

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, NOVEMBER 4, 2009,
SCHOOLHOUSE, TOWN CENTER, 765 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028

Vice Chair Zaffaroni called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m. Ms. Lambert called the roll:

Present: Commissioners Gilbert, McIntosh and Von Feldt and Vice Chair Zaffaroni
Absent: Chair McKittrick
Staff Present: Tom Vlastic, Dep. Town Planner
Richard Merk, Town Council Liaison
Leslie Lambert, Planning Manager

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

REGULAR AGENDA [*Items re-ordered*]

(2) Preliminary Review of Site Development Permit X9H-607 for New Residence and Site Improvements, 385 Cervantes Road, Illich

Mr. Vlastic reviewed the staff report of 10/29/09 on the request for 1,205 cubic yards of grading for residential redevelopment of the subject 1.2-acre parcel. He noted that a joint ASCC/Planning Commission site meeting was scheduled for 3:15 p.m. on November 9, 2009. He discussed: 1) grading plan; 2) existing house; 3) building site; 4) slope; 5) existing vegetation; 6) landscape plan; and 7) sustainable elements of the project.

Responding to Commissioner McIntosh, John Richards (architect) said much of the old fill on the site would be re-compacted and put back on the site. He described the location of the new house in relation to the old fill. Responding to Commissioner Gilbert, he confirmed that no solar panels had been specified at this point. Usually, he tried to put in solar panels for hot water because that was the most effective use of solar energy. The applicants wanted to investigate photovoltaics as well. A catchment system for rainwater had also been discussed, and a drainage system to accommodate that would be put in.

Responding to Vice Chair Zaffaroni, he said the metal roof had a standard dull finish. Mr. Vlastic noted that it was fully compliant with the Town's light reflectivity values and was very dark. The ASCC would be looking at samples to consider the reflectivity/sheen in relation to the color. Samples would be available at the field meeting. Responding to Vice Chair Zaffaroni, Ms. Lambert confirmed that neighbors had been noticed about this meeting as well as the site meeting.

Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, Mr. Richards described the original contours prior to the placement of the fill. He said there would be some off haul because some of it would have debris in it. When the fill was compacted, some of the volume would decrease. Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, he said the current drainage was basically uncontrolled and flowed under the house. It would be directed down into the meadow. He confirmed that the 4' fence was for the dogs.

Responding to Commissioner McIntosh, Mr. Richards said re-using some of the house material had not been discussed; there was not much in the house worth saving. The owner expressed some interest in re-using the bathtubs. Responding to Commissioner McIntosh, he said the location of the guesthouse was a personal preference of the applicant. They wanted to keep it separate; it would probably not appear as far away once the site was opened up. Responding to Commissioner McIntosh, he said the dark color of the roof could generate more heat and require a better ventilation system in the roof itself. Some roofs had higher reflectivity built into them. Commissioner McIntosh said the green points were a great objective.

Vice Chair Zaffaroni asked for public comment, and there was none.

Commissioner Von Feldt said she was generally supportive of the project—especially removing all the non-native vegetation. She supported removing some of the hedges that occurred around Town that broke up the views. She would like to see less planting along Cherokee. Bob Cleaver, landscape architect, noted that the Conservation Committee was concerned about using California pepper because it was not native to California. Some *Prunus lyonii* could be put in instead. The applicant wanted to claim the space and remove the feeling of leaking out onto Cherokee. The intent was to have some medium sized shrubs but not plant plant-to-plant. Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, he said the planting towards Cherokee was to lessen the impacts of headlights.

Commissioner McIntosh said he concurred with Commissioner Von Feldt and preferred to have some sense of openness.

The preliminary review was continued to the site meeting on 11/9/09.

Vice Chair Zaffaroni stepped down from the Commission for the next two items. Commissioner McIntosh took the gavel.

(1) Annual Fall Review, CUP X7D-30, 302 Portola Road, The Priory School

Mr. Vlastic reviewed the staff memo of 10/29/09 on the annual fall report on the Priory. He said staff was somewhat concerned that the maximum authorized enrollment had been exceeded by 5%, which was more than in the past. Mr. Molak had been asked to consider additional efforts the school could make to control the fall enrollment. He added that the Priory continued to work with the Town on the affordable housing provisions. Staff recommended acceptance of the report with some reservation over enrollment.

Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, Mr. Vlastic said the housing targets in the Housing Element were set with the understanding that the Priory would continue to work with the Town to meet those needs. The Town was grateful to the Priory for providing affordable housing and hoped that they could provide additional units as part of their master plan. If there were things that were substantially out of compliance with the Housing Element or with the numbers originally identified, the Priory would be asked if they could more effectively meet the needs. At this point, the Town was happy that the Priory provided the units they had. Tim Molak (Priory) added that a couple of the homes on campus were part of the affordable guidelines. The Priory studied who could move into what houses. It was difficult if there were two working individuals to get close to “very low” income. “Low” was difficult even if only one of the spouses was working and the other stayed home with the children. Going forward, it would be harder and harder to meet some of those targets.

With respect to enrollment, Mr. Molak said last year was extremely unique across the country for all schools due to the economy. The Admissions Committee made the decision to accept more students than normal to make sure there would be enough to fulfill the 350 cap. In late May and June, thirty of the current families were on financial aid. If half of those were lost, fifteen would have made the enrollment in compliance. Only two of those thirty had been lost. There were now eighty families on financial aid receiving \$1.7 million. It appeared that some of the families might need more aid than the school could provide, but that did not happen. He reviewed additional reasons why the enrollment was higher than in previous years as set forth in his report of 9/18/09. He said the Priory respected the 350 cap and wasn't trying to grow the school. This year was a blip in the 5-6 year range shown in his report. Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, he said there was an attrition of 6-8 every year. Next year would be the most difficult to get into the Priory because the enrollment would have to go down. Additionally, the Priory was under 18% of just Portola Valley residents; for the Portola Valley School District area, another ten students were added. Responding to Commissioner Gilbert, he said a student was automatically re-enrolled unless there were academic or behavioral concerns. Responding to Commissioner Gilbert, he confirmed there were fewer girls in both this year's sixth grade and last year's 7th grade. He discussed actions taken to improve the gender imbalance as set forth in his report.

Commissioner McIntosh felt anyone coming out of the Portola Valley School District should be counted as a Portola Valley resident. Councilmember Merk noted that if residency was based on a zip code of 94028, that included Portola Valley and its sphere of influence of Ladera, Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde. Commissioner McIntosh said the Priory continued to do a good job.

Commissioner Von Feldt said last year was unprecedented, and she did not fault the decision-making process. With the history provided, she was confident that the enrollment numbers would get back in line. Mr. Molak reviewed average daily attendance figures shown in his report. Commissioner Von Feldt congratulated the Priory on the carpooling progress. Mr. Molak noted that it included carpooling, walking and biking.

The Commission accepted the report.

(3) Preliminary Review of Proposed Amendment to Conditional Use Permit X7D-132 for Replacement of Wireless Antenna at Woodside Priory, 302 Portola Road, Verizon Wireless

Mr. Vlasic reviewed the staff report of 10/29/09 on the proposal to replace two Verizon wireless 35' pole antenna facilities at the Priory with a 50' "slimline monopole." Staff recommended holding a joint ASCC/Commission meeting at the Priory on 11/9/09 to review the conditions at the site. He noted that the staff report dated 8/12/09 on the Sprint CUP renewal request was included in the packet. The Town had also been contacted by Nextel for a similar request.

As previously discussed, Mr. Vlasic said the Town Attorney had advised that the provisions of the Federal Telecommunications Act did not permit local agencies to analyze radio frequency health issues associated with proposed wireless communication facilities. But, aesthetics and long-term plans to serve the community were open for review. Additionally, options such as the "monopine" proposed by T-Mobile had been shared with Verizon. He said Ms. Lambert indicated that Verizon was reluctant to consider the monotree, but that would need to be clarified.

Commissioner Gilbert asked that Verizon provide a map showing the existing coverage areas and location of sites. Mr. Vlasic said existing and long-term plans had been requested and should be available before this was before the Planning Commission for final action. Responding to Commissioners, he said the applicant could address: a) impacts of higher height on coverage; b) whether emissions from different towers were cumulative; and c) what it would take to provide service to 75% of the community. He added that if the carriers were held to the 75%, the facilities would need to be in more locations such as Westridge and the Ranch. Staff wanted to have some sense of what these carriers thought they wanted to do in Town so that staff could respond to the requests and try to encourage co-location and design solutions that didn't result in a proliferation of these facilities at any given site. Without the data from the carriers, it was hard to answer some of the fundamental questions that came up with these requests.

Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, Mr. Vlasic said if Verizon needed to have two antennas on the pole with separation, it would probably be harder to put any other carriers on that pole. There might be an opportunity with the Sprint pole for co-location, but that pole might not be sufficient to support the other antenna. The representative from Verizon should be able to talk about what additional facilities could be on their pole. Ms. Lambert added that there had been some problem with co-location and the frequency level. That was why the Nextel pole was further away. Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, Mr. Vlasic said with the requests for changes or additions, staff needed to try to pull this together in some rational way. He did not think the companies were necessarily working closely together.

Laura Boat, Verizon, provided photos of what was currently at the site, including the two Verizon poles. Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, she said the 50' pole would be in the same location—between the two existing antennas. With regard to design, she said the "trees" were great when there were other trees around to make them blend in. If it was isolated, it would add more mass. A pole painted dark green would

blend in with the trees in the backdrop; she didn't think the brown color blended in very well.

Responding to Commissioner McIntosh, Ms. Boat said Verizon would be adding upgrades to their coverage. Going from the whip antenna to the panel antenna provided more capacity, which meant they were able to serve more customers. According to the radio frequency engineer, there were complaints from the residents on the hills to the east about coverage. With respect to co-location, she said Verizon had been operating at the lower height, and it was possible that someone else could come on the pole. There needed to be a certain separation. AT&T and Verizon could be next to each other with a foot separation. Nextel needed a bigger separation on the horizontal plane and perhaps 10' on the vertical plane. Responding to Commissioner Von Feldt, she said co-locating on the Sprint pole was not proposed at this time because Verizon had its own poles. Responding to Commissioner Gilbert, she said she would provide a Verizon coverage map. She also suggested the radio frequency engineer come to the site meeting on Monday.

Responding to Commissioner McIntosh, Ms. Lambert confirmed that there were 6 poles at the Priory utilized by 5 carriers. The new pole would be similar to the Nextel pole at the site. Responding to Commissioner Gilbert, Ms. Boat said a portable generator could be plugged into the facility if necessary. Commissioner Gilbert asked if the carriers could share a generator at the site. Commissioner Von Feldt noted that T-Mobile had battery power backup. Ms. Boat said there was battery backup for 8-12 hours. Mr. Vlastic added that with T-Mobile, the suggestion was to double the battery backup. He said he would be concerned if there were a number of generators at the site. Commissioner McIntosh asked that Verizon investigate the maximum battery this facility could have. Ms. Boat said generators were installed at the high capacity sites. Portable generators were available for the smaller sites.

Mr. Vlastic said this site was different because these facilities had distant views. The concern was about massing these poles. Painting might be a solution. On the other hand, there were tree profiles as you looked up to the site. One option was to fill it in a little with the tree pole option. One question was whether the trees moved in the wind or were just stiff. He added that the distance that most people would view the site was far.

Commissioner McIntosh said this request would reduce the number of poles but a more visible pole would be put in. If all the carriers were represented at the site, it wasn't likely that there would be six more poles there. Mr. Vlastic said whether or not there would be other carriers/competition was unknown. As the ownership of these changed and the needs of the carriers matured, there would be bigger and taller poles requested.

Commissioner McIntosh said he would like to see some simulation of what it would look like with "trees" instead of poles. Mr. Vlastic felt the request was reasonable because simulations were being provided by other carriers. What options Verizon could provide would be helpful. Ms. Boat noted that the "tree" required more maintenance; paint was a lot easier to maintain than fake pine needles. Additionally, she said a study for the radio frequency emissions could be provided.

Commissioner Von Feldt said the facilities at the Priory were visible from the trail at the end of Georgia Lane that went to Ormondale School. Ms. Lambert noted that the Priory removed a lot of dying pines on that hill which opened it up. Commissioner McIntosh requested Verizon provide a picture of the two existing poles out and the new pole in as well as a view with a "tree." Under the permits with the other carriers, he did not think the Town could ask them all to change to trees in the middle of their term. Ms. Lambert noted that there were currently three requests: one was an older permit that didn't have an expiration date; two were expired. Mr. Vlastic said they could be requested to get their poles painted a darker color. He noted that the Sprint application was just to continue using the existing facilities.

Responding to Ms. Zaffaroni, Ms. Lambert confirmed that this was an amendment as opposed to a lapsed permit. Ms. Zaffaroni said she was concerned about the lapsed permits. The policy said the permit was to be granted for an initial period not to exceed 5 years. There had not been close monitoring of what was going on, and the carriers themselves allowed the permits to lapse. She hoped there would be some

innovation over time. T-Mobile described their pole with everything within the pole. There was a lot of vagueness here in terms of what was possible. There should be some clarity as to what the Town could require if there was a better aesthetic solution. That might be a tree or the kind of pole that T-Mobile was willing to put up on the Peak Lane site. From a distance, the whip antennas were very visually noticeable. Visually, it was easier to provide some sort of unobtrusive look when there was a dark monopole that contains the antenna. As a Town, the concerns were to get a better visual or aesthetic result. The carrier might have to accept some diminished capacity. The Town policy said the wireless communication facility must be designed to be unobtrusive and compatible with surrounding landscape. There was no way that a tree farm of antennas would look natural. If there had to be some non-native landscaping because it worked given the site conditions and what could grow, she would advocate for planting some screening. It would take a long time, but the sooner it was done the better. At that particular site, there were already a number of dead trees, which would have to come out soon. The Peak Lane location had the same kind of pines, which did not have longevity. There needed to be some sort of active monitoring that was included in the CUP so that the providers monitored this. Someone had to take responsibility. The Town had a lot of catching up to do in terms of responsible monitoring and also monitoring for innovation so that when the permit came up for approval, innovated developments that could make them less obtrusive and more compatible could be investigated. She suspected that more and more communities would demand some innovation. Responding to Commissioner McIntosh, she said she did not feel that any of the permits should have a 10-year timeframe. Mr. Vlastic said the key was to have a review on a systematic basis. Ms. Zaffaroni said that had not been done because there were lapsed permits. The opportunity for on-going review and monitoring should be built into the permit. Ms. Lambert noted that carriers changed without the Town being aware of it. Or, the carrier remained the same but the person representing them changed. There was never a consistent contact. The people representing the T-Mobile Peak Lane site were not the same ones who looked at a potential Corte Madera School site.

After discussion, Commissioners agreed that the Town needed to find out if co-location was realistic with the various design options. Ms. Boat noted that 6-7 carriers were on the legs and cross bars of the water tower at 92 and 280.

Responding to Ms. Zaffaroni, Ms. Lambert said the Verizon proposal was for one 50' high steel pole with six antennas--three of which would be mounted at the top with the other three located below. It had a slimline appearance. Mr. Vlastic said on the plans it was referred to as a "slimline monopole."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioners submitted changes to the minutes of the 10/21/09 meeting. By motion and second, the minutes were approved as amended by a vote of 4-0.

COMMISSION, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: None

ADJOURNMENT: 9:10 p.m.

Leah Zaffaroni, Vice Chair
Planning Commission

Leslie Lambert
Planning Manager