

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 24, 2016

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

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

Commissioners Absent: Mark Sandoval

Staff Present: Senior Planner Kristin Teiche

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- The City Clerk is reminding all Boardmembers and Commissioners that they need to complete the Ethics Training as soon as possible.
- Staff is working on code enforcement for 546 and 556 Magnolia Avenue- cleaning up the back of the property, and removing sheds and storage containers. The property owners recently paid the first installment of fees to reimburse the City for staff time. Several of the tenants have asked for storage on the property and staff is assisting in helping them with applications for a more permanent and attractive approach.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS

1. **DR/VAR #15-52; 133 King Street (AP# 021-101-05); Michael Harlock, A.I.A., applicant; Kathleen Rogers, property owner; R-3 (Third Residential) Zoning District. Request for approval of permits to allow construction of a new residence to replace an existing non-conforming residence that was destroyed in a fire: 1) Design Review; 2) Variance to allow construction of a single-family residence with an approximately 10-foot front yard setback and 9-foot rear yard setback, where 15-foot front and rear yard setbacks are required by the governing R-3 Zoning District Standards; 3) Variance to required parking to allow construction of a single-family residence with no off-street parking, where four spaces (including one covered space) is required by code. (*Continued from May 10, 2016*)**

Chair Tauber asked if anyone would like to remove this item from the Consent Calendar. There were no comments.

M/s, Deignan/Kunstler motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Sandoval absent) to approve DR/VAR #15-52, 133 King Street, based on the findings and conditions set forth in the staff report.

Chair Tauber stated there was 10-day appeal period.

2. **DR/VAR #16-11; Eric Layton, Patriarch Architects, Applicant; Kristin Bennett, Owner; 8 Alexander Avenue, Larkspur; Assessor's Parcel: 021-181-186; R;1 (First Residential) Zoning District. The applicant is requesting approval of permits to allow substantial remodeling and new additions totaling 918 sq. ft. (reduced from 931 sq. ft.) to an existing 1,370 sq. ft., single story, single family residence, including 1) Design Review; 2) Variance to the side yard setback to permit new improvements with a 3-foot side setback where 5**

feet is required; 3) Variance to required parking to allow the provision of two uncovered parking spaces where four are required (one covered) for the substantial renovation and remodeling of a single family structure. (Continued from April 26, 2016).

Senior Planner Teiche presented the staff report. The most notable change is the reduction in grading and removal of a basement level bedroom and bathroom.

Commissioner Deignan asked if the applicant came into the office to speak to staff after the last meeting. Senior Planner Teiche stated "no".

Chair Tauber opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Eric Layton, architect, made the following comments:

- This is a challenging lot due to its narrowness.
- He understands the requested variances create a higher threshold for approval.
- The proposed revisions are incremental.
- He could redesign and reconfigure the stairs to pull the new improvements off the existing wall and meet the 5-foot setback within the building.
- He discussed the proposed changes which included: 1) relocating (stepping in) the northeast exterior walls 4 inches and easterly side wall 4 inches to reduce the width of the second floor by 8 inches at the front; 2) adding a low gable end in the second floor roofline over the master bathroom; 3) narrowing the width reduced the roof height 2 inches; 4) narrowing the width reduced the floor area of the second floor an additional 13 sq. ft.
- He also noted the second floor steps in on both sides and meets, or exceeds the side yard setback.
- The height is only 22 feet +/- at the front and 26 feet 8 inches at the rear. The church next door dwarfs this structure.
- Strict application of the parking requirements is counterproductive. Lot is narrow and fewer parking spaces maintains a more attractive street presence.

James Holmes, Madrone Avenue, provided the following comments:

- Finds that the applicants redesign is a "game of inches".
- Not a very strong opinion of design. He noted the staff report indicated that the applicant may not have met the Commission's direction.

Chair Tauber closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Deignan provided the following comments:

- At the last meeting the Commission was consistent with their comments about this application.
- Some applicants treat the process as a "war of attrition".
- The prior proposal was top-heavy and did not look balanced.
- The side yard setback variance is exacerbating an existing non-conforming situation. This is not a good path to go on and could set a precedent.
- There was prior concern about the bulk and mass and the project's proximity to the property line.
- He could not see a discernable difference in the story poles.
- The proposed dormer creates a more top-heavy look. It is going in the wrong direction.
- The applicants seem focused on going up- at one point there was a proposal for work in the basement that would not provide a high-profile look.
- This is still a problematic project.
- He cannot support it.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- He was concerned about setting a precedent and the intensity of use of the property.

- He was sympathetic to the last proposal but is sensitive to the other Commissioner's objections to the overall design.
- He was concerned about the bulk of the project.

Commissioner Ziesing provided the following comments:

- He agrees with the comments made.
- He respects the fact that they are trying to gain more use on this small lot. However, it is in a neighborhood of small houses.
- There is an art to adding square footage on a small lot and having it feel appropriate and proportional to the lot.
- He loves the design of the current house but the walls go straight up and this gives the illusion of a feeling of mass.
- He agreed with Commissioner Deignan- doing more underneath and stepping the top floor in would be appropriate.
- He does not have a problem with the Parking Variance and understands the hardship.
- He could not approve the Setback Variance- the lot does not support this type of mass.
- He could not support the Design Review piece of this application.

Chair Tauber provided the following comments:

- She struggled with this project at the last meeting.
- The changes are not substantive enough to change her feelings- they do not address the concerns raised at the last meeting.

Commissioner Deignan provided the following comments:

- The Commission gives the applicants direction- they do not design the project.
- The proposal is too top-heavy. If they want to keep the program then perhaps they should shift some of the additional space to other areas.
- This might not be the appropriate parcel for this intense amount of development.

Mr. Eric Layton, architect, made the following comments:

- The second story addition is not that large and it steps back.
- This is a small second story addition and he does not think it is top-heavy.
- A smaller addition would look unbalanced.
- The side yards do set back from the ground floor below.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- The height is not at issue.
- Design Review is distinct from the Setback Variance request. This is what the Commission is focusing on.

Commissioner Ziesing provided the following comments:

- The Commission's comments have been consistent throughout the process.
- He urged the applicant to work with the Planning Department and receive a favorable response from staff.
- This is a great property and the concept of the design to increase the size "does not fly".

Commissioner Deignan provided the following comments:

- The architect has made incremental changes to the appearance from the street.
- The proposal is still too top heavy.
- The revisions do not meet the Commissions expectations or follow the Design Review guidelines.
- The bulk and mass has not been mitigated.

M/s, Deignan/Kunstler, motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Sandoval absent) to deny DR/VAR #16-11, 8 Alexander Avenue, with prejudice, based on the staff report and the finding that the incremental changes did not address the Commissions' concerns.

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

BUSINESS ITEM

1. Commissioners Reports

There were no reports.

2. Approval of minutes of Planning Commission meeting on May 10, 2016

M/s, Kunstler/Ziesing motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Sandoval absent) to approve the May 10, 2016 minutes as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 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.



Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner