

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 10, 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, Monte Deignan, Daniel Kunstler,
Mark Sandoval, Laura Tauber

Staff Present: Planning Director Neal Toft
Planning Consultant Lorraine Weiss

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- At the October 21st meeting, the City Council discussed the issue of short-term rentals. The Council has decided to take a “wait and see” approach. State regulations are being considered that would give cities the ability to manage or regulate short-term rentals. Current interpretation of the code is that short-term rentals are not a permitted use and anything under 30 days is considered transitory occupancy. Council directed staff to continue to enforce the code on a complaint basis. Commissioner Kunstler asked if the ordinance applies to a situation where the owner was present while there is a “paying guest”. Planning Director Toft stated “yes” and that it is still considered a commercial activity.
- Staff has been engaged in a code enforcement action pertaining to 546-558 Magnolia Avenue. There have been complaints about storage containers, accessory structures, and some grading along the bike path. Staff issued a “Notice of Violation” and a Council hearing was held on November 4th. The Council supported the staff position that there were violations and issued a notice to abate the violations. Staff is working with the property owner.
- The last Town Hall meeting regarding the Library/Community Facility is scheduled for this Saturday at 10:00 a.m. at the Drake’s Landing Community Room. Commissioner Kunstler asked if there were discussions about reactivating the Advisory Committee. Planning Director Toft stated “not at this time”. He indicated that and other process issues would be discussed at an upcoming City Council meeting.
- The County of Marin will be hosting a workshop regarding potential improvements to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from the Highway 101 to the Town of Ross. Improvements would not include increasing capacity but rather installing additional turn lanes, improving crosswalks, bike paths, sidewalks, and signage. The goal is to improve the efficiency of the thoroughfare. The workshop will be held on Wednesday, November 18th at 7:00 p.m. at College of Marin’s Fusselman Hall.
- City Hall would be closed beginning on the 24th of December through January 4th. Remediation and repairs will be done on the second floor of the building including replacing windows and dry rot in the kitchen area.

Chair Ziesing asked if there was an update on the plan to improve the thoroughfare from Highway 101 to the Richmond Bridge. Commissioner Kunstler stated this was discussed at a recent Marin Transit Authority (MTA) meeting. This project is included in a huge “menu” of other projects. Planning Director Toft stated it was on TAM’s “wish list” for funding but it was not a priority.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

1. **DR/V 15-39; 73 Madrone Avenue (AP #021-112-02); Taylor Yang, Inc., Applicant; Brent and Anne Lowinger, Property Owners; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. The applicants are requesting Design Review and Variances to allow the substantial renovation, and expansion of, an existing 2,677 square foot two-story home to 3,822 square feet on a 10,497 square foot lot. Proposed variance request would permit minor encroachments into the required 20-foot front yard setbacks required from the north and south lot lines. Proposed additions include: 1) a 195 square foot addition to the first floor; 2) a 274 square foot addition of unconditioned space (screen porch) to first floor; and 3) a 475 square foot addition on the second floor.**

Planning Consultant Weiss presented a staff report.

Commissioner Tauber referred to the flood issue and asked how it would affect the application. Planning Director Toft stated the property was located in a mapped Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) Zone A. The property owner could file a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) through FEMA

showing there was an error in the mapping and thus removing the property from the SFHA. Staff was confident that there is no flood hazard on the property and has included a condition of approval that addresses this issue.

Chair Ziesing opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Brent Lowinger, applicant, made the following comments:

- This is a three-bedroom house that is not keeping up with the growth of his family.
- They love the neighborhood and Larkspur and plan to live in the home for a long time

Ms. Susan Bartholomew, Madrone Avenue, made the following comments:

- She appreciates the need for expansion and noted the house was not very efficient for a family.
- The neighbors have gone through a major renovation along the alley that caused serious problems including tearing up the roadway.
- She asked that no construction vehicles be allowed to access the alley- it is the only way she can get to her property.
- Construction should not be allowed to start before 9:00 a.m. on Saturdays.

Chair Ziesing closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- This is an attractive, highly functional design.
- He questioned the choice of stone veneer on the chimney but realized it broke up the massing on that elevation.
- He wondered if there were plans to improve the front fence.
- He could approve the application.

Commissioner Tauber provided the following comments:

- This is a nice design and it does not seem to impact the neighbors.
- She understood the need to expand for a growing family.
- She understood the neighbor's concern about her house being blocked by vehicles. The applicant should work this out with the construction crew.
- She could support the application.

Commissioner Deignan provided the following comments:

- The staff report provided reasonable rationale for allowing the variances. The findings could be made.
- This is a nice, cohesive design and he could approve the Design Review request.
- He would like to see that front fence cleaned up.
- He could support the application.

Commissioner Sandoval provided the following comments:

- He agreed with the comments made by the other Commissioners.
- This is a well-crafted design.
- He could support the application.

Chair Ziesing provided the following comments:

- This is a great design.
- There are physical constraints including the small size of the lot.
- They did a nice job of not overbuilding the lot.
- He agreed with the comments made about the fence.
- He agreed with the comments made about the alley- it should not be blocked.
- He could support the application.

M/s, Kunstler/Sandoval motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve DR/V15-39, 73 Madrone Avenue, 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. Commissioner Reports

There were no reports.

2. Approval of minutes of Planning Commission meeting on October 8, 2015

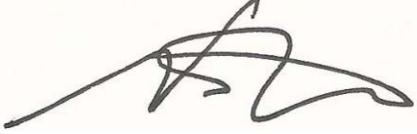
M/s, Kunstler/Sandoval motioned and the Commission voted 3-0-2 (Deignan and Tauber abstained) to approve the October 13, 2015 minutes as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 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 December 8, 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neal Toft', is written over a light beige rectangular background.

Neal Toft, Planning Director