

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 22, 2022

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

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

Commissioner Absent: Natasha Chalmers

Staff Present: Interim Planning Director Daniel Hortert  
Senior Planner Kristin Teiche  
Planning Consultant Lorraine Weiss

### OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

### PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Living in Larkspur.org is the Housing Element Website. Staff is adding more features to make it more user-friendly. Staff is getting ready to do some outreach efforts.
- Progress is being made on the General Plan update. Staff is reviewing the Administrative Draft sections of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

### PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

1. **DR/V #21-31, 116 Monte Vista Avenue, Larkspur; APN 021-171-09; Brad Hubbel, Hubbel-Dailey Architects, Applicants; Raymond Cassidy, Owner; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. Applicants are requesting Design Review approval to allow demolition of the existing single-family residence and construction of a new 2,859 square foot two-story home with a 1,207 square foot basement on a 7,147 (net) square foot parcel. Basement level is exempt from inclusion in the floor area as it is greater than 50% below grade. This area includes a 374 square foot two-car garage, storage, mechanical rooms and stairway to upper floors. Additional improvements include landscaping and a swimming pool.**

Commissioner Kunstler recused himself from this item.

Planning Consultant Weiss presented the staff report. She summarized the revisions.

Commissioner Swisher asked how soon the archeologist could get to the site for an evaluation. Planning Consultant Weiss stated the applicant could answer that question. Senior Planner Teiche stated it could be done during the demolition of the site.

Commissioner Tauber asked if the house was more than 45 years old. Planning Consultant Weiss stated "yes". Senior Planner Teiche stated the City, as the Lead Agency for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, makes the first determination whether the structure has any architectural merit and deserves to be listed as an historic resource. It was determined that the building did not qualify for inclusion on the list and is not subject to CEQA.

Acting Chair Wagstaff opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Brad Hubbel, architect, made the following comments:

- The staff report was very thorough.
- The owner was recently notified by Pacific Gas and Electric that the Fan Palm tree should be removed because it endangers the power lines.
- They have been working with the neighbors about the windows, roof heights, garage size, etc.
- The building will fit well within the neighborhood.

Ms. Katherine Arrow, Baltimore Avenue, made the following comments:

- She loves Palm trees.
- Trees that do not quite “fit into the box” should not be discounted.
- Trees do not have to be native to qualify as a Heritage Tree.
- The archeological survey should be done before the house is demolished. It is a straight-forward process.
- The building seems a bit high for the area.

Senior Planner Teiche explained how building height is measured.

Acting Chair Wagstaff closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Tauber provided the following comments:

- The structure seems a lot taller than everything around it.
- Putting the garage underneath raises the house.
- The design is nice.
- They addressed the other issues.
- The midden issue will need to be addressed.

Commissioner Swisher provided the following comments:

- The height issue was discussed at length at the last meeting. It is under the legal limit.
- They have made accommodations by lowering the structure.
- There is a sense of “apparent height” since the grade is higher than what is perceived because the area is elevated.
- This is a nice design.
- He is glad the privacy concerns were addressed.
- The Palm tree is an eyesore and could be removed along with the Lemon tree.
- He could approve the project.

Acting Chair Wagstaff provided the following comments:

- He appreciated the two-car garage revision. Parking is difficult on that street.
- He wished they had dropped it another foot or so but he could accept it the way it is.
- This is a handsome house. They did a great job.
- They paid attention to the neighbor’s concerns.
- He can support the project as submitted.

M/s, Swisher/Wagstaff, motioned and the Commission voted 2-1-2 (Tauber voted no, Kunstler recused, Chalmers absent) to approve DR/V #21-31, 116 Monte Vista Avenue, based on the findings and conditions set forth in the staff report, including the removal of the Heritage Tree, plus the additional condition that they obtain an archeological investigation prior to demolition.

Commissioner Tauber stated she did not support the removal of the tree.

Acting Chair Wagstaff stated there was a 10-day appeal period.

Commissioner Kunstler returned to the meeting.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **1. Annual Progress Report on the General Plan and Housing Element for Calendar Year 2021**

Interim Planning Director Hortert presented a staff report.

Chair Kunstler asked staff to make sure definitions of the acronyms were included in the report.

M/s, Tauber/Wagstaff, motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Chalmers absent) to approve the Annual Progress Report on the General Plan and Housing Element for Calendar Year 2021 for submittal to Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and forward it to the City Council.

### **2. Approval of Minutes from the January 25, 2022 meeting**

M/s, Tauber/Swisher, motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Chalmers absent) to approve the minutes from the meeting of January 25, 2022 as submitted.

### **3. Approval of Minutes from the November 23, 2021 meeting**

M/s, Wagstaff/Swisher, motioned and the Commission voted 3-0-2 (Chalmers absent, Tauber abstained) to approve the minutes from the meeting of November 23 2001 as corrected by staff (misspelling of names).

### **4. Planning Commissioners Reports**

Chair Kunstler stated two meetings were held, one by the City of Larkspur and one by the County Board of Supervisors, regarding the application for 1251 South Eliseo. Commissioners could be receiving correspondence from the public regarding the application.

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

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Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner