

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 24, 2018

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

Commissioners Present: Chair Monte Deignan, Laura Tauber, Ignatius Tsang

Commissioners Absent: Daniel Kunstler, Todd Ziesing

Staff Present: Senior Planner Kristin Teiche

### OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

### PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- The General Plan Steering Committee will hold a meeting tomorrow night in the Council Chambers. The focus will be on looking at the major shopping centers and economic resiliency for the City.
- Last Wednesday the City Council reviewed whether or not to include three structures on Onyx Street on the Heritage Preservation Inventory. They were reviewed in 2006 and not added because they did not rate high enough. There is more information at this time and the Board thought they might be eligible. The City Council determined that the increase in scoring was not adequately supported to supersede the 2006 evaluations and did not add the structures to the inventory.

### PUBLIC HEARING ITEM

1. **DR/SUP/V #17-57: 655 Magnolia Avenue (APN: 020-201-24); Brad Elgsti, Imprints Landscape Architecture, applicant; Sarah and Lucas Voiles, property owners; R-1 (Single Family Residential) Zoning District. Applicants are requesting the following permits to support proposed grading and landscape improvements at the front and rear of a historic single family residential property: 1) Design Review; 2) Slope Use Permit to allow grading of 64 cubic yards (51 CY of excavation, 13 CY of fill, and 38 CY of off-haul) to support creation of level yard area at the front and rear of the residence, on a lot with an average slope of 34%; and 3) Variance to allow a retained, filled yard area supported by a 3-foot high retaining wall in the front yard that encroaches 6 feet into the 20-foot front yard setback. CEQA Status: Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.**

Senior Planner Teiche presented the staff report.

Chair Deignan opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lucas Voiles, property owner, made the following comments:

- They bought the house five years ago and love its historic nature.
- They bought it knowing it needed a new foundation and new retaining walls in the front and back.
- They have been working on it over time.
- The main goal is to have a safe place for the kids to play.
- They plan to move the 3' retaining wall in the front out a bit to get more flat area.

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- They plan to replace the rear retaining wall and move it back a bit.
- They are trying to do as much as possible to keep everything original and not disturb the way it looks from the street.
- Both of the neighbors are on board and very supportive.
- He displayed a drawing of the proposed fence.

Chair Deignan noted there were no elevation drawings.

Mr. Brad Elgsti, landscape architect, made the following comments:

- They included the fence in one of the original applications.
- They removed the railing in an effort to simplify the project and get it moving forward.
- He has a drawing with an elevation of the safety rail that goes on top of the wall- it is not a fence.
- The current application has a planting area that was meant as a substitute barrier for the play area. They would rather have a safety rail.
- They do not want the railing to delay the application- the site is unsafe.
- The rail is 42" high with some posts for the fence that rises an additional 6" up.
- The goal of the rail is to keep it open and architecturally in style with the historic home.

Chair Deignan asked Senior Planner Teiche if the late submittal could be accepted. Senior Planner Teiche stated railings are required and staff could administratively approve an open railing. If it exceeds 42" then they would need to apply for a Fence Height Exception. Fences are measured in height from the bottom of the wall to the top of the fence if they are attached as one. They would have more options in terms of height if they stepped it forward a foot so they could be measured separately. They can install some plantings in between. Chair Deignan asked if they would be willing to do that. Mr. Elgsti stated "yes". The goal of the fence is to keep it historic. Senior Planner Teiche stated there was a small landscape strip between the wall and the lawn and they could put the proposed low fence behind the landscape strip. This would give it separation and allow for them to be measured separately.

Commissioner Tauber had a question about the process and if staff could approve certain aspects of the fence. Senior Planner Teiche stated "yes"- but if it is constructed per the discussion tonight it would be a compliant fence (stepped back a foot and 42" above grade). Mr. Elgsti stated they could move the fence 12" back from the wall.

Chair Deignan closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Tsang provided the following comments:

- This is a hillside property. There are not many options for creating a yard.
- He understands the design and the goals of the property owner.
- He sympathizes with the desire to have a small front lawn for the family.
- He can support the application for Variance and Slope Use Permit.

Commissioner Tauber provided the following comments:

- She liked the project- it made sense.
- The project will make the front of the house more attractive.
- She is fine with the Variance and the Slope Use Permit.
- She could support the project.

Chair Deignan provided the following comments:

- The front yard retaining walls are fairly low.
- He could support a safety rail/fence that is no higher than 42".

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- He could support the Slope Use Permit and wanted to make sure it was managed well with no debris out in the right-of-way.
- They are stuck with an easement for drainage that has limited their choices- this would qualify as a site-specific hardship. He could make the Variance findings.
- He could approve the project.

M/s, Tauber/Tsang, motioned and the Commission voted 3-0-2 (Kunstler and Ziesing absent) to approve DR/SUP/V #17-57, 655 Magnolia Avenue, subject to the findings and conditions set forth in the staff report.

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

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

1. Commissioners Reports

There were no reports.

2. Approval of minutes of Planning Commission meeting on June 26 and July 10, 2018

M/s, Tsang/Tauber, motioned and the Commission voted 3-0-2 (Kunstler and Ziesing absent) to approve the June 26 and July 10, 2018 minutes as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 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 August 14, 2018.



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Neal Toft, Planning Director