



THE CITY OF
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CALIFORNIA

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Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

May 4, 2016

MINUTES

Present: Beth Radovanovich, Chair
Patrick MacLeamy
Michael Barber
Marshall Balfe

Absent: Joe Farrell

Staff: Hans Grunt, Senior Planner
Matt Gilster, Planner II

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order.

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

The agenda was approved without changes.
M/s: Barber / MacLeamy; passed 4-0

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. APPROVAL OF DRC MINUTES OF APRIL 6, 2016 (BR, MBAR, PM, MBAL)

PUBLIC HEARING: None

CONTINUED ITEMS: None

NEW ITEMS:

1. BAHIA HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION (MG) P2015-084; DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP APN 143-272-07; END OF MISTY COURT

Conduct a public workshop to review and provide comments on a conceptual site design, circulation, building massing, and architecture for the development of a 9-lot residential subdivision. The subdivision is of an 8.72 are unimproved, hillside parcel. The final subdivided residential lots will range from a quarter acre to over an acre in size.

Planner II Matt Gilster presented the project proposal and gave an overview of the proposed project, scope of project, and application process.

The applicant Aaron Roden of Ryder Homes gave a presentation describing the project proposal, site plan, and site background. The project architect gave an overview of the architectural layouts of the homes and details of the home exteriors.

Public Comments: Bob Weelow who lives at 2516 Topaz Drive was in favor of the project but voiced concerns regarding soil stability following proposed site grading.

The applicant responded that the development of the hillside with houses and proper drainage should make the current site more stable.

Francis Brott who lives at the adjacent 521 Malobar Drive voiced concerns regarding wildlife being displaced by the new development.

Patricia Rutz who lives at 2616 Topaz Drive voiced concerns regarding wildlife and the management of the designated open space that will remain behind the new houses.

Jeanette Ayoulr who lives at 505 Malobar Drive voiced concerns regarding drainage from the new homes impacting her property.

Summary of Commission Comments:

Commissioner MacLeamy

- Glad to see previously disturbed site being developed.
- Agrees with the applicant's attempt to work with the existing property and keep grading and retaining walls to a minimum.
- Should demonstrate ability to successfully landscape slopes between lots.
- Concerned about steepness of street
- Encourage the applicant to meet and work with the immediate neighbors

Commissioner Barber

- Likes larger lot setbacks and overall lot layout.
- Questioned more opportunity, through home designs, to make a better use of the sites hillside elevation to provide better easterly views of the marsh/river/bay.
- Recommended stepping back the second floors on home side elevations to provide more variation/interest and architectural depth.
- Recommend the applicant find a way(s) to reduce or remove the 6 foot tall retaining wall proposed e.g. series of shorter walls – focus of comment was based on lot 7.

Commissioner Balfe

- Directed the applicant to address drainage and slop stability on the properties.
- Generally likes home designs and how they “work” with the site topography.
- Concerned with the steepness of the street and parking on the street.

Commissioner Radovanovich

- Generally agrees with other Commissioner comments and also recommended the applicant break up the side elevations of the homes.

Applicant Response:

- Project applicant responded to questions regarding site design and architecture.

2. OAKMONT SENIOR LIVING (HG) P2016-010; DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP APN 151-022-09; 1461 SOUTH NOVATO BLVD

Conduct a public workshop to review and provide comments on draft plans for site design, circulation, building massing, building architecture and landscaping for a proposed two-story (approx..30’11” at tallest portion of main roof), 72,000sf+/- structure to support 50 senior assisted living units and 28 senior memory care units. Additional accommodations in the structure include kitchen. Dining room, activities rooms, lobby areas and media room. Supporting site improvements include: a central open courtyard, community garden, a small dog park, parking. Circulation and overall landscaping. The proposal is located on the northern 2.78 acres of vacant land adjacent to Quest Church. Project entitlements required include a General Plan Land Use Amendment from R1 to R10, a rezoning from R1-7.5 to a site specific Master Plan and Precise Development Plan, a two lot subdivision and Design Review, which are, collectively subject to environmental review under CEQA.

Senior Planner Hans Grunt presented the project proposal and gave an overview of the project setting, proposed site and landscape plans, building architecture, and access/circulation improvements and described the applicable city entitlements requested and the pending public review process and hearings.

Commissioner Barber inquired about parking dimensions on site and questioned whether or not the parking lot would be able to accommodate the senior center and church if both were to have events at the same time.

The applicant Bill Mabry gave a presentation describing the project proposal, services offered and the goals of the project. Mr. Mabry and the landscape architect, Pete Warts, gave an overview of the architecture, site design, and landscaping elements.

Commissioner Questions to the Applicant:

Commissioner MacLeamy asked the applicant if the senior center was actually parallel to Novato Boulevard. He indicated that the building foot print does not look like it is parallel with Novato Boulevard.

The applicant confirmed that the building foot print is not completely parallel with Novato Boulevard and was offset for design purposes.

Commissioner Radovanovich inquired where deliveries would occur on site and questioned the number of handicapped parking spaces.

The applicant responded to questions indicating the deliveries would be in the parking lot and that there are two ADA parking spaces proposed.

Commissioner Radovanovich stated that she would like there to be more ADA parking.

Public Comment:

John Caye, 20 Portsmouth Dr., wanted to have a conversation regarding the proposed change from the General Plan R1 land use designation to R10 to allow the residential care facility for the elderly. Asked how the project is being a good neighbor to the surrounding neighborhood and questioned the adequacy of the new structure's setback from existing homes along Cambridge St.

Marlene Ballard, 1451 Pastel Ln., stated that she was in full support of the project. She stated that she would like it, its employees and residents to be part of the community, and thinks it will blend in beautifully to the surrounding neighborhood.

Community Development Director Bob Brown stated that staff will be reviewing the shared parking onsite for consistency with City Codes.

Hutch Turner, 418 Ridge Rd., commented on the right angles of the buildings and stated he would like to see more curves in the project architecture as right angles are too stressful.

Summary of Commission Comments:

Commissioner MacLeamy

- Acknowledged that Novato is short on assisted living facilities
- Believes that the site and building designs need to address the issue of scale of properties in the surrounding area e.g. Quest Church and Novato Community Methodius Church.
- Likes hardscape/pathway and landscape improvements proposed for Johnson St.
- Agrees with Commissioner Radovanovich (comment below) that more ADA parking be provided.
- Recommended that building façade be parallel with Novato Boulevard.
- Questioned adequacy of rear yard setback regarding the tightness of the rear of the property and the resulting utility of proposed outdoor spaces (garden boxes, pathway)
- For building architecture suggest use of hip roof elements in place of gables to reduce scale, afford shade to windows/walls and generally less busy; suggest the architecture provide strong horizontal tie; suggest better attention to windows (trim elements etc.) overall; look at application of alternative siding materials (vertical, horizontal siding) and color differentiations between 1st and 2nd floors
- Recommended a 2-3 foot tall hedge to separate the site from Novato Boulevard.

Commissioner Barber

- Overall likes the landscaping and the breakup of the mass of the building
- Agrees with Commissioner MacLeamy that windows need further attention e.g. alternative trim details, and that the architecture provide strong horizontal tie
- Cupolas appear “stuck on” and need work
- Suggest application of evergreen trees on interior and rear setback areas
- Concerned regarding the shared parking between the church and senior living facility.
- Concerned with tightness of the areas in the rear of the structure and solar access to garden area.

Commissioner Balfe

- Agrees that the applicant should, via design elements, emphasize horizontal tie of the building’s façade
- Agrees with application of evergreen plants and trees to screen parking along Novato Blvd.

- Concerned that the garden planting area in the rear of the building will not receive enough sunlight due to building size and the adjacent property elevation change; consider stepping back the second floor and/or roof line to create more space and sun access to the rear of the proposed building.
- Likes porte-cochere design – adds functional relief and interest to the front facade

Commissioner Radovanovich

- Agrees that the site and building designs need to address the scale of developed properties, including homes in the surrounding area
- Agrees that the rear of the building is the project's pinch point and its utility/function needs to be demonstrated e.g. shading and/or solar access needs to be addressed
- Requested cross sections between the proposal and existing adjacent homes etc. to better demonstrate separation, elevation changes and relative structure massing; other Commissioners expressed agreement
- Recommends more ADA parking be provided

ADJOURNMENT: M/s Barber/MacLeamy. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.