



THE CITY OF  
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CALIFORNIA

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# Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

July 6, 2016

## MINUTES

**Present:** Beth Radovanovich, Chair  
Michael Barber  
Joe Farrell  
Patrick MacLeamy

**Absent:** Marshall Balfe, Vice Chair

**Staff:** Hans Grunt, Senior Planner  
Matt Gilster, Planner II  
Brian Keefer, 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 4-0-1

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**CONSENT CALENDAR:** None

### **1. APPROVAL OF DRC MINUTES OF JUNE 15, 2016 (MBAR, MBal, JF, BR)**

M/s: Farrell/Barber; passed 3-0-1-1

**PUBLIC HEARING:** None

**CONTINUED ITEMS:** None

**NEW ITEMS:**

**PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP:**

- 2. WOOD HOLLOW HOTEL (BK)  
FILE: P2015-091;  
DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP  
APN 125-202-13 AND 14;  
NORTHWEST CORNER OF REDWOOD BLVD. AND WOOD HOLLOW DR.**

Conduct a public workshop to review and provide comments on a conceptual site design, circulation, building massing, and architecture for the development of a new 55,350 square foot, 87 room hotel on two parcels totaling 4.49 acres; Assessor's Parcel Numbers 125-202-13 and 14. The project includes associated access drives, parking, bio-retention areas, retaining walls, grading, and landscaping.

Planner II Brian Keefer presented the project and gave an overview of the proposal, building architecture, project history, application process, and site constraints.

The applicant's land use consultant, Paul Smith, gave a presentation describing the project proposal, services offered by the hotel, and overall goals of the project. Young Kim, the architect for the project, gave an overview of the proposed architecture, site design and constraints, and layout of the hotel.

**Commissioner Questions to the Applicant:**

Commissioner Farrell asked the applicant to explain details of the map.

Commissioner Barber asked the applicant that if there are 87 parking spaces and 87 rooms where the staff parking was to be located?

The applicant responded by informing the commissioner that the hotel met the current parking standards required by the City of Novato Zoning Code and that hotels generally experience 80% occupancy at one time leaving available parking spaces for staff.

**Public Comments:**

Arlene Evans Cobblestone Court - Commented that she had attended neighborhood meeting. Commented that she appreciated changes to plans in response to neighborhood concerns and that this project is at the gateway to her neighborhood. Commented that the project presents limited landscaping particularly the open parking lot in front affords no interior planting islands-only perimeter. The buffer between the project and wetland needs enhancement to restrict intrusion. Expressed that the neighborhood has an HOA that reviews all architecture to protect the value of their neighborhood, and that their concerns revolve around protecting that value.

Commented that the Hillside Ordinance requires architectural design that is scaled to complement the hillsides and that the presented big flat roofs do not complement the hillsides. Asked if the parking qualifies as underground parking. Commented that she likes to see the wetland protected; however, the setback serves more purpose than just hydrology. Commented that she thinks there needs to be some sort of barrier to keep foot traffic, dogs, etc. out of the wetland. Asked if the 1996 General Plan considered the PG&E pipeline. Commented that she did not think the project should violate the height limit.

Kathy Socal-Commented that she doesn't want a crime ridden hotel. Commented that she is concerned that some of these hotels can't get the clients they need, and then let people live there and receive subsidies from the City and State.

Susan Stompe- Agrees that the buffer is important for wetlands. Commented that landscaping can enhance wetland's value. Questioned if the underground parking is included in FAR.

Staff responded that, per standard zoning provisions, underground parking is not included in the FAR.

Joe Robinson- Asked what is the definition of basement or submerged parking?

Young Kim (architect for applicant) responded by explaining that the code defines underground parking in a way that 1 side can be open.

Joe Robinson commented that the parking needs more landscaping, not just courtesy plants and the entire project needs more screening.

Public comment period closed.

### **Summary of Commission Comments:**

#### Commissioner MacLeamy

- Commented that everyone is accustomed to seeing the project site as a beautiful pastoral scenery and underlined the importance of the project site's visibility from Highway 101.
- Explained the constraints on the site, only one area where a building can be developed is down in a bowl between the hills, above the wetland, and outside of the PG&E easement, and there has to be a fire truck access around the back of the structure.
- Made comments that the applicants have done some nice things; bent the building with the developable site, located parking beneath the lower portion of the structure, stepped the building up with the grade, limited access from Wood Hollow, and placed the parking within the PG&E easement.
- Explained that the building is 56 feet tall at its tallest, and it is a modern looking flat roof building. Commented that this is a fairly large building to be the first "welcome sign" when entering Novato from the north. Suggested that a more residential look can be achieved, rather than a modern look. Commented that 87 rooms seems like a lot given site constraints.

Suggested that they could get a single loaded corridor of rooms along the front looking out on the wetland if the parking could be placed elsewhere.

- Commented that the proposed building is too big, and doesn't nestle into the site very well.
- Commented that the main design review issues are scale, style, and parking treatment.
- Commented that there may be a way to get 87 rooms with better scale.

#### Commissioner Farrell

- Commented that the building is too big. Mass of the building is too big, too boxy – Footprint is good.
- Questioned if it would be possible push into west hillside to get room for more landscaping in front of building.
- Commented that 87 rooms might be too aggressive. Exposed 4-story space is rough.
- Felt that the landscaping needs more to provide more buffering.

Applicant responded to comments by explaining that the landscaping plan will not be finalized, until they get the building settled.

#### Commissioner Barber

- Commented that this building will be the gateway to Novato from the north.
- Commented that the hotel looks like one big block from that corner; it needs to step up better.
- Understands that the landscape will come later, but does not like vast parking lot with no trees.
- Understands the issue with the PG&E easement.
- Does not see reason to exceed the height limit.
- Commented that a larger buffer would be better for wetland.
- Commented that pavers would be better than black asphalt parking lot.

#### Commissioner Radovanovich, Chair

- Agrees with other commissioners' comments.
- Likes that the building faces 101, and doesn't turn its back on the freeway.
- Complemented the applicant on a nice job of getting points across with drawings.

- Having trouble supporting height limits that exceed the Hillside Ordinance. Explained that these standards were put in place for a reason.
- Stated that the community wants a superior project here.
- Questioned the size of the wetland buffer.
- Commented that the applicant did a good job of stepping building, but from main entry, smack into 4 story wall.

**3. RODAS RESIDENCE (MG)  
FILE: P2015-075;  
DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP  
APN 153-141-31; 715 LAMONT AVENUE**

Conduct a public workshop to review and provide comments on the building, design, massing, and architecture of a new single family residence located at 715 Lamont Avenue. The proposed residence would include 1,970 square feet of ground floor area, 1,055 square feet of second story area, and 540 square feet of garage space. Design Review is required for two-story residences in the R4-6.0 zoning district.

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

Commissioner MacLeamy asked staff why the project was brought before the commission.

Staff responded by explaining that the item was requested to come before the commission by concerned neighbors and that the applicant agreed that a Design Review Workshop would be appropriate.

The applicant's architect Steve Maskulka gave a brief presentation outlining the proposal and project history.

**Public Comment:**

Cindy Halvorson, who lives across the street from the proposed project on Lamont Avenue, voiced concerns regarding the size and height of the home when compared to existing homes in the neighborhood. Commented that the home is twice the size of surrounding homes and is out of character with the rest of the neighborhood.

Rhonda Berberich, who lives next door at 713 Lamont Avenue, voiced concerns regarding the drainage of the property, concerned that noise from the freeway may bounce off the new home into her yard, light and noise from the new garage hitting her bedroom windows, and landscaping and privacy.

The applicant, neighbors, and commissioners proceeded to gather around a set of the plans and the applicant gave a walkthrough of the layout and design of the homes. The applicant responded to

public comments by explaining that drainage on site would be improved by providing French drains around the perimeter of the new home and that they were proposing to provide bio-retention swales in excess of the Public Works drainage requirements for a new single family home recognizing the existing drainage problems on site.

Public comment period closed.

### **Summary of Commission Comments:**

#### Commissioner Farrell

- Complimented the applicant on the very clear drawings and plan set.
- Recommended flipping the layout of the home to have the garage on the opposite side of the lot to create more distance from the neighboring property to the garage.
- Recommended the removal of the second story rear yard deck explaining that the deck will be very expensive to maintain and not receive any use.
- Recommended reworking the façade of the home by extending the roof line pop out.

#### Commissioner Barber

- Agreed with comments made by Commissioner Farrell, except for “flipping” the home.
- Recommended extending and lining up the roof lines.
- Recommended removing the rear yard deck for privacy issues.
- Recommended changing the garage door architecture to appear to have or appear to have two doors.
- Consider a hip roof for the upper floor over the garage.
- Expressed approval regarding the amount of articulation the structure design afforded.

#### Commissioner Radovanovich

- Responded to the neighbor’s noise concerns by explaining that increased landscaping in the side yard would help to deter any excess noise coming off the project site.
- Requested a landscape plan from the applicant for final action.
- Agreed with previous commissioner comments.

#### Commissioner MacLeamy

- Agreed with previous commissioner comments

- Complemented the applicants design and preparedness.
- Requested landscape plan and materials board for final action.

**Applicant Response:**

The applicant was receptive to feedback provided by the commission and responded to questions regarding landscaping and fencing by expanding that a landscaping plan would be prepared for the next hearing and a new fence would be installed that would provide privacy and improved separation between the new home and existing, adjacent homes.

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