



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

March 23, 2009

7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

CALL TO ORDER – 7:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Bressler, Ferrick (absent), Kadvany (absent), Keith, O'Malley (Vice chair), Pagee, Riggs (Chair)

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF – Deanna Chow, Senior Planner; Thomas Rogers, Associate Planner; Justin Murphy, Development Services Manager (arrived 8:30 p.m.)

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

B. CONSENT

1. Approval of minutes from the February 23, 2009, Planning Commission meeting.

Chair Riggs pulled the February 23, 2009 minutes from the consent calendar, and reviewed suggested modifications.

Commission Action: Unanimous consent to approve the minutes with the following modifications.

- Page 1, 4th line: Delete the word “Planning” before the word “Commissioners.”
- Page 2, 2nd paragraph, 1st line: Replace “Mayor Heywood” with “Mayor Robinson”; remove extra word “had.”
- Page 2, 3rd paragraph, last line: Add a phrase “and noted a council liaison to our Commission was a good idea” at the end of the paragraph after the word “together.”
- Page 3, 3rd full paragraph, 8th line: Replace the phrase “use permits and the applicant” with “use permits and one applicant in particular ...”
- Page 6, 1st full paragraph, 5th line: Add the word “later” between the word “do” and “as.”
- Page 11, 5th paragraph, 2nd to last line: Add the word “product” after the word “work.”
- Page 11, 6th paragraph, last line: Add the word “itself” between the word “goal” and “but.”

- Page 11, last paragraph, 2nd line: Replace “because” with “and that” between the words “property” and “no one.”
- Global Change: Replace “Heywood” with “Heyward” and “Mayor Heywood” with “Mayor Robinson”, where appropriate.

Motion carried 5-0 with Commissioners Ferrick and Kadvany absent.

C. PUBLIC HEARING

1. **Use Permit/Roger K. Kohler/430 Claremont Way:** Request for a use permit to construct first- and second-story additions to an existing single-story, single-family, nonconforming residence that would exceed 50 percent of the replacement value of the existing structure in a 12-month period in the R-1-U (Single-Family Urban) zoning district.

Staff Comment: Planner Chow said since the printing of the staff report that staff had received one piece of written correspondence from Ms. Donna Tribula, 139 East Creek Drive. Ms. Tribula expressed concern with a potential impact to privacy from the installation of five new windows on the left existing nonconforming wall, where currently there was only one small bathroom window. Additionally, she was concerned that the addition of more windows would increase the impact of the of nonconforming wall. Planner Chow noted that although windows were being added to the existing nonconforming wall that this did not change the location or length of the wall. She said the existing six-foot wood fence would remain on the shared property line with 434 Claremont Way.

Planner Chow also noted a correction on the plans and referred to sheet B3 in the staff report. The demolition plan showed only one window in bedroom #1 where there were actually two windows as shown on the floor plans. She said that it had been brought to staff's attention that the applicant wanted the flexibility to install an elevator at a future time. She said if the elevator were to be installed at a later date that the floor area on the second floor for the elevator would not be excluded until such time as the elevator was installed. She said in the interim that the additional floor area desired for the future installation of an elevator would exceed the maximum floor area limit for the property. She said that staff has proposed condition 4.a to address the applicant's request and that had been distributed to the Commission. She read the condition for the record: “As part of a complete building permit application, the plans shall include an elevator as shown on the plans or the plans shall be modified to reduce the floor area limit to not exceed 3,109 square feet should the elevator not be part of the building permit for the proposed project, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division. If the elevator is part of the building permit, the elevator shall be installed prior to final inspection, subject to review and approval of the Building Division.”

Public Comment: Mr. Roger Kohler, project architect, provided the Commission a rendering of the exterior. He noted the existing roof on the left side of the house which was not attached to the new sloping roof at the front. He said the garage and the front door wall were existing. He provided photographs of the existing site related to Ms.

Tribula's letter, which showed the left side view. He said the majority of the existing dense landscaping was on the neighbor's property. He said that the base and racks for the proposed elevator would have to be installed during construction as it would be very difficult to retrofit later. He said staff had questions about how the existing wall would remain and how they would handle the structural situation of transferring the shear wall from the exterior wall up to the roof setback. He said it was a fairly common situation where the second floor sets in. He distributed a detail sheet that showed by dotted line the shear wall and he explained that exterior wall stayed pretty much intact.

Mr. Zack Nye, the property owner, said that his family was growing and they needed more space. He said they decided not to do a demolition and rebuild because of the cost factor.

Commissioner O'Malley asked if the neighbors on the left and right hand side had reviewed the plans and whether those neighbors supported the plans. Mr. Nye said he walked the neighborhood with plans for the neighbors to review. He said he was not able to make direct contact with the neighbor on the left side but had left plans and his contact information. He said he did not hear back from them. He said another neighbor who has a pool was concerned with privacy impacts. He said they amicably agreed as part of the project to plant four maple trees to mitigate any privacy impacts. Mr. Nye also commented that one of his daughters was severely epileptic and that they would eventually need an elevator for her use to get to the second floor, but that he and his wife would rather not have bear the cost for an elevator just yet.

Commissioner Pagee said the bathrooms on the second floor did not meet ADA accessibility requirements. Mr. Nye said the bathroom on the second floor was not accessible but noted that his daughter would primarily reside on the first floor which would have an accessible bathroom. He said the purpose of an elevator would be to give his daughter the mobility to go up and down floors with her siblings.

Commissioner Pagee asked where the motors for the elevator would be located, and if that would be within the 3,109 square feet. Mr. Kohler said that if they used a cable mechanism that a mechanical room would be needed. He said that they would probably opt for a hydraulic elevator, which was more expensive. He introduced Mr. Bill Lopez, the contractor for the project. Mr. Bill Lopez, project manager, said the equipment could be placed in the crawlspace. Commissioner Pagee said that hydraulics were relatively quiet but there might be an issue with noise for neighbors. She noted that they had placed air conditioning condenser units within the setback which was good. Mr. Kohler said if the equipment had to be placed outside they would come back for approval for it.

Commissioner Keith asked about the water heater encroachment in the garage and asked if Mr. Kohler if he had thought about tankless water heaters to avoid that encroachment. Mr. Kohler said that he was undecided about the value of tankless water heaters because they needed larger gas lines and had to be within a certain radii of bathrooms and sinks.

Chair Riggs closed the public hearing.

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Commission Comment: Commissioner O'Malley moved to approve the item as recommended in the staff report with the addition of condition 4.a. Commissioner Keith seconded the motion.

Chair Riggs asked about the pepper tree as it did not have as large a canopy as was usual for that type of tree. Mr. Nye said that the tree had been pruned. Chair Riggs said that pepper trees were subject to sunburn. Mr. Nye said that they had their arborist look at the tree, and it was deemed in good condition. Chair Riggs said he thought the design was sensitive.

Commissioner Keith asked if the siding and shingles went all the way around the house. Mr. Kohler said that the siding went down 15 feet on the one side and four feet on the other side. He said they could extend it further back. Commissioner Keith said that it would be better if the materials were extended. Mr. Kohler said that on the right side they could go back another seven feet. Mr. Lopez said that it could go back to the point of where the garage wall ceiling of the existing roof stopped and the new second story roof started. Commissioner Keith asked about the left side. Mr. Kohler said that it went to the wall of bathroom #1 about 12 or 13 feet but noted there was dense foliage and the wall would not be seen.

Commissioner Keith asked about the sill heights on the second floor. Mr. Kohler said will heights were 4-foot 3-inches on the right side, two-foot eight-inches on the left side, and 4-foot eight-inches on the front and back sides. He said two of the windows in the front on the left were for the master bedroom and the other two were for the bathroom.

Commissioner Keith requested a condition 4.b to have shingles continue on the left side to the point where the new addition starts. Commissioner O'Malley accepted that modification.

Commissioner O'Malley asked Mr. Kohler to address Ms. Tribula's comment listed in her email as number 3. Mr. Kohler said if Ms. Tribula was counting the first and second floor windows there were six windows proposed where now there was only one window for the first floor bathroom. Mr. Kohler said there were five windows on the first floor. Commissioner O'Malley noted that there were at least two residences between this project and Ms. Tribula's. Mr. Kohler said that he could not determine how there was a view to her home.

Commission Action: M/S O'Malley/Keith to approve the item as recommended in the staff report with the following modifications.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 3 (Section 15303, "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures") of the current California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.
2. Make findings, as per Section 16.82.030 of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the granting of use permits, that the proposed use will not be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use, and will not be

detrimental to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the City.

3. Approve the use permit subject to the following **standard** conditions:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans prepared by Kohler Associates Architects, consisting of 13 plan sheets, dated March 3, 2009, and approved by the Planning Commission on March 23, 2009, except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.
 - b. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all Sanitary District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, and utility companies' regulations that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.
 - d. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall submit a plan for any new utility installations or upgrades for review and approval of the Planning, Engineering and Building Divisions. All utility equipment that is installed outside of a building and that cannot be placed underground shall be properly screened by landscaping. The plan shall show exact locations of all meters, back flow prevention devices, transformers, junction boxes, relay boxes, and other equipment boxes.
 - e. Prior to building Heritage trees in the vicinity of the construction project shall be protected pursuant to the Heritage Tree Ordinance.
4. **Approve the use permit subject to the following project-specific conditions:**
 - a. ***As part of a complete building permit application, the plans shall include an elevator as shown on the plans or the plans shall be modified to reduce the floor area limit to not exceed 3,109 square feet should the elevator not be part of the building permit for the proposed project, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division. If the elevator is part of the building permit, the elevator shall be installed prior to final inspection, subject to review and approval of the Building Division.***

- b. As part of a complete building permit application, the right side, first floor elevation shall be modified by extending the use of cedar shingles to where the roof line changes on the first floor, which is approximately 22 feet in length from the front of the house, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.***

Motion carried 5-0 with Commissioners Ferrick and Kadvany absent.

- 2. Use Permit/Danielle Paye/761 Partridge Avenue:** Request for a use permit to demolish two single-story, single-family dwelling units and construct two two-story, single-family dwelling units on a substandard lot with regard to lot width in the R-2 (Low Density Apartment) zoning district. As part of this development, the following heritage tree is proposed for removal: a multi-trunk fig at the left rear of the property with a 36-inch diameter at the point the trunks diverge, in poor condition.

Staff Comment: Planner Rogers said the project architect had submitted a graphic supplement to show distances from the proposed project's second floor footprint to the adjacent buildings. He said page two of the handout also showed the driveway flipped and the distances between buildings.

Public Comment: Ms. Danielle Paye, applicant and developer, said she had spoken with both neighbors at 755 Partridge Avenue and 753 Partridge Avenue about the proposed development. She said her earliest sketch had the driveway remaining at its current location. She said she visited the neighbor's home at 755 Partridge Avenue and came to the conclusion that the driveway would be better on the other side. She said that the neighbor's home at 775/773 was configured such that if the driveway on her parcel remained in the existing site there would be no space for any type landscape screening. She said the other neighbor then called and said he was unhappy with the proposed driveway relocation. She said that neighbor's two-story blocked the sun on her property. She said regarding 775 and 773 Partridge Avenue that those homes were centered in the middle of the lot. She said to respond to that the front unit was squeezed forward and would overlook neighbors' back yard. She said the rear home on the neighboring property would not be affected by the proposed rear house at all.

Chair Riggs asked if the parking could be configured so that the front unit was flipped but not the rear unit. Ms. Paye said the neighbor with the single-story home would be the most impacted if this project's second-story front unit was pushed toward that side.

Commissioner Pagee asked if the rear unit could be moved to the left. Ms. Paye said that unit was not affecting the neighbor with concerns as it lined up with a two-story apartment building. Commissioner Pagee said the second story on the rear unit was weighted to the right. Ms. Paye said that was to protect the sunlight for the neighbor at 753/755 Partridge Avenue as her yard was already shady. Ms. Paye said that they had looked at those alternatives to address neighbors' concerns but she thought this

proposal was a better product aesthetically. Commissioner Pagee said the south elevation of the rear residence was a two-story wall without any articulation, and asked if it was only visible to neighbors living to the rear of it. Ms. Paye said that the rear unit did not line up with the neighbors at 753 and 755 Partridge Avenue. Commissioner Pagee said the two-story wall would face the rear. Ms. Paye said the wall was facing the side. Commissioner Pagee asked if there was landscaping on that side. Ms. Paye said there was abundant screening on that side. Commissioner Pagee asked about the driveway materials. Ms. Paye said that she would pave to the first building and then use asphalt to the rear. Commissioner Pagee asked about pervious pavers. Ms. Paye said she could do a combination of pavers and paving.

Mr. Mark Robinson, project architect, said the width of the driveway was 16-feet wide as required by the Fire District as opposed to 12-feet wide. He said that the neighbors on each side had contacted them desirous to having the driveway located on the side adjacent to them. He said they looked at leaving the driveway on the right side. He said the diagrams showed distances between the existing building and the proposed building and if they flipped the location of the driveway. He said the existing front unit was located 23 feet from the building on the right. He said with the new front unit, the first story would be 17 feet from the building on the right and the second story would maintain the existing 23-foot distance. He said for the rear two-story building on the left adjacent parcel that keeping the driveway on the right side meant pushing the new two-story building on the project more towards the left. He said he could not flip the parking for the rear unit because of the constraint to have detached covered parking space in the back half of the lot. He said there was no room to flip the front building and leave the rear unit as existing as the rear unit garage had to be in line with driveway. He said placing the driveway on the left driveway allowed moving the rear unit away from the existing two-story on the left side. He said currently the two-story distance between the existing building and the two-story on the left was about 27-feet, but keeping the driveway on the right with the proposed new building reduced the distance between the second stories to 11 feet separation. He said with the driveway located on the left this would increase the distance between the proposed rear unit and the neighboring left rear unit to 17 feet on the first floor and 22 feet on the second floor; similarly for the front proposed building a distance of 17 ½ - feet would be maintained with the front left building and 23-foot distance between the new front building and the neighbor's home on the right.

Chair Riggs noted that if a flipped version was pursued that the front residence had two windows (bedroom 2) under hip dormer and that would be an issue with neighbors.

Commissioner Pagee said the Fire District had previously offered an option to install sprinklers in rear units which eliminated the need for a wider driveway. Mr. Robinson said had not been offered. Chair Riggs said it would be worthwhile to speak to the Fire District Chief about the possibility of sprinklers.

Mr. Mossamo Cavallero, Menlo Park, said he lived in the upstairs unit to the right of the subject property. He said he contacted the developer because he had heard about the

proposed project from a neighbor. He said he spoke with the developer once and had suggested that she meet with him. He said he made four phone calls to the developer and never got a call back. He said the front unit would impact his property. He said his parents resided on the first floor of their building and their front door would look directly at this new unit. He said if the front unit could be flipped and keep the driveway where it was located for the rear unit that would be better, or if they left the driveway where it was and made the rear and front units mirror images that would put the rear garage in line with the driveway. Chair Riggs asked Mr. Cavallero if he had received a project notice and reduced plans. Mr. Cavallero said he got a notice but no plans and had gone to the City to look at the plans there.

Mr. Andrew Pastorius, Menlo Park, said he had written a letter of objection that was attached to the staff report. He said the lot was substandard in width and because of that there was the certainty that one or the other of the adjacent neighbors would be made unhappy with the impact of this project. He said that the developer and architect had decided he should be the unhappy one as they had much conversation and agreement with the neighbors on the other side. He said to have the driveway relocated to the other side would create an impact on this property. He said a canyon effect would be created by having two two-story homes just 15 feet apart and there would be no light or privacy.

Ms. Kim Burnham, Menlo Park, said she resided in the one-story unit on the left. She said she and her neighbor who owns the two-story unit in the rear met with the developer. She said relocating the driveway would be helpful to them as they were looking at solar panels in the future.

Ms. Wendy Hasemeyer, Menlo Park, said she lived in the left rear two-story unit, and had first seen the plans six months prior which had the driveway on their side. She said her concern was if the driveway remained on the right side that the wall of the proposed two-story rear unit would impact both her home and the front one-story home by impacting light access.

Mr. Gary Russo, Menlo Park, said he lived nearby and his concern was with construction noise and contractors using the street as a parking lot for vehicles. He said during a previous construction project on Partridge Avenue that the noise was an incredible issue for him as he works at night and sleeps during the day. He said he pays to park his car on the street and that his car was damaged by contractors during the past project he had previously mentioned. He said it probably would be preferable to leave the driveway where it was.

Chair Riggs closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Bressler said the lot was very narrow and there were legitimate concerns from the adjacent neighbors. He said he would like to hear why the project should be approved and a discussion about property rights.

Commissioner Page said she was concerned that personnel changes at the Fire District meant applicants were being told something different about requirements. She said one of the units proposed could be a one-story with the existing basement rather than building out as much as possible. She suggested the applicant contact the Fire District and asks about sprinklers to reduce the driveway width. She said that weighting the second-story was not aesthetically satisfactory and the clip points on the proposed roof did not work. She said she was disappointed that reduced plans were not sent to the neighbors. Planner Rogers said there were two notices sent for every application submitted to the Planning Department and that reduced plans accompanied the first notice. He said that occurred in 2008 for the first notice for this project, and the more recent notice was for the public hearing. Commissioner Page asked if there had been changes to the plans since preliminary application. Planner Rogers said there were some changes but basically the proposal was the same.

Commissioner Keith said the Zoning Ordinance required a lot to have a width of 65 feet width and this parcel was 15 feet short of that requirement. She said the neighbors had issues with the project and she recommended that the applicant work with the neighbors.

Commissioner Bressler said sometimes neighbors share driveway access. Chair Riggs said in this instance there was a power pole on the property line.

Commissioner Page moved to continue the project for redesign and for the applicant, to work with neighbors on both sides regarding the position of the proposed homes, to speak with the Fire District Chief about reducing the width of the required driveway by installing sprinklers and look at the placement of windows on both sides. Commissioner Keith seconded the motion.

Commissioner O'Malley said there seemed to be an opinion that the actual design was not as good as it could be. Chair Riggs said he thought there were issues with the massing of the second floor of front building. Commissioner O'Malley said the proposed design was not pleasing to his eye.

Chair Riggs reopened the public hearing to allow the applicant to speak. Ms. Paye said the project had been with staff for over a year, and she was very frustrated that a neighbor who had previously seen the plans and to whom she had spoken would express concerns at the last minute. She said she had built the homes at 865/869 Partridge Avenue, and suggested that the Commissioners might want to look at those as this proposal was very similar to that project. She noted also that it was very likely her family of six would move into the front unit.

Chair Riggs reclosed the public hearing.

Chair Riggs said the Commission has been supportive of property owners' rights to build. He said that part of the problem was the need for the 16-foot driveway. He said the Commission has a responsibility to look at massing for both immediate neighbors

and the surrounding community. He said the project was to be continued for redesign with a suggestion to look at eliminating the driveway requirement and address the massing of the front house. He said to relocate the driveway that one of a series of street trees would need to be removed, and that tree currently screened utility poles. .

Commission Action: M/S Pagee/Keith to continue the item with direction to the applicant on the following items.

- Work with the neighboring side properties on the location of the front residence.
- Work with the Fire District to see if certain requirements could be modified in exchange for additional safety improvements. For example, determine if the 16-foot driveway could be reduced in width if the rear residence contained fire sprinklers.
- Review and improve the massing and window placement of the front residence.

Motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner O'Malley opposed and Commissioners Ferrick and Kadvany absent.

Commissioner Pagee said she sympathized with Ms. Paye's length of time to get to the Commission but that was outside the Commission's control.

D. STUDY SESSION

1. **Study Session/100 Middlefield Road Partners, LLC/100 Middlefield Road:**
Request for a study session regarding construction of a new 8,986-square-foot, non-medical office building and associated site improvements on an existing vacant lot (formerly a fueling station) located in the C-4 (General Commercial, Other than El Camino Real) zoning district. The proposal would require use permit and architectural control review and approval by the Planning Commission.

Staff Comment: Planner Chow said staff had no additional comments and noted that there was a recommended procedure for the study session on page 6 of the staff report.

Public Comment: Mr. Robert Whitley said that he and his partner Mr. Boyd Smith were the LLC developing the property. He said this project would be a gateway piece and expressed his surprise that this property had been vacant for three years. He said it was also part of the redevelopment zone. He said they had to balance the need and desire to build a beautiful project with the current economic climate, noting that tenants had recently asked for a 25 percent reduction. He said they would need to be efficient with the project but achieve a high quality building.

Mr. Bill Bocook, architect, Palo Alto, said they looked at ways to bring traffic and parking into and out of the site and building. He said the best way to get into the site was from

Willow Road with the exit out to Middlefield Road. He said they wanted to create a focal point to address the intersection and other nearby buildings and the intersection. He said that this site was better suited for an office building than anything else. He said they were proposing a two-story office building of slightly less than 9,000 square feet. He said they would provide five parking spaces per 1,000 square feet and would put nine spaces into landscape reserve. He said that they would use a stone base with deeply recessed first floor windows and smooth stucco between the stone and columns. He said the windows would be tinted and double paned. He said they would use a sloping roof similar to other buildings on Willow and Middlefield Roads and mechanical equipment would be on the roof behind screen with provision for solar panels. He said the building would exceed Title 22 by 25% to 35 % and it would be substantially qualified for LEED if not full certification. He said the stone wall between this property and Mike's Café property would remain. He said they would like to screen the mural on the side of Mike's Café from their property. He said the low landscape wall was to partially screen traffic noise and provide some privacy to offices on the first floor, and would be four feet in height with openings. He said there would be patios on the first floor and balconies on the second floor. He said their intent was to build the perfect gateway entrance building for Menlo Park. He said that he hoped the parking would be determined by the City's Administrative Review Guidelines.

Mr. Paul Letterieri, principal, Guzzardo Partnership, landscape architect, said they would use exciting landscaping to pick up the imagery of area. He said they wanted to keep an integrated sidewalk noting that there were USA markings indicating some type of utilities in area recommended as a park strip by staff. He said they would have a strong line of street trees behind the sidewalk and would have water treatment swales. He said they would create an entrance event using interlocking paver stones and use a foursquare of trees to mark entrance. He said they would do accessible parking spaces with pavers and he thought with the area for green space and a barbecue that those spaces could be used for unloading for events using the barbecue and green space. He said they planned to enclose the transformer with wood gates and walls. Bicycle parking would be available under the stairs and accessible from the plaza. He said they would plant vines on the existing wall. He said there were two oak trees on the adjacent property that were strong and healthy, which would not be negatively impacted by their project. He said it was highly desirable that those trees overhang the parking lot and provide shade. He said two trees that were marked for removal probably would not need to be. He said appurtenances for storm water treatment would be underground or in the parking area and would be integrally combined with landscaping. He said that they would not use bio swales but rather filtration swales and that they were interested in as much permeability as possible. He said the wall would have open grills and wooden gates.

Commissioner Pagee asked about signage. Mr. Letterieri said that possibly they would use the curved corner to have low keyed signage; he said that they would want the signage on a small scale.

There being no public comment, Chair Riggs closed the public comment period.

Commissioner Comments: Commissioner Keith said her initial impression was favorable. She said she liked the arch of the windows. She said it would be a gateway piece. She said she liked the mural on the side of Mike's Café, and knew that the mural had been expensive, and she would prefer to not have it screened from view. She said that the building would have to be very high quality as it was in a very visible location. She said she would like it to be a LEED building. She noted that the Commission has the opportunity each year to recommend a commercial and resident project for an award from the City for green building. She asked what the architect had meant about "some provision for solar panels." Mr. Whitley said they were looking at all of the potentialities available to reduce energy load and were looking at roofing scenarios and tradeoffs in cost of roofs and solar panels. Commissioner Keith said she appreciated the landscape architect's efforts to use swales and trees. She said she liked the concept of outdoor areas and a barbecue.

Commissioner O'Malley said that the applicant had the opportunity to build a LEED certified building that would be a gateway building. He said that he endorsed comments made by Commissioner Keith.

Chair Riggs said he agreed with comments made thus far. He said the project area was parking challenged, noting Mike's Café at lunchtime. He said he did not disagree with the parking guidelines but their use might be an issue when this project was brought to public hearing. He said the Commission takes the gateway concept seriously and would caution against using stucco panels as that was 1960s and 1970s Menlo Park architecture. He said that 1600 El Camino Real was a beautiful project. He said the City would like to have a building of that quality at this location. He said he had some concern about walls planted with vines as some vines take over, but he also knew that Mr. Lettieri was an excellent landscape architect.

Commissioner Pagee said she would be concerned to have trees blocking the sidewalks and supported the landscaping and trees on the property behind the sidewalk. She said the elevations were somewhat hard to read but she would like to see something similar to the 1600 El Camino Real site with mullioned windows and roofs just not tiled but with more depth. She said elevations and shading were part of the quality of the project. She said the deep overhangs would help with shading of the building. She said having mechanical equipment on the roof in a well was good because it was screened from the neighbors. She suggested looking at a site for a standby generator for the future tenants. She said if they did a LEED building there were bus lines in the near vicinity and perhaps a shuttle could pick up and deliver tenants from the train station, which would garner LEED points as well as the potential for showers in the building and bicycle racks. She said the landscaping and the soft wall around the corner was nice and she thought the proposed entry and exit was the best and safest for the property. She said she was not certain about the parking for this building but there was public transit available. She said she would like to see more details on the exteriors and a rendering and sample of materials.

Commissioner Bressler said he agreed with having buildings close to the street but thought this proposal was a little too close. He said the site was underparked which would be an issue with people. He said finding tenants was difficult. He said if it was possible to put parking underground with more green spaces and setback from the street that might provide a payback even if it initially cost more.

Mr. Whitley said the scale of the building was small and he thought that large, curvy Spanish type tile for the roof would be too much. He said he thought a flat tile roof would give dimension and pop. He asked about the comment on stucco. Chair Riggs said vertical stone with panels of stucco made a reference to 1960s/1970s style office building. He said showing shadow lines and the stucco color might allay concerns. Mr. Whitley said the parking was a critical issue. He said they looked at underground parking but with the small site and the small footprint that the ramps would eat up as much space as could be gained. He said the five spaces per 1,000 square feet was critical to this project to have the footprint necessary to build the building and have outdoor spaces as well.

E. COMMISSION BUSINESS

1. Review of planning items on City Council agendas.

A. El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan (Phase II) Process

Planner Chow said the next meeting for the Oversight and Outreach Committee would be April 2 to review the preliminary comments from the public, Planning Commission, Housing Commission, and City Council.

Chair Riggs said the consultant took three questions to the Council. For goals, the recurring themes were to revitalize underused spaces and create vibrancy. For challenges, there was a wide range of observations but many of those had been expressed by the Planning Commission. For the consultant's priorities, a need for images, better communicating quality, and an underlying assumption that the consultant will be able to listen to the diverse voices of the community.

F. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Planner Chow said that the Environmental Impact Review (EIR) for 1300 ECR was released and mailed to the Commissioners. She asked that they keep the report throughout the entire process. She said there would be a joint study session and review of the draft EIR on April 6.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Deanna Chow, Senior Planner

Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett