

REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING, TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, February 4, 2004,
TOWN CENTER, HISTORIC SCHOOLHOUSE, 765 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028

Vice Chairman Zaffaroni called the meeting to order at 8:08 p.m. Ms. Lambert called the roll:

Present: Commissioners Elkind, McIntosh, Wengert and Zaffaroni
Absent: Chairman Breon
Staff Present: Tom Vlastic, Dep. Town Planner
Leslie Lambert, Planning Manager

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Bill Lane expressed his appreciation and thanks to Craig Breon for his years of service and to all commissioners for their dedication and hard work.

REGULAR AGENDA

(1) Request for Eucalyptus Tree Removal, Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Mr. Vlastic reviewed the staff report of 1/30/04 on the request from MROSD for removal of four large eucalyptus trees that currently stand adjacent to Sausal Pond vista point at the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, near the western property boundary with The Sequoias. He reviewed the letter request from Ana Ruiz, Open Space Planner with MROSD, which describes the four non-native trees pose a potential safety hazard to preserve visitors by routinely dropping very large limbs in an area that receives high visitor use. In addition, the trees pose a potential fire hazard due to the high flammability of the trees and its leaf litter, a concern shared with The Sequoias. Mr. Vlastic noted that because Windy Hill Preserve is regulated by a conditional use permit issued by the Planning Commission, the request is presented to the Commissioners for information and comment prior to issuance of the tree removal permit. The request was referred to the Conservation Committee, and at their January 27th meeting the committee unanimously recommended removal of the four trees and encouraged removal of the smaller eucalyptus trees on both sides of the pond. He noted that committee members raised some concerns over potential impact on raptors in the trees.

Responding to Commissioners Zaffaroni and Elkind, Ms. Ruiz informed commission that the District's Resource Management specialist and biologist have made a preliminary evaluation of the trees and will visit the site prior to removal of the trees to confirm the lack of active nests. In response to questions over accessibility, Ms. Ruiz explained that the section of trail would be closed temporarily to visitors, who would be directed to use the Betsy Crower Trail to bypass the work area, signage will be posted at the parking lot, and at the site for notification to users. In response to concerns over thistle and broom, Ms. Ruiz indicated that they will have a specialist involved in restoration of the area.

The Commission concurred with removal of the eucalyptus trees as provided with recommendation that MROSD submit a letter to the Town on the removal procedure and restoration plan for review by staff and Conservation Committee.

(2) Preliminary Review, Exception Request for Detached Garage, 107 Tan Oak Drive, Kister

Mr. Vlastic reviewed the staff report of 1/29/04 on the request for construction of a proposed attached, single story garage within 5' feet of the front parcel line, whereas a 20 foot setback is normally required on the .21 acre property located within Brookside Park subdivision. He referred to Municipal Code Section 18.52.090 of the zoning ordinance which allows the Planning Commission to grant an exception to permit a garage to be located within 5 feet of the front parcel line, but no closer than 15 feet of the centerline of the street, if two findings can be made as described in the staff report. He used site photos

and site plans to show the Commission the existing conditions of the site. Commissioner Elkind raised concern with the 15 foot height of the proposed garage and wondered about the potential visual impacts to views along Tan Oak Drive.

Responding to Councilman Merk, Mr. Kister and his designer Mr. Leopold indicated that the garage is proposed to be 15' in height, with the pitch creating an attractive façade and allows for some storage.

Commissioner Wengert felt the project was reasonably thought out for the site and surrounding areas.

Commissioner McIntosh concurred that the request for exception was appropriate, but did request that the ASCC consider the matter of roof height and visual impact off site.

Commissioner Zaffaroni further concurred that this request was an appropriate example for exception, and not unusual for this zoning district.

COMMITTEE, STAFF, COMMITTEE REPORTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

By motion of Commissioner McIntosh, seconded by Commissioner Elkind, the minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2004 were approved as submitted by a vote of 4-0 (Breon, absent).

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Leah Zaffaroni, Vice Chairman
Planning Commission

Leslie Lambert
Planning Manager