



Design Review Commission Meeting

Location: Novato City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue*

December 4, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

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Mayor
Eric Lucan

Mayor Pro Tem
Denise Athas

Councilmembers
Pam Drew
Pat Eklund

City Manager
Adam McGill

Present: Michael Barber, Chair
Joseph Farrell, Vice Chair
Patrick MacLeamy
Michael Edridge

Absent: Beth Radovanovich

Staff: Steve Marshall, Planning Manager
Hans Grunt, Senior Planner
Brett Walker, Senior Planner
Vivek Damodaran, Planner II

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA:

M/s: MacLeamy/Farrell; (4-0-0-1) to approve the Final Agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 6, 2019 (MB, JF, PM, BR, ME)

M/s: Farrell/MacLeamy (4-0-0-1) to approve the Minutes.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

CONTINUED ITEMS: NONE

NEW ITEMS:

**2. SPRINGBROOK GREEN HOMES (HG)
P2019-047 DESIGN REVIEW
1602 VALLEJO AVE, APNs 141-221-74 & -75**

Conduct a design review hearing and provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding site design, building massing/scale, building design, and landscaping for the development of nine, attached residential homes in two building clusters; one building with four attached, two-story homes, and one building with five attached, two-story homes. Twenty-one off-street parking spaces are proposed; one garage space per home and 12 uncovered spaces.

Hans Grunt, Senior Planner presented the staff report, and described the design recommendation requested and, if a favorable recommendation is made, Mr. Grunt described the remaining entitlement process; a Planning Commission hearing to take final action on the project design and a corresponding tentative map.

Vincent Sproete, applicant, presented the project design, including site design, landscaping and building architecture and noted design changes integrated pursuant to design feedback provided by the Commission at the September 18, 2019 design workshop; Mr. Sproete also clarified that the building designs have been reduced from three stories to two stories.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

NUMBER OF SPEAKERS: 1

Brenda Stadnik, a neighboring resident, expressed support for the project, indicated she liked the design now even more at two stories and with the elimination of an upper story balcony. She believes the project will help eliminate illegal trespassing onto the property and associated risk of fire.

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Farrell suggested efforts should be made to hold the retaining-wall back a bit more from the rear corner of unit #9 to provide better access around the perimeter of the unit. Mr. Sproete indicated he thought this revision could be accommodated given the type of wall material proposed. He indicated he likes the project design and believes it will be an attractive addition to the neighborhood and an enjoyable place to live.

Commissioner Edridge asked for clarification on the absence of windows in the dining room of unit 8. Mr. Sproete explained that windows are not permitted due to fire requirements as that portion of unit 8 is at the property line.

Commissioner Barber confirmed, with Mr. Sproete, the application of tree and plant species on the landscape plan.

Commissioner MacLeamy asked Mr. Sproete to describe the color schemes for each unit; Mr. Sproete provided an overview of the unit color schemes. He indicated that he is pleased with the overall project design and appreciates Mr. Sproete's willingness to make the design changes suggested at the workshop.

Moved: Farrell Second: MacLeamy

That the Design Review Commission recommend approval to Planning Commission of the site design, architecture, and landscaping for Springbrook Green Homes as presented on the plans prepared by Taylor Building Designs and landscape plans prepared by Rod Scacalosi, Landscape Architect received on November 8, 2019, based on the analysis in staff's report to the Commission dated December 4, 2019, and the following findings and conditions:

FINDINGS

In accordance with NMC § 19.42.030.F and NMC § 19.26.060, and based on the discussion in the staff analysis section of staff's report to the Commission dated December 4, 2019, and the associated Project plans, the Design Review Commission finds that:

Standard Design Review Findings:

1. The design, layout, size, architectural features and general appearance of the Project is consistent with the General Plan, and any applicable Specific Plan and with the development standards, design guidelines and all applicable provisions of the Municipal Code, including this Zoning Ordinance and any approved Master Plan and Precise Development Plan.
2. The Project would maintain and enhance the community's character, provide for harmonious and orderly development, and create a desirable environment for the occupants, neighbors, and visiting public.
3. The Project would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; is not materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity; does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments and does not create potential traffic, pedestrian or bicycle hazards.

Supplemental Hillside Development Design Review Findings:

1. The design, scale, massing, height and siting of Project is compatible with the character and scale of the surrounding, developed neighborhood.
2. The design and site layout of the hillside Project is respectful of and protects the natural environment to the maximum extent feasible.
3. Project site grading has been designed to be as minimal as possible to achieve sensitive hillside design, minimize tree removal, and provide safe site access and required parking.
4. The hillside Project is designed and sited to screen development, to the extent feasible, through clustering and/or avoiding of highly visible hillsides, ridgelines, and knolls.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. Pursuant to the Project plans approved herein, staff shall review subsequent plans submitted for a building permit for consistency e.g. building design and exterior finish materials and colors, landscaping, site hardscape and exterior fixtures (walls, fencing, paving, lighting, mailbox etc.) prior to issuance.
2. The Project proponent shall be subject to compliance with the City's Art Program, NMC Division 19.21 prior to issuance of a building permit.

Commission Action: Vote to recommend: Ayes: 4; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Absent: 1

**3. HOMEWARD BOUND – WORKFORCE & VETERAN HOUSING (HG/VD)
P2019-055 DESIGN REVIEW
APN 157-970-07, VACANT PARCEL**

Conduct a public workshop to review and provide comments regarding conceptual site design and circulation, building massing, design, and landscaping for Homeward Bound’s Workforce and Veteran Housing project, including 50 residential apartment units and an 8,928 square foot commercial/training kitchen with combined event gathering spaces at APN 157-970-07, the vacant parcel south of 1385 Hamilton Parkway.

Vivek Damodaran, Planner II, presented the staff report and described the purpose of the design workshop, and subsequent entitlement steps.

Mary Kay Sweeney, Executive Director for Homeward Bound of Marin, provided a brief history of the project and the steps they have taken to bring it forward to the Design Review Commission today.

Fred Divine and Pat Cousens, Architects, presented the proposal and outlined changes made to the conceptual building elevations, as well as detailed the process in designing the site plan. Mr. Divine explained to the commission that the intention of the proposed architecture was to create a campus feel between the Next Key buildings and the project proposal.

Shortly after, the commissioners, applicants, architects, interested members of the public and staff gathered around the table to further discuss the project.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

NUMBER OF SPEAKERS: 0

None.

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Farrell: Acknowledged that the scheme of the site plan is very logical given the unusual shape of the parcel. Felt that the events/kitchen building was too blocky and almost felt like a warehouse. Also pointed out that the stairwells leading up to the units seemed to be fairly narrow and may be dark spaces – commented that the architects should also consider lowering the arches to the stairwells for the residential buildings to enable alignment of the windows.

Commissioner MacLeamy: Directed the project architects to consider connecting the campus buildings with more defined pedestrian friendly improvements (e.g., covered walkways, paths) with attractive landscaping (i.e., trees). Consider a covered walkway between the events/kitchen building and the adjacent residential building. Suggested exploring ideas to better utilize the central parking area for pedestrian circulation throughout the campus with an emphasis on tree plantings and well defined pedestrian pathways. Observed that the events/kitchen building may benefit from a hipped roof to soften the blocky warehouse look that Commissioner Farrell identified. Suggested making the western elevation of the events/kitchen building more of a statement. Generally commented that the events/kitchen building and the parking area needs some more work.

Commissioner Barber: Observed that the southern elevations of the events/kitchen building and the adjacent residential building could benefit from shifting the retaining wall further south, possibly to the property line and increasing the walkway and/or area of adjacent, at grade planting along the back of the building.

**4. THE PAVILIONS (BW)
P2018-018; DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP
APN 153-170-56; 200 LANDING COURT**

Conduct a design workshop to review and comment on the site design, building massing and height, and conceptual architecture for The Pavilions, a 30-unit live/work development proposed at 200 Landing Court (APN 153-170-56).

Brett Walker, Senior Planner, presented the staff report and described the purpose of the design workshop and subsequent entitlement steps.

Geoff Wood, Novato Creek Partners, described the site design changes, which included moving the buildings off the ridge, a proposal to reduce the size of the Landing Court cul-de-sac bulb, and described the live/work concept. Mr. Wood also stated that he has toured a number of live/work project in the East Bay.

Chris Craiker, applicant's architect, described the history of the site and the design changes over the years.

Bob Brown, applicant's representative, described the market potential, and proximity to downtown and the SMART Station.

Commissioner Farrell asked if the Fire Department has reviewed the project. Craiker responded.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

NUMBER OF SPEAKERS: 2

Emily Larson, nearby resident, stated concerns that the new access road off the cul-de-sac will be extended west at a later date, believes the site plan lacks an outdoor gathering space, thinks noise pollution from Hwy 101 seems problematic, that the design concepts are not compatible with existing homes, and she doesn't support parking in cul-de-sac as it is for trucks. She thinks it is a very car dependent site – not close to downtown or SMART.

Joe Dorsey, nearby resident, would like to see graphics that depict the hill better, believes access to work space vs. living space is insufficient to meet code, the existing master plan limits height to three stories – the proposal is too tall.

Subsequent to public comments, the commissioners, applicants, architects, interested members of the public and staff gathered around the table to further discuss the project.

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Barber stated that he likes the materials, but the triplexes are too close to Pavilion No. 1.

Commissioner Farrell stated that it is an improvement of the last iterations, but thinks the penthouses are not a good idea.

Commissioner MacLeamy stated that covering the retaining walls with buildings is a good idea. MacLeamy also questioned the location of the elevators on the site plan in relation to the walkways and penthouse units.

While gathered around the table, commissioner suggestions included removing the triplexes and replacing with a fourth stacked flat pavilion; stepping the buildings up the hill to increase the amount of outdoor balcony/patio area; and different building design and orientation ideas that the applicant may want to consider. Commissioners stated concerns that the penthouses may not be financially feasible given the amount of cut/fill and retaining wall necessary to construct.

GENERAL BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.