

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Goulden called the Planning Commission regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Planning & Building Director Russell called the roll.

Present: Planning Commissioner Taylor, Vice Chair Hasko, Chair Goulden
Absent: Commissioner Kopf-Sill, Commissioner Targ
Town Staff: Laura Russell, Planning & Building Director; Cara Silver, Town Attorney;
Rebecca Auld, Lamphier-Gregory, Environmental Consultant

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Tom Buchholz recommended this process be suspended until the public has enough information upon which to make intelligent comments regarding the EIR scope and content. He said they do not know the ultimate disposition of the remainder of the property, there are no results from fire modeling, and there are numerous unanswered administrative questions. He said without a definitive statement about how much Alpine Road will be reconfigured, the public cannot make an adequately intelligent set of comments nor can the EIR be done. He said, in fact, the submitted plan brings up fundamental questions regarding the setbacks of Alpine Road if it is going to be reconfigured.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Stanford Wedge Housing Project – Environmental Impact Report Scoping Meeting – 3530 Alpine Road, APN 077-281-020

Chair Goulden explained this project requires an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), with the first step being determining what to include in that report. Tonight's agenda is asking for public input in addition to responses to the mailers that went out. He said there will be no discussion about the merits of the project until later, and tonight's discussion about the EIR will be the predecessor to that discussion. The two absent Commissioners have ties with Stanford and have recused themselves.

Planning & Building Director Russell introduced herself, Town Attorney Cara Silver, and Environmental Consultant Rebecca Auld. Planning & Building Director Russell explained that Ms. Auld works for Lamphier-Gregory and is an impartial consultant hired by the Town and is not an advocate for any particular outcome. Ms. Auld's role is regarding the analysis consistent with the CEQA requirements.

Planning & Building Director Russell said the purpose of tonight's meeting is to provide information on the Environmental Review process, a brief overview of the proposed project itself, and to receive input on the scope of the Environmental Review. She reiterated that this meeting is for community input only, and no decisions will be made tonight. She explained there will be a number of meetings before any decision point is reached, and there will be separate meetings on the merits of the project.

Planning & Building Director Russell explained tonight's agenda – introduction by staff; presentation by applicant on project proposal; presentation by Town's EIR consultant; Planning Commission questions; public comments on EIR scope; and Planning Commission Comments on EIR scope. She described CEQA, a brief review of the proposed project, scoping session discussion items, public outreach, and next steps, as detailed in the staff report.

In response to Commissioner Taylor's question, Planning & Building Director Russell said they estimate the Draft EIR will be completed this summer. She said there will normally be a meeting during the review period for the Draft EIR and then meetings when the whole project is considered that will include the EIR.

John Donahoe, Director of Planning and Entitlement for Stanford University Real Estate. Mr. Donahoe said he was there with several Stanford representatives and their consultant to listen to the comments from the community.

Mr. Donahoe shared Stanford's slide presentation. He said the genesis of their project came about in 2016 when the Portola Valley Town Council identified providing affordable housing as one of the top Council priorities, including reaching out to the three Affiliated Housing sites as designated in the Housing Element, one of which is Stanford. Each of the three Affiliated Housing sites were asked if they would consider working with the Town to develop housing. Mr. Donahoe said Stanford thought about it, and it became a dialogue between the Town Council and Stanford, sharing of initial thoughts, and even sharing some conceptual plans. In May 2019, Stanford held the first of two community meetings where they shared some of their ideas and concepts and listened to the community responses. They held their second meeting in July 2019 to present some responses, which led to the generation of Stanford's proposal and the submission of their formal application in September 2019.

Mr. Donahoe said the preparation of the EIR is a critical step, but they recognize it is not the only review process. He said they will continue to work with all of the comments and input they've received from city staff and outside agencies such as the Woodside Fire Protection District. He said they will continue to evolve the design of their project through those comments as well as the EIR process.

Mr. Donahoe described the project site. He said one of Stanford's most important priorities is to provide housing for their faculty, which is along the same lines of thought as when the Town added the Affiliated designation to the Stanford property to begin with. He said development of the property would support the Council's effort to provide more housing in the community. He said Stanford can provide affordable housing in addition to the faculty housing, which would also help the Town meet some of the regional housing goals.

Mr. Donahoe said they thought it would be good to concentrate all of the development in the 7.4-acre area, leaving the majority of the property undeveloped with no development potential in the near future. They are proposing 27 single-family homes on small lots for faculty employed by Stanford. They are proposing three buildings in the center of the development area which will consist of four below-market-rate (BMR) rental units in each building. The criteria for potential occupants will be decided by the Town with Stanford's input. He said based on a lot of input received from Portola Valley Town Council and the community, they moved the BMR units from edges of the development into the center to help integrate them into the community. He described the common areas, roads, and landscaping.

Mr. Donahoe introduced the project architect, Larry Strain. Mr. Strain described the guidelines that guided the project, including blending in with the natural environment, minimizing paving and grading, preservation of existing trees and a landscape buffer along Alpine Road. Mr. Strain said the homes will be net zero energy homes and all electric, with no gas brought onto the site. He said the original conceptual renderings were wood buildings and were well-received, but have been changed to cement fiber siding with metal roofs, primarily for fire safety reasons. The landscaping has focused on all native landscaping, good fire buffers, and low-water requirements.

Rebecca Auld, Environmental Consultant, Lamphier-Gregory. Ms. Auld described the process for the environmental document, as detailed in the staff report. She explained that after tonight's public scoping meeting, they will prepare the Draft EIR. At that time, that Draft EIR will again be brought to

the public for comment. They will then respond to each comment, making revisions as necessary based on the comments, and prepare a Final EIR including responses to comments. The Final EIR is then taken into account during Town Committee and Commission recommendations and the Town Council decision.

Ms. Auld explained that during this scoping period they are hoping to identify the community's concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the project and also to discuss ways to avoid or reduce those impacts, such as mitigation measures, changes, or alternatives to the project. The Draft EIR will address the known concerns. It should cover all the topics under CEQA, including focused assessments in certain areas, such as if the site has value from an agricultural, forestry, and mineral resources perspective, and if the project would substantially impact that. They will look at the proposal for utility and energy usage and make sure it complies with the capacity available and regulations that apply. They will look at the increased demand the project could have in relation to public services and recreation and how the project complies or conflicts with land use, programs, and policies, as well as population growth estimates. They will also conduct technical analyses, specifically ones based on technical documents prepared by the applicant as part of their due diligence process. They will include environmental site assessments of the hazards and hazardous materials that may be present on the site, drainage and hydrological calculations addressing how storm water is handled on the site, and the geotechnical report addressing geology and soils on the site and how it relates to the site preparation and foundations for the buildings. Field surveys will be performed as well as technical review of public documents, including biologists looking at plant and wildlife species and habitat on the site and whether the project might impact them. They will look at historical, archeological, and tribal cultural resources, and whether there's the potential for those to be on-site. A wildfire specialist will be looking at existing fire conditions and how they might change with the project, and also reviewing the plan for fire protection and seeing if it needs to be tweaked. Some field surveys include modeling to include noise levels, emissions, air quality, greenhouse gases, visual impacts, traffic congestion delays, vehicle miles traveled, etc.

Ms. Auld said all of these topics will be covered in the analyses that are just starting and that will be rolled into the environmental document once completed. Tonight they are looking for comments on that scope and concerns that should be taken into account. Ms. Auld said the environmental concerns are specifically useful, as well as suggestions for ways to reduce or avoid those concerns, such as measure that can mitigate an impact, small project changes or tweaks or larger project changes or alternatives that could reduce or avoid impacts. She said tonight they will receive verbal comments and will receive written comments through the 30-day review period.

Vice Chair Hasko asked how many horses will be impacted at the Alpine Rock Ranch. Planning & Building Director Russell said she did not know the exact scale of the operation. Planning & Building Director Russell asked what part of that question was relevant to the environmental review. Vice Chair Hasko said she was not sure how much was environmental versus general and defers to the legal experts to know what is within the EIR. She said there is a use of land changing here, and there will be an impact. She said she would think the current use would be a factor.

Vice Chair Hasko asked for clarification of CEQA guidelines requiring an evaluation of a No Project Alternative. Ms. Auld said in this case it would mean continuation of the use as it is today. She said sometimes it means development of the site under the existing rules, but in this case it would be continuation of the existing use.

Vice Chair Hasko asked for clarification regarding what would trigger the project possibly entering into an Affordable Housing and Development Agreement. Planning & Building Director Russell said staff is still looking at the circumstances of what has been proposed. She said there is a possibility that the Council would enter into a development agreement with Stanford, which would put in place certain

agreements that would create a level of assurance around those agreements. She said an alternative to that would be possibly a below-market-rate housing agreement to lock in whatever is required for the BMR housing units, such as income level and preference of who would be allowed to live there and things like that. Planning & Building Director Russell said the form an agreement would take is currently unknown, but they know there will be some kind of agreement that will address at the minimum the below-market-rate housing. Vice Chair Hasko said the description should be changed from “may” to “will” enter into an Affordable Housing and Development Agreement.

Commissioner Taylor asked if the Town would choose who gets the BMR or if the Town just sets the parameters and Stanford is responsible for enforcing the parameters. Planning & Building Director Russell said the details would be worked out in the course of the process, but the Town anticipates that they would set some priorities about the income level of the residents. She said most towns have a preference program where people who live or work in the community get first preference to live in the units.

Chair Goulden said the word “significant” was used frequently, such as “proposed project’s significant environmental impacts.” He asked for clarification of the word “significant” in this context. Ms. Auld said the definition depends on what particular impact is referenced. She said the rationale used for any particular impact will be detailed in the environmental document. She said, for instance, with noise impacts it will be the noise ordinance in whatever jurisdiction, to determine that the noise level is being followed at the neighbor boundaries. She said the appropriate threshold will be used for any particular impact. Planning & Building Director Russell said under CEQA “significant” has a specific meaning – not necessarily the commonsense meaning of the word “significant.”

Chair Goulden asked about the State Affordable Housing Density Bonus Law. Planning & Building Director Russell said that will be discussed a lot as the project moves forward. She said there are laws throughout the state that allow developers that are building housing, if they build a certain amount of affordable housing, to in some cases increase the density of the number of units allowed. They also get concessions, incentives, and waivers of certain local requirements, and those things have to be granted under certain conditions. She said information about this topic will also be posted on the website so the public can also track it. Commissioner Taylor asked if these are existing rules or if additional changes are anticipated. Planning & Building Director Russell said she does not anticipate changes to the law that would apply to this project, which is being processed under the law currently in effect.

With no further questions from the Commission, Chair Goulden invited public comment. He explained that because there are so many in attendance, speakers will be held to three minutes.

Jon Silver, 355 Portola Road. Mr. Silver said he appreciated the applicant’s reference to the planning and preservation of the scenic view from the Alpine Scenic Corridor. He said it is important that the EIR focus specifically on that. He said because of the flatness of the area of the current stable operation and because it is closer to the road, it makes more sense from an economic standpoint to develop there, but that brings the more intensive development close to the scenic corridor. He said it is important to examine the tradeoff between keeping an adequate buffer so that the area remains rustic looking. He said a big part of the site is proposed to be kept in open space, but it’s not clear to him if it would be a permanent open space dedication. He said if the EIR is looking at environmental tradeoffs, it is very important whether or not that’s a permanent dedication of open space, which he understands Stanford University is resistant to in other parts of its endowment. He said if it is a temporary open space dedication, it does not mean nearly as much when it comes to balancing environmental tradeoffs. He said an EIR typically examines project alternatives. He said the “no project” option is usually not taken very seriously. He said an option that should be seriously looked at, although he is not necessarily advocating for it, are the likely impacts if this property was to be developed under the

underlying zoning that doesn't take into account the option for development as an Affiliated housing partner, which allows all kinds of special things that are being proposed here. He said he knows more about the zoning history of this land than anyone else in the room because he lived through it. He said when he was 22 years old and got concerned about the development in his hometown, he looked at what would happen to the undeveloped land if it was zoned for one house per acre. He said that would be a very intense subdivision zoned like Alpine Hills. He said instead they used the Westridge zoning, a minimum of two acres. He said since then they developed slope density overload in existing zoning districts so that Westridge instead of being just a 2-1/2-acre minimum, a slope density zoning of 2-1/2 on flat ground, 9 acres on slopes of 50% or more, and if there is unstable land, the developer only gets 10% credit. He said it is also important for people if the Town hadn't done anything, they could be looking at a proposal for 70 homes here.

Mary Hufty, 257 Mapache. Ms. Hufty said she has had a deep interest in the Stanford Wedge since moving here in 1986. Ms. Hufty said it is a beautiful piece of property with no public access. As a result, she said it is the only piece of pristine property within Portola Valley. She said it is a jewel that nobody knows about and that everybody should care about. She said she appreciates the responsibility the Commission is taking in this situation. She said 40% of the Commission is conflicted, which is a big problem. She said much in the audience is also conflicted. She said she is a seven-degree Stanford family. She said they have allegiances to both sides, which makes it a complicated decision for everyone. She said, however, that the health, wellbeing, and safety of the community is in the hands of the decision made here at the Planning Commission. Ms. Hufty said the Fire Department has strongly committed that this is a danger to the community and that it should not proceed at this time until the rules and regulations are clearly specified and adequate for such a design as this. She said the Town's regulations are for single family homes, and the Town has nothing that comes close to satisfying the safety of putting this many families into a completely native habitat. She said she has started a 501(c)(3) to help local governments make good decisions. She said this is a very complicated decision, and the Town needs all the legal and environmental input they can get, and she is there to help. She said the development is in the middle of a wildlife corridor that runs from Highway 17 to Arastradero to the Crystal Springs Reservoir, the only place they can get through the neighborhoods safely. She said mountain lions use it, eagles use it, and it's loaded with dusky-footed woodrats, which feed the mountain lions, and is a working ecosystem. Ms. Hufty requests a fire model before the EIR, which the Fire Department has advised her is standard practice, and consideration of the environmental corridor.

Kristi Corley, 15 Golden Oak Drive. Ms. Corley expressed concern about the number of homes and suggested 7 or 10 homes instead of 27. She asked if there was a requirement for a total of 39 new homes. She said it starts a precedent for Stanford to purchase more land with more buildings. She said if the Town allows this, they can expect more acreage to be bought and Stanford to build more housing. She said it is important to know how many horses are being displaced. She said that is important to the environment and is why a lot of people moved here. She is concerned about parking on the land and hopes an assessment of parking will be done. She shared photographs she had taken of different projects done by Stanford showing each house with approximately five cars parked in front because a 1,200-square-foot house may have five people living there. She suggested the houses may be rented out by single professors, with two people in each room of a three-bedroom home, resulting in a lot of cars.

Loverine Taylor, 35 Naranja Way. Ms. Taylor thanked the Commission for the opportunity to express her concerns. She said affordable housing stock and increasingly destructive wildfires are two urgent crises in California at the moment. She said half of the housing units built in California between 1990 and 2010 were built in a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), and the bulk of the wildfires in California happen in WUIs. The Kincaid Fire – 75,000 acres; Camp Fire Paradise – 10,000 homes destroyed, 85 dead; and the Tubbs Fire – 5,000 homes destroyed, 22 dead. She said 9 out of 10 wildfires are caused

by humans, and the most potent fuel in a fire is a manmade structure – a house burns hotter than a bush. She said this development will have minimal, if any, impact on affordable housing. She said there is only a small portion of it for low-income, and it is not yet known who controls it, but it will have a massive impact on the potential for wildfires. Ms. Taylor said she lives in Westridge with one road in and one road out, as does most of the town. She said Portola Valley is a WUI. She said of the 75 acres, 69 are too steep to build on so the building will occur on the 6 flat acres. She said in a September 1, 2019, letter, Woodside Fire Marshal Denise Enea describes the property that will not be developed as steep canyons and ravines with an abundance of dead and live vertical and horizontal herbaceous and woody vegetation. Marshal Enea said a large percentage of the canyons and ravines within the parcel are too steep for mechanical fuel treatments, and goat grazing has not reduced the amount of live or dead woody material. Marshal Enea said the parcel is surrounded by many midcentury homes with wood shake roofs. Chair Goulden acknowledged that Ms. Taylor wants to make sure the wildfires are studied as part of the EIR.

Someone from the audience called out that the wildfire issue needs to be analyzed prior to the drafting of the EIR. Chair Goulden explained that tonight, they are receiving input on the EIR and they will, as always, be consulting with the Fire Chief. Commissioner Taylor said the modeling will happen prior to the Draft EIR. He said the Draft EIR is where all the information and comments will come together.

Ken Kornberg, 425 Minoca Road. Mr. Kornberg said he moved to Portola Valley in 1959. He suggested considering a T-road instead of a U-road that connects in two places, so there is only one entrance between Westridge and Golden Oak Drive. He shared the wildfire concerns. He said approximately 20 years ago there were approximately 15 fire trucks and emergency vehicles at the end of his driveway parked on Minoca. They were conducting a fire drill because they said that was the most dangerous place in terms of all of Portola Valley that was likely to have a serious fire. He said the situation has worsened because of the sudden oak death and other problems in that area. He said he hopes the EIR will include mitigation of that area. Mr. Kornberg said the materials changing from wood, a natural material with a lot of texture and character, to the proposed material changes the quality of the whole development and town considerably. He suggested brick and stone, materials more compatible than what is proposed. He said he does not know what net-zero means because there are many definitions. He said it should include the energy and consumption of materials that go into the construction phase. Mr. Kornberg said across the street are six BMR units approved by the Town, but were stopped by Stanford University that should be reinstated.

Tom Hafkenschiel, 1100 Westridge Drive. Mr. Hafkenschiel has lived in Portola Valley since 1965. He was concerned about the impact of traffic. He said there is currently a traffic jam in the morning trying to get to Sandhill Road. He said adding potentially 80 more cars every morning, all heading roughly in the same direction, will greatly impact the traffic. He said the impact on the schools should also be studied. He said most of these residents will be young families. He asked if the taxpayers will have to advance to cover the costs of the increased schooling. He said currently there is no available parking between noon and 2:00 at Ladera, and the parking situation at the local shopping centers should be considered. He said the town is on a fault line and asked what would happen when there is a big earthquake. He said most people moved here due to the rural environment, and he doesn't want to see the town looking like Daly City.

Angela Hay, 4570 Alpine Road. Ms. Hay said she is speaking as an individual although she is also a member of the Bicycle, Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Committee. Ms. Hay expressed her concern about parking. She said Fire Marshal Bullard has said he will redline all the curbs. She said if you turn west from the development, there is a clear line of sight on Alpine Road. She said she is a cyclist and when you come out with your bicycle and cycle to Stanford, you will need to get across the road. She suggested they look at putting in a crosswalk. She said school buses come up to the school, which may require a bus stop on Alpine Road. She said Stanford has ZIP Car parking and charging. She said

she is most concerned about when people have guests. She expressed concern about the defensible space around the back, possibly making the gardens longer so there are less bushes and trees along the back, perhaps cutting down some of the trees up the hill. She said in England, they consider bats as part of their environmental impact, and her family had to build three houses which had to have holes in the roofs for bats because the bats were there first. She said all of the animals in the area need to be looked at. She suggested all of the utilities be undergrounded.

Christine Mumford, 405 Golden Oak Drive. Ms. Mumford said her property runs from Golden Oak down to Minoca. For the past two Januarys, she received letters from two different insurance companies who would not renew her homeowner's insurance because she resides in a wildland fire area. She said her broker could not find one insurance company in California that would insure her property. She has finally secured very inadequate and minimal insurance through a company in Arizona called Scottsdale Insurance Company that doesn't fall under California legislation. She recently spent \$4,000 clearing 200 feet from her property, cutting trees down. She said her property taxes are almost \$75,000 a year, and her property has considerable value, but she cannot insure it. She suggested that the Fire District warnings be heeded. She said this body should help homeowners in this community secure insurance so they can live here and have properties protected for these kinds of emergencies.

Tom Buchholz, 157 Westridge. Mr. Buchholz said the impact on residents for things such as insurance costs are well within the scope of the specifications in an EIR.

Rusty Day, 178 Pinon Drive. Mr. Day said asked if the project documents listed on the project website are the official records. Planning & Building Director Russell said the website has the plans and comment letters issued so far, notice of this meeting, and the notice of preparation. Chair Goulden added that the Planning Commission website also has notes and minutes. Mr. Day said the Woodside Fire Protection District is not listed as an entity that will be interacted with as part of the EIR. Mr. Day asked what the process is for considering and acting on the comments they've already received from Woodside Fire Protection. He asked who was in charge of that interaction and who makes sure their comments are considered and applied. Planning & Building Director Russell said she is the Project Manager, and she routes the plans through the Woodside Fire Protection District for their comments. She said the Woodside Fire Protection District has provided comments on the two rounds of review that have happened so far. She said the applicant then takes those comments and integrates them into their submittal, which becomes part of the record as the project moves forward. Mr. Day said the first set of comments that the Woodside Fire Protection submitted on September 1, 2019, are not on the website. He said in these comments the Fire Marshal indicated this is a bad place to put a high-density housing project. Mr. Day said these comments are not in the public record, and he doesn't know why. He said on October 15, the Woodside Fire Protection District submitted comments saying the minimum space between structures on this project should be 100 feet and that they needed two independent modeling studies, approved by them, to be conducted before the EIR commenced. The Woodside Fire Protection District also wanted a fire safety plan submitted by the applicant. Mr. Day said the applicant turned in their submission on November 25 and did not respond to any of those comments, did not identify any modeling, did not propose any modeling, and did not submit a fire protection plan. Mr. Day said the Woodside Fire Protection District submitted comments in January pointing that out and telling staff that they insisted on a 100-foot separation between structures. Mr. Day said the separation between structures in the applicant's submission is 8 and 12 feet. Mr. Day asked who is listening to the Woodside Fire Protection District.

Chair Goulden said that tonight is the kickoff of starting to get that input. Chair Goulden said he cannot explain why some comments were not there, but the purpose of this process is exactly to address those kinds of things. He said Stanford has yet to get any input from the EIR. Mr. Day said the comments were submitted on October 15, and Stanford submitted its plan more than a month later and did not address any of those comments. Chair Goulden said the Town's plan has only just started and

things have not proceeded. Chair Goulden tried to move on, and Mr. Day said he would not be closed off. He said what is going on here is that Woodside Fire Protection District advised 100-foot separation and independent modeling of the fire behavior on this site before the EIR begins because they have to know what this proposal is going to do to the landscape before you can even consider the EIR. Mr. Day said the Town has not acted on any of those comments.

Planning & Building Director Russell said the applicant has indicated they will be addressing many of the comments the Fire District has posed, and they will be taking up that responsibility and working on that. Separately, there will be extensive fire analysis and modeling that the Town will be doing through a qualified consultant as part of the EIR process. Planning & Building Director Russell said both of those things are expected to happen, and there will certainly be no final decision making in any way on this project until those things happen. Planning & Building Director Russell said the Town understands the value of syncing up that work between what the applicant is doing and what the Town is taking on, making sure that the project doesn't get too far ahead of that. She said the Town is aware of that concern, but certainly the Town is undertaking its own modeling work through Ms. Auld's team on the environmental consultant side as well. A resident asked who pays for the EIR and Planning & Building Director Russell said that Stanford will pay for it.

Veronica Kornberg, Minoca Road. Ms. Kornberg said she lives on an extremely at-risk street. She said it is at such significant risk in part because of the Wedge property. She said there have been many meetings between Stanford and the Town in years past regarding the property. She said she knows of two additional people who have had their insurance cancelled and struggled mightily and are living with great uncertainty. She said it is a significant imposition for homeowners to not be able to insure their homes. She said the EIR should examine the impact for homeowner's insurance policies.

Planning & Building Director Russell clarified her previous comment, explaining that the Town has a separate contract with Lamphier-Gregory to do the environmental review. She said there is no direct relationship between Stanford and Lamphier-Gregory. She said the relationship is between the Town and Lamphier-Gregory. She said there is a cost recovery system in Town where the applicant is required to pay all of the costs of processing the application, which includes the contract with Lamphier-Gregory, all of the staff time involved in doing all of this work, all of the work they do in the office. She said all of that is cost recovery, and the applicant pays for it. Town Attorney Cara Silver added that this is a very common way of implementing large projects. She said the thought behind it is that taxpayers should not have to pay for a specific project and its impacts, so almost all cities enter into these cost recovery agreements with an applicant who is processing a project. She said the only influence that the applicant has on the project is that they are paying the funds, but all of the work is being directed by the Town.

Ginger Creevy, 1175 Westridge. Ms. Creevy asked about the budget for the Draft EIR. She said the Fire Marshal has already determined that this is not safe, townspeople already have insurance problems in town, and many reasons have been cited to not even consider the project. She asked if, by the time a certain amount of money is spent, even if Stanford is paying for it, the Town is then fairly committed to doing the project? Chair Goulden said there is no predetermination about whether or not this project will go through. He said the cost of a project and threats of lawsuits is irrelevant to the Planning Commissioners. Ms. Creevy said it seems like the cart is being put before the horse. She said she lost her power three times this year, and this Town is located in a fire danger area and this development only adds to that. Planning & Building Director Russell said the budget for the EIR is \$210,000. She said when there is an active application that is submitted, the Town is required to process it under State law and each of these steps must be completed.

Ms. Auld said, in response to the question of whether the wildfire issue should be addressed first, there is nothing in CEQA that allows for one process to be required before the rest of the analysis. She said it has to be processed all together.

Mary Hufty, 257 Mapache. Ms. Hufty asked how the character of a community is judged and if that is part of the environmental scope. She asked what about this project fits in with the character of the community. She said this project steps way out of where anybody thought the character of Portola Valley was going. She said a good consultant has been chosen; however, despite the fact she has been extremely interested and followed this issue closely, she saw no explanation of how the consultant was selected or hired. She asked if the consultant has any experience with wildland fires. She said if they are putting 28 houses onto that lot, with additional smaller affordable housing units, there will be a lot more jobs created than they can produce affordable housing for.

Mark Whelan, 171 Degas. Mr. Whelan said it's all about safety. He said this represents far and away the densest development in Portola Valley. As the Fire Marshall has said a number of times, increased density increases the risk of fire. He said that is the single-biggest question – the ability to mitigate the fire risk. He agreed with Mr. Day that this needs to get out into the public more. He said the Woodside Fire Protection District (WFPD) says two separate fire modeling programs must be conducted with the WFPD present and included in the evaluation criteria before Planning approval and Environmental Impact Report. He said there is a process here that should be followed. He agreed this is clearly not in line with the character of Portola Valley. He said the traffic and character issues do not need to be dwelled on, but the focus should be on the bigger issue of fire risk.

Unidentified male speaker. He said he is an architect and has submitted many projects with EIRs in California. He said his first step before getting conceptual approval, long before getting to the stage of the drawings seen here tonight, is having the Fire Marshal sign off on it, because the Fire Marshal can come back and kill essentially all the work they've done. He said, just from the standpoint of helping the applicant, the Fire Marshall should approve the project schematically and conceptually before any further steps are taken and certainly long before the package of drawings is sent to the EIR.

Robert Morgan, 20 Bear Gulch Drive. Mr. Morgan asked if there was an estimate of how long it will take to build these housing projects. Chair Goulden said there is no estimate at this point given they are not designed or approved. Mr. Morgan said there should be a study regarding traffic coming into Portola Valley. He said every morning, he walks two miles with his 80-year-old mother and can set his watch at 7:00 a.m. for when the stream of cement trucks and large trucks come into town. He said to multiply that by 27 houses and the amount of time that will take to complete. He asked where these vehicles will be parked.

Clair Jernick, 33 Grove Drive. Ms. Jernick has lived there for 36 years. She said she shared the expressed concerns about fire and is terrified of trying to be evacuated from a fire. She said someone sent goats onto the property to mitigate brush. She said she doesn't understand how an EIR can be done after doing that because now they've already changed the environment.

With no further public comment, Chair Goulden closed the public comment period and brought the issue back to the Commission for discussion. He explained that the comment period for the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is closing on February 18, 2020.

Commissioner Taylor thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He said the beauty of Portola Valley is that the town is small enough and people care enough to show up. He said as difficult a task as this is to make decisions, it is great that everyone is present to help work through this. Commissioner Taylor said a lot of comments were made about things that should happen prior to the preparation of the EIR. He said there appeared to be a misunderstanding. He wanted to be clear that the information

gathering process occurring tonight is prior to the EIR and is what goes into the process of creating an EIR. He said the purpose of tonight's meeting is to make sure all of the concerns are expressed and understood so there is as complete a picture as possible in order to address all of the concerns. He said there was some concern expressed tonight that the process has gotten ahead of itself. He reiterated that this is the process for collecting information.

Commissioner Taylor suggested that in addition to the other outreach being conducted, there can be a mailing list for people to specifically sign up to receive all notices on this project. Planning & Building Director Russell said they can do a direct email or perhaps something through the Town's website to provide automatic notifications.

Commissioner Taylor said people asked about public documents. He said the website is not intended to be the full and complete public record. As things come in, they are collected, and the Draft EIR will include all of these items, but not every document received will be on the website. Townspeople can, however, go to the Town Center and request to review the public file. The Draft EIR, once prepared, will be on the website.

An unidentified woman in the audience asked if a citizen could go to the Town Center and scan all the documents into their phone and then publish them on a separate webpage. Planning & Building Director Russell said if people are interested in having access to the documents, she will work with them on how to transmit them so that people can be assured they've got the official documents. She said she would like to think that through. Chair Goulden said he would prefer not to see that because if it's not official and vetted, things get out of sequence. He said he has seen things get put out on PV Forum, sparking a whole round of concerns about something that is simply untrue. He would prefer to have an official Town-vetted place to find the real documents as opposed to having people start moving them around.

Vice Chair Hasko said this will not be a perfect process, and it will be challenging to feel completely comfortable all along the way. She said, however, that she wants the residents to know that they are heard and that the Commission takes very seriously every comment made. In particular, Vice Chair Hasko urged, given the import of this project to the Town and given the scope and timeline, that people have accurate and full access to what has been submitted for the record. She said there may be unavoidable delays of a week or two, but the Town should observe best practices on making sure the record is full and that there is a very clear place on the website that is updated perhaps more frequently than other projects.

Vice Chair Hasko said the purpose of tonight's meeting is to comment on the scope. She said from the Commission's point of view, as residents of the Town, they want to determine the important aspects of the scope. She said the audience has been very eloquent in covering a lot of things she would mention. She said she is concerned about the things normally looked at in terms of light and noise impact. She said lighting is a real thing on Alpine. She said all of the major projects that have been approved have had enormous amounts of lighting that very much have an impact on the experience driving out. She said she would want to know what was compared and when it was compared and what the analysis was based on. She said noise is important both for the aesthetic of the neighbors as well as to the wildlife, which is a very important factor. She said there are some pristine areas right in back of what may be a more dense living area. She said the residents will enjoy and respect that, but people are people, and the intersection of wildlife and humans is always a bit difficult. She urged, to the extent it is within an EIR, the wildlife aspects be looked at in more detail than might normally be done. She said this is not a normal site and is a very special site. She said she is also concerned about the traffic. She added that there are a lot of bicyclists coming back and forth. She said in that area, it will be that much more of an issue to track. She said the Town needs to consider the safety of equestrians. She said to the extent that it impacts the character of town, which may or may not be on the EIR

scope, the equestrians should be able to continue to come and go past that property. She said this will be a horse property that will be lost, which will also impact the town's character. Overall, Vice Chair Hasko said people are well served by keeping posted and looking at Town sources of information regularly rather than creating parallel websites. She suggested the Town go through a little bit of extra measure to make sure they are the reliable source on a timely basis.

Commissioner Taylor asked that normally the noise is measured at the property line. He said he would be interested in the noise at the edge of the seven acres, which is to the point of impact on wildlife.

Ms. Hufty said the Fire Marshal has clearly stated that this is not an appropriate place for a development, but they cannot write that in any official document because they are tasked with creating a plan to mitigate the damages of the development. Chair Goulden said nothing has been presented to the Planning Commission, so he regards it all as it is just getting started. Ms. Hufty said the Fire Department has felt the same frustrations she has felt in that they are writing reports and have opinions, but they're not being heard and they are not being seen.

Commissioner Taylor suggested the Fire Department be encouraged to submit information to the Planning Commission. Someone from the audience said they already had submitted the information. Chair Goulden advised that this is the first meeting the Planning Commission has had on the subject with the intent being to start finding out what they need to know. Ms. Hufty said what the Fire Department can say verbally is different what they are allowed to put in writing.

Chair Goulden closed the item.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(2) Annual Election of Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair

Continued to the next meeting.

(3) Commission Reports

Planning & Building Director Russell said an application came in for the site considered a couple of times behind the Hallett Store at 846 Portola. She said that is a challenging site, and they had applied for a PUD and then a rezoning. They then tried to come in with a design in compliance with the A-P standards. Because of the track they had been on and the challenges, the applicant took the proposed project to the ASCC for an early conceptual review before they even had full plans, to get some ASCC feedback. She said some things that came out of that may be topics that may need to be dealt with in the future, such as the definition of floor area and how that definition does or does not pick up areas that are basically attic areas. She said the code does not currently provide clear guidance around what to count as floor area and how attics should or should not count if they have less than a 7-foot ceiling height and don't count as habitable area under the building code. She said this has not been too big of a problem over the years because this happens often on a sloped site with an underfloor area or perhaps a small mezzanine or attic. She said this particular site, because it is so constrained on such a small lot, they proposed a pretty significant upper level that had a ceiling height of just less than 7 feet. She said it added the massing of basically another floor, but does not count as floor area. She said it was brought to the ASCC for feedback. She said the ASCC looked at it from a context of neighborhood compatibility and design, and they weren't necessarily concerned about the massing of the house in that context. She said there was a question though of how that floor area was counted. The question was deferred back to staff to work with the Building Official on what is habitable area. She said a question, moving forward, is if the definition of floor area needs some refinement in order to capture these kinds of things. She said the ASCC separated themselves from the technical description of floor

area discussion and focused on design, providing useful feedback to help the applicant move forward. She said staff will need to look at it technically and building code-wise and make a decision if it's something to be taken up as something to change. She said it may not be a high priority because this is the first time anyone can recall that it's been used in this way. She said it might be a topic for discussion at the Mayor and Chairs meeting whether or not to put that issue in a future work program.

Planning & Building Director Russell said there was a study session with ASCC and staff to discuss some of the issues around construction staging and site management. The entire staff that works on those things, including the Building Official, Public Works Director Young, and some of the Planning staff were there to discuss some of the issues that come up, such as some ideas around increased neighborhood notification and more neighbor-to-neighbor communication. Commissioner Taylor said they also discussed people complaining anonymously about projects and being unwilling to put their name on the complaints.

Planning & Building Director Russell said the Westridge Homeowner's Association invited two members of the ASCC to attend their meeting to try to increase collaboration.

(4) Staff Reports

None.

(5) News Digest: Planning Issues of the Day

Staff shared an article of interest with the Commissioners – “About the Environmental Review Process (also called the CEQA Process)”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 4, 2019.

(6) Planning Commission Meeting of December 4, 2019

Continued to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT [8:50 p.m.]