permit requires 124 parking spaces total, including 94 improved (paved) spaces. She said with this application, they are proposing to provide 108 improved parking spaces. She said the club is confident they can provide the 124 total parking spaces on-site, but the final parking plan has not been submitted at this time.

Vice Chair Gilbert asked how much excavation would occur below the building. Planning Director Pedro said it would be approximately 1 foot from the current elevation.

In response to Vice Chair Gilbert's question, Planning Director Pedro said that no structures are allowed in a setback; however, this application is requesting a play structure, a yoga deck, and a bocce ball court in the setback. Vice Chair Gilbert said she understands that the building is legal non-conforming, but asked if Windmill's uses (sandbox, play structures) had been allowed through a variance. Planning Director Pedro said Windmill School did not have any special permission for their sandbox and play structures. Vice Chair Gilbert asked if the proposed barbecue area was considered a structure. Planning Director Pedro said the barbecue is an addition to the current building so is

considered to be a structure. She pointed out, however, that the sheds and other things in the setback would be removed as part of the project.

A member of the public asked for clarification regarding vacant residential parcel at the back of the club. Planning Director Pedro said there is a property of approximately one acre that was subdivided by the club a number of years ago. She said a single family home could be constructed on the property; however, the club never sold the property and it is still under the ownership of the club. She said with this application the club is intending to use that property. She said all three parcels are zoned residential estate (R-E), and the use permit is what allows the operation of the club on these R-E zoned properties.

Bob Adams, 11 Applewood Lane. Mr. Adams said he was president of the club in 1981 when they made the lot line adjustment. He said there was never an intent to actually execute a sale, but the club wanted to have the ability to sell it if they got into financial trouble or needed to raise money for development.

With no further public comment, Chair Hasko brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

Vice Chair Gilbert said that the footprint of the new club house did not appear substantially larger, although the project is increasing from 9,400 square feet to 13,000 square feet. Planning Director Pedro pointed out on the renderings where the increased square footage would occur and said there was also an excavated area on the lower floor.

Vice Chair Gilbert asked about the location of the temporary facility to be used during construction. Ken Scates, of HGHB Architects, said the current thinking is that the temporary facilities would occupy the tennis court located above the upper parking lot. He said this idea has been supported by staff and local fire officials and also works well with regard to the construction activities. He said they are envisioning a triple-wide trailer to serve as the clubhouse, a single trailer for office functions, a cooking trailer, and a restaurant trailer. He said the members would be entering through Los Trancos Road. Mr. Scates said upon completion of construction, the tennis court would be repaired and reverted to the original use as a tennis court.

Commissioner McKitterick asked regarding the grandfathering rule as it relates to the Roadhouse and the structures that exist there now – the fence, shed, storage cabinets, and playground. Planning Director Pedro said the proposal is only to renovate the Roadhouse, with no expansion to the footprint. Commissioner McKitterick asked if the nonconforming fence in the setback could be replaced with another fence. Planning Director Pedro said the rule is that 25 percent of the length of the legal nonconforming fence can be rebuilt. She said the intent of the legal nonconforming structures ordinance is not to maintain a nonconforming structure in perpetuity, but that at some point the structure will be brought into conformance. Commissioner McKitterick asked if the rule applied item by item for everything in the setback, or if it all got grandfathered in. Planning Director Pedro said with this application, other than the Roadhouse building, all of the accessory structures will be removed except for the perimeter fence. She said if the applicant wants to rebuild the fence, it will require a variance. She said when the nursery school was approved in the 1970's, the Planning Commission granted a variance for the fence. In response to Commissioner McKitterick's question, Planning Director Pedro said the applicant could rebuild part of the fence under the grandfathering clause, and they could put tables and decking in the setback; but a bocce ball court, a barbecue, an outdoor fire pit, or other structures would require a variance.

Commissioner McKitterick asked if staff had received an answer regarding the impervious surfaces. Planning Director Pedro said the design has not been finalized; however, the club said they are

confident that they will be able to adhere to the 59 percent maximum impervious surface area coverage limit.

Commissioner McKitterick asked regarding light spill. Planning Director Pedro said the ASCC mentioned at the field meeting today that lighting will be discussed extensively at their meeting next Thursday.

Commissioner McKitterick asked for clarification regarding building height restrictions. Planning Director Pedro said there are two height measurements – the vertical height of the building and the overall building height. She said the vertical height, at any point, cannot exceed 28 feet and the overall height measurement, which is measured from the lowest point of the building to the highest point of the building, cannot exceed 34 feet, including appurtenances. Mr. Scates said the existing club house structure is over the 28-foot maximum at approximately 32 feet. Commissioner McKitterick pointed out this was irrelevant since the structure is being rebuilt.

Chair Hasko asked for confirmation that the request to move corporate events from the main building to the Roadhouse does not indicate an increased level of use. Joyce Chung, President of Alpine Hills, said the intent is to enable their day-to-day operation to continue even when they have a special event, so they can continue to serve members who are not participating in the special event. Mr. Scates said it was anticipated the building's use would decrease because the school, which was open five days a week, nine months out of the year, will not be there.

After hearing no additional questions, Chair Hasko closed the question session and invited public comment.

Phil Cianfichi, 4115 Alpine Road, said he lives in one of the three homes located behind the club. He said no one on the Commission had discussed the proposal to have trucks enter from Los Trancos Road for deliveries instead of Alpine Road. He said there is a very long road running along the border of the three homes that will be impacted by the trucks. He said the turnaround as depicted in the design plans is literally within 30 yards of his master bedroom. He said there is no such noise currently in their neighborhood, and these deliveries may be happening at all hours. He said all three of the neighbors are represented at this meeting tonight.

Ty Jagerson, 67 Los Trancos Road, said approximately 50 yards of his property line runs along the small road that is proposed to become a bigger road. He said the entire area is a park-like, dog-walking, local neighborhood area with children running around. He said having trucks in there will create a very different use of the area, and the noise issue is a concern. He requested that deliveries continue to occur at the front of the building, saying it seemed to be unnecessary to introduce trucks onto Los Trancos Road which disturbs that neighborhood.

Bob Adams, 11 Applewood Lane, said something needs to be done with the 60-year-old building because occupants of the current structure are in danger in the event of an earthquake. He said the building's current use, as well as the design, is similar to the Town Center. He said the club is trying to comply with the Town's requirements and that the project is very positive for the Town.

Planning Director Pedro said the applicant had prepared a presentation. Chair Hasko called for the applicant's presentation, stating they could resume with public comment after the presentation.

Joyce Chung, President of Alpine Hills, member of Alpine Master Planning Committee, and resident of Portola Valley, thanked the Commission for their service to the Town and consideration of their proposal. She described the history of the club and provided background information on the project. She said the club was originally designed to serve 250 member families, and they now have 700

member families, per their amended conditional use permit. She said there is no intention to increase their membership beyond 700. She said 26 percent of the residents of Portola Valley are members at Alpine Hills, 67 percent of their club membership includes residents of Portola Valley, and 15 percent are residents of Woodside. She said due to the age of the facilities and the increased needs of their members, they began discussing improving the clubhouse and surrounding landscape 10 years ago. She said the facility is outdated and out of compliance with ADA and current health and safety regulations, which they would like to correct. She said the project was delayed for many years as they extended the lease of the Roadhouse to Windmill School while the school searched for a new site. The club's Master Planning Committee concluded that the most efficient and safest solution for their facility would be to rebuild the structure in essentially the same existing footprint. She said 70 percent of their membership voted, and the votes were 2 to 1 in support of the proposed design.

Ms. Chung said they originally planned to renovate the Roadhouse first, using that as a temporary clubhouse while they worked on the main clubhouse, but because Windmill's plans were delayed, the club shifted course and decided to start with the main clubhouse and develop a separate temporary facility, postponing the Roadhouse renovation project. Ms. Chung said the architect, Ken Scates, is LEED certified and very knowledgeable in green building design. She said Mr. Scates has an appreciation for the culture and feel of Alpine Hills and Portola Valley. She said the club has always strived to be a good neighbor, a good landlord, and a good resource for the community. She described the various Town events the club hosts. She said Windmill's departure will mean less people and cars at their facility. She said the traffic flow will be more efficient, and the delivery trucks will not block the road and bicycle lane on Alpine Road, which will improve safety for all. She said the club believes the changes will enhance the quality of life in Portola Valley.

Ken Scates, project architect, showed a slide presentation of the project. He described the preliminary research and studies conducted regarding the project. He said the proposed clubhouse is approximately one-third larger in total area, mostly due to the desperately needed expansion to the kitchen and other support areas. He said the one new functional addition to the clubhouse is a lower-level room for activities such as tennis tournaments, floor exercises, and aerobics.

Mr. Scates said the proposed turnaround will alleviate the congestion that occurs between the clubhouse and Alpine Road. He said although this slightly reduces the parking capacity in the front parking lot, even more is gained in the rear. He said key to the concept is that the service approach to the club would be from a different location. He said currently some delivery trucks arrive from Alpine Road, which is particularly hazardous and congested, and some trucks come off of Los Trancos to the upper parking lot which is a dead-end road with no turnaround. He said they are proposing a loop which will allow trucks to enter and exit and will also increase the parking capacity. He said the pathway for the service vehicles already exists and they are proposing to pave it.

Mr. Scates showed a diagram showing where the proposed increases of square footage are located in the building, and said it does not increase the apparent mass of the building. He said they are proposing to strip the interior of the Roadhouse and renovate, with the new use being a meeting/party room with a prep kitchen and bar and new restrooms. They are proposing to move the existing barbecue function to the outdoor eating area surrounding the Roadhouse. He said the intention is to preserve the historical integrity of the Roadhouse. He said they tried to keep the height of the club house building at, or lower than, the current building, with the exception of the chimney structure which can be easily modified.

Mr. Scates said they hoped to make the building more like a pavilion, glassy and transparent to the extent possible, while also reducing the necessary bulk of a building this size. He said their design follows the architectural guidelines regarding varied roof heights and planes, elements that cast shadows, etc. He said the historical roots of the building are rural architecture with nature materials. He

said the goal is to keep a low profile building, but allow the space called for at the interior. He said from Alpine Road, the building appears small because the abundance of glass has the effect of reducing the overall mass of the building. He said at the lower level, there is currently a projection (the tennis lounge) that is a solid mass whereas the proposed design greatly reduces the appearance of massing.

Chair Hasko invited the public to resume comment.

Phil Cianfichi, 4115 Alpine Road, said his family moved to Portola Valley because of the school district and the community. He said he built his house following the rules and regulations of the Town, such as controlling light spill, selecting an air conditioner with a specific dB level of noise that would not bother neighbors, having less than 20 percent impervious surface on site, etc. He said the club's use permit is allowed 59 percent impervious surface coverage, which does not include the back road that will be paved. He said there has been substantial water runoff into his neighborhood that has caused an issue. He said there is water drainage on the road that runs along the back of the club, and that drainage often overflows and goes across the street into the creek, causing erosion of the area. He said, considering he was restricted as to the dB level of his air conditioning unit, he didn't think that the noise from delivery trucks would be allowed. He said he's lived there 11 years and has had no problem with truck deliveries at Alpine Road. He said the biggest concern of any parent with a child that walks to Corte Madera School from his side of Los Trancos is the intersection of Los Trancos and Alpine Road. He said people coming down the hill barely stop at the stop sign. He said it is already a dangerous intersection, and to add trucks coming out from that intersection onto Alpine Road will further increase that hazard. He asked the Commission to consider both the noise from the trucks coming off of Los Trancos and the length of the driveway that comes off Los Trancos all the way to the back of the club where the trucks will be driving.

Bob Adams said when they prepared the master site plan, the Town indicated the parking was a big concern, and the Town was very specific about pushing the parking to the rear of the site. He said this was not an arbitrary decision on the applicant's part, but was something that the Town asked for and was part of the Master Site plan.

Phil Cianfichi said the concern about the rear of the project is not the parking but the trucks. He said the neighborhood basically uses the area as a park and kids cross the street and walk up and down that back area. He said it's a long straight road, but it's dirt, and cars don't drive fast there. He said that paving that road will enhance the risk of speeding. He said that paving that area is a material change of use and a safety issue. He said for him and his neighbors, it will clearly cause impacts to property value and residents' sleep. He said it is not clear why the deliveries have to be moved to the back.

Joyce Chung said the deliveries, approximately two to three per day, are currently performed mainly along Alpine Road. She said they sometimes pull into the front of the entrance, which blocks traffic going into the parking lot, or they park on Alpine Road on the shoulder, which blocks bicyclists. She said some of the trucks already go through the back entrance via Los Trancos through the upper parking lot and drive in, unload, and then have to back out, activating their back-up beepers because there is no appropriate turnaround.

Eric Quaid, Alpine Hills General Manager, said there is only one very large truck delivery, and most deliveries are made with bakery-sized trucks.

With no further public comment, Chair Hasko brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

Vice Chair Gilbert said she understood about getting the extra foot by digging down, but did not understand the reason for the increase in ceiling height on the second floor. She said it appeared,

since the roof was sloped, that the ceiling height would be higher in the front versus the rear. She asked if there was a need other than a design feature for how that space is used.

Mr. Scates said it had to do with trying to maximize the amount of volume in a space. He said the forward-most point of the Alpine Room is approximately 17 feet, which is a minimum height for a 3,500-square-foot room. He said it has to do with scale. He said the peak of the Alpine Room is currently approximately 19 feet, and the proposal is probably 16 to 17 feet at the highest point in the Alpine Room. Planning Director Pedro said the diagram shows the highest point is at 19.6 feet.

Commissioner McKitterick said Windmill was the first matter he heard when he came on the Planning Commission in January 2005. He said the club was renovating then, and he thanked the club for putting off their renovation plans specifically to accommodate the Windmill school.

Commissioner McKitterick said there are clear rules about the setback. He said he is open to considering a variance regarding the fence. He said the way the space is being used is not attractive when viewed from Portola Road and contains a large, dark fence and one or two big sheds in the front of the property along Alpine Road. Commissioner McKitterick said he would not want to see a decrease in the net number of parking spaces, including the overflow dirt parking in the rear. He said there are regular events at the club where parking overflows onto the street, which they would like to discourage.

Commissioner McKitterick said he would be open to considering a variance regarding the height given the current use, the unique characteristics of this property, and the central location. However, he said there would also be an issue of light spill, which is more of an ASCC concern, and a lighting plan addressing light spill would be required. He said he understands what the applicant is trying to accomplish, but said there are rules that have to be followed. Commissioner McKitterick said impervious surfaces must be addressed, as will water runoff. He said the Commission last dealt with delivery truck noise issues with Roberts Market. He said at that time they discussed disabling back-up alarms for morning deliveries, restricting the hours of delivery, and putting rules in place such as turning off the truck engines and not leaving them running. He said the Town has not received any complaints about noise from Roberts Market deliveries. He said with the Alpine Hills project they will want to discuss specifics such as when the deliveries are occurring, how often, and what rules can be implemented to mitigate impacts. He said if the noise turns out to be a nuisance, there should be an alternate plan in place. He said he assumed it would all be within the rules of the noise ordinance, but beyond those rules, there is a general concern that noise at 6:00 a.m. is different from noise at 5:00 p.m. Commissioner McKitterick said he would like to see a more secure internal bicycle parking area.

Vice Chair Gilbert said she is hopeful something can be worked out in terms of truck delivery restrictions. She said the neighbors need more understanding of exactly how many deliveries and the timing of them. She said she does not have a clear enough understanding of the traffic flow in the area with regard to the safety concerns at the Los Trancos driveway area. She said issues regarding the neighbors near the Roadhouse also need to be addressed. She said the setback may help, as well as informing the neighbors about the scheduling and frequency of events that will be there.

Vice Chair Gilbert said it is usually up to the ASCC to deal with the look and feel of new construction, but because the project is on the Alpine Road Scenic Corridor, she wanted to make a few comments. She said the General Plan helps maintain the rural character of Town. She said in one of the slides shared, although not a view from Portola Road, the massing and glazing looked more modern than would be expected in Portola Valley. She suggested possibly screening to minimize the urban look or suggested that perhaps minor design changes could be warranted. She was also concerned about light spill. Vice Chair Gilbert said the site does not have the circumstances that would normally warrant variances. She asked the applicant to consider alternatives, if possible, to reduce the height.

Vice Chair Gilbert said she understands the 20-foot side yard setback, but is not clear regarding the 75-foot front setback in terms of what can and cannot be done in the area in front of the Roadhouse. Planning Director Pedro said, in terms of requirements, the 75-foot scenic corridor setback functions the same as the 20-foot side yard setback; it's just a deeper setback. She said no structures are allowed in the setback. She said there are some amenities allowed, such as decking, chairs, and tables. Vice Chair Gilbert said it is somewhat linked to a variance with the fence. She said if it was an open-style fence, the setback area should be clear of structures to the degree possible. She said if the Commission supports a variance for the fence, then that is less of an issue because what's would be behind the fence would not be visible. Planning Director Pedro said the original fence variance was granted because of the use for the nursery school. She said the Commission may discuss alternatives to the current fence because this is a change of use.

Chair Hasko said she is glad to see this project moving forward and said the efforts are significant. She said it is exciting to see the project move forward for the benefit of the members and the community. She said there are rules to deal with since the project is in the Scenic Corridor. She said if the Commission will be pressed to consider a variance from the default rules, the applicant should bring very specific requests and basis for those requests. She said, for example, specifics on what they want to do with the front fence should be provided in the proposal. She said she is familiar with the area in terms of traffic and understands those issues. She said adding trucks to the mix, in an area where there is already a prevalent inclination to speed, must be carefully considered and understood. She said they will need more specifics about the deliveries. She said it should be discussed if a circle would eliminate the need for backing up on a regular basis. She said those things should be considered for the neighbors' privacy and sense of peace. She said she would like to confer with Public Works Director Howard Young to see a traffic analysis of the intersection would be warranted.

Chair Hasko said she appreciated that the amount of glass will lighten the mass, but shares the light spill concern. She said that the project is in the Scenic Corridor, and it will be important to have a plan to mitigate the light spill. She said they had discussed tinted glass and different types of shades, which should be further explored, as well as descriptions provided of how they would be used to mitigate the light spill issue. She said the parking lot lights must also be considered. Chair Hasko said that while she understands the piece of the roof that goes out beyond the actual wall structure is great for people in the building, it does tend to increase the mass visually, especially from Alpine Road. She suggested the applicant examine the materials, paints, or finishes to see if there is a way to minimize the visual impact. Chair Hasko agreed with Commissioner McKitterick that the Commission must work within the existing rules. She said there are ways of looking at variances, and the applicant should clarify what they want and why.

Commissioner McKitterick asked how many traffic trips Windmill has every day at that location. Karen Tate said there were two sets of 24 children, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, which the parents drop off and then leave. Commissioner McKitterick said those 96 trips need to be figured in. He said he noticed that people prefer to park in the front. He said when there is no Windmill parking, there will be more room for members, and the number of people parking in the back may decrease.

Chair Hasko said the Commission will need more information regarding the impervious surfaces and the water flow issues.

In response to Mr. Quaid's question, Planning Director Pedro said the Public Works Director will look at the plan and see if there is a traffic study warranted. If so, staff will request the applicant submit a study to the Town.

Chair Hasko concluded the preliminary review. Planning Director Pedro said that the ASCC will be reviewing the project at their meeting on October 27 at 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 7, 2016.

The approval of minutes was postponed because Vice Chair Gilbert will be abstaining and Commissioner McKitterick has not yet reviewed them.

ADJOURNMENT [8:40 p.m.]