



**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY**  
**Architectural Site Control**  
**Commission Meeting**  
**Monday, October 14, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Carter Warr**, Chair  
**Rebecca Flynn**, Vice Chair  
**Kenny Cheung**, Commissioner  
**Danna Breen**, Commissioner  
**Gina Dixon**, Commissioner

**HYBRID MEETING**

**AGENDA**

**HISTORIC SCHOOLHOUSE - 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028**

**Remote Public Comments:** Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. Please send an email to [tgrindall@portolavalley.net](mailto:tgrindall@portolavalley.net) by 12:00 PM on the day of the meeting. All comments received by that time will be distributed to Commissioners prior to the meeting. All comments received are included in the public record. Time permitting, your correspondence will be uploaded to the website. Additionally, technology permitting, the public body will take questions using the Raise Hand button for those who attend the meeting online or by phone. Phone callers may provide comments by pressing \*9 on their phone to "raise your hand" and \*6 to mute/unmute themselves. The meeting Chair will call on people to speak by the phone number calling in. Remote participation is provided as a supplemental way to provide public comment, but this method does not always work. The public is encouraged to attend in person to ensure full participation.

**Assistance for People with Disabilities:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Town Clerk at (650) 851-1700 or by email at [towncenter@portolavalley.net](mailto:towncenter@portolavalley.net). Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the Town to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

**VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM**

**To access the meeting by computer:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89481213143?pwd=qOaaoe65WhvAEnkaiaC1RL76MZtx9b.1>

**Webinar ID:** 894 8121 3143

**Passcode:** 428580

**To access the meeting by phone:**

1-669-900-6833 or 1-888-788-0099 (toll-free)

*Mute/Unmute – Press \*6 / Raise Hand – Press \*9*

**1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Chair Warr, Vice Chair Flynn, Commissioners Breen, Dixon and Cheung  
Announcements/Consideration and Approval of Request to Attend Remotely by Commissioners  
pursuant to AB 2449 (just cause and emergency circumstances).

**2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

*Persons wishing to address the Architectural and Site Control Commission on any subject **not on the agenda** may do so now. Please note, however, that the Architectural and Site Control Commission is not able to undertake extended discussion or action tonight on items not on the agenda.*

### **3. AGENDA**

- a. ASCC formation of an ad-hoc committee comprised of two (2) ASCC members to review conditions of approval as directed by the Planning Commission acting as the Board of Adjustment for an appeal to the ASCC approval of a new residence and site development permit at 857 Westridge Drive (PLN\_ARCH07-2023 & APPL01-2024). (J. Bourne)
- b. Reorganization of Architectural and Site Control Commission, Election of Chair and Vice Chair
- c. Recommendation of an ASCC member and an alternate ASCC member for appointment to the Ad Hoc Site Evaluation Committee.

### **4. COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a. Commission Reports
- b. Staff Reports

### **5. MINUTES**

- a. August 12, 2024, and August 26, 2024

### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

#### **AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION**

Any writing or documents provided to a majority of the Town Council or Commissions regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at Town Hall located 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA during normal business hours. Copies of all agenda reports and supporting data are available for viewing and inspection at Town Hall and at the Portola Valley Library located adjacent to Town Hall.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Public Hearings provide the general public and interested parties an opportunity to provide testimony on these items. If you challenge any proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only issues you or someone else raised at the Public.

Hearing(s) described in this agenda, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the Public Hearing(s).

#### **Land Acknowledgement:**

The Town of Portola Valley acknowledges the colonial history of this land we dwell upon the unceded territory of the Ramaytush (rah-my-toosh) Ohlone, Tamien Nation, and Muwekma (mah-WEK- mah) Ohlone, who endured a human and cultural genocide that included removal from their lands and their sacred relationship to the land. Portola Valley recognizes that we profit from the commodification of land seized from indigenous peoples and now bear the ecological consequences. We seek to understand the impact of these legacies on all beings and to find ways to make repair.

**ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE CONTROL COMMISSION**  
**Hybrid Meeting – In Person at Schoolhouse and via Zoom**

**August 12, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Carter Warr.

Present: Kenny Cheung, Danna Breen (remote), Gina Dixon, Rebecca Flynn and Carter Warr.ك

Absent: None

Town Staff: Adrienne Smith, Senior Planner

Council Liaison: None

Chair Carter Warr advised that Commissioner Danna Breen could not attend in-person and would be attending remotely under new Brown Act meeting provisions AB 2449, which allow for remote attendance due to emergency circumstances. “Emergency circumstances” is defined as a physical or family medical emergency that prevents a Council member or a Commission member from attending the meeting in person.

Commissioner Breen confirmed her remote participation, revealing that she is currently recuperating from an ankle replacement surgery, which necessitates a three-month bed rest with her leg elevated.

Chair Warr added that Staff and the Town Attorney advised that it is permissible, so long as the Commission takes a vote and agrees that these circumstances qualify. In addition, AB 2449 requires that a quorum of the Commission attend in-person, and that Commissioner Breen attend via video and audio technology.

**Motion** by Commissioner Cheung to allow Commissioner Breen to attend the meeting remotely. Seconded by Vice Chair Flynn, the motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.

Chair Warr requested Commissioner Breen to confirm if there was anyone else in the room with her who was eighteen years or older.

Commissioner Breen assured that she was alone in the room.

Chair Warr noted that all votes during the current meeting need to be by roll call vote, and that AB 2449 allowed Commissioner Breen to attend up to a maximum of three consecutive months remotely. A vote is necessary at each meeting she attends remotely according to AB 2449.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- (1) Forthcoming Building Permit Application at 27 Hillbrook Drive. Scope includes demolishing an existing barn near Town Equestrian Trail and various landscape improvements. Project summary provided for information purposes only.**

Senior Planner Adrienne Smith clarified that the current item doesn't meet the criteria for ASCC review. However, due to its proximity to a town trail, it was deemed necessary to inform the ASCC. This precaution was taken to ensure that if there was public discussion and ASCC members were approached, they would have some context about the project. The project planner, Jake Garcia, is available online for any detailed inquiries. Discussion on the item is optional and can be initiated through a motion if desired.

Chair Warr invited questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Breen expressed interest in the lighting plan and the walkways associated. She stated that she became aware due to residents' concerns about a large eucalyptus tree on the trail.

Senior Planner Smith suggested that a motion would be required to pull the item from the consent calendar for discussion.

**Motion** by Vice Chair Flynn to pull the item from consent calendar for discussion. The motion passed (5-0) by voice vote.

Consultant Planner Jake Garcia presented the item, providing a detailed overview as per the staff report and background information on the project. He mentioned that the applicant, Steven Kikuchi, was present and could address any specific questions. He explained the Planning Department's process of meeting with applicants before the submission of their formal applications. This helps determine whether their application will go to the ASCC for review or directly for a building permit. He elaborated on the specific requirements within the municipal code that necessitate the ASCC's review. This project did not meet any of those common triggers; however, due to its location next to a trail, the Planning Building Director had the discretion to decide whether the ASCC would review the project. He described the project as a proposal to demolish an existing stable at the rear of the property and introduce new landscape improvements.

Steven Kikuchi, landscape architect, confirmed his availability to answer any project-related questions.

Chair Warr inquired about the openness of the pavilion.

Mr. Kikuchi confirmed that it is a wooden lath stretcher.

Vice Chair Flynn inquired about the planting plan and the types of new tree and shrub plantings intended for privacy.

Mr. Kikuchi responded that they are still in the conceptual stage and have not yet developed detailed plans. He indicated that the plantings would be native or drought tolerant.

Vice Chair Flynn inquired about the plan for the hillside and the measures to stabilize the ground cover.

Mr. Kikuchi clarified that the green areas depicted in the illustration represent the new areas where they anticipate conducting new plantings. He mentioned that the project includes the removal of an existing septic system, and therefore, they have proposed some erosion control measures near the house. He added that most of the other plantings are intended for screening to ensure privacy.

Commissioner Breen questioned whether the absence of a lighting or planting plan would trigger any action from the Town. She expressed her concern that such a project would not be approved without a clear understanding of the lighting situation and the planting plan.

Consultant Planner Garcia confirmed this, stating that once a formal building permit application is submitted, the Planning Staff would review any planting or lighting aspects associated with the project to ensure compliance with the municipal code.

Commissioner Breen then deemed it appropriate to inquire about the lighting associated with the project, emphasizing the importance of understanding the planned activities, especially for trail users.

Mr. Kikuchi assured that the lighting would be minimal and there would be no uplighting. He explained that the clients plan to use the patio in the evening, so there will be minimal lighting from the arbor for maneuverability, and likely lights along the path to the house. He mentioned the removal of the existing barn, which has lighting, and suggested that they were trading off new lighting for existing lighting.

Commissioner Breen expressed that she did not recall seeing barn lighting and asked about the plans for lighting the pathways.

Mr. Kikuchi confirmed that there will be lights along the path from the house to the patio.

Chair Warr observed that in the area of the pavilion, there appears to be a twelve-foot elevation difference due to the impact of six contours by the location of the kitchen pavilion, dining area, and the fire pit. He speculated that this would require a grading volume and a retaining wall, necessitating at least a site development permit review. He

pointed out that if the volume exceeds 100 cubic yards, it will need to come before the ASCC. He also noted another threshold for the site development permit when the existing landscape area is impacted by more than 5,000 square feet. He suggested that the project might need to return for a more comprehensive review and proposed using the patio of the pavilion and the fire pit as the access across that area to reduce the amount of impervious surface.

Mr. Kikuchi explained that during a meeting with Consultant Planner Garcia, he clarified the issues that would necessitate an ASCC review. He shared that they had conducted some preliminary grading calculations and the overall grade differential from the uppermost part of the patio is approximately five feet. He stated that they are grading approximately 88 cubic yards and that the landscaping is well under the 5,000 square feet limit, likely around 3,000 square feet. He clarified that the trees and shrubs represent just the canopies of those plants, not the entire extent of the landscaping being done.

Vice Chair Flynn requested Commissioner Breen to elaborate on the matter related to the eucalyptus tree.

Commissioner Breen mentioned a trail junction with a large eucalyptus tree and questioned its removal, expressing uncertainty about the concerns raised by an individual.

Mr. Kikuchi stated that he has not been to the site recently, but it was his understanding that the eucalyptus tree has been removed.

Dan Schafer confirmed that there was an extremely large eucalyptus tree there and it was removed about a year ago. A few other smaller eucalyptus trees along the path line have already been removed as well.

Vice Chair Flynn sought clarification on the vegetable plot.

Mr. Schafer clarified that the vegetable plot was a passion project to his wife. He stated that they have a smaller garden near their house for herbs, but his wife aspires to expand beyond herbs in an enclosed space.

Commissioner Breen suggested that any lights installed along the trails should be equipped with timers or switches. She believed the lights should only be on from the house to the green circle and down to the designated area. She expressed concern about excessive lighting, likening it to an airport runway, despite appreciating the design.

Mr. Kikuchi stated that the clients communicated to him from the very beginning that they love the rural atmosphere of their house as it currently exists, so there is an effort to minimize development and minimize any impacts on the existing conditions and also any impact on any neighbors. There will be lights, probably on critical areas like the steps, and they will be limited from the patio to the house for safety. He stated that they will be

low path lights that shine downward on the path, not radiating lights that can be seen from the trail system. He noted that a lighting plan will be submitted to the Building Department as well.

Chair Warr emphasized the need to be cautious about the thresholds and the concerns expressed by the ASCC.

Mr. Garcia assured that he would note the discussion and continue to work with the applicant to move forward.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **(2) Architectural Review of an 1,138 square foot addition and remodel of an existing single-family residence; 30 Shoshone Place; Morris Rosen Residence; File # PLN\_ARCH 02-2023 (P. Chytla-Hinze)**

Senior Planner Smith introduced Project Planner Paul Hinze to the meeting, informing everyone that Mr. Hinze is one of the Town's Contract Planners.

Project Planner Paul Hinze presented the item as detailed in the staff report. He highlighted that the project involves an addition of 1,138 square feet to the main residence, bringing the total square footage to 4,590. He reassured everyone that the project adheres to all development standards, including setbacks, heights, floor area, impervious surface, and more. His presentation encompassed the existing and proposed floor plans and elevations, proposed colors and materials, existing and proposed landscaping conditions, exterior lighting, public noticing, findings for approval, conclusion, and recommendations.

Gustave Carlson, architect, appeared before the Commission and introduced Chad Rosen and Kimberly Morris Rosen. He suggested that they could provide a brief overview of the project's purpose, after which he would be available to address any architectural queries.

Kimberly Morris Rosen shared insights about her family and their reasons for wanting to remodel in Portola Valley. She mentioned that their love for Portola Valley began when their first daughter started attending Windmill School. They have been residents of Portola Valley since 2018 and are deeply attached to the community. As parents of four children attending local schools and with Kimberly serving on the School Board for the Portola Valley School District, they hope to expand their home to accommodate their growing family. She emphasized their desire to retain the home's original charm while making necessary additions.

Mr. Carlson expressed his admiration for the project, commending Kimberly and Chad Rosen for their cooperation. He described the project as a straightforward task to fulfill the family's needs and offered to answer any questions.

Chair Warr invited comments from the public. Hearing none, he closed the public comment section and invited discussion among the Commissioners.

Vice Chair Flynn praised the project for its thoughtful planning. She was particularly impressed with the innovative remodeling of the interior, especially the moving of the kitchen to enhance its connectivity with the family room and the dining room. She also recommended the installation of more electric appliances during her site visit.

Commissioner Dixon found the project to be very fitting. She appreciated the opportunity to visit the site and experience its scale firsthand. She commended the project as being very well-executed.

Commissioner Cheung concurred with his fellow Commissioners' remarks. Although he regretted not being able to visit the site, he found the project to be perfect based on what he could see. He appreciated the improvements made to the existing structure instead of opting for a complete teardown. He saw no reason to object and expressed his inclination to approve the project.

Chair Warr voiced his support for the project, praising its design suitability for the site. He acknowledged the challenges posed by the upsloping backyard and commended the adaptive reuse of the house as being ideal for the Rosen family. He endorsed the recommended conditions of approval without any modifications and expressed his anticipation for a motion to that effect.

Commissioner Breen conveyed her excitement for the applicant, recognizing that the project fulfills their requirements. She commended the project as being excellently executed.

**Motion** by Commissioner Breen that the ASCC approve the Architectural Review for an addition and remodel subject to the conditions of approval as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Cheung, the motion was carried unanimously (5-0) by voice vote.

**(3) Architectural Review of a new residence, Site Development Permit, and landscape improvements; 242 Corte Madera Road; Dixon Residence; File # PLN\_ARCH 01-2024 (P. Chytla-Hinze)**

Commissioner Dixon recused herself from the item, citing a conflict of interest as she is the architect and homeowner.

Project Planner Paul Hinze presented the item as detailed in the staff report. He noted that the project includes a new residence of 2,899 square feet and complies with all development standards, including setbacks, height, daylight plan requirements, floor area, etc. The presentation included proposals for the site plan, design, landscaping conditions, planting plan, and exterior lighting plan. He noted that the project proposes 100 cubic yards (CY) of Soil Movement subject to a Site Development Permit as such



final discretionary approval will be considered by the ASCC. The presentation also included public noticing, findings for approval, conclusion and recommendations.

Consultant Planner Garcia explained that staff started with a more comprehensive lighting plan that included some driveway lighting and strip lighting. Recommendations were made for overall lighting reduction on site. He pointed out that clouded areas can be seen on the site plan that show areas where the lighting has been reduced or removed. He stated that there are still a number of lights on site. The lights comply with the municipal code, and they are located along pathways to be utilized by the homeowners; however, if the ASCC decides that there is a need for reduction, a recommendation can be made to remove or reduce lighting. The decision is up to the Commission's interpretation and final discretion to how they meet the Design Guidelines. He stated that the applicant team may also be able to speak more directly to the need and necessity for the lights, as well as more technical questions, such as the distance.

Peter Dixon, property owner, shared that his growing family, which includes three daughters and an expected son, is the reason behind their home expansion plans. He expressed gratitude for his wife's architectural skills, which are being utilized in the construction of their new home in Portola Valley. He extended his thanks to the Commission and expressed readiness to answer any queries.

Commissioner Breen sought clarification about three trees on the south property line along the pathway.

Daniel Colvard, Fergus Garber Architects, confirmed that the three trees in question are fruit trees.

Commissioner Cheung referred to the landscape lighting and asked if the landscape architects had ensured compliance with the Portola Valley Design Guidelines, specifically the lumens per linear foot along the pathways.

Mr. Colvard replied that the lighting had been assessed and found to be in compliance.

Vice Chair Flynn referred to the landscape plan and questioned if the line of five trees was intended solely for privacy and suggested a less linear arrangement, in keeping with Portola Valley's preference for more natural layouts.

Mr. Dixon stated that there were thorough discussions with the neighbors and the project received widespread support.

Chair Warr invited comments from the public. Hearing none, he closed the public comment section and invited discussion among the Commissioners.

Vice Chair Flynn conveyed her understanding of the applicants' eagerness to expedite the project, which has been underway for a considerable period. Upon site inspection and

client discussions, she noted their preference for raising the house by up to two and a half feet. She commended their exceptional design of a one-story building on a constrained site, achieved by situating the children's bedrooms in a basement. This design would necessitate significant soil removal from the site. Hence, she discussed the idea of elevating the entire project by up to two and a half feet to reduce soil removal, lessen the cut on the property, and potentially create more fill for better alignment with the road. This elevation would also enhance the lighting in the lower floor while maintaining the one-story appearance, without imposing on the neighbors. However, she expressed uncertainty about the process if the Commission approves the current plans. Lastly, she advocated for an all-electric setup, especially considering the numerous basement bedrooms.

Commissioner Cheung expressed his inclination to approve the project, appreciating the efforts to align the project with the Design Guidelines. He noted the extensive lighting but acknowledged its compliance with the quantitative Design Guidelines.

Commissioner Breen thought the project was stunning and fits in beautifully with Corte Madera. She voiced her opposition to any elevation changes and expressed concerns about excessive lighting, given the property's small size and the potential for light spill from the numerous windows. She advocated for a reduction in lighting and expressed her excitement about the project's progression.

Chair Warr commended the project's design and its respect for the streetscape. He expressed relief that the property would not transform into a large, two-story house obstructing the ridgeline and Windy Hill view. He felt that for the livability of some of the basement rooms, raising the building a couple of feet could help. He thought that there might be a misinterpretation of the height limit that may have forced it artificially low because the basements would not count. If the ceilings were eighteen inches or less, above the adjacent grade, making the light wells a little less deep could help. He supported Commissioner Breen's views on the low-lying design and praised the choice of materials and landscape design. He stated his support for the project as proposed, with a recommendation for reduced lighting.

Mr. Colvard clarified that the fixture does not include a lens, and the photograph may misrepresent what is being seen. He proposed to conceptualize it as a shell, with the light positioned at the top, and that white area is just the light on a vertical face.

Vice Chair Flynn noted that the plan indicates a total of 52 fixtures, a figure she questioned as she could only identify 15 markers.

Mr. Colvard explained that it is a full cut-off fixture, meaning that the light does not exceed the horizontal plane. He stated that all of the lights will be zoned and controlled by zone,

so they will be able to toggle on and off. He did not foresee a scenario where all of the lights would be illuminated simultaneously for any length of time.

**Motion** by Commissioner Cheung that the ASCC approve the Architectural Review for a new residence, Site Development Permit, and landscape improvements subject to the conditions of approval, with a recommendation to reduce the lighting. Seconded by Vice Chair Flynn, the motion was carried unanimously (5-0) by voice vote.

## **COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### 2. Commission Reports

None.

### 3. Staff Report

Senior Planner Smith announced that the project located at 857 Westridge, which was previously discussed by the SEC in July, is scheduled for an appeal hearing by the Planning Commission on September 4, 2024.

Chair Warr expressed his desire for both the applicant and appellant to understand the intricacies of the project's conditions of approval, as they were significant mitigations to the issues between the properties that needed to be resolved as a consequence of those conditions. He expressed concern that the approval was not being seen as a conditional approval because of the numerous unresolved matters. He emphasized that these issues are subject to staff review unless further problems arise. He maintained that the ASCC review remains open until the applicant fulfills all conditions.

Senior Planner Smith explained that the appeal documents contain generic reasoning about the General Plan and Zoning Code not being met, lacking any specific details. The appellant is cognizant of the need for more information to enable the Planning Commission to make an informed judgement on the appeal. She anticipated further submission materials prior to the packet release, but no additional details were currently available.

Commissioner Breen highlighted the presence of four deeply concerned residents, expressing her commitment to ensuring their notification and representation throughout the process.

**ADJOURNMENT** [7:19 p.m.]

**ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE CONTROL COMMISSION**  
**Hybrid Meeting – In Person at Schoolhouse and via Zoom**

**August 26, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Carter Warr.

Present: Kenny Cheung, Danna Breen (remote), Gina Dixon, Rebecca Flynn and Carter Warr.ك

Absent: None

Town Staff: Adrienne Smith, Senior Planner

Council Liaison: None

Chair Carter Warr advised that Commissioner Danna Breen could not attend in-person and would be attending remotely under new Brown Act meeting provisions AB 2449, which allow for remote attendance due to emergency circumstances. “Emergency circumstances” is defined as a physical or family medical emergency that prevents a Council member or a Commission member from attending the meeting in person.

Commissioner Breen confirmed her remote participation, revealing that she is currently recuperating from an ankle replacement surgery, which necessitates a three-month bed rest with her leg elevated.

Chair Warr added that Staff and the Town Attorney advised that it is permissible, so long as the Commission takes a vote and agrees that these circumstances qualify. In addition, AB 2449 requires that a quorum of the Commission attend in-person, and that Commissioner Breen attend via video and audio technology.

**Motion** by Commissioner Cheung to allow Commissioner Breen to attend the meeting remotely. Seconded by Vice Chair Flynn, the motion was carried by roll call vote.

Chair Warr requested Commissioner Breen to confirm if there was anyone else in the room with her who was eighteen years or older.

Commissioner Breen assured that she was alone in the room.

Chair Warr noted that all votes during the current meeting need to be by roll call vote, and that AB 2449 allowed Commissioner Breen to attend up to a maximum of three consecutive months remotely. A vote is necessary at each meeting she attends remotely according to AB 2449.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **(1) Architectural Review of three new signs and a mailbox at 4388 Alpine Road, Willow Commons; File # PLN\_ARCH 07-2024 (J. Garcia)**

Chair Carter Warr noted that he was the architect for the project and recused himself from the item.

Consultant Planner Jake Garcia provided the staff report for an Architectural Review of three new signs and a mailbox at 433 Alpine Road, Willow Commons. Willow Commons is an affordable supportive housing, multi-family residential project currently under construction and located in the mixed-use zoning district. The project was reviewed and approved by the ASCC in December 2021. He stated that the project was approved on the condition that the final signed package comes back to the ASCC for design review and approval, and the applicant now proposes three new signs and a mailbox. He shared slides showing the proposed site plan and signage. The ground address sign would be located at the left driveway entrance. It is proposed to be twenty inches in height and two feet in length. The sign displays the project street number, and the letters are to be four inches in height. He stated that the sign would consist of natural materials and colors that match the approved building materials and blend in with the natural environment. A metal trim in a rustic umber finish is proposed, and the letters are proposed in an aspen green color. All colors and materials meet the Design Guidelines. The sign would also have a light strip proposed, and it is a recessed downward facing LED strip light two feet in length. It is proposed under the rim of the metal fascia and is proposed to be 106 lumens per foot. He also shared slides to show the proposed “Willow Commons” ground sign, mailbox, and the Common Grounds hanging sign. A notice of the public meeting was mailed to all property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site on August 26, 2024. Since the publication of the Staff Report, no additional comments have been received. Staff recommends that the ASCC review the plans and staff report, consider public comments, offer feedback, and approve the proposed project subject to the draft conditions of approval.

Vice Chair Flynn invited questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Kenny Cheung inquired about the lighting for the sign and whether it was presented as something that was needed because of the unique nature of the project.

Consultant Planner Garcia responded that there was no specified reason for the lighting on the particular signage. The applicant team is available to answer the question and may be able to speak more directly to it. It would be to essentially identify the location of the building.

Lisa Staprans, project designer, advised that she was one of the project designers working very closely with Chair Warr to create the signage package. She stated that they did LED as quietly as possible, but one requirement was that they had to illuminate just that one sign.

Commissioner Gina Dixon stated that it seems like the numbers are only on one side, and she asked if it was on two sides.

Ms. Staprans confirmed that the numbers were on both sides, adding that they have to be seen in both directions.

Vice Chair Flynn inquired about the café sign and the actual entrance to the café being on the other side of the building.

Ms. Staprans responded that no, it is at the front of the building. There is the main entrance to the building, and then toward the left, there is an entrance into the café. The sign is being placed right outside the café door.

Vice Chair Flynn stated that on page 7, there is a light right next to it. She was unsure if the angle looked a little strange for the picture, but she stated that it did not seem like the light would actually illuminate the sign.

Ms. Staprans said that it was only going to be open during daylight hours and is not meant to illuminate the sign. She stated that they did a very discreet and quiet barn light just to have a downlight over the door. The idea was that this café would only be open during daylight hours.

Vice Chair Flynn invited questions from the public. Hearing none, she closed the public comment section and invited discussion among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Danna Breen congratulated the staff for the beautiful project. She thought the signage was gorgeous and she was excited for it.

Commissioner Cheung agreed with comments made by Commissioner Breen.

Commissioner Dixon thought the proposals to the project looked nice and felt inclined to approve.

Vice Chair Flynn agreed. It fits in really nicely with the whole design of the project.

**Motion** by Commissioner Breen that the ASCC approve the Architectural Review of three new signs and a mailbox at 4388 Alpine Road (Willow Commons) subject to the Conditions of Approval. Seconded by Commissioner Dixon, the motion was carried (4-0) by roll call vote.

Commissioner Cheung excused himself from the meeting (00:14:53).

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **(2) Architectural Review of an application for trail work already done without the benefit of a permit, newly proposed landscape improvements (new pool, new pool pavilion, outdoor dining area and landscaping), a Site Development Permit, significant tree removal and landscape improvements at 127 Pinon Drive; Epstein Residence; File # PLN\_ARCH 03-2024 (J. Garcia)**

Consultant Planner Garcia presented the staff report and background information for an Architectural Review at 127 Pinon Drive for proposed landscape improvements (pool, gazebo, patio and landscape planting, significant tree removal), Site Development Permit, and trail work completed without the benefit of a permit. He presented slides showing the project mapping and existing site plan. The first component of the project is the proposed site improvements at the rear of the house, including the pool, gazebo, patio, landscape planting, significant tree removal, and site development permit. The second component is a request to permit the trail work already completed without the benefit of the permit. The total amount of grading between the two project components is greater than 1,000 cubic yards, and therefore requires final approval by the Planning Commission. The ASCC's determination at the current meeting would be to consider recommending the project for approval by the Planning Commission. He stated that the applicant proposes to construct a new pool, gazebo, and outdoor dining area at the rear of the residence on the adjacent hillside. The proposed pool is an infinity pool with a spillover edge, anticipated to be fifty feet by seventeen feet in size. The surrounding pool patio area is to be stone paving, matching other paved areas on site. Minor paths will be constructed above and below the main pool patio. The path above the pool patio will extend out to an existing clearing/seating area, and the path below will connect the pool patio to the main residence. The proposed gazebo is octagonal in shape and provides for a covered dining area including an outdoor kitchen and a small storage area. Previous plans included a fireplace at the gazebo, but that has since been removed from the project. He shared slides showing the project's proposed gazebo elevations, exterior materials, renderings associated with proposed improvements, and proposals to the landscaping, non-significant tree removal, and exterior lighting. The homeowners have completed site work without the benefit of a permit and will need to obtain permits for the work completed prior to the approval of any further work being permitted on site. Unpermitted work includes trail cuts throughout the two parcels upslope of the residence and driveway, and the project engineer has mapped the location of the trail work already completed. Since the ASCC last reviewed the project, the applicant team has worked with Commissioner Breen

and the Conservation Committee to incorporate changes required by the ASCC so that the trails no longer encroach into the setback trail areas. The applicant also included new plantings along the trail work to better screen from neighboring properties. It is also identified that there is a high number of invasive plant species, and that the applicant should proactively work on a plan for removal. The applicant has provided a five-year weed abatement plan for the project site. The Town's Conservation Committee has reviewed the project and provided a set of comments to the applicant that provide extensive feedback and recommendations. Staff has identified a condition of approval to the project that would require the final landscape plan be reviewed by at least one member of the Conservation Committee and one member of the ASCC prior to building permit approval. He shared slides of proposed grading and grading done without the benefit of permit. Notice of the public meeting was mailed to all property owners within a 300-foot radius of the project site on August 16, 2024. The applicant has conducted their own public outreach and there was one public comment received on August 26, 2024, at approximately 3:20 p.m. The comment has been sent to the ASCC in the 5:00 p.m. hour. Staff recommends that the ASCC review the plans and staff report, consider public comments, offer feedback, and make a recommendation to the Planning Commission to approve the proposed project subject to the draft conditions of approval.

Chair Warr asked Consultant Planner Garcia to read the letter as he did not receive it.

Consultant Planner Garcia stated that the letter is from Mark Holmes, resident at 145 La Sandra Way. The letter stated that his family understood the trails within twenty feet of the property line of 145 La Sandra Way, the switchback hill trail bordering 145 La Sandra Way, and the flattened area bordering 145 La Sandra Way and 150 La Sandra Way at the top of the switchback trail will be returned to their original condition. Mr. Holmes also included in the letter that he and his family have no objection to the application.

Chair Warr invited questions from the Commissioners.

Vice Chair Flynn stated that the last comment from the neighbor was at 145 La Sandra Way, and she asked which property that was. She said when looking at the landscape plan, she sees 187 and 188 La Sandra Way.

Consultant Planner Garcia responded that it was the property at the end of La Sandra Way.

Commissioner Breen stated that it is not at the end, it is about three quarters of the way up on the left. Mr. Holme's property was down on one of the major turns and there was a place to sit.

Consultant Planner Garcia shared his screen to show the reference property.

Chair Warr requested that Consultant Planner Garcia show the overall site plan from BKF.



Vice Chair Flynn remarked that it is labelled 188 La Sandra Way on the landscape plan. She asked if there was any plan to detail some of the additional shrubs that the Conservation Committee requested.

Staff responded that they were already detailed on the trails plan (L-7).

Commissioner Breen stated that there was *Garrya elliptica* because it is successful on site.

Staff advised that it is mostly around the generator and the propane tank.

Chair Warr invited comments from the public.

Nona Chiariello, Conservation Committee member, stated that she has had the pleasure of reviewing the plans for this project around three times. The property is an amazing property and embodies four of the most difficult vegetation challenges in Portola Valley. There is the risk of erosion, which was the initial concern with the trail work. There are risks of invasive species, fires, and wooden tree death as a result of the trail work. This property has the nexus of all major problems seen in the Town in terms of managing vegetation. The important thing to recognize is that they are interrelated. As you have erosion, you have substrate for invasive plants to establish. Many of those invasive plants like *Dittrichia* are extremely flammable, as well as being very invasive. Once you have a steep slope, then you have spread of invasive species. She added that there are some trees that have died potentially as a result of drought, although there have been two very wet years. It is conceivable that is also a result of the trail work. She stated that she has seen this landscape take shape in a way such that the trails can actually serve as firebreaks. All of the shrubs seen on the site today are native, which is a really great thing. It is going to take a view of the landscape as a whole to see it come together in a way that those vegetation challenges are managed. She appreciated the responses received from the team in terms of getting the picture and understanding what will be necessary. She felt that going forward, it would be necessary to stay attuned to how the landscape develops over time. She suggested that there be some additional inspections to give the owners and the team a heads-up when things are going well and when they might not be. There was a secondary concern, which is that below the project, that the property drains into Jasper Ridge, and so that swale really has to be protected from invasive species moving from the project site to ensure that those do not get carried into a biological preserve. She thanked the team for being very cooperative on working through all of the questions and for reshaping some of the thinking of the Conservation Committee itself in terms of how to think about trails as a mechanism for having breaks in vegetation that reduce the spread of potential fire.

Chair Warr closed the public hearing and invited discussion from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Dixon asked Consultant Planner Garcia to pull up the exterior lighting plan. She stated that it might be helpful to take the three lights on the new stairs and slide back the one that is below so that it is at the bottom tread. There is the condition on the other side, but it might make for a safer situation at the bottom of the steps. She questioned whether all of the lights that are on the exterior of the pavilion were necessary.

Chair Warr clarified that those were step lights.

Commissioner Dixon thanked Chair Warr for clarifying. She said she liked the gazebo and added that it was a nice design that works well with the existing house. She thought it was nice being out on the site and seeing the level that the pool would be. It is helpful that it is already pretty flat, and it is coordinating with a lower level so that it sits inside a bit better.

Vice Chair Flynn stated that the main project with the pool and the gazebo is lovely. The finishes are great and match the house. The team has done a good job of fitting it into the landscape. Regarding the trail project, in at least one of those switchbacks, the dirt was pushed down and filled against one of the oak trees. She suggested that the team get some of the dirt away from the trunk to prevent eventually losing the tree. There were discussions in the meeting about the idea of having to push the trail switchbacks away from the property line. In the past, it has been the recommendation of Portola Valley not to have a trail come right up against a fence line, but that recommendation was really in reference to whether or not it was imposing on a neighbor in such a way that you would not be able to screen that trail from the neighbor. In this particular property, in part of this property, it is in a different situation. There is not a person that is impacted by some of those switchbacks. Only in an area where the neighbor who commented and concerned about an issue. She did not see the need to have the very last switchback removed and recommended putting a tree there to provide a little more screening in the case that the uphill trees suffer in some way. She supported the plans for the screening of some of the switchbacks and moving them slightly away from the La Sandra Way properties. She expressed concern about the banks being maintained. There are some steep areas that the trail cuts through, and it seems that the best way to stabilize those banks is to have some small perennial bushes on occasional spots. She recommended that the applicant speak to Ms. Chiariello and her team to see whether or not there are a few areas where it is particularly steep and where the banks are not fully stable, whether more plants are needed.

Commissioner Breen noted that she has worked on the project for a long time with the Epstein team. The most important things are access to the swimming pool and the building site, and how that would be dealt with in terms of the invasive species and repairs. She stated that the team is aware of the *Dittrichia* and all other invasive issues. They are aware that the water feeds into Jasper Ridge. She stated that it is to their benefit that the

meadow ends up being impeccably gorgeous. She felt confident moving forward with the group and encouraged the team to get going or they would lose another year. She wanted the project to go to the Planning Commission as soon as possible so that they could get started. She said she had no problem with the trail. There is no need to add new perennials and new shrubs. There are gorgeous *Garrya elliptica* along the trails. It is almost a native site and does not need to be polluted with other things. The pool site alone is wonderful, and they can do their own thing to make it pretty, but other than that, the project should mostly be left alone.

Chair Warr supported the pool project and thought it made total sense. It is well located and designed, and he stated that he liked the gazebo. He thought the trails were well-constructed by a good trail builder. The dirt against the tree on the first corner should be corrected. He supported what the team was applying to do. He thought it was more than what was necessary by pulling all the way away from the property lines behind the setbacks. There was one area on the trails when he was walking back along the road and looking at the perspective from the houses across the way on Ramoso Road that he thought would need some landscape improvements to rehabilitate. He suggested a little more significant planting that breaks up the zigzag lines as they come down the slope. The rest of the trails fit nicely into the topography and hide the inclinations in the trees. He was uncertain how to deal with Ms. Chiariello's concerns regarding inspections, but he thought a solution could probably be found to follow through with that. He commended the owners for the ownership of the property and for building the trails. He felt that trails were a tremendous way to preserve open space, and it provides access to help maintain them. Many steep slopes are inaccessible because there are no trails. He thought that Jasper Ridge was one of those big plots of massive vegetation with very little management until recently. He stated that what is being done regarding the trails is really exquisite. Aside from his comment about additional landscape treatment, he supported the project as proposed.

**Motion** by Vice Chair Flynn that the ASCC approve the Architectural Review for an application for trail work already done without the benefit of a permit, newly proposed landscape improvements (new pool, new pool pavilion, outdoor dining area and landscaping), and a Site Development Permit, significant tree removal and landscape improvements with the addition of some minor landscaping on the very steep switchback area above the propane tank. Seconded by Commissioner Dixon, the motion was carried (5-0) by roll call vote.

Terrence Grindall, Interim Planning and Building Department Director, stated that they understand additional concerns voiced by Commissioners without a motion or a vote. This can be conveyed in the staff report to the Planning Commission. It is understood that what the ASCC is looking for is to allow the applicant to have the option of leaving those areas that are encroaching the setback in the case where it does not affect other properties. He

stated that the information could be conveyed to the Planning Commission without going through a motion unless the ASCC desired to do so.

Vice Chair Flynn supported going through a motion process.

**Motion** by Vice Chair Flynn that the ASCC is open to the applicant maintaining their switchbacks close to the property line for the first two and the last two. Seconded by Commissioner Dixon, the motion was carried (5-0) by roll call vote.

### **COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### 3. Commission Reports

None.

#### 4. Staff Report

Senior Planner Smith announced that regarding the Housing Element, she reached out to the staff member through the Enforcement Division of HCD who has been managing the Housing Element clients. The staff member said he would get back to the Town with a response early last week, and he did not. She advised that she would try again. Because this is such a new part of the law, there is not a statutory requirement to get back within thirty or sixty days.

Chair Warr asked why it would not be governed under the same Permit Streamlining Act as anything else.

Senior Planner Smith was unsure, adding that leaning on a maximum day limit was not possible. Staff aims to be as persistent as possible and will continue trying to get a formal response. Additionally, she advised the ASCC that Consulting Planner Jake Garcia would be stepping back from his role with the Town to pursue a broader experience with work in some other jurisdictions. He is not departing immediately, so he will be mentoring some of the Town's other consultant planners through Good City. She thanked Consultant Planner Garcia for his fantastic work with the Town, adding that he has taught her a lot as she transitioned out of her Housing Element role and into Current Planning. Lastly, Senior Planner Smith advised that she was expecting a baby next month and she would be going on maternity leave as of September 6, 2024. The current would be her last ASCC meeting until early March.

Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall advised that there have been some significant issues in the Building Permit Issuance process due to staffing and experience that was lost in that process. Starting today, a consultant very experienced in the permits tracking software came in to assist with the backlog, resolve any issues, and hopefully also to recommend streamlining of the process. He informed the Commission that a permanent Senior Permit Engineer has been hired and scheduled to begin on September 6, 2024. He announced that the Town was looking to hire an Assistant or Associate Planner and those interested may visit the Town website to consider an application. Mr. John Biggs continues to help the Town and is focused on trying to resolve the building permit backlog and the process issues. Interim Planning and Building Director Grindall noted that he would be managing all other projects in the entitlement process.

Vice Chair Flynn stated that there was some discussion in the Finance Committee that the Town is considering transitioning to having their planner be an outside consultant. She asked if there was any information about how that would work.

Interim Planning and Building Director Grindall responded that they were still formulating what the recommendation would be. He thought that consulting out for most of the planning activity was possible. He felt the Town needed to have a director that can address policy issues and other questions. Someone who is more attuned to what is going on in the Town is the recommendation at this point. Farming out a consultant to be the director is probably not the best course of action, but all options will be considered.

Commissioner Breen expressed her excitement to Senior Planner Smith about the upcoming arrival of her baby. She also thanked Senior Planner Smith and Consultant Planner Garcia for their great work with the Town.

Senior Planner Smith appreciated the kind words.

Commissioner Dixon stated that she worked with Consultant Planner Garcia and wished him luck. She added that it has been great coordinating with him.

Consultant Planner Garcia thanked the Commissioners and stated that it has been a pleasure working with everyone. He hoped there would be a smooth transition as more staff are trained and things move forward.

## **MINUTES**

5. April 8, 2024 and June 10, 2024

Vice Chair Flynn referred to red page 177 and requested changing the minutes to state, “the requirement that the landscaped area be left open.” On page 179, the very last line stating “materials shall be permeable, impervious” needs to be reworded.

Commissioner Dixon referred to the same location on page 179 and stated that “materials need to be objective” needs to be changed to “subjective.”

Vice Chair Flynn referred to page 181 regarding a public comment by Kristi Corley. She questioned the line in the minutes that stated “...questioned whether designating open space on the second floor or above would reduce the actual open space...” and suggested that be looked into for revision.

**Motion** by Vice Chair Flynn that the ASCC approve the April 8, 2024, meeting minutes with the proposed changes. Seconded by Commissioner Dixon, the motion was carried (5-0) by roll call vote.

**Motion** by Commissioner Breen that the ASCC approve the June 10, 2024, meeting minutes. Seconded by Chair Warr, the motion was carried (5-0) by roll call vote.

**ADJOURNMENT** [7:13 p.m.]