

15 March 2021

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Ten years ago we purchased our home, specifically choosing Portola Valley to enjoy the rural, quiet, outdoor lifestyle that it offers. For the last two years we have worked with the WFPD regarding the Station 8 expansion to ensure that their improvements meet their needs while not adversely affecting the enjoyment of our home and its property value.

We much appreciate that the WFPD has listened to our and other neighbors' concerns and have relocated parking to its present position, away from the residential-facing side and rear portions of the property. We feel this location is an ideal solution to the parking issue and provides minimal impact to the neighbors while providing benefits to the fire station as well.

We also are very pleased of the decision to drop the Sheriff's office.

With regards to the text amendment application, we purchased our home 10 years ago knowing that the fire station was on an R-1 lot, and was not a high-traffic facility like a library or community center, or a potentially dangerous facility like a police station. The impacts of these kinds of uses would be significantly different and potentially damaging to us and the surrounding neighbors.

We ask that the proposed text of 18.14.030 E be limited to "Fire Station" and not "Public building as defined by Section 18.040.395." This change is sufficient to correct the current nonconforming status of Station 8 and its long-standing, sole use as a Fire Station. Since "public buildings" was explicitly removed from R-E and R-1 zones by Ordinance 1987-224, adding other uses beyond "fire station" is not consistent with the property's current R-1 zoning.

Regarding the CUP findings:

#2. "...the proposed use will be reasonably compatible with land uses normally permitted in the surrounding area and will insure the privacy and rural outlook of neighboring residences"

Just prior to the ASCC meeting, we felt compelled to hire and consult with local landscape architect Lisa Moulton because we still had not received any landscaping proposal from the WFPD. Screening is very important to us since our home borders Station 8, and our front door and living room look directly out onto WFPD property. If existing redwood trees are removed, we will have a direct loss of visual and noise screening. Ms. Moulton suggested appropriate screening plants, and noted that a

hedgerow of unplanned scrub vegetation at the fence line must be properly dealt with so that the new screening plantings will survive.

We look forward to working with the WFPD on a landscaping plan, but for the above reasons, we ask that complete landscaping plans be brought before the final Planning Commission meeting, not prior to building permit issuance. And since the new screening will be crucial to our privacy, we ask that the Planning Commission require landscaping and fencing installation be completed prior to final inspection, and that bonding not be permitted.

#4. "The proposed use will not adversely affect the abutting property or the permitted use thereof."

#5. "The site for the proposed use is demonstrated to be reasonably safe from or can be made reasonably safe from hazards of storm water runoff, ..."

As noted in our correspondence with the Town and ASCC, letters from the Town's consultant NV5 implied that stormwater is not adequately addressed and the notes of the 1/2/20 Conservation Committee raised concerns on the amount of impervious surface. There has been a past history of puddling and overflow onto our property, and the removal of the mature redwood trees may exacerbate this problem.

In addition, the applicant is asking for 3.8X the permitted R-1 maximum for impervious space, which is a 58% increase over existing, with a large increase in parking.

For these reasons, we ask the Planning Commission to require the applicant to submit final grading and drainage plans prior to the final Planning Commission meeting. We also look forward to the results of the Town's CEQA analysis.

Without solving the above issues the CUP does not meet findings #2, #4, and #5.

We thank the WFPD for the collaborative approach it has taken in addressing the expansion. It has been a good neighbor for ten years. The requests in this letter are intended to allow us to continue to enjoy the property we worked so hard to obtain while allowing the Fire Department to continue providing necessary services to the Town.

Sincerely,

Bob and Suzanne Schultz
145 Portola Road

*Don and Cathy Priest
227 Echo Lane
Portola Valley, CA 94028
650-851-3240*

March 15, 2021

Town of Portola Valley
Portola Valley Planning Commission
765 Portola Road
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Subject: Proposed Fire Station Expansion

We want to assure that:

1. We support a continued Conditional Use Permit for the Fire Station in an R1 Zone. We do not support a change to the permit for a "Public Facility" with potential unknown uses, traffic and parking. We want the use permit to specify "Fire Station" only.
2. All surface water and drain water from properties on the east of Echo Lane are safely conveyed to the creek which runs along the south side of the fire station before passing under Portola Road. This drainage needs to have maintenance, clean outs and allow for tree root mitigation to keep water flowing freely
3. We support the parking for the fire station being in front of the station, being limited to fire station business, and conforming to R1 Zoning building heights, floor area, setbacks, etc.

We live at 227 Echo Lane and back up to the existing fire station. All of the homes on the east side of Echo Lane are on a down slope from the west side of Echo. Because of the elevated hill to the west, all surface water flows through the east side properties, which, along with a high-water table, results in standing water in wet years in our crawl spaces and basements. Both the Barnums, 223 Echo Lane, and the Priests, 227 Echo Lane, have sump pumps to pump the water into surface drains in addition to French drains in front of our homes which convey underground water into the surface drains, then to the rear of the fire station. New construction at the fire station needs to provide water drainage across the rear of the fire station and access for drain maintenance.

Surface drains run along the east/west property lines for 223, 227, 235 and 237 Echo Lane. These were undergrounded by Jack Eldridge and Dick Ramos (223 and 235 Echo Lane in the 1960s). They drain to the rear of the fire station. Originally there was an open ditch which conveyed the water to the creek that flows under Ramies Automotive and on the south side of the fire station before passing under Portola Road. In the 1980s, the property owners on the east of Echo Lane paid for a culvert and drain piping to underground the water runoff to the creek. The fire station gave permission but did not have a budget to help with the financing and labor.

Sincerely, Don and Cathy Priest

From: [Loni Austin](#)
To: [Dylan Parker](#)
Subject: Letter for Fire Station proposal
Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 7:08:50 AM

Dear Planning Commission,

We own a home and permanently reside at 235 Echo Lane. Currently / temporarily (returning this summer) we are out of the country and unable to attend the meeting about the Fire station remodel / expansion that is taking place this evening as it is a 4am meeting in our time zone. We have been worriedly following along the discussion from afar over the last couple years and would like to submit a letter with our comments on the proposal.

In general, we are concerned about the added noise, traffic and parking that the expansion will bring to our small corridor in town.

We think the new parking location, along Portola Road, away from the rear of the fire station property, is the better of the solutions on the table to the parking issue

We are pleased that the new Sheriff's substation proposal has been dropped.

We would request a change of the proposed section 18.14.030 "E" text to remove the words "public building as defined by Section 18.040.395" and replace it with "Fire Station". Then section 18.04.395 becomes unused and is no longer necessary.

Basically we want to limit the use of the property to a Fire Station--not a library, not a police station, not a healthcare facility! The conditional use as a Fire Station is reasonable given the property has been a long-standing active fire station. But the additional uses the Town proposes are unnecessary for the Fire Station to continue its operation, and the current R-1 zoning does not permit them. Having something like a library, police station, or community center is very different than a Fire Station and would create a different and potentially worse impact to the surrounding neighbors as it would bring more noise, garbage, misuse and traffic along with it.

Thank you,
Brent and Loni Austin
235 Echo Lane
Portola Valley, CA 94028