

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, JULY 5, 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 Hasko and Von Feldt; Vice Chair Targ; Chair Gilbert

Absent: Commissioner Goulden

Council Liaison: Councilmember Aalfs (absent)

Staff Present: Debbie Pedro, Planning Director
Arly Cassidy, Associate Planner

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Antonio Cremona, Owner of the hair salon located at 104 Portola Road, said he opened the salon a year ago and his clients have suggested opening a small coffee bar outside the salon, which he believes is a great use for the landscape area next to the building. He said Mr. Jelich who owns the property, is very supportive of this project. He said he spoke with Planning Director Pedro and things have been put on hold. He said he is looking to add an approximately 100-square foot kiosk-type building and 300 square feet of sitting area and an outdoor patio to provide Portola Valley residents an opportunity to sit and enjoy good coffee and the greenery of Portola Valley. Planning Director Pedro said the property is governed by a use permit. She said staff has had email exchanges with Mr. Cremona explaining the process for modifying the use permit to allow an additional use or business on the property. She said the next step is for Mr. Cremona to submit an application so the Planning Commission can formally hear the request. Mr. Cremona said the landlords have an issue with paying \$14,000 and then waiting six to ten months to see if it will be allowed. He said those fees represent about 80 percent of the entire business investment, and the landlords have suggested he present the idea before the Planning Commission.

Chair Gilbert explained that it could not be discussed because it was not on the agenda, and they will decide if it is something that gets handled offline with staff or if it should be agendized in the future.

Danna Breen, 4680 Alpine Road. Ms. Breen said she was working with the Jeliches about the property at the corner, and Mr. Cremona happened to walk by and told her his narrative. She told him that it merited more exploration. She said the Town needs more vibrant gathering places for people in Town, and she was personally disappointed that Roberts did not put up a plaza or gathering zone around their building. She said Portola Valley calls itself a sustainability community, but there is an exodus of cars leaving every day because the Town does not provide enough services for the people of the Town. She said one complication is the added burdens of getting things approved along the Scenic Corridor. She said she thinks the Town needs to revisit the Zoning Ordinance or some sort of dispensation for things like this. She said there are incredible opportunities to have these little popup kiosks, such as a dog grooming kiosk, a bicycle repair kiosk, etc. She suggested the Town open themselves up to the idea of little things popping up. She hoped the Planning Commission would consider Mr. Cremona's idea, which he is considering at the request of his customers.

Planning Director Pedro clarified that the \$14,000 includes the permit fee and deposit, which is set by the Town Council. She said perhaps the fee schedule could be reviewed. She said another issue is that this parcel is governed by a use permit with specific allowed uses and any modifications or

changes will require an amendment to the use permit. With regard to pop-ups, Planning Director Pedro said perhaps they could look at the possibility of temporary use permits.

Commissioner Von Feldt asked if it would be appropriate to request agendaing a discussion of barriers for small businesses.

Vice Chair Targ said it would be an interesting item to agendaize. He said they should consider exploring micro-projects as a way to have more vibrant, walkable points of interest in the community.

Chair Gilbert suggested agendaing an item to discuss the current process and how other municipalities are addressing pop-ups and micro-uses.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Preliminary Architectural Review and Site Development Permit for a New Residence, Accessory Dwelling Unit, Swimming Pool, and Cabana, File #26-2017, 200 Goya Road, Anderson Residence

Associate Planner Cassidy said the ASCC and Planning Commission held a joint site visit at the site on June 26, 2017, where they viewed the story poles, the adjacent Jasper Ridge, and discussed the proposal. The ASCC recently conducted their preliminary review and provided feedback. She said the applicant has not yet had the opportunity to respond to the ASCC comments. Associate Planner Cassidy presented the staff report, including additional information based on the ASCC feedback. She reviewed the General Plan regulations that apply to some of the issues with the project.

Chair Gilbert invited the applicant to comment.

Ben Langford, Landscape Architect, said there was discussion about using some of the fill to build up the area below the pool to gain height to plant screening plants and reduce off-haul. He asked Associate Planner Cassidy regarding her comment about removing the olive trees. She said an ASCC Commissioner expressed preference for removal of them. Mr. Langford said they had proposed fruitless olives, and he thought the ASCC found those acceptable. He said that the placement of the three-oak cluster will remove visibility of the second story from Jasper Ridge. He said they are working on renderings.

Commissioner Von Feldt, who was the liaison at the ASCC meeting, said that it had been pointed out that although the projected water usage is less than the maximum, it was still in the top 2 percent of water users in Town. She said the applicant said their intent was to water the plants only to get them established, and they are all native California plants. She said the Conservation Committee and others pointed out that the plants were more meadow plants, and the site was more chaparral in habitat, with thin soil, steep slopes, and very hot. She said there was a lot of discussion about the down lights because the project is on a knoll, and the lights are much brighter than expected when viewed from below. She said the ASCC did not have many comments or concern regarding grading. Associate Planner Cassidy said there seemed to be some tension between the desire to have less grading and the desire to lower the roofline with the possibility of pushing the building into the hill. Commissioner Von Feldt added that the ASCC acknowledged that it made sense for the project to use the existing building pad, but that also put it at the highest point, and they discussed whether or not that met the General Plan guidelines.

Chair Gilbert invited questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Hasko asked about the ASCC's comments regarding buildup of soil at the top of the knoll to plant additional screening plants. Associate Planner Cassidy said additional fill was not specifically discussed, but planting as much as possible for screening received general approval. She said if cut was happening anyway, keeping more on-site as fill was generally approved.

Vice Chair Targ asked if Jasper Ridge was a public or private facility. Associate Planner Cassidy said it is a biological preserve owned by Stanford University and is the site of a number of studies, and has communication with a number of sites worldwide related to those studies. She said they conduct public and private docent-led tours, but it is not generally open to the public. She confirmed that it is a private enterprise, adding that it is within the planning scope of Portola Valley. Commissioner Von Feldt said several Town residents are certified docents who have their own access and oftentimes lead hikes on the trails. Vice Chair Targ said the applicant appears to be sympathetic to Jasper Ridge and the occasional residents who walk along the trail there and is looking to screen the property. He said he wants to see those renderings and how much they mitigate the view conditions for those who use Jasper Ridge as well as the view from the applicant's property down to the buildings in Jasper Ridge.

Vice Chair Targ said the second story appears to have a lot of potential light and asked if the ASCC expressed concern about light spill. Associate Planner Cassidy said there was not a specific discussion of light spill toward Jasper Ridge, but the main concerns by Tony Barnosky, Executive Director of Jasper Ridge, seemed to be the view of the building itself, as well as invasive plant species. Commissioner Von Feldt said ASCC Chair Dave Ross provided a lengthy explanation about why the second floor matters and the regional impacts, even though there were no concerns expressed by immediate neighbors, explaining that if the applicants have a 360-degree distant view, everyone in the distance can also see their structure, particularly when it's lit up at night.

Vice Chair Targ said it appeared the property has been in a damaged condition as far back as the 1930s. He said he was not concerned about the amount of grading. He said it will be interesting to see if the water usage can be reduced. He said the applicant should get guidance about appropriate trees to plant.

Commissioner Hasko asked if there was a plan to have a rainwater catchment system to take advantage of any rainfall on the site. He said the rainwater capture typically does not work out financially due to the small amount captured and confirmed the roof is not set up to collect rainwater. The applicant said there is no plan for gray water currently. Commissioner Hasko said those types of things may be helpful considering the desire for more landscape and irrigation, and suggest they evaluated whether it is a viable option.

Commissioner Von Feldt asked staff when the shower-to-landscape pre-plumbing would be a requirement. Planning Director Pedro said the pre-plumbing is currently required in the construction drawings as part of the building permit process.

Commissioner Von Feldt asked if the team had a chance to discuss the plant palette after receiving the ASCC feedback. The applicant said the plant palette has not yet been discussed, but they have looked at some initial reductions. He said the preliminary look at numbers reduces the irrigation demand by 25 percent without changing any species and reduces the developed and irrigated area by 25 percent.

Chair Gilbert asked about the temporary construction fence just below the pool. She said the discussion had been that the fill would go as much as 20 feet beyond the fence, which is reflected in the grading plans; however, at the site visit, Mr. Walker, the project architect, said the fill would only go to the fence and not below the fence, which would cover up and remove the plants that are already there. Mr. Langford said that can be studied further. He said some of it may be impacted by whether or not they try to use more fill on-site.

Chair Gilbert said Commissioner Goulden, who could not be present, asked if, with the exception of the pool, there was any place where more than 2 feet of soil was being removed. Mr. Langford said there was not.

Chair Gilbert invited comments or questions from the public. Hearing none, she brought the issue back to the Commission for discussion.

Chair Gilbert said the water use seems high, will be expensive, and will cause an issue for the homeowner during future water crises. Mr. Langford said there was a comment at the ASCC meeting that the proposed water usage was in the top 1 or 2 percent of water users. He asked what those numbers were based on. Planning Director Pedro said they were based on Cal Water's records of water usage in Portola Valley. Chair Gilbert said anything that can be done to reduce that water usage will be beneficial.

Commissioner Von Feldt said the soil on the site is so thin and hot that the fear is the owners will need to water all the time so it does not go dormant. She said she would encourage more of a shrub and mulch kind of look. She said the June grass meadow closer in will need to be irrigated to maintain any green. Mr. Langford said they've equipped a lot of properties with temporary irrigation systems for establishment of plants. He said those systems are no longer used once the plants are established, but having them in the ground can also work as fire suppression in the event of a fire. Commissioner Von Feldt said between the irrigated area and the chaparral, they might consider planting some of the species that are already there, such as the toyon, the lemonade berry, and the oaks.

Vice Chair Targ said he is not opposed to the height of the structure, but is concerned about the creation of a lighthouse effect that spills light to a broader area, which would affect the character in terms of creating more ambient light and more visibility from the other areas within Town and regionally. He said he would be interested in seeing potential light spill minimized, and that sinking the house down seemed more plausible than eliminating the second story.

Vice Chair Targ was supportive of using the off-haul grading productively on-site, but was not opposed to it going offsite.

Commissioner Hasko said she is one of the Commissioners who has been hiking in Jasper Ridge and that there is a decent amount of use there. She said it should not be concluded that the night light and nighttime visibility is not an issue just because it wasn't mentioned during the site visit. She said that mountain lions are affected by light spill and she is aware that they have been photographed in the Preserve. She said there is good potential for light spill impact on Jasper Ridge activities, and the enjoyment of the experience in hiking through there is also impacted. She said the General Plan dictates that the buildings in town are supposed to be subservient to the shape of the land. She would like to see the building not be placed at the top of the knoll. She said she would be open to being more lenient on the grading in order to achieve the building being more set into the land, and also hopefully, mitigating the light spill.

Commissioner Von Feldt said other projects have been approved with similar grading numbers, and it is not unreasonable. She said keeping some of the fill on site on the already scraped area would not be harmful, but she would not support going too far beyond where they're removing the trees because of the introduction of invasives.

Commissioner Von Feldt said that at the ASCC meeting there was consistent feedback about the second story, lowering the house, or moving it down. She said the Planning Commission should provide feedback on a few possible scenarios. She said, as in some of the Blue Oaks projects, they

should consider allowing for more grading so the house is not so prominent on the hill, despite the increased off-haul or site disturbance, because the longer-term impact will be reduced.

Commissioner Von Feldt said they generally discourage creating artificial landforms, preferring natural landforms. She said the plans make sense, and adding the fill to plant trees is fine, but she would not support a whole second knoll on the north end.

Chair Gilbert shared Commissioner Goulden's thoughts after the field meeting. He said although the amount of grading seemed like a relatively large number, he thought it was warranted in this case and would improve the overall situation. He said the hilltop was previously heavily disturbed, and the proposed smoothing and rounding should result in a more natural end result. He said one of the largest grade changes was in the line of sight from the Jasper Ridge trail, which could be used to enable new brush shrub and planting per the suggestion of the Conservation Committee that would help shield the site.

Chair Gilbert said she supported increasing the amount of cut to lower the building. She was supportive of spreading that cut around the disturbed area, but not below the fence because it will dramatically change the existing natural chaparral. She understands they also don't want to have a sudden drop-off and understands they are dealing with a couple different issues there, but should factor in the consideration of the chaparral disturbance. She said she would encourage screening to help with the view from Jasper Ridge.

Commissioner Von Feldt said the materials and architecture fit well with the site. She thanked the applicants for adding the ADU, which helps with the Town's housing goals.

Commissioner Hasko said it is a carefully thought out project and will be a positive use for the site.

Vice Chair Targ said this is an opportunity to heal a broken piece of land.

The applicant said, in addition to reusing the building pad, they have worked closely around the existing oaks, particularly on the south side of the building. He said the garage entry straddles the two large groupings of oaks, which helps the screening from Goya. He said any significant lowering of the building will impact their ability to safeguard those oaks. He said it would also result in higher retaining walls in order to get into the garage.

Vice Chair Targ asked if it would be helpful to have a member of the Planning Commission be available to the applicant as a sounding board since they've heard such a variety of suggestions. Chair Gilbert said most of the comments Vice Chair Targ mentioned are actually ASCC-driven, and she would have concerns about driving from a Planning Commission standpoint. Vice Chair Targ said then it may also be helpful to have someone from the ASCC as the applicant may find it helpful to have access to the Commission members.

Planning Director Pedro said it is unusual for individual Commissioners to be advising an applicant on a private development project as it may not be representative of the views of the rest of the Commission. She said it is also best practice to not express opinions to an applicant until the item is brought before the entire Commission in a public setting, where other stakeholders have had an opportunity to comment on the project. Vice Chair Targ said that while that might pose an administrative problem, it poses no problem from a legal standpoint. He said if he was an applicant under these circumstances, he would absolutely want to seek out the advice of the ASCC.

Chair Gilbert said the applicant can go back to the ASCC and have a meeting to share the direction they're going and get the ASCC's view as opposed to picking one member.

Commissioner Von Feldt said she did not hear any major objections to the grading quantities. She said the applicants heard concerns about the height from both the ASCC and the Planning Commission. She said it is up to the team to figure out how to solve it.

Mr. Walker said that after walking Jasper Ridge, he feels confident they can screen most of the building. He said they have been very careful to keep windows oriented more toward the north to mitigate both solar heat gain and light spill. He said they are aware of neighbors to the south and west and they've tried to keep most of the windows facing the other way. He said by planting additional trees in the northeast corner, it will take care of Jasper Ridge and any concerns from folks across the valley. He said the second story is already 5 feet below the allowed maximum. He said it is quite a drastic change to start pushing things down further. He said they did several early studies of different scenarios before arriving at the current plans being presented. Mr. Langford said there are several young trees that are already in place to begin the screening process for the view along the property line at the northwest.

Commissioner Von Feldt asked if there was any confusion about the oak versus olive trees around the house. Mr. Langford said he did not recall suggestions about removing the olives. Commissioner Von Feldt said the Conservation Committee was not saying they didn't want oaks, but they cautioned about roots intruding in the foundation. She said one ASCC member mentioned getting rid of the olives, but it was not a consensus.

Planning Director Pedro explained the next steps to the applicant.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2a. Priory School Annual Report per Conditional Use Permit X7D-30

Planning Director Pedro said the school is required to submit an annual report to the Town on the status of their compliance with the conditions of the use permit. She said that if the Commission finds the need to agendaize this topic for a public hearing, staff will do so. Mike Calbert from the Priory was present to answer any questions.

Commissioner Von Feldt asked if the track was available for public access to residents when school is not in session. Mr. Calbert said it is available and is used for that purpose. Planning Director Pedro said according to Tim Molak, the school has seen an increase of general public use of the track, and they are trying to gauge how much of that usage is by non-Priory students. She said at this time, individual Portola Valley residents may use the track when not in use by the school. Planning Director Pedro said the use permit calls out a list of organized groups that are allowed access to the facility, subject to authorization by the school, but there was no condition about usage by individual residents.

Planning Director Pedro pointed out Item #2 on the Annual Report, which indicates that the Priory is allowed a maximum student body of 350, with a maximum of 50 of those in the residential/boarder programs. She said the Town uses the average daily attendance (ADA) to count toward the 350 maximum. She said in the last two years the ADA has been 355 and 356. She said in reviewed the annual reports of the last 10 years, the Planning Commission had allowed minor variations to the maximum enrollment; however, they said that the use permit should be revisited if exceeding the 350 maximum became a trend. Chair Gilbert pointed out that the attempt to reduce enrollment numbers was noted in the annual report.

Chair Gilbert asked if the Priory advertised to encourage Portola Valley student enrollment. Mr. Calbert said the Portola Valley families at the school are their advertisement. He said there is also additional consideration given in the application process to students from Portola Valley, as reflected in their

acceptance rates being much higher. He said they are receiving very high quality students from Portola Valley into the school. He said there are Portola Valley residents on the board who also serve as a recruiting tool. He said they do not advertise for students, but they have an admissions staff that visit different feeder schools and the public schools in Portola Valley on parents' nights.

Commissioner Von Feldt asked if staff had received any complaints. Planning Director Pedro said there had not been any complaints other than questions about being allowed to use the track.

2b. Town Center Master Plan

Planning Director Pedro provided an update to the Town Center Master Plan project. She said the Council directed the committee to further discuss the criteria for evaluating projects and land use regulations that applies to the Spring Down property before bringing the item back to the Council for next steps.

2c. Ad Hoc Housing on Town-Owned Property Committee

Planning Director Pedro said there is an ad-hoc Housing Committee meeting scheduled for next week. She said they will be looking at the three Town-owned properties on the B List.

Vice Chair Targ asked regarding the status of the Planning Commission's recommendation to conduct a study of affordable housing needs for workers in Portola Valley. Planning Director Pedro said the item is on staff's work plan for the next fiscal year. Vice Chair Targ said there is \$3 million that can be used for affordable housing purposes and asked if this might be one of them. He suggested it could be a project for a grad student, a non-profit entity, or consultancy that does this kind of work. He said although it may require a little bit of attention, it will get done on a timely basis if it is outsourced. Vice Chair Targ said to the extent that the Housing Element is being based on ADUs, it should be determined if it is an effective mechanism to achieve the really important regional goal. Planning Director Pedro said it is a great idea and she will discuss it with Town Manager Dennis. Chair Gilbert said it was something worth considering as long as it was not ridiculously expensive.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3. Planning Commission Meeting of May 3, 2017

Chair Gilbert and Commissioner Hasko submitted their changes to the minutes but held off the vote until the next meeting.

4. Planning Commission Meeting of May 17, 2017

Commissioner Von Feldt moved to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2017, meeting, as submitted. Seconded by Vice Chair Targ, the motion carried 3-0; Commissioner Hasko abstained.

ADJOURNMENT [8:32 p.m.]