

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 11, 2015

The Larkspur Planning Commission was convened at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers by Chair Ziesing.

Commissioners Present: Chair Todd Ziesing, Daniel Kunstler, Mark Sandoval,
Laura Tauber

Commissioners Absent: Monte Deignan

Staff Present: Planning Director Neal Toft

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- The City has scheduled three community workshops for the Larkspur Library and Community Center Design Project. The purpose of the workshops is to get feedback on the "look and feel" of Larkspur relative to the project, the site, etc. The first workshop will be held on September 2nd at 6:30 p.m. at the Krepes Center in Redwood High School; the second will be held on October 7th at 9:30 a.m. at the Central Marin Police Authority Meeting Room; and the third will be held on November 14th at 10:00 a.m. at the Drake's Landing Community Room.
- Staff received building permit applications for the Bon Air Shopping Center.
- Staff issued permits for the interior remodel work at Perry's. Work will begin soon.

Commissioner Tauber asked if the Town Hall meetings would build on one another. Planning Director Toft stated "yes". Staff had not scheduled a specific agenda at this time. Commissioner Tauber asked if redesigns would occur between meetings. Planning Director Toft stated "no". The architects would not be bringing back designs. The intent is more to get more input from the community to provide the City Council with direction on the design program.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

- 1. DR/FAR 15-24; 65 Via Chaparro (AP #070-251-18); Harold Bexton, Applicant; Brian Pensack, Property Owner; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. Request for the following permits to construct a 940 square foot addition to the existing 2,000 square foot one story single-family dwelling: 1) Design Review; 2) Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to permit a structure of 2,868 square feet (0.32 FAR) where no more than 2,248 square feet (0.25 FAR) is permitted due to lot slope.**

Planning Director Toft presented a staff report. He indicated that consultant planner Lorraine Weiss was the project planner for this item, but she was unable to attend this evening.

Commissioner Tauber stated she found a discrepancy in the square footage listed in the staff report (2,868 sq. ft.) and attachment #3 (2,437 sq. ft). Planning Director Toft stated they were talking about something in the range of 2,868-2,890 square feet as measured by staff. The attachment was prepared by the applicant and he does not know why the discrepancy exists. Commissioner Sandoval asked if the discrepancy had to do with the coverage of the deck in certain areas. Planning Director Toft stated he did not think so. Commissioner Kunstler stated the lower number might not include the square footage of the garage.

Chair Ziesing opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Harold Bexton, architect, made the following comments:

- The square footage calculated by staff was correct.
- The garage has been reduced in size.
- They are trying to bring the home up to modern standards.
- There are three very small bedrooms. They want to add a fourth.
- The home does not have a separate living room and dining room- it has one great room.
- They wanted to keep it a one-story structure so they do not encroach on anyone's view.
- The master bedroom addition is in the rear- lower than the existing roof.
- There is a very small addition in the front with low sloped dormers. The eaves remain the same height.
- All of the work is below the existing roof.
- They cut back on the over-sized garage which allowed for two, full sized off-street parking spaces.
- They plan to install solar on the house and an electric charging station in the garage.
- This project will be a good addition to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Sandoval referred to the back deck elevation and asked if it was 2" below the finished floor. Mr. Bexton stated "yes". Commissioner Sandoval stated the plantings between the neighbor's properties was sparse. He asked if it could be supplemented to provide more privacy due to the deck. Mr. Bexton stated they did not get into the details regarding the landscaping but that was a good idea.

Commissioner Tauber referred to the neighbor to the north and asked if the project would block any of their views. Mr. Bexton stated "no".

Commissioner Kunstler asked if the roofing material was asphalt shingles. Mr. Bexton stated "yes". Commissioner Kunstler stated the lattice work at the rear of the house looked quite tall. Mr. Bexton stated this was a ventilated crawlspace and they could reduce this lattice work. They were trying to make it look lighter from the back.

Mr. Scott Candell, Via Chapparo, made the following comments:

- He is the neighbor to the right (as one faces the house).
- He met with a contractor to discuss some issues.
- The back deck and window will not be an issue.
- There is currently a view between the front of the house and the driveway. The proposal would block that view. He is not sure what the solution would be.

Planning Director Toft stated the minimum side yard setback was 6' and the minimum rear yard setback was 15'. The proposal meets these setbacks. The project exceeds 9' along the north side and remains well over 15' from the rear property line.

Mr. Dennis DeLong, Via Chapparo, made the following comments:

- He is happy to hear there will be some regard for the fences between the properties.
- He would like to have some input about the fence on his side.
- The house has been empty for some time. This proposal will raise property values.
- He is excited about the project.

Commissioner Sandoval asked staff how the screening material or fencing enters into the mix. Planning Director Toft stated this application did not include a plan for fencing. Commission Sandoval stated it would be good to have some staff review. Planning Director Toft stated it would be preferable for the Commission to provide some direction as to a condition of approval as opposed to staff trying to mediate any disagreements that come up with solutions. Commissioner Sandoval asked if this would require a separate permit. Planning Director Toft stated it might not require a permit; fences of up to 6 feet in height do not require a permit. Commissioner Kunstler asked if the issue of the fence was relevant to this application. Planning Director Toft stated it would be relevant if the Commission found a nexus with the Design Review / FAR Exception application. Commissioner Kunstler asked the applicant about their intention in terms of the fence.

Mr. Garrett Berdick, property owner, made the following comments:

- They fix up dilapidated houses and put them back on the market.
- They always build “good neighbor” fences.
- Fences are typically not included in the plans.
- He supports a condition of approval for a fence.
- He would like the Commission to approve the application tonight.

Commissioner Sandoval stated he was more interested in screening due to the 10' high deck. He urged the neighbors to have a discussion since it would be mutually beneficial.

Chair Ziesing closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Sandoval provided the following comments:

- He brought up the issue of screening because the deck would not be a passive use of that space.
- He could approve the application.

Commissioner Tauber provided the following comments:

- This is a nice solution for this site.
- The proposal would be a larger home for the neighborhood. It is not too big.
- She is happy they made the decision to stay one-story.
- She is comfortable with the Design Review application and the FAR Exception request.
- This is a nice design and she liked the colors.
- The proposal would be a good addition to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- He agreed with the comments made by the other Commissioners.
- He was glad there would not be any cutting into the landscape.
- This is an irregularly shaped, tapered lot.
- The proposal would be an asset to the neighborhood.
- He encouraged them to implement a landscaping plan that satisfies the neighborhood.
- He could approve the Design Review application and the FAR Exception request.

Chair Ziesing provided the following comments:

- The proposal updates the existing design and will look great.
- The breadth of the home would have some impact to the north side.
- A second story addition could have greater impact.
- He appreciates the fact it is a single-story.
- He likes the design and the indoor/outdoor aspects.
- He likes the parking.
- He could approve the Design Review application and the FAR Exception request.

M/s, Tauber/Kunstler motioned and the Commission voted 4-0 (Deignan absent) to approve DR/FAR 15-24, 65 Via Chaparro, subject to the findings and conditions set forth in the staff report.

Chair Ziesing stated there was a 10-day appeal period.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Adoption of Findings of Denial; Application DR 14-66; 41 Hillcrest Avenue (AP # 022-033-44) Robert Wilkinson, Applicant; Nicholas and Sarah Wilsey, Property Owners

Planning Director Toft presented the staff report.

Commissioner Kunstler noted the applicants had presented a new set of plan at the previous meeting and he wondered if this was germane to the motion. Planning Director Toft stated "no" since the applicants never formally submitted those plans. Commissioner Kunstler asked if the 10-day appeal period starts now. Planning Director Toft stated "yes".

M/s, Sandoval/Tauber motioned and the Commission voted 4-0 (Deignan absent) to adopt the Findings of Denial for DR 14-66, 41 Hillcrest Avenue.

Chair Ziesing stated there was a 10-day appeal period.

2. Adoption of Findings of Approval; Application DR 15-18; 1 Murray Lane (AP #020-031-14); Polsky Perlstein Architects, Applicant; Chad and Leah Solter, Property Owners

Planning Director Toft presented the staff report.

M/s, Kunstler/Sandoval motioned and the Commission voted 3-0-1 (Deignan absent, Tauber abstained) to adopt the Findings of Approval for DR 15-18, 1 Murray Lane.

Chair Ziesing stated there was a 10-day appeal period.

3. Discussion on Planning Commission Representative on Larkspur Library and Community Center Design Project

Planning Director Toft presented the staff report. He noted representative Ziesing and alternate Tauber would not be able to attend the daytime meetings.

Commissioner Kunstler volunteered to serve as the Commission representative to the Larkspur Library and Community Center (LLCC) Project Design Advisory Committee (LLCC).

M/s, Tauber/Ziesing motioned and the Commission voted 4-0 (Deignan absent) to elect Commissioner Kunstler to serve on the LLCC Advisory Committee and for Commissioner Sandoval to serve at the alternate.

4. Commissioner Reports

There were no reports.

5. Approval of minutes of Planning Commission meeting on July 28, 2015

M/s, Sandoval/Tauber motioned and the Commission voted 4-0 (Deignan absent) to approve the July 28, 2015 minutes as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Toni DeFrancis, Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Larkspur Planning Commission on August 25, 2015.



Neal Toft, Planning Director