

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 12, 2016

The Larkspur Planning Commission was convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Marin Police Authority Community Room by Chair Ziesing.

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

Staff Present: Planning Director Neal Toft  
Senior Planner Kristin Teiche

### OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

### PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- The City Hall remodel (upstairs and kitchen area) is on schedule. The Building and Planning Department is operating out of the Council Chambers and continues to issue permits. Construction has been challenging and will conclude in a month or two. The finished product will improve the work environment and the building itself.
- The City Council will review an amendment to the Noise Ordinance at its next meeting. The amendment restricts construction noise on Sundays and holidays- this would bring consistency with the other jurisdictions (San Anselmo and Corte Madera) served by the Central Marin Police Authority. The Council will also discuss the next steps in the Larkspur Library/Community Facility project process including whether or not to restart the advisory committee. He will report back to the Commission.
- Staff will be issuing an "Order to Show Cause" for a City Council hearing regarding 31 Piedmont. The project is very close to completion.
- The January 26<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting has been cancelled.
- Public Works Director Marygrace Houlihan has announced her retirement- she will continue to work for the City through February. She has initiated and managed a significant amount of public works projects in Larkspur in her short time here (e.g. Doherty Bridge, Bon Air Bridge, park improvements... etc.).

### PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

1. **DR/UP 15-09: 2207 Larkspur Landing Circle (AP #018-191-01); BCV Architects & YogaWorks, applicant; Marin Country Mart LLC- James Rosenfield, property owner; PD (Planned Development) Zoning District. Applicants are requesting approval of the following permits to allow operation of a yoga studio on the second floor of Building 5 in the Marin Country Mart retail center. The yoga studio would include two indoor instructional workout rooms, and one roofed, partially enclosed outdoor instructional workout room, and minor retail sales: 1) Design Review of proposed exterior building alterations to expand the second floor roofline to cover an outdoor patio and create an outdoor instructional workout room; 2) Conditional Use Permit for a tenant space in excess of 4,000 sq. ft. The proposed use would occupy 5,217 sq. ft., and 3) Conditional Use Permit to allow a fitness use with class sizes of ten or more persons. Proposed class sizes are anticipated to be 25-30 persons.**

Senior Planner Teiche presented a staff report.

Chair Ziesing opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Jim Rosenfield, property owner, made the following comments:

- YogaWorks is the largest national operator of yoga studios.
- There is a desire to make the studio better- locating it on the second level would give it a quiet environment with terrific views of the bay and Mount Tamalpais.
- The idea is to create an indoor/outdoor studio.
- They have developed several iterations of the plan to make the “look” consistent with the character of the property.
- He asked the Commission to approve the plans as presented.

Commissioner Deignan referred to the openings on the second floor and asked if they were cable rail down below with no windows or other screening. Mr. Rosenfield stated “correct”- they were looking at an approval that says there may not be temporary or permanent windows installed and that area must remain open. This allows air to flow through and gives it a lighter look.

Mr. Hans Baldauf, BCV Architects, made the following comments:

- The porch is generally south-facing and from a green building point of view it provides passive shade for the interior of the building. The solar gain from those windows is substantial.
- This group of buildings is challenging from a “proportion” point of view because there are a lot of different things going on.
- He referred to the porch and stated he likes odd numbers of bays.
- The breezeway on the second floor is strongly horizontal in its read and they were trying to make a transition within the building. The massing would seem overbearing without this strong horizontal element.
- There is a strong projection that sets up the original balcony that this space is a part of- they are trying to maintain the character of the building.
- He disagreed with the staff assertion regarding the relationship/view of the tower.
- They are trying to create an airy, nice porch that helps the energy performance of the building and do it in a way that is respectful of a very complicated set of architectural vocabulary.
- They are open to suggestions from the Commission.

Commissioner Tauber asked if they considered an awning or some type of fabric for the porch instead of expanding the roofline. Mr. Baldauf stated the proposal seemed more appropriate than an awning. They are working on some awning projects in the complex and there are challenges in terms of the wind, etc. However, it is not impossible. Mr. Rosenfield stated they did look at awnings but they felt it would be better if the cover architecturally integrated into building.

Commissioner Kunstler noted the plate height of the terrace seemed to be 12’ and he wondered if it could be reduced towards the front of the project. The roof could be sloped more without increasing the massing. Mr. Baldauf stated they were trying to tie this into the complicated architecture. They could study this further. Commissioner Kunstler stated he was concerned about the massing in that section- it is a very “large chunk”.

Chair Ziesing asked if there was a way to extend the roof down over a portion of the deck to soften that area.

Commissioner Sandoval asked if they examined the possibility of keeping the roof as is and then extending the flat covered porch area out- this would reduce the overall impact of the massing. This would keep the horizontal elements that are trying to relate to on the opposite side. Mr. Baldauf stated part of the challenge is that they are moving the exterior wall in. They are trying to create a gracious volume of outdoor vs. indoor space. Commissioner Sandoval noted the plate height in that covered area was 12’ and he asked about the ceiling height. Mr. Baldauf stated the architects for Yoga Works was working on that. Mr. Rosenfield discussed the need to keep the continuity of the

parallel roofs. Mr. Baldauf pointed to a broad expanse and stated they felt this was character defining.

Commissioner Sandoval referred to Sheet A3.3 and noted the existing roof angle could “die” into the horizontal band. He asked if they were trying to raise the entire ceiling height of the deck area. Mr. Baldauf stated that was the “game plan”. Commissioner Sandoval stated one of the consequences is the creation of awkwardness- it becomes more dominant than the lower floor. They could keep the same position of the roof but allow for a less massive thrust of the building. Mr. Baldauf stated they could explore this suggestion.

Commissioner Tauber wondered if they could keep the roofline as proposed but slim down the columns- they look bulky. There are a lot of vertical elements around them that are narrow and slim. Mr. Rosenfield stated they were working on reducing those columns.

Commissioner Kunstler noted there was only one door from the interior studio to the patio and no other windows. He asked if additional windows could be added to soften that element. Mr. Rosenfield stated each of the rooms has only one door entering and exiting to provide privacy. Mr. Baldauf stated the plan does not account for more glass but that was a good suggestion.

Mr. Steve Bugge, BCV Architects, made the following comments:

- There have been comments about the mass and bulk and relationship of elements but they have done their best to maintain the existing conditions across the site.
- There is only one condition where there is a flat roof portion in the entire sector of buildings and he pointed to that connection. There are no other flat roofs in any of the courtyard buildings (Buildings 1 through 5). The sloped roof portion was important to maintain. The 12’ height maintains that opening and the views of the bay and Mt. Tamalpais.

Commissioner Sandoval asked Mr. Bugge if the outdoor patio had access to the outdoor landscaped area. Mr. Bugge stated “no”. Planning Director Toft asked how that area was closed off from the patio. Mr. Bugge stated by the use of guardrails. Mr. Rosenfield pointed to an outdoor area that was a separate patio that would remain as an open, accessible patio.

Commissioner Sandoval had questions about the occupancy load. Mr. Bugge stated that was depicted on Sheet G.02. Commissioner Sandoval asked if there was a requirement for a second exit. Mr. Vogel stated “no”. Mr. Rosenfield stated there was a secondary exit in the back- an elevator and stairs.

Chair Ziesing closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Deignan provided the following comments:

- This is a good application and a good discussion.
- Staff had a good point that the proposal looked more massive. But looking at the story poles he realized there were only a few areas that had an overly dense appearance.
- The artist’s rendering (lower right corner) does the application a disservice- the white showing through gives it a much heavier feel.
- The applicant’s answers to all the questions made sense.
- The columns should be narrower.
- The proposal could use more detailing but it tries to fit in with the pattern of development and the established architecture.
- He can make the findings to approve the project.

Commissioner Tauber provided the following comments:

- She could make the findings for the Conditional Use Permits.
- The proposal was a bit massive and she would like to see a redesign to make it less bulky.
- Slimming down the columns and adding some windows in the wall behind the outdoor studio would help.
- She is less troubled by the roofline issue.
- She would like to see the applicants submit a redesign.

Commissioner Sandoval provided the following comments:

- This is a great application.
- The application needs more thought and the applicants need to explore other options.
- He agreed that the rendering did not do the project justice.
- He is not keen on adding a lot of glass if it will interfere with the function of the studio. However it could be an opportunity to get additional views from the inside.
- This is an important elevation and more attention to the plan could create a better solution and give that space flexibility.
- The application needs some refinement.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- He is naturally sympathetic to this type of project.
- This shopping center is now a vibrant gathering place for Larkspur and the County.
- He is troubled by the impression of mass and bulk. It is not a lot but is significant enough to ask the applicants to return with some ideas on reducing the bulk. A radical redesign is not required.
- He could approve the Conditional Use Permits.

Chair Ziesing provided the following comments:

- He agreed with the staff report.
- He thanked Mr. Rosenfield for the re-development of a wonderful shopping center.
- He was less troubled by the story poles than the renderings- not so much the extension of the square footage but rather the appearance that something “landed there” as opposed to something that was molded onto the building.
- The reduction in glass at the outside wall, behind the outdoor studio, creates visual massing.
- He is sympathetic of the attempt to grab the views.
- He would like to see something lighter.
- He agreed with the staff report regarding the blockage of the tower. It is the anchor of this building.
- He would like to see a redesign.

Chair Ziesing reopened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Rosenfield made the following comments:

- He understood the Commission’s concerns.
- This is a shopping center that is “in the round”- there is no back to it.
- He agrees with the suggestion to add glass to that wall.
- The columns should be narrower but not too spindly.
- They are trying to achieve a nice looking front façade.
- Signage will be an important part of this building.

Planning Director Toft noted the amount of discussion about shadowing, the back wall, etc. and stated one thing the plan lacked was information about what the interior ceiling height was doing (vaulted, drop ceiling, etc.) and how that affects what is seen from below. Staff would like the applicants to submit a section with that information.

Commissioner Sandoval provided the following comment:

- Lighting is an important part of this plan.

Commissioner Tauber provided the following comment:

- She asked if the upper part of the project could match the roof color.

Chair Ziesing closed the Public Hearing.

M/s, Kunstler/Tauber motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to continue DR/UP 15-09, 2207 Larkspur Landing Circle, to February 9<sup>th</sup> for the applicants to address the comments of the Commission.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

1. Adopt Findings of Approval for Application DR/SUP/HT/FHE 15-44: 219 Hawthorne Avenue; Perlstein Architects, Applicant; Denis and Susan Gilardi- Marin County Exchange Corporation, Owners; Assessor's Parcel: 020-222-02; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District.

Planning Director Toft presented a staff report.

M/s, Deignan/Sandoval motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Chair Ziesing abstained) to adopt the Findings of Approval for application DR/SUP/HT/FHE 15-44, 219 Hawthorne Avenue.

2. Commissioners Reports

There were no reports.

3. Election of Officers for 2016

M/s, Deignan/Sandoval motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to elect Vice Chair Tauber as Chair.

M/s, Deignan/Tauber motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to elect Commissioner Kunstler as Vice Chair.

4. Approval of minutes of Planning Commission meeting on December 8, 2015

M/s, Kunstler/Sandoval motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Chair Ziesing abstained) to approve the December 8, 2015 minutes as corrected.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,  
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted the regular meeting of the Planning Commission on February 9, 2016, regular meeting of the Larkspur Planning Commission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neal Toft', written in a cursive style.

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Neal Toft, Planning Director