

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, MAY 3, 2017,
SCHOOLHOUSE, TOWN CENTER, 765 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028

Chair Gilbert called the Planning Commission regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Planning Director Pedro called the roll.

Present: Commissioners Goulden and Hasko; Chair Gilbert

Recused: Commissioner Von Feldt and Vice Chair Targ

Staff Present: Debbie Pedro, Planning Director
Cynthia Richardson, Planner

Town Council Liaison: Jeff Aalfs

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- (a) Preliminary review of a Conditional Use Permit, height and setback Variances, Architectural Review and Site Development Permit for a new clubhouse and renovation of the Historic Mangini Roadhouse (currently being used by Windmill School) and associated site improvements. Alpine Hills Swim and Tennis Club, 4139 Alpine Road, File #'s 35-2016 and X7D-13.

Chair Gilbert explained that three out of the five Planning Commissioners are members of the Alpine Hills Swim and Tennis Club. As a quorum of the Planning Commission is required, previously, the Commissioners drew straws and Commissioner McKitterick was selected. As Commissioner McKitterick has been replaced by Commissioner Goulden, Commissioner Goulden will be now complete the quorum. Commissioner Von Feldt and Vice Chair Targ will not be present for this review or the final review of this application.

Planning Director Pedro said there was a Special Joint ASCC and Planning Commission Field Meeting this afternoon for this project, located at 4139 Alpine Road. She recommended that the Commission review the related information and give the applicant direction on the items as detailed in the staff report.

Planning Director Pedro said they've received comments from two neighbors, both of whom attended the field meeting today. One neighbor's concerns appear to have been mitigated with the new design of the loop driveway which will need to be submitted by the applicant for review. The other neighbor discussed noise concerns from the pool. The applicant proposed an 8-foot sound fence to mitigate noise. Staff also received an email from Ms. Corley, a neighbor across from Alpine Road, expressing concerns about construction activity.

Philip Korchek, Project architect, said there is no change in overall use and no new activities have been planned. He said they are proposing changes to accommodate the needs of the club more efficiently and in a modern facility. He presented a slide show describing the proposed project and design revisions.

Chair Gilbert invited questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Hasko said the applicant mentioned deliveries would occur on Saturday; however, the documents in the packet indicate only Monday through Friday deliveries. Planner Richardson said Page 7 of the staff report should have included the Saturday delivery.

Commissioner Hasko asked for details regarding the shades for the glass. Mr. Korchek pointed out the part of the glass that would be shaded. He said the intent is to reduce as much light spill as possible and still enable them to function. Mr. Korchek said the lights will be on a sensor.

Commissioner Hasko asked what steps the applicant was taking to address the recent noise complaints. The applicant said the current delivery schedule has been somewhat random because there is not a designated delivery spot. He said they are directing deliveries to one location to improve safety. He advised that they are monitoring deliveries more closely. He said the second complaint was related to a fundraiser with outside amplified music, and it was a mistake.

Commissioner Goulden asked about overflow parking. Planning Director Pedro said the Use Permit requires 124 parking spaces at buildout. She said the applicant is providing 124 improved parking spaces, and there may be spaces available along the rear driveway for additional overflow. In response to Commissioner Goulden's question, Planning Director Pedro said the proposal meets the minimum parking requirement.

Chair Gilbert asked if, considering the events over the last decade, the club had found a need for more than 124 parking spaces and what they did for overflow parking. The applicant said they did use the overflow space. He said there are quite a few areas where people can park – non-landscaped areas next to the driveway and near the trash area. He said they are not losing all of those overflow spaces and, since they will have more improved parking, the overflow areas will probably be used less. Chair Gilbert asked if the applicant could estimate how many additional cars could fit in the overflow area. The applicant said more than 20. Chair Gilbert asked how many events a year would require that extra parking. The applicant estimated that they use the overflow parking two to three times a year. In response to Chair Gilbert's question, the applicant said although, historically, additional spaces across the street have been available to them, in the 4 years he's been there, they have not had to use that area.

Commissioner Goulden asked if there needed to be a review of the temporary facilities. Planning Director Pedro said the temporary facilities are not part of the Use Permit. She said staff wanted to present the entire project so the Commission is made aware there will be temporary facilities available because the club intends to continue their operation during construction. In response to Chair Gilbert's question, Planning Director Pedro said the approval of the temporary facilities will be by staff review, and they welcome any Commissioners' questions or comments.

Commissioner Goulden asked regarding the handling of Ms. Corley's concerns. Planning Director Pedro said the concern was to make sure that construction workers are properly vetted, which came about as a concern following the recent home burglaries that occurred in Town. Mr. Korchek said they will be doing a background check on contractors working on site through a third party. He said they usually only do that on public jobs; however, the club requested that be a requirement. Planning Director Pedro said staff asks for business licenses from contractors but do not conduct background checks as a routine practice.

In response to Chair Gilbert's question, Mr. Korchek confirmed that the reduction in square footage of windows was due solely to the change in height and not a result of changing design to remove windows.

Chair Gilbert asked Planning Director Pedro if there were any 8-foot-tall fences in Town. Planning Director Pedro said the Windmill School received a variance for an 8-foot sound wall as a noise mitigation measure for the neighbor on Wyndham Drive, which was approved by the Planning Commission last year.

Chair Gilbert noted that the Roadhouse fence was once horse-rail fencing as shown in an old photo in the historic resource evaluation report.

Chair Gilbert asked if an acoustical engineer had been consulted regarding the sound wall. Mr. Korchek said to effectively control sound from being projected, it must be controlled from the line of sight. He said there is some challenge in that Alpine Road is slightly elevated. Chair Gilbert asked if the acoustical engineers took decibel measurements. She said her greater concern was for the neighbor along the side. Mr. Korchek said there was a report from a study in 2006, but no study was done with the current proposal. Mr. Korchek agreed to provide the 2006 study to the Commission.

Commissioner Hasko asked regarding the length of the 8-foot fence at Windmill School. Planning Director Pedro said it spans the entire length of the neighbor's property.

With no further questions, Chair Gilbert invited public comment.

Philip Cianfichi, 4115 Alpine Road. He thanked the club for addressing concerns about back-up noises with the change to the circular driveway. He said he wants to make sure that when the club revises and resubmits the plans, there will be a specific spot for drop-offs so that vehicles do not pull in and back up to the closest spot to unload. He asked if there was a setback between a residential fence and the overflow parking because sometimes they park right up against his back fence. Planning Director Pedro said there is no setback. Mr. Cianfichi said the 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. delivery time on weekdays is very reasonable. He said, with regard to the Saturday deliveries showing up at 9:00 a.m., if it was known what that delivery is and if there is a possibility it can be pushed back. Mr. Quade said it is usually a produce delivery and he can check to see if that delivery time can be changed.

Pat Lee, 4145 Alpine Road. Ms. Lee said for almost 30 years they have had an issue with the fence. She said when she moved there in 1988, the previous owner was very upset that the club had moved their fence to the property line to build the Windmill playground fence. Ms. Lee said that did not bother her, but a few years later the club decided, without her knowledge, to remove the fence, which protected her house from the pool all the way past the playground and back barbecue area. She said her living rooms and bedrooms were exposed. She said they consulted a lawyer to help them address the problem. She said on October 26, 1995, they came to an agreement that the club would carry out the planting between the buffer on the PG&E easement and also rebuild the double fence that had been removed. She said she wanted to make sure that the buffer fence on the east side of the club remains. She said she talked to Mr. Quade this afternoon, and he agreed that the fence should stay there. Her concern is that the fence is near the end of its life. She said that someone at the field meeting today was opposed to the variance for the 8-foot fence. She said the club activities have changed since their 1995 agreement, and it is much more active now. She invited Commissioners to view the situation from her side of the fence. She said her tenants are moving, and she has trouble finding new tenants because of the upcoming construction, which has caused her some hardship.

Leslie Murveit, 220 Erica Way, Menlo Park. She said she's been a member of the club for 15 years and supports the project. She said it will be a great improvement to the club for members' use and will be aesthetically pleasing for the community. She said the general manager, Mr. Quade, is professional and has a done a great job managing the club and interfacing with the neighbors. She said they've done considerable work to comply with the Town's requirements while also being considerate of the neighbors' interests.

Marge DeStaebler, 31 Santa Maria, representing the Conservation Committee. Ms. DeStaebler said that neither of the iterations she's seen has included the Conservation Committee's recommendations about the *Carex tumulicola*. She requested the applicant choose a different plant from the approved grasses list. She said the Committee also encouraged removing the invasive trees (acacias). She said they were supportive and appreciative of the remainder of the planting plan, the drainage pattern, and the retention of the oaks.

Eric Quade, General Manager, Alpine Hills. Mr. Quade said 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. is when they currently receive their deliveries, and they will do their best to remain within that limit, but they would like to have the delivery times changed to 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in keeping with the Town's normal delivery schedule guidelines. He said they are beginning to remove the non-native species, including the acacias.

Bill Leckonby, 455 Golden Oak Drive. Mr. Leckonby said he is head of the Alpine Hills Master Plan Committee. He said they had asked for a variance for the fence at the back of the property that is adjacent to Mr. Cianfichi's property. He said they are removing that variance request and do not intend to alter that fence. He said the changed plan will be submitted so there's no back-up, and it will be a turnaround that they have agreed upon with Mr. Cianfichi. He said that issue has been resolved. He said on Alpine Road, in front of the Roadhouse and on the side between the parking lot entrance and the front of the Roadhouse, is the most probable place where the Roadhouse will be visible. He said that area will have mesh fencing; opening up the view to the historic building. He said along Alpine Road itself, in front of the Roadhouse, there is currently a 6-foot high wooden fence that was approved for Windmill. He said if they have to, they will leave that fence untouched. He said the variance request is to improve that fence. Chair Gilbert said she thought there was a request in the application for an 8-foot tall sound wall along the property line with Ms. Lee. Mr. Leckonby said it is not needed unless it's a mitigating measure and will help solve issues.

Phil Cianfichi, 4115 Alpine Road. Mr. Cianfichi said they no longer need the 8-foot fence along his property.

With no other public comment, Chair Gilbert brought the issue back to the Commission for discussion.

Chair Gilbert said she was supportive of the plantings shown in the rendering, with the bottom floor being covered by plantings, effectively reducing the apparent mass of the building, but said those would be new plantings and would take time to build up to that height.

Commissioner Hasko said she was appreciative of the efforts that have been made by the club.

Commissioner Hasko said she is concerned about how effective the window shading will be when the trees are gone. She said a goal in the General Plan is to have minimal lighting so the presence of development at night is difficult to determine, and the subtle changes between night and day can be seen. She said she recognizes this is an already existing club, but wants to make sure they do what they can to not amplify the visual impact, given the increase in glass. She said it will be jarring to see a very marked change in the amount of emitted light at that location.

Commissioner Hasko said the overflow parking sounds manageable, but she would like to see more data on the number of events to ensure that it is sufficient. She does not want to create a situation where people have to park along the road, impacting the trails along that road.

Commissioner Hasko said the Trails Committee submitted seven points. She said Alpine Road is one of the main equestrian routes, and they should be marked appropriately. She advised that she will be looking to make sure the Committee's comments are considered.

Commissioner Goulden said he was supportive of the project's direction, and it appears that most of the issues have been addressed. He said as a usage for the overall property, there is no question the existing Use Permit being expanded to include the property on the Roadhouse is a natural fit. He said the Roadhouse was clearly used for those kinds of purposes historically. He said the plants will need time to grow, but it is preferable to planting fast-growing plants that are less appropriate.

Chair Gilbert agreed with the comments regarding making sure that the overflow parking is adequately addressed. She said the applicant may want to highlight the number of large events in their final submission, explaining why they believe their parking plan is adequate.

Chair Gilbert expressed concerns regarding the cross walk and asked if there was anything that could improve its safety. Planning Director Pedro said the Bicycle, Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Committee has occasionally discussed pedestrian traffic along Alpine Road in general, and she will find out more. In response to Commissioner Goulden's question, Chair Gilbert said that issue comes into play with the Use Permit and the use of overflow parking across the street.

Chair Gilbert praised the applicant's efforts in responding to the Commission's direction and in working with the neighbors. She said she was supportive of the CUP in general.

Chair Gilbert said that Finding 4 for the CUP is that the proposed use will not adversely affect the abutting property or the permitted use thereof and should be considered when discussing the fences.

Commissioner Hasko asked if the 8-foot fence that will be built at Windmill School will be within the 75-foot setback. Planning Director Pedro said it would not because it was located towards the rear of the property.

Commissioner Hasko said she understands that the club is willing to accommodate for the neighbor; however, a goal listed under the General Plan is to minimize structures that interfere with a view of the surroundings – minimal use of fencing except when necessary to control animals and children on properties and that of a design which is minimally visible. She said the proposed fence is between two properties, and an 8-foot fence would be a significant visual change. She wondered if that would be balanced with sufficient acoustical reduction. She said Ms. Lee is also concerned with the impact of construction noise on her renters. Commissioner Hasko said she would want to look at the measures that could be taken to communicate with the neighbor on these issues.

Commissioner Goulden said he is not inclined to support an 8-foot sound wall. He said the club has not substantially changed their use, and he would have a hard time making findings for a variance. He said Windmill was clearly a new and different use of the property.

Chair Gilbert said she is inclined to support the 8-foot sound wall. She said when the first CUP was put in place, there may not have been a noise issue. She said when she walked past the pool at the field meeting, it was very noisy, and she would guess that noise is much greater than the noise from the students at Windmill. She said no one sees the sound wall other than the impacted neighbor and the people in the pool. She said she would like them to do what they can to minimize that noise. She said it would be helpful to have statistical information provided by an acoustical engineer, as they had with the Windmill project. She said if there is an issue with the height of the fence nearer the street, along the Lees' driveway, perhaps it could be lowered there, where the noise is not as great of an issue and the activity is not as intensive. She said there are very few places in town where a residence is abutting a property with this sort of intense use and is an unusual circumstance. For those reasons, Chair Gilbert said she would like the applicant to mitigate those issues so long as it was not visible to anyone other than the applicant and the neighbor.

Commissioner Goulden said he would prefer that be achieved with plantings. Chair Gilbert said because of the intensity of this use, a wall plus planting in the buffer zone between the two fences would be good, but plants alone would not solve the issue. Planning Director Pedro said planting would help to mitigate a privacy impact, but would not be effective for sound. Mr. Korchek said there was a study done in 2006, which found that a 6-foot high sound fence helps with noise mitigation, and an 8-foot high sound fence helps even more by blocking the visual impact. Chair Gilbert suggested he share that report with staff so staff can determine if that report is sufficient to answer the Commission's questions. Commissioner Hasko asked if there was information in that report regarding the difference of functionality of the current fence versus a sound fence. Mr. Korchek said that was addressed in the report.

Chair Gilbert invited discussion regarding the 6-foot solid sound wall fence proposed along Alpine Road.

Commissioner Goulden said, from the standpoint of usage, the 6-foot fence would tend to make that space nicer to use as a patio. He said what makes it unusual is the historical aspect of the structure. He said there should be a fence there because there will be children in the area. He said plantings will be important as far as providing a barrier from the street, regardless of what size of fence is put there.

Commissioner Hasko said a 4-foot see-through fence would not require a variance, but would cause hardship on the property given that there are children who could scale that fence. She said a 6-foot see-through fence would need a variance, but would have a visual benefit as far as being able to see the Roadhouse. She said she would prefer it if sound were not the issue. She said it was difficult to balance the sound issues and the impact of that on the actual use of the Roadhouse because it is in a more noisy area. She does not know how much mitigation the current fence has on the sound factor. She said the applicant has the right to leave the fence in place, and there is not much of a difference if it will be visually the same but a different composition that is more effective at mitigating the sound. However, she said, this is right on the Alpine corridor, and the fence does strike passers by as out of place. Commissioner Hasko said she would prefer the see-through 6-foot fence.

Chair Gilbert said she is in support of the open corten steel fence, she is torn about the 6-foot solid fence along Alpine Road. She said on the one hand, it would be great to showcase the historic building with an open fence, but she is not quite sure of what the view will be in front of it. On the other hand, she said there was a fair amount of noise there, even with the current 6-foot solid fence, and people will want to be able to sit and talk. She said that because it is a solid fence now, she might be supportive of a 6-foot solid sound wall.

Planning Director Pedro asked if there was consensus, further discussion, or guidance about the 8-foot solid sound wall along the Lees' property.

Commissioner Hasko said she is hesitant to grant a variance for that within the 75-foot setback unless she has data proving significant noise reduction. In response to Chair Gilbert's question, Commissioner Hasko said she would be okay with a 6-foot tall fence in the setback and then increasing to 8 feet.

Commissioner Goulden said there would be slight improvement with the fence being limited to 6 feet in height in front, but that it still feels like not enough use has changed to warrant a different fence. Chair Gilbert said the original CUP was granted in 1958, and there has been change in use. She said she does not see use change as being an issue. She said that when a resident comes forward with an issue regarding a CUP, the Commission will review it and consider a variance if proposed, even after a CUP had been issued. She said it has been 10 years since anyone has looked at this issue.

Chair Gilbert said they will factor in ASCC comments and any information an acoustical engineer can provide when considering the fence issue.

Planning Director Pedro said the project will be reviewed by the ASCC on Monday. She said the applicant will submit revisions based on the various items discussed. Once the review is completed by staff, the project will be scheduled for their final ASCC and Planning Commission hearings.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 19, 2017.

The approval of minutes was continued to the next meeting because there was no quorum this evening.

ADJOURNMENT [8:39 p.m.]