



Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

THE CITY OF
NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

August 21, 2013

MINUTES

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Mayor
Pat Eklund
Mayor Pro Tem
Eric Lucan
Councilmembers
Denise Athas
Madeline Kellner
Jeanne MacLeamy

City Manager
Michael S. Frank

Present: Patrick MacLeamy, Chair
Michael Barber, Vice Chair
Joseph Farrell
Tom Telfer

Absent: Jon Strickling

Staff: Alan Lazure, Principal Planner
Steve Marshall, Senior Planner
Louise Patterson, Planner II

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order.

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

The final agenda was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 6, 2013 (PM, JF, TT)

M/s Farrell/ Telfer (passed 3-0-1)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 19, 2013 (PM, MB, JF, BR)

M/s Barber/Farrell (passed 3-0-1)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

CONTINUED ITEMS:

**3. BUCK HOUSING (LP)
P2011-008; DESIGN REVIEW
APN 125-580-11; 8001 REDWOOD BLVD.**

Conduct a Design Review hearing on the site plan, building architecture, colors and materials, and landscaping for the development of 130 housing units for the Buck Institute employees.

Applicant attendees – Stephanie Amend, BAR Architect, Mary McEachron, CEO Buck Center, Colin Bly, Landscape Architect, Kirk Bovitz, CSW Stuber-Stroeh

Planner Patterson gave a staff presentation summarizing the comments of the DRC at the July 17, 2013 meeting and modifications/additional information submitted for the project.

Applicants presented the additional information and modifications made to the project.

Three members of the public spoke raising concerns with building height, color, design, PG & E pipe location, traffic, soils conditions and drainage.

The DRC voted (3-0-1) to continue the project with the following comments/direction:

- All commissioners agreed that the site plan, building architecture, passive solar design, colors and materials, and landscape concept were good
- More detail is needed for site grading, particularly at the pedestrian sidewalks, unit entrances and where contours meet retaining walls
- Location of buildings 10, 12, and 13 need to be studied as they relate to the adjacent parking
- Retaining walls on the west side of buildings 1 and 2 need to be located outside of the PG & E easement
- Slope/width required for the block retaining walls
- Proximity of buildings next to each other, particularly buildings 9 and 10
- Large scale detailed site plan for grading, access to buildings, retaining walls and pedestrian sidewalks and how these built improvements tie in with the graded contours
- Detailed plans may be submitted in phases

Commissioner Farrell voted against motion as he thought the entire site needs to be reviewed at one time.

NEW ITEMS:

4. 801 STATE ACCESS SENIOR APARTMENTS (SM) P2012-010; DESIGN REVIEW APN 157-970-04; 801 STATE ACCESS ROAD

Conduct a public hearing and consider the final architectural, landscaping, and public art details proposed for the 801 State Access Road Senior Apartments project.

Senior Planner Marshall presented the staff report for the project, noting the following key design issues:

- using Sycamore trees along State Access Road instead of Jacaranda trees
- reducing the height of the parking lot lights
- using more decorative luminaires and poles for parking lot lighting
- using LED lamps for the parking lot lighting system
- relocating or using bollard lights for parking lot lighting near the apartment building
- question regarding the visibility of the public art component
- consider tank-less water heaters/other measures to eliminate exterior water heater closets

Rob Davidson, representing the applicant, introduced the project architect and landscape architect.

Bob Wright, project architect, noted the project was amended to address the Commission's comments at an earlier meeting. Mr. Wright commented that alternatives will be considered to eliminate the water heater closets on the balcony and patio areas. However, the design team would like the flexibility to consider other heating options, such as a central boiler, recognizing that tank-less water heaters might not be the most economical or efficient alternative.

Don Blayney, project landscape architect, briefly described the project's landscaping, lighting, and public art components. Mr. Blayney commented that Jacaranda trees were substituted for Sycamores due to the size of the planter strip along State Access Road and noted that Sycamores drop branch and seed pods that are messy and which might not be appropriate for senior residents. In terms of lighting, Mr. Blayney noted that lowering the height of the parking lot lights might mean more light poles would need to be installed to maintain adequate light levels. He stated that fewer lights would be preferred by the applicant. He indicated the design team would look into LED lamps. Mr. Blayney stated the public art component would be visible from the public sidewalk and would invite views into the larger central plaza space.

The public hearing was opened. No members of the public wished to address the Commission. The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Farrell commented that the design team did an excellent job creating a project that is relevant to the architecture at Hamilton Field. He was fine with the Jacaranda trees as proposed. He would like to see a more residentially scaled parking lot lighting system with LED lamps. Shorter light poles would be preferred even if more poles are needed. The front entry door should be a more complimentary design, not the stock design depicted on the plans.

Eliminating the water heater closets would be beneficial.

Commissioner Barber agreed with the comments made by Commissioner Farrell. Commissioner Barber commented that the community garden space needs more sun exposure and seems to be shaded by fencing and storage cabinets. Commissioner Barber preferred lower height parking lot lighting. Commissioner Barber felt the public art component was hidden within the central plaza and would like to see it a bit more visible to the public. He supported removing the exterior water heater closets.

Commissioner Telfer thought the project was well designed and had no other comments.

Chair MacLeamy commented that it is likely the changes to the parking lot lights would become conditions of approval. He felt removing the water heater closets was a good idea. He expressed a preference for Sycamore trees along State Access Road recognizing the aesthetic and shade benefits of a large canopy tree. He liked the public art component, even though it isn't fully located in a public space. Nonetheless, he favored the art piece as designed.

Motion (Chair MacLeamy)/Second (Commissioner Telfer) to approve the final architecture, landscaping, and public art component for the 801 State Access Senior Apartment project, subject to the conditions of approval contained in the staff report.

Motion Passed: 4-0-1

PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP: None

GENERAL BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned by the Chair at 10:10 p.m.