

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2018

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

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

Staff Present: Planning Director Neal Toft
Associate Planner Anna Camaraota
Senior Planner Kristin Teiche

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Staff will be sending out an invitation to the Summer Lunch on Friday, September 7th at Piper Park.
- PG&E has been out in neighborhoods marking trees in an attempt to be more aggressive in its tree trimming/clearing program. Staff will be posting more information on the City Website. Some trees could be removed. Chair Deignan asked if the work would include the pole-to-pole lines and the lines that go to individual houses. Planning Director Toft stated he was not sure. Commissioner Kunstler asked if the work would be concentrated in the Wildland Urban Interface Areas. Planning Director Toft stated PG&E would be providing detailed information for us to provide on the Website.
- The City Council will not be meeting in August.
- Several weeks ago staff received information from the property owner and arborist at 75 Frances Avenue. The roots of a Redwood tree were damaged during the course of some hillside grading. The project was stopped for about 10 days while the City arborist met with the homeowner's arborist. The tree is now unstable and is recommended for removal. The homeowner's paid double the evaluation of the tree (a total of \$15,000) as a fine and staff also took \$3,000 as a deposit for staff time and future inspections. The homeowner is required to replace the tree with two, 24" box Valley Oaks and two, 15" box Black Oaks.

Planning Director Toft left the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

1. **DR/SUP/HTR #18-03: 33 Orange Avenue (APN: 021-081-39); Murdock Architecture, applicant, Knox and Shannon Lundgren, property owners; R-1 (Single Family Residential) Zoning District. Applicants are seeking the following permit approvals to allow construction of an approximately 1,072 square-foot, 16'-1" high, split level addition onto an existing 2,250 square-foot two-story single-family residence: 1) Design Review (DR); and 2) Slope Use Permit (SUP) to allow approximately 85 cubic yards of grading, consisting of 79 cubic yards of cut and 6 cubic yards of fill, on a hillside property with an average slope of 36 percent; and 3) Heritage Tree Removal Permit (HTR) to allow removal of one heritage-size Bay Laurel tree situated near the northwest corner of the proposed addition. CEQA Status: Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.**

Associate Planner Camaraota presented the staff report.

Commissioner Kunstler asked if the wrap-around terrace was included in the calculated 1,072 square feet of addition. Associate Planner Camaraota stated "no".

Commissioner Kunstler noted a lot of the cut was to eliminate the berm and he asked if this berm was natural or represented fill from a previous cut. Associate Planner Camaraota stated the geotechnical report indicates there has been some fill on that hillside. Most of the berm is probably natural with fill around the edges.

Commissioner Kunstler asked the applicant to identify the tree they would like to remove. Associate Planner Camaraota referred to page A10 and stated it was tree #3. Commissioner Kunstler asked if the request for removal was driven by the Fire Marshal's concerns. Associate Planner Camaraota stated there were several trees slated for removal due to fire concerns, the type of tree, and the proximity to the addition.

Commissioner Kunstler referred to the aerial shot and asked if it was old. Associate Planner Camaraota stated it was about two years old.

Commissioner Ziesing asked staff if they received any communication from the residents of 23 Highland. Associate Planner Camaraota stated "no".

Commissioner Tsang asked staff to elaborate on the proposed screening for the uphill slope. Associate Planner Camaraota stated the Fire Marshal would be weighing in on this once the applicants come up with a plan. Commissioner Tsang stated it would be nice to get some input from the residents at 23 Highland since they would be looking down on it.

Chair Deignan opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Brian Murdock, architect/applicant, made the following comments:

- The soils report could answer the questions about the berm. Three borings were performed and he pointed to the areas that were fill.
- They plan to contact the neighbor to the north about the screening. He was thinking about planting Pittisporum.
- They used the existing house as the template for the design.
- They wanted the addition to blend in- they did not want anything new or modern. This was done through the texture of the siding, the proportion of the windows, and the wrap around porch.
- The bulk of the excavation will come from pushing the project into grade. This will result in a lower house that does not appear to be large.
- They are respecting the neighbor's views.
- The wrap around terrace was about 350 to 400 square feet.
- They did discuss solar panels for the southern facing portion of the new roof. It is an opportunity but depends on the long-term goal of the client.
- The roof pitch of the addition will be 3/12- they originally planned on a 4/12 pitch. They wanted to reduce the overall height of the house. The difference between a 3/12 and a 4/12 is not that perceptible.
- The driving force for the great room and the porch was to get it closer to the outdoor area. They wanted a closer connection to the yard. They are putting a little bit of fill there.
- Most of the excavation was coming out of the raised portion.

Chair Deignan closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Tauber provided the following comments:

- She likes the project. It makes a lot of sense and she liked the connection with the existing house.
- The berm does not seem usable the way it is.
- She can make the Findings for the Slope Use Permit, Design Review, and the Heritage Tree Removal Permit as recommended by the arborist.

Commissioner Ziesing provided the following comments:

- He agreed with Commissioner Tauber. This is a very attractive plan.
- The project works well on this challenging site.
- He likes the idea that the addition is “more of the house and has seems like it has always been there” as opposed to it being something different.
- The project will not have a lot of impact to the neighbors.
- He supported the additional planting/screening between the project and 23 Highland Avenue.
- He could support the Heritage Tree Removal Permit- it was minimal.
- He supported the application.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- The project is attractive and he loves the wrap-around porch.
- The grading is not excessive.
- He could make the Design Review, Slope Use Permit, and Heritage Tree Removal Permit Findings.

Commissioner Tsang provided the following comments:

- The south facing roof does not represent a large area due to the gable roof and the east/west slope.
- The detailing of the roof and wall is very different from the existing building even though they are trying to match the existing house.
- The grading from the main house goes down one foot into the addition and then another two to three feet to the back side of the addition. The height of the house does not impact anyone’s view. The excavation could be reduced if they maintained the same level.

Chair Deignan provided the following comments:

- The plan is sensitive, mimics the original details and spirit of the house, and addresses the neighbor’s concerns. It ties in quite well.
- He could make the Findings for the Slope Use Permit- they stepped things to avoid too much excavation.
- He could make the Design Review Findings and the corrected version of the Heritage Tree Removal Permit.

M/s, Tauber/Kunstler, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve DR/SUP/HTR #18-03, 33 Orange Avenue, based on the findings and conditions set forth in the staff report and the additional condition regarding plantings/screening between the proposed addition and 23 Highland Avenue.

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

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Adoption of findings of denial for FHE #18-07 requesting a Fence Height Exception to allow a 6-foot tall wood fence and pedestrian gate in the front yard setback in conjunction with remodeling a single-family dwelling at 25 Wiltshire Avenue (APN 021-192-05), including revised conditions of approval for design review for the proposed project DR #18-07. Note: The Planning

Commission acted to approve the remodeling and expansion of the single-family dwelling, but denied the requested fence height exception on June 12, 2018.

Chair Deignan noted the current fence and plantings were not in compliance with the Fence Height Ordinance and he asked if the current application would have a condition that this be corrected. Senior Planner Teiche stated staff would prefer to legalize things that do not conform. Commissioner Tauber stated the applicants mentioned they would be coming back with a fence proposal.

M/s, Kunstler/Tauber motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Ziesing recused) to adopt the modified Conditions of Approval for DR #18-07 and adopt the Findings for Denial for Fence Height Exception #18-07, 25 Wiltshire Avenue. The Commission is asking staff to make sure the fence is addressed appropriately.

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

2. Commissioners Reports

Commissioner Kunstler stated the General Plan Update Steering Committee met last week and discussed the Parks and Recreation Element.

3. Approval of minutes of Planning Commission meeting on June 12, 2018

M/s, Tsang/Tauber, motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Ziesing abstained) to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2018 meeting as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 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 July 24, 2018.



Neal Toft, Planning Director