

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2008, HISTORIC SCHOOLHOUSE, 765 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028

Chair McKitterick called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. Ms. Lambert called the roll:

Present: Commissioners Gilbert and Zaffaroni and Chair McKitterick
Absent: Commissioner McIntosh
Staff Present: George Mader, Town Planner
Tom Vlastic, Dep. Town Planner
Steve Toben, Council Liaison
Leslie Lambert, Planning Manager

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

REGULAR AGENDA

- (1) PUBLIC HEARING: Site Development Permit X9H-588 for New Residence, Driveway and Associated Site Improvements, 300 Westridge Drive, Bariteau

Mr. Vlastic reviewed the staff report of 8/28/08 on the request for 2,080 cubic yards of grading for residential development on the subject 2.5-acre property. He used the plans to show where the majority of the grading would take place and driveway access. As set forth in the staff report, he discussed the split driveway proposal, which was before the Commission for preliminary review. He said the Westridge Committee supported the proposal, but wanted a break in the asphalt where the trail was. Additionally, the Public Works Director also supported the split driveway approach provided he could get a technical statement from the project's civil engineer relative to sight distance. He described the previously approved tentative map, which anticipated a curved easement that extended further onto the Oakley property. That was not what was represented on the final map. With the new proposal, there was a small portion of about 20' of dedicated access to the Town that would have to be abandoned. That would take a Council action.

With respect to the split driveway approach, Commissioner Zaffaroni said the staff report indicated there were some safety concerns. Mr. Vlastic said staff's concerns related to the sight distance issue with the driveways coming together. The Public Works Director did not feel it was an uncommon design but wanted to get confirmation from the project engineer that the sight distances were to appropriate standards. Jack Bariteau, applicant, said the Town should have a report from the civil engineer Tuesday morning.

Responding to Commissioner Zaffaroni, Mr. Vlastic said less asphalt and a little separation between the driveways allowed for a softer access point. The Oakleys and Mr. Bariteau had worked with the Westridge Committee over the last few weeks. Mr. Bariteau noted that the Doyles could not attend tonight but also supported the split driveway proposal.

Commissioner Zaffaroni said the ASCC and other Town consultants/committees appeared to be comfortable with the site development permit. Responding to Commissioner Zaffaroni, Mr. Vlastic confirmed that the volume of grading was necessary for the driveway and to bring the house further down into the site. He said the existing contours would be mimicked, and the fill on site was balanced. The pool area would be a little bit flatter, and the views from down below weren't as direct. The slope and site contours would not change dramatically. Most of the grading was in areas where trees did not exist.

Commissioner Gilbert said it appeared that the effect of the grading on the trees would be minimal. She asked if there would be any adverse impacts on drainage. Mr. Vlastic said there were no specific concerns and staff's comments were standard. No unusual impacts were expected. Responding to Commissioner Gilbert, he confirmed that the requirement to score driveways over trails was the same for trails in Westridge.

Chair McKitterick described an alternative driveway design that would be shorter and flatter. Mr. Vlasic said that would be a more dramatic change. The intent was to have one connection point for the three parcels. Inserting another connection point would involve more review by the Commission. What was proposed was more of a technical adjustment based on the approved tentative map. The record was clear that there was to be one common access point for the three parcels. The General Plan called for limiting the number of direct access points for properties on arterials and major collectors such as Westridge. As proposed, there would be one asphalt apron. He noted that the Oakleys wanted to move this ahead as quickly as possible. Reviewing a more involved alternative would take longer.

Regarding the trail easement, Mr. Vlasic confirmed for Chair McKitterick that the design reflected the adjustments worked out with the Westridge Committee in terms of the location, the driveway working its way around trees, and the split rail fence. Chair McKitterick said he wanted to make sure that the drainage plan would take into account the potential moving landslide that was located in the northern part of the property. Responding to Chair McKitterick, Mr. Vlasic said he had not heard any concerns from the neighbors since the last ASCC meeting. Ms. Lambert said the Steinharts wanted to be notified of what the Commission's action was. Mr. Bariteau said Steve Steinhart wanted to preserve the best possible siting for a future owner of his property. He was not aware that they had any objections to what was proposed.

Chair McKitterick opened the public hearing.

Mr. Bariteau introduced Tim Chappelle (architect), Tom Klope (landscape architect), and Celia Oakley and Craig Barrett (neighbors nearing completion of their house). He said the neighbors were in charge of building the driveway for all the parcels. The split driveway design would be safer for the horse trail.

Mr. Barrett said he purchased the lot to the west of the subject parcel 2 years ago. During the design, he had tried to closely follow the 1989 approved design. The split driveway approach moved the drive more in a natural direction rather than perpendicular to Westridge. That reduced the encroachment on the oak tree and created an opening for the horse trail through two separate sections. He hoped to have the driveway on the agenda in two weeks and as soon as possible after that to the Town Council. When the subdivision was approved, no one had access to Westridge except through the narrow section. The split driveway would require 10-15' of that to be moved back to allow access. It might have been a clerical issue 20 years ago that caused the recorded documents to not match the description. He said he very much wanted to get the driveway installed by the end of this month. He asked if there were any concerns.

Chair McKitterick said there were no concerns about the split driveway proposal other than safety, which was being addressed. Commissioner Zaffaroni said she would be interested to see what the Town Attorney advised about the legal aspects of the proposal. She said the properties were not developed 20 years ago. Now that the properties were all being developed, people were giving it more attention in terms of the best design. Unfortunately that conflicted with what was recorded.

Commissioner Gilbert moved to find the site development permit project categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15303(a) of the CEQA Guidelines. Commissioner Zaffaroni seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Gilbert moved to approve the site development permit application as shown on the plans, unless otherwise noted, revised through August 27, 2008, and listed in the staff report of 8/28/08 subject to conditions "a" through "e." Commissioner Zaffaroni seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

(2) Continued Discussion of Sustainability Element of the General Plan

Commissioner Zaffaroni said the version of the element that was distributed in the packets did not have the reorganization changes she recommended. Town Planner Mader said the reorganization of the material had not been incorporated because the Commission had not discussed it. Commissioner Zaffaroni said she e-mailed a reorganized version to Commissioners. She wanted the Community Education and Involvement goal first. That was something people should read first in the sense of understanding that this had to be a

community project and something that the community felt they were participants in right at the outset. At the outset, it should be clarified that this was something the Town was doing in a collaborative fashion. The language tried to address that. She read the 5 objectives included in the revised version distributed in the packets. She reiterated that the Community Education and Involvement goal with the objectives should be stated first so that people understood that this had to be a shared project and a shared objective for the entire community. She noted that the document used the terms "CO₂," "carbon footprint," and "greenhouse gas emissions." She wanted to filter that language and get a consistent term. The State used "greenhouse gas emissions." She referred to an article in *The New York Times* that indicated that nitrogen might be more of a concern than originally thought. She said "greenhouse gas emissions" might be preferable because it was broader. She said the Sierra Club also had an article on green building and local building regulations. In today's *San Jose Mercury*, they talked about the number of towns in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties that were participants in the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement and would have some form of regulation addressing green building standards and carbon footprints by the end of 2008. It said 23 of the 35 cities in the two counties had adopted the targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. She wanted to come up with some vocabulary that was accepted in a regional or State-wide basis. She thought "greenhouse gas emissions" served that purpose. She reiterated that her recommended reorganization was to emphasize community involvement as the primary objective.

Town Planner Mader distributed copies of revised language describing the Conservation Element as suggested by Commissioner Zaffaroni. Chair McKitterick questioned whether "implementation measures" needed to be included. Commissioners agreed the last sentence could be deleted.

Responding to Commissioner Gilbert, Commissioner Zaffaroni said she recommended moving the goal for Existing Stock ahead of New Buildings because addressing existing buildings would have a larger and more significant impact than new building in Town. Eventually new buildings would be built, but it would be a very slow process. She did not think that most people looking at this would be in the process of building a new home. They would want to know what they could do to address their current situation.

Referring to the packet version, Commissioner Gilbert recommended that "GHG emissions" be spelled out in the paragraph above Overarching Goals. Under Transportation objective #2, she suggested "(e.g., biking, walking)" to indicate that those were not the only means of transportation that did not rely on non-renewable sources. Under Existing Building Stock, she said objective #4 could be the same as objective #2 depending on how it was interpreted. She suggested that transportation be listed after New Buildings, etc. She suggested #2 state "When remodeling existing homes, to encourage...." Commissioner Zaffaroni agreed noting that the Town didn't want to encourage remodeling of homes. She suggested "To encourage energy efficiency and conservation of resources when remodeling...." Under Water Resources objective #2, Commissioner Gilbert questioned whether "fixtures" was an appropriate term. Commissioner Zaffaroni said it included things like shower fixtures.

Referring to the paragraph introducing the appendix, Commissioner Gilbert distributed copies of suggested re-wording. Councilmember Toben suggested removing the clause "...for not all of those listed may be considered appropriate for the Town." Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Gilbert suggested removing "In addition...." Chair McKitterick suggested removing "...as the sustainability element is implemented."

Referring to the appendix, Commissioner Gilbert said under Transportation, item #11, biofuel was controversial and not very efficient. She suggested replacing it with "alternative fuels." Under New Buildings, item #2, she questioned whether "extent of site improvement" was clear. She thought that meant everything except the residence. Councilmember Toben suggested "extent of structures and site improvements." Commissioner Gilbert agreed noting that that matched the language in the goals section. Chair McKitterick suggested "type and extent of structures and site improvements." Commissioner Zaffaroni questioned whether "extent of structure" was the right term. Town Planner Mader noted that the intent was to avoid using "size." Chair McKitterick said it needed to include things like pools. Commissioner Gilbert said site improvements included landscaping. Town Planner Mader said that might not be clear to residents.

Commissioners agreed on “type and extent of structures and site improvements....”

Referring to the Community Education and Involvement section in the appendix, Resident Actions #3, Commissioner Gilbert suggested eliminating “including TVs, stereos and office equipment.” Under Resident Actions #2, Chair McKitterick suggested replacing “CFLs” with “energy efficient lighting.”

Chair McKitterick said he felt passive solar and photovoltaics should be included under New Building Stock. He suggested “Consider the siting and design of improvements for both photovoltaic and passive solar purposes.” The desire to hide homes could clash with the desire to use passive solar. Town Planner Mader noted that this area would be addressed in the work being done for the new building provisions. Chair McKitterick said he did not like the term “needs of residents” in objective #2 of the goal for New Buildings. He suggested “To continue to use a balanced approach regarding the extent of site improvements....” Commissioner Zaffaroni questioned what was being balanced. Alex Von Feldt suggested “desires of residents” as opposed to “needs of residents.” Chair McKitterick said he did not want it to appear that the Town was trying to do an end run around the current floor area regulations. If the language shown didn’t give that impression, he was fine with it. Town Planner Mader suggested “activities of residents” in place of “needs.” Councilmember Toben said he preferred “needs.” Ms. Von Feldt said “activities” was not clear. Commissioner Zaffaroni suggested “development objectives of residents.” Those objectives versus other considerations that might be relevant to sustainability were the kinds of things that would be balanced. Commissioners agreed. Chair McKitterick said he would like to leave the word “need” in the illustrative policies and procedures section for New Buildings.

Ms. Von Feldt said the Conservation Committee was interested in how people maintained their land. For example, mowing and blowing caused noise and pollution as well as broke down soil structures, etc. The use of fertilizers was also a consideration in sustainability. Referring to the policies under the Living Environment section in the appendix, she said there were some similar statements. Councilmember Toben suggested “Discourage the use of pesticides and practices that removed nutrients from landscapes.” Ms. Von Feldt suggested “Look into developing maintenance guidelines.” Councilmember Toben suggested “Discouraging off haul of garden debris” or “Encourage composting or mulching on site.” Town Planner Mader suggested adding language about caring for the property to help ensure the continued health of native soil and vegetation. Chair McKitterick thought examples should be included like composting on site, minimizing off haul, discouraging pesticide use, encouraging natural fertilizers, etc. Ms. Von Feldt noted that the County subsidized composting barrels for citizens. Commissioner Zaffaroni said she thought the Town could help facilitate composting by giving classes, etc. Ms. Lambert noted that the new SuRE Coordinator was looking into this.

Under New Buildings, objective #2, Commissioner Zaffaroni said she was still not comfortable with the language. The last clause was from the original language. The Town’s goal was to reduce consumption of nonrenewable resources. That should be balanced with the extent of site improvements and development objectives of residents. Reading from an earlier version, Town Planner Mader said the old language said “To balance house size and site improvements so as to meet the needs of residents and also provide for the reduction and consumption of nonrenewable resources. Chair McKitterick liked the balance concept. The extent of site improvements and development objectives should be on one side of the balance. The other side was the need to reduce consumption of nonrenewable resources. Commissioner Gilbert suggested “To encourage reduced consumption of nonrenewable resources by balancing the extent of site improvements with development objectives of residents,” or “To balance the wish to reduce nonrenewable resources....” Commissioner Zaffaroni suggested “To balance the need to reduce consumption of nonrenewable resources....” Commissioner Gilbert suggested “To consider and balance the need to reduce the consumption of nonrenewable resources with the extent of site development improvement and development objectives of residents.” Chair McKitterick suggested “To consider and balance the extent of site improvements and development objectives of residents with the need to reduce the consumption of nonrenewable resources.” Town Planner Mader suggested eliminating “consider” and begin with “To balance.”

Councilmember Toben said he would submit minor corrections to Town Planner Mader. After discussion, Commissioners decided the document should go to the Council without additional Planning Commission review.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

By motion and second, the minutes of the August 6, 2008, meeting were approved as submitted by a vote of 3-0.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:35 p.m.

Nate McKitterick, Chair
Planning Commission

Leslie Lambert
Planning Manager