

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 10, 2020

The Larkspur Planning Commission was convened at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Tauber via teleconference due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Commissioners Present: Chair Laura Tauber, Natasha Chalmers, Daniel Kunstler, Jeffrey Swisher, Brock Wagstaff

Staff Present: Senior Planner Kristin Teiche
Assistant Planner Aaron Matthews

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Staff will begin to meet people, who have scheduled an appointment, in City Hall. They will meet in the Council Chambers.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- 1. DR #20-28; 41 Madrone Avenue (APN: 021-112-45); Sarah Reeves, Applicant; Devin Dixon and Todd Schneider, Owners; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. Applicant is requesting Design Review approval to allow construction of a two-story addition totaling 190 square feet on the front elevation (facing Madrone Ave.) of an existing single-family residence.**

Chair Tauber asked if anyone wanted to remove this item from the Consent Calendar for discussion. There was no response.

On the Consent Calendar, M/s, Wagstaff/Kunstler, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve DR #20-28, 41 Madrone Avenue, based on the findings and conditions set forth in the staff report.

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

- 2. DR/EXCEPT/FHE #20-30; 99 Dartmouth Drive (APN: 021-113-01); Norah Frei Architect, Applicant Stephanie and Ron Wolf, Owners; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. Applicant is requesting the following permits to construct a one-story addition to an existing single-family, one-story home and relocating a fence into the required 15-foot front yard setback: 1) Design Review (DR); 2) Exception Permit (EXC) to allow a larger window opening in a wall with a nonconforming street side setback; 3) Fence Height Exception (FHE) to locate a fence up to approximately 6 feet from the front lot line, and 9 feet from back of sidewalk, where 15 feet is required by code.**

Assistant Planner Matthews presented the staff report. He noted the Fence Height Exception Permit was not included in the public notice and the application should be continued to the next meeting on the Consent Calendar.

Commissioner Wagstaff asked if the zoning for the front yard setback was different in Hillview Gardens. Assistant Planner Matthews stated this lot has a 15-foot front yard setback. Tulane Avenue is considered the front lot line because it is the shorter of the two frontages. Commissioner

Wagstaff asked if the nine-foot, nine inch setback on the Dartmouth side would change. Assistant Planner Matthews stated “no”.

Commissioner Wagstaff asked if Hillview was in the Wildfire Urban Interface (WUI) Zone. Assistant Planner Matthews stated “no”.

Commissioner Chalmers asked about the allowable height limit for the fence. Assistant Planner Matthews stated front yard fences cannot exceed three and one-half feet in height. The owners might have considered Dartmouth to be the “front yard” and Tulane to be the “side yard”. Commissioner Chalmers asked if staff received anything that would indicate what the fence would look like. Assistant Planner Matthews stated staff received a fence detail late last week. He displayed it on the screen. Senior Planner Teiche stated it was in the Commission packet.

Chair Tauber asked about the height of the existing fence. Assistant Planner Matthews stated it was currently 6’8” in height and twenty feet from the property line.

Chair Tauber opened the Public Hearing.

Ms. Stephanie Wolf, applicant, made the following comments:

- They do not intend to change the look of the fence.
- The existing fence is 6’8” in some locations and shorter in others.
- There is no reason to consider the height excessive. It will blend with the height of the neighbor’s fence.
- They will pull out the old plantings and replace it with something more suitable.

Ms. Norah Frei, architect, made the following comments:

- Her measurements are 7’1” from the fence to the property line and 11’7” to the back of the sidewalk.
- Everybody in the neighborhood considers Dartmouth the front yard.
- There is no fence on Dartmouth.
- Dartmouth is 75’ wide and the other streets are 50’ wide.
- It makes sense to allow the property owners to keep the fence the same height.
- The coverage is 3,144 and not 3,114 as indicated in the staff report.

Chair Tauber closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Swisher provided the following comments:

- He has no problem with the project.
- The neighbors do not seem to have an issue.
- He did not want to quibble over a couple of inches.

Commissioner Chalmers provided the following comments:

- She could make the findings for Design Review and the Exception Permit for the new window opening.
- The neighborhood has open front and side areas and bringing the fence forward from twenty feet to six feet is a dramatic change.
- She understood what the owners are trying to do in keeping the backyard closed and private.
- She is hesitating on the fence.

Commissioner Wagstaff provided the following comments:

- The proposed improvements will make the house nicer including the siding and the new roof.
- The fence should remain at six feet. He does not see why, since they are moving it, it should be 6’8”.

- They could use some open lattice work at the top.
- He is not in favor of the 6'8" high fence.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- This is a modest and thoughtful upgrade.
- He did not want to quibble over the distinction as to what should qualify as the front yard as opposed to the side yard.
- He would be comfortable with the approval of a six-foot fence.
- He cannot make the findings for a 6'8" fence.

Chair Tauber provided the following comments:

- New plantings will soften the fence.
- She does not have a problem with the new addition- it makes sense from a program standpoint.
- She went to the property and stood next to the fence and it seemed really tall.
- The current landscaping hides the fence.
- She would prefer a six-foot fence as opposed to a 6'8" fence but she could live with it.
- There are mitigating factors- this is the side of the house, the fence does not run along the entire wall.
- There was a consensus of the Commission to approve a six foot, and not 6'8" fence.

Chair Tauber reopened the Public Hearing.

Ms. Stephanie Wolf, applicant, made the following comments:

- She submitted letters from the neighbors in support of the application. Nobody had any concerns.
- The fence height is different at different spots. They will not go taller than needed and would love to reuse the fence materials.
- They will install some nice plantings.

Chair Tauber closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- He liked the idea of recycling the fence materials.
- He encouraged the owners to try to adhere to the six feet as much as possible.
- He would not quibble over it being a bit higher

Commissioner Chalmers provided the following comments:

- She agreed with the comments made by Commissioner Kunstler.
- The houses with high fences closer to the sidewalk had more attractive frontage with some kind of plantings. They should do the same thing.

Commissioner Wagstaff provided the following comment:

- The fence will need to be taken apart and could be built to the allowable height.

Senior Planner Teiche stated reusing at least some of the materials is certainly possible, even if the height is reduced. There is no fence detail in the plans at this time, so it is difficult to know if the surrounding property owners are fully aware of the fence design. It is important to add this detail and complete the revised noticing to inform the public. As the Zoning Administrator she regularly requires a planting scheme to soften the appearance as a condition of a Fence Height Exception. The Commission should be specific regarding the maximum height you are willing to support so it could be included in the public notice.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- The maximum height should be six feet.
- The fence detail should include a planting scheme.

M/s, Kunstler/Swisher, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to continue DR/EXCEPT/FHE #20-30, 99 Dartmouth Drive, to the next meeting as a Consent Calendar item with the understanding that the applicant will resubmit plans with details on the fence design, not to exceed six feet in height, and a planting detail.

3. DR #20-36; 2233 Larkspur Landing Circle, Farmshop Restaurant (APN: 018-191-01); Haideh Sobhi, Chrome Architecture, Applicant; Marin Country Mart, LLC, James Rosenfield, Property Owner; PD (Planned Development) Zoning District. Applicant is requesting Design Review approval to modify the roofline of Building No. 3 in the Marin Country Mart commercial center to extend a permanent roof over the restaurants existing outdoor dining area, located in the central courtyard.

Senior Planner Teiche presented the staff report.

Chair Tauber opened the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Haideh Sobhi, architect, made the following comments:

- This is a straight-forward project.
- She is available for questions.

Chair Tauber closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- They will probably be seeing more applications of this nature.
- He has no objections to the application.

Commissioner Wagstaff provided the following comment:

- They are creating a nice, warm eating space.

Commissioner Chalmers provided the following comments:

- The courtyard area is very popular.
- The project would work well in this large space.

Commissioner Swisher provided the following comments:

- The project is great.
- He supported projects that encouraged social distancing.

Chair Tauber provided the following comments:

- She liked the project.
- She supported helping to keep the restaurants in business.

M/s, Wagstaff/Chalmers, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve DR #20-36; 2233 Larkspur Landing Circle, subject to the findings and conditions set forth in the staff report.

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

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Adoption of Findings for Approval for Application DR/FAR/SUP/V #19-38 at 8 Loma Vista Avenue (APN: 021-231-10), proposing new additions (including a new detached garage) totaling 813 square feet to an historic single-family dwelling, removal of the existing

pool in the front yard, removal of the existing detached garage in the rear yard, installation of a new rear yard pool, and new landscaping. The Planning Commission approved this application on October 27, 2020.

M/s, Swisher/Chalmers, motioned and the Commission voted 4-1 (Chair Tauber voted no) to adopt the Findings for Approval for Application DR/FAR/SUP/V #19-38 at 8 Loma Vista.

2. Approval of the October 27, 2020 draft meeting minutes

M/s, Kunstler/Swisher, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 27, 2020 meeting as submitted.

3. Planning Commissioners Reports

There were no reports.

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 November 24, 2020.



Neal Toft, Planning and Building Director