

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Koch called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Center Historic Schoolhouse Meeting Room, 765 Portola Road.

Planning & Building Director Laura Russell called roll:

Present: ASCC: Commissioners Dave Ross and Al Sill; Vice Chair Danna Breen; Chair Megan Koch
Absent: Jane Wilson
Planning Commission Liaison: Judith Hasko
Town Council Liaison: Craig Hughes
Town Staff: Planning & Building Director Laura Russell; Consultant Assistant Planner Daniel Harrison

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Town Center Tennis Court Screening, 765 Portola Road (Conservation Committee)

Catherine McGill from the Conservation Committee presented their proposal for the Town Center Tennis Court screening. The proposal included two toyons, one coffeeberry, and two lemonade berry. There was no staff presentation.

Vice Chair Breen noted that deer graze coffeeberry and toyon. She said she did not mind the experience of looking through the tennis court and does not want to screen the tennis court, but just soften it. Vice Chair Breen said these islands of plantings eventually grow into hedges and there are too many plants. Catherine McGill suggested cages to protect the trees for the first year. Vice Chair Breen said she did not want to see cages. She said the plants never made it on the north side of the tennis court or the east side of the construction building so she thinks it's a longshot that these will survive.

Commissioner Sill and Chair Koch were supportive of the plant choice.

Commissioner Ross agreed and said the five-gallon size was appropriate.

Vice Chair Breen moved to approve the proposed tennis court screen plant list. Seconded by Commissioner Sill; the motion carried 4-0.

(2) Architectural Review for a New Water Feature, 302 Portola Drive, Woodside Priory School, File #PLN ARCH 17-2019

Consultant Assistant Planner Daniel Harrison described the background, discussion items, and the design guidelines review regarding the proposed new water feature at the Woodside Priory School, as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommended the ASCC review the plans, consider

the comments in the staff report, and approve the proposed water feature, subject to the Conditions of Approval and any other conditions which may be necessary based on the ASCC's review.

Chair Koch invited the applicant to comment. Michael O'Leary, the landscape architect, explained the planting selections around the water feature.

Chair Koch invited questions from the Commissioners.

In response to Commissioner Ross's question, Mr. O'Leary said galvanized wire will be used for the gabions.

With no further questions from the Commission, Chair Koch invited questions from the public. Hearing none, Chair Koch brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

Commissioner Sill was supportive of the water feature and said it was well thought out. He wondered how attractive it would be when there is not water running through it, such as during drought cycles. Mr. O'Leary said it is meant to be turned off and be attractive wet or dry. He said the granite has different texture and the rocks have different color, and under the baffle light of the trees it will be attractive.

Vice Chair Breen was supportive of the project. She wondered what type of wildlife it would attract.

Commissioner Ross said it is a well thought out project. He agreed it will look even better with the patina that will come after a few years.

Chair Koch was supportive of the project and said it will make a very pleasant gathering place.

Commissioner Ross moved to approve the water feature with the recommended conditions of approval. Seconded by Commissioner Sill; the motion carried 4-0.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(3) Commission Reports

Vice Chair Breen worked on a new house on Santa Maria with four vertical deciduous trees they wanted to substitute with four round citrus. Vice Chair Breen suggested they stay with a vertical form to anchor the house to the site.

(4) Staff Report

Planning & Building Director Russell said they made an offer to a new permanent assistant planner and they accepted. She said they are also working with another potential candidate.

Vice Chair Breen requested to have a meeting with the building inspectors to discuss construction staging and tree protection.

Vice Chair Breen said whenever soil is disturbed, it is an opportunity for invasives to come in. She suggested a small bond requiring that two years after a final, the Town should go back to the site to check on the invasives.

Vice Chair Breen said she would like to further discuss having a full-time building inspector to handle the egregious things she sees happening daily. Chair Koch agreed and said the community needs to see that there is a relationship and communication directly with these inspectors.

Vice Chair Breen said she also wants to see the written communications that have occurred with the people near the Priory.

Vice Chair Breen said the owners of the property on the corner of Los Trancos and Alpine Road need to be called out for planting English laurel and hibiscus as well as inappropriate lighting, particularly because they are located on the scenic corridor. She said they were allowed to have both light fixtures at the door with only one operable, but they have both wired and operable, which should have been caught by an inspector. Commissioner Ross agreed that it is more challenging to catch these types of things with the turnover of contract inspectors who are not familiar with the nuances of the Portola Valley.

Planning & Building Director Russell said she would be happy to set up a special daytime meeting/study session with the building inspectors. She said she has been having conversations with Town Attorney Silver regarding the wording of the conditions of approval, because they are currently legally difficult to enforce after final inspection. They are looking at different condition language to make it clear that people cannot come back and change things like lighting and landscaping when it has already gone through the reviews.

(5) News Digest: Planning Issues of the Day

Staff shared an article of interest with the Commissioners – “Emoji house feud erupts as frustrated neighbors urge Manhattan Beach to take action.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(6) ASCC Meeting of August 12, 2019

Vice Chair Breen moved to approve the August 12, 2019, minutes as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Ross, the motion passed 4-0.

Vice Chair Breen asked about upcoming projects. Planning & Building Director Russell said the 228 Westridge project has a proposed revision that will need to come back to the ASCC. She said she was not aware of site issues at the property, but if the Commissioners know of any, to let her know and she would send Inspectors or Planners to look.

Vice Chair Breen said she’s called staff three times about the R.J. Dailey trucks parking right up against the blue oaks. She said the whole site is getting compacted.

Planning & Building Director Russell said there are significant challenges around construction staging. She said she will be very interested in the feedback from the study session with the building inspectors. She said possibly a work group can think through the balance of the different issues. She said they don’t want too many people parking and staging on-site because of disturbance of the land and invasives, but they also don’t want people overflowing into the streets in the right-of-way. She said there can be improvements between Planning, Building, and Public Works about how they review the construction staging plans. She said there is also room for improvement around making sure the arborist reports and recommendations are

captured in plans, because they get mostly stock plans from civil engineers for tree protection that are not specific to the site. Commissioner Ross said there will always be difficult realities to grapple with. He said construction staging is difficult to manage and very difficult to enforce.

ADJOURNMENT [7:45 p.m.]