



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

April 6, 2009

7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Bressler (7:02 p.m.), Ferrick, Kadvany, Keith (absent), O'Malley (Vice chair), Pagee, Riggs (Chair)

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF – Deanna Chow, Senior Planner; Megan Fisher, Associate Planner; Justin Murphy, Development Services Manager

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

B. CONSENT

There were no items on the consent calendar.

Chair Riggs noted the arrival of Commissioner Bressler and Development Services Manager Murphy.

C. PUBLIC HEARING

1. *Review and comment on the content of the Environment Impact Report prepared for the following project:*

Rezoning, Planned Development Permit, Lot Merger and Minor Subdivision, BMR Agreement, Heritage Tree Removal Permit, and Environmental

Review/Sand Hill Property Company/1300 El Camino Real: Requests for the following: 1) Rezoning the properties from C-4 General Commercial District (Applicable to El Camino Real) to Planned Development (P-D) District, 2) Planned Development Permit to establish development regulations including parking, building height, landscaping, and building setbacks, and conduct architectural review for the proposed development of 110,065 square feet of commercial space (51,365 square feet of retail/restaurant/service uses and 58,700 square feet of non-medical office uses), 3) Lot Merger and Minor Subdivision to merge the existing six lots and create up to four commercial condominium units, 4) Below Market Rate (BMR) Agreement for the payment of in-lieu fees associated with the City's BMR Housing Program, 5) Heritage Tree Removal Permits to remove two on-site and four off-site heritage

trees, and 6) Environmental Review of the proposed project for potential environmental impacts.

Staff Comment: Planner Fisher said there were two agenda items for the 1300 El Camino Real project: 1) a public hearing on the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and 2) a study session on the project. She said the draft EIR analyzed the primary project which would be a commercial development and two commercial use variants. She said the primary project would result in the highest number of trips to the site; therefore, the environmental analysis focused on this project scenario throughout the document. She said the draft EIR also analyzed alternatives to the primary project including a mixed use project, which would include residential units. She said although the applicant had provided plans for the mixed use project at the City Council's request, it was not part of the applicant's request. She said it was purely an alternative that was discussed and analyzed in the EIR. She asked the Commission to look at page 12 of the staff report as she wanted to review the recommended procedure for consideration of the item. She said the environmental consultant had prepared a brief presentation on the environmental review process and that would occur first after which the Commission had the opportunity to ask questions about the draft EIR and/or the environmental review process of either staff and/or the consultant. She said staff then recommended the Commission hear public comment on the draft EIR after which the Commission would comment on the document. She said two pieces of correspondence on the draft EIR had been received by staff from Ms. Nancy Barnby and Ms. Margaret Petitjean and had been distributed to the Commission at the dais.

Mr. Adam Weinstein said he was an associate with LSA Associates, Berkeley, and was the project manager for the environmental impact report for the 1300 El Camino Real project. He said the purpose of CEQA in general was disclosure of environmental impacts of projects to decision makers and the public, to conduct a public forum, consider mitigation of impacts, and identify project alternatives. He said that CEQA did not dictate acceptance or approval of a project or the outcome of the planning process, but only required that a project's environmental impacts be presented to decision makers and the public.

Mr. Weinstein said the CEQA process for this project started when the applicant submitted the most recent round of project materials at which time a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft EIR was released in August 2007. He said this NOP was sent to agencies and individuals who might have an interest in the project. He said a scoping session was held with the Planning Commission also in August 2007. He said they took the written and the verbal comments submitted during the 30-day scoping period that followed the release of the NOP into account as they prepared the draft EIR. He said that their multi-disciplinary team - land use planners, traffic engineers, geologists, noise specialists and others - researched the project pertinent to individual areas of expertise and prepared the draft EIR. He said the draft EIR was then released for public and agency review on March 23, 2009. He said this began the 45-day public review period, which would end on May 7, 2009. He said after this review period, the

Final EIR would be prepared and would include responses to all comments submitted on the draft EIR. He said the Final EIR would then go to the City Council for certification upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Weinstein said impacts identified for the project were summarized in Chapter 2 of the document. He said for every topic except transportation, circulation and parking that the environmental impacts of the project were either less than significant or could be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of mitigation measures identified in the draft EIR. He said the project would result in impacts to seven roadway segments and nine intersections, which would be significant and unavoidable even with mitigation measures. He said the impacts identified in the draft EIR were somewhat typical of in-fill projects in urban areas.

Mr. Weinstein said they were present to hear comments on the adequacy of the document and specifically whether there was enough information in the draft EIR to make a reasoned decision on project approval. He said if the Commission did not have enough information in the document to support a reasoned decision on project approval that the Commission should discuss what else was needed and that would be incorporated in to the response to comments document. He said written comments from the Commission and the public might be submitted until May 7, 2009.

Commissioner O'Malley said one of the mitigations for transportation was to provide an onsite traffic coordinator. He asked if that would be a fulltime employee for the duration of the project's existence. Mr. Weinstein said at the end of this process that they and City staff would prepare a Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program that would provide much more detail on how mitigation measures were implemented. He said they would respond to that comment specifically in the responses to comments document. Planner Fisher said that would be part of the Transportation Demand Management Program (TDM) Mitigation and all of the measures listed were examples of things that might be included but these had not been finalized.

Commissioner O'Malley noted on page 24 it was indicated that the applicant would go for Silver LEED certification. He asked if that was a requirement or recommendation for mitigation. Mr. Weinstein said that this mitigation measure was in regard to the global climate change impacts of the project and they put together a comprehensive set of measures that could be incorporated into the project as the City worked with the applicant on what the best sustainability elements were to reduce the global climate change impacts. Commissioner O'Malley said the requirement for a Silver LEED certification was fairly stringent and there was a less stringent LEED certification.

Commissioner O'Malley asked how it was determined that 25 bicycle parking spaces were adequate for the project. Mr. Weinstein said that analysis was done by Hexagon Transportation Consultants and their finding was based on case studies they had done on ridership, and they had determined that 25 spaces seemed reasonable for where the project was located and its proximity to public transit.

Commissioner O'Malley confirmed with Planner Fisher that utilities would be underground.

Commissioner O'Malley asked if a parking study would be completed before the EIR was finalized, which Mr. Weinstein confirmed. Planner Fisher said there would be a parking study, which currently was in draft form.

Commissioner Pagee noted on page 102 of the Draft EIR that there was a direct conflict with LEED requirements as related to standards for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. She said in addition to the conductivity of bicycles onto the site there was a need for bicycle storage and showers. She said a jobs-to-housing balance was an issue that tended to be raised and noted that the goal of 1.9 on page 62 was the first time she had seen an actual number for jobs-to-housing balance. She said if that was the goal there would always be more jobs in any city anywhere than there were employed residents, and asked if that was healthy. Mr. Weinstein said the chart on page 62 was the projected jobs/housing balance in Menlo Park based on the Association of Bay Area Government's (ABAG) status of demographic data and was not necessarily the goal for a jobs/housing balance in the City. He said that a jobs/housing balance was best looked at as a regional issue rather than a local issue just based on the tendency of people to commute outside of their town. He said the main reason they included the information was to provide better context of how the jobs generated by the project would affect demographic change patterns in Menlo Park. He said the other issue was a jobs/housing mismatch where employment did not pay a wage that would equate with the housing affordability. Commissioner Pagee asked if the information in the chart could be used to identify the number of jobs created by the project and the value of the homes that would need to be subsidized to house those people. Mr. Weinstein said it was a good question but beyond the scope of the EIR. He said a project that might create a job/housing balance was not a CEQA impact but thought it was probably addressed by the City's Below Market Rate (BMR) Housing program. Commissioner Pagee asked what Mr. Weinstein's experience was with other cities as to the BMR housing rates noting that the City of Menlo Park used a \$7.50-\$8.00 per square foot for that in-lieu fee. Mr. Weinstein said that was beyond the scope and range of environmental impacts. Commissioner Pagee noted the same information that Commissioner O'Malley had brought forth about the Silver LEED certification recommendation as a mitigation, some of which was required under the energy efficiency measures per the State of California in Title 24. She said if the project would exceed Title 24 for this particular building then she thought the project should be approaching LEED. She said she would expect more to be incorporated into the site such as recycling of the existing building materials when demolished and daylight access for all buildings on the site whether residential or commercial..

Chair Riggs said there were City parking guidelines that allowed for parking requirements to be reduced based on mixed use, and that became valid because those uses did not overlap. Mr. Weinstein said that was correct. Chair Riggs asked if retail and other commercial uses dovetailed with office building as well as residential did to avoid that overlap. Mr. Weinstein said that would best be answered by Hexagon

Transportation Consultants in the Responses to Comments. Chair Riggs asked if there was a similar factor for traffic should the project in the future lean on available transit and if the dovetailing of retail with office building would be as good as the dovetailing of residential with office use parking. Mr. Weinstein said that was best addressed by Hexagon Transportation Consultants.

Chair Riggs closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Kadvany said overall he thought the draft EIR was well written, organized and comprehensive. He said for the community's better understanding of the document that there were some areas where the quantitative analysis would be better served if it was presented graphically and schematically in particular the traffic analysis. He said he was not sure how to interpret the noise matrix and thought creating a baseline would be important. He said the matrixes were 24-hour aggregates and thought doing smaller time units would serve better to clarify impacts. He said it would be helpful to see variances in traffic flow and to describe pedestrian and bicycle characteristics at intersections. He said the greenhouse section had mostly background information and he suggested eliminating most of that introduction and showcasing the analysis instead. He said there were multiple references to the fact that a single project does not significantly contribute to global climate change, which he thought could be eliminated. He suggested instead a more detailed analysis on how to mitigate for energy efficiencies and amount of travel. He said the cumulative effects section in the traffic section referred the reader back to Chapter 4 which he thought was inconvenient for the reader. He suggested instead a paragraph to summarize the cumulative impacts. He said the computer generated street scenes were great and it would be helpful if those were done for the other two alternatives. Mr. Weinstein said the project and two alternatives all looked the same. Commissioner Kadvany said summarizing outcomes of the alternatives – no residential, middle density residential and high density residential – for trips, for instance, would be more helpful if found in one place in the documents. He said a glossary in the back of the document would also be helpful.

Chair Riggs asked staff if the Commission could ask for more information on alternatives and matrixes. Mr. Weinstein said the purpose of the alternatives analysis was to look at a reasonable range of alternatives to the project. He said under CEQA the alternatives should be described and analyzed in a lesser level of detail than the project itself. He said the mixed use alternative was a little bit different in that there were detailed project plans for it. He said for the other alternative they came up with conceptual drawings that were not as detailed. He said if the Commission felt it needed more detailed analysis on the alternatives to adequately compare impacts that his firm could provide more information but they would not be able to provide more detailed renderings. Chair Riggs said the City Council expressed interest in a housing element in the project which explained the analysis of that alternative. He asked should the Council decide to require the housing alternative whether the EIR would be easily amended to address that as the primary project. Mr. Weinstein said under CEQA that if the project changed and the EIR was already certified then either an addendum or a

supplemental additional EIR would be prepared and those would focus on the implications of the net changes in impacts between the project in the main EIR that was certified and the new project.

Planner Fisher said the mixed use alternative for which plans had been provided by the request of Council was analyzed in enough detail such that the alternative could be certified by the Council if they so desired.

Commissioner O'Malley said he thought there should be a housing element to the project. He said any major construction along El Camino Real would have traffic and parking issues. He said he thought the draft EIR as presented was adequate.

Commissioner Ferrick said pages 152, 153 and 154 referred to the Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Generation Figures, 3rd edition, and asked when and where the study was done. Mr. Weinstein said he understood that these numbers come from different sources and were aggregate.

D. STUDY SESSION

- 1. Review and comment on the project components, such as architectural design, site layout, parking ratios, and use aspects, of the following project:*

Rezoning, Planned Development Permit, Lot Merger and Minor Subdivision, BMR Agreement, Heritage Tree Removal Permit, and Environmental Review/Sand Hill Property Company/1300 El Camino Real: Requests for the following: 1) Rezoning the properties from C-4 General Commercial District (Applicable to El Camino Real) to Planned Development (P-D) District, 2) Planned Development Permit to establish development regulations including parking, building height, landscaping, and building setbacks, and conduct architectural review for the proposed development of 110,065 square feet of commercial space (51,365 square feet of retail/restaurant/service uses and 58,700 square feet of non-medical office uses), 3) Lot Merger and Minor Subdivision to merge the existing six lots and create up to four commercial condominium units, 4) Below Market Rate (BMR) Agreement for the payment of in-lieu fees associated with the City's BMR Housing Program, 5) Heritage Tree Removal Permits to remove two on-site and four off-site heritage trees, and 6) Environmental Review of the proposed project for potential environmental impacts.

Public Comment: Mr. Jeff Warmoth, Sand Hill Property Company, said the project had been in process for four years. He introduced Mr. Ken Rodriques, the project architect.

Mr. Rodriques, Rodriques and Partners, said page 5 of the staff report referred to variant 1 and variant 2 of the primary project. He said the primary project would consist of a combination of retail and office. He said along the first floor would be a one- or multi-retail tenant. He said the project was stepped with a tower entry to provide a nice pedestrian element and then a break in scale to smaller village type elements. He

showed an overall roof plan with lower level retail and upper office with a courtyard element in the center. He said there would be a tower element along El Camino Real and along Garwood Way. He showed the garage plan with a large amount of parking underground off El Camino Real and a second entry into the parking off Garwood Way. He said parking would be convenient from either end of the site. He showed the site plan with surface parking from El Camino Real for the retail space. He said there was a large outdoor pedestrian space and a large setback along El Camino Real to allow for outside use, which he thought would activate the street edge.

Mr. Rodrigues said that they had come before the Commission previously and talked about this building being a LEED certified building. He said a mixed-use building made LEED certification a bit more complex because of some of the interior uses. He said with Sand Hill Property Company they had experience in other cities with mixed-use office/retail projects, and there was expertise they could draw on to accomplish LEED certification. He said the design for the alternative of retail, office and residential use would be similar with the entire lower level still being retail and the second floor would have a larger office footprint with a residential component along Garwood Way. He distributed a colors and material board. He said he thought the design would meet stated objectives of the El Camino Real Downtown Visioning Plan in that the project would maintain the village character that was Menlo Park and would have well designed and maintained buildings with plaza and street elements, mixed use with upper floors of either residential/office or just office, and a rich tree canopy. He said they would add considerable landscaping and green planting. He said there would be a balance of hardscape, a plaza and active and passive green space with a variety of uses and architectural styles and building scale.

Commissioner Bressler said there was no information provided as to the comparable profit of the different options. Mr. Warmoth said that in the 300 page draft EIR, a thorough analysis of the potential uses of buildings including three variants for the building had been analyzed with a focus on the most conservative primary project. He said at this time they did not know who the users would be and who would really want to be in this location. He said they needed some flexibility as they went forward and that it was very complicated to meet the range of uses. Commissioner Bressler said the project would be under-parked based on the existing zoning and that parking would be an important element of the project negotiation process. He said since the project was next to the Derry project it could possibly have more height. Mr. Rodrigues said there was a lot of history related to development along El Camino Real such as the City Center plan. He said however that the goals of development along El Camino Real of other jurisdictions along El Camino Real were very similar. He said there was a desire to have projects set back from El Camino Real, but retail use could not be set too far back. He said the City Council had told them to either meet the requirements of the C-4 zoning or to wait until the completion of the visioning plan. He said that the only difference from the C-4 zoning was the request to have the retail height at 40 feet rather than at 30 feet and the parking requirement of six spaces per 1,000 square feet. He said that parking requirement was not consistent with the City's practices or with other cities' practices. He said the Town of Los Altos and the City of Redwood City have

appropriate parking requirements similar to what was possible under the City's Administrative Parking Guidelines. He said that six spaces per 1,000 square feet was over-parked and that he had not done one project over the last 20 years that had that amount of parking, except medical office projects.

Commissioner Pagee asked about the setback noting that the plans indicated 18-feet in setback. Mr. Rodrigues said at some points that was correct such as at the stairway. Commissioner Pagee said that it showed 22 feet in other areas. Mr. Rodrigues said he was measuring the setback from curb to building, which was 22 or more feet to the sidewalk and the eight foot sidewalk, or 30 feet. Commissioner Pagee said that it might be helpful to know what the setback for Café Borrone was. Mr. Rodrigues said he would get that information.

Commissioner O'Malley said that for the underground parking there were two elevators, one on the El Camino Real side and one on the Garwood Way side with a few handicapped spaces near each elevator. He suggested a third midway elevator so that if a person who had a handicap needed to park at the end opposite from his destination that there would not be such a long distance to walk. Mr. Rodrigues said they might add an additional stair and noted that there were two accessible parking spaces for the retail use in the surface parking. Commissioner O'Malley said it sounded like they would get LEED certification. Mr. Rodrigues said the developer was committed to that certification. Commissioner O'Malley asked why the fence height along Glenwood Avenue was seven-foot but along the Derry project it was eight-foot. Mr. Rodrigues said he thought those fence heights should be the same and said he would get back to the Commission regarding those heights. Commissioner O'Malley said it appeared that a vehicle traveling south on El Camino Real would have to make a u-turn and asked if they were looking into another left lane on El Camino Real. Mr. Rodrigues said that they were not proposing changes along El Camino Real. He said that there would be a number of ways to access the site. Commissioner O'Malley said on sheet A1.1a showed the front building having part of the square footage listed for the building along Garwood Way. Mr. Rodrigues said that was for the shared elevator and shared stairs. Planner Fisher said for the gross floor area that if the stairwell was being used by the office space then it should count towards that space.

Commissioner Ferrick asked why a property located at 1258 El Camino Real between this project and the Derry project was not included. Mr. Warmoth said that land was privately owned and the property owner did not want to sell. He noted that there were other privately owned parcels adjacent to the project. Commissioner Ferrick asked if the housing element was required for the project whether the plans or time lines would change based on the financial viability of the project. Mr. Warmoth said the time line would not change as there were improvement plans for this entire City block. He said he was not sure about the market timing as currently residential was not a market that had successful lending. He said he was comfortable with the commercial project and that housing would complicate the project as the residential would need to share the podium and the underground parking. He said it would be easier if the residential was a rental project with one owner but if housing was for sale then there would be a vertical

ownership of property. Commissioner Ferrick asked if the parking ratio for the Draeger's in the City of San Mateo would be part of the parking study. Planner Fisher said a more current project, the Whole Foods in the City of San Mateo, would be part of the parking study.

Commissioner Pagee noted the decline of the redwood trees at the site and a recent article in The Almanac about those trees. She said the applicant was proposing to remove one of the trees and asked what would be done for the other one. Mr. Reed Moulds, Sand Hill Property Company, said they took ownership of the property four years prior, and their tenant was charged with maintaining the site, building, improvements, and landscape. He said in the past couple of years his firm had some difficulty accessing the property to do more for the trees. He said the tree marked as #4 had to be removed as it had been in ill health for the last 10 years and was hazardous. He said that tree had not been planted deep enough, it was too close to the other tree, and its roots had become entangled with the irrigation system. He said the other tree was hanging on because it had more room; he said they were maintaining that tree and had installed a temporary irrigation system. He said the tree was so stressed that it could not yet be fertilized. He said they hoped to remove the one tree and fertilize the other tree next spring. He said that they had a tree preservation protocol in place. Commissioner Pagee asked whether they had applied for heritage tree removal permits. Mr. Moulds said they had applied to remove two heritage trees from the site and four heritage trees off the site along Garwood Way.

Ms. Elizabeth Lasensky, Menlo Park, Menlo Park Housing Commission, said her Commission was supportive of this proposal with a housing element. She noted that the project was within the transit corridor and there should be bicycle and pedestrian amenities included. She said that loading the BMR Program with in-lieu fees was not needed as much as units. She said there were 40 applications on a wait list for 2-bedroom homes.

Mr. Michael Holy, Menlo Park, said that the traffic blight on El Camino Real was a travesty. He said that this looked like a great project. He said related to parking and traffic that he was not concerned with this project's parking as Menlo Park was one of them most walkable cities in which he had ever lived. He said there was a train station just a couple blocks away and he thought employees at this new site would be encouraged to use train.

Chair Riggs read an email from Ms. Patty Boyle, Menlo Park Housing Commission, who said the Housing Commission had reviewed the project with housing elements and that they wanted a project with housing elements.

Mr. Warmoth said that the traffic numbers did not include any transit reduction or assumption of anyone using trains or mass transportation; nor did they take into account the possibility of GM retaining the lot and filling the space with new vehicles. He said the draft EIR did not give any credit for the tenants at the site. He thanked Planner Fisher and the City staff for their tireless work on this project.

Chair Riggs closed the public comment period.

Commissioner Kadvany said that there were two options for housing, either a middle or high density, and asked what the Housing Commission would prefer. Planner Fisher said the Housing Commission viewed the same plans as the Planning Commission.

Commissioner O'Malley said he would support a housing element for the project. He said he liked the design, the village appearance, the setbacks and colors and materials.

Commissioner Ferrick said she liked the idea they were incorporating visioning plan elements and it appeared to be a pedestrian-friendly project. She said she would like the project built and hoped that there would not be forces on it that would result in the project not being building. She said that LEED certification required 28 points and it appeared the project would need only five more points to get Silver LEED certification. She suggested those points might be gained by using water efficient landscaping such as native plants and onsite renewable energy, such as solar panels. She said also controlling lighting and thermal systems might gain additional points.

Commissioner Bressler said he agreed with the one speaker about having new quality buildings along El Camino real. He said that originally this property was slated to be built with apartment buildings. He said related to the renderings in the draft EIR that there were other newer buildings along El Camino Real whose design he preferred. He said that the concept of village character and breaking up façade was not entirely consistent and he would prefer a uniform style of architecture rather than a hodge-podge of styles. He said there would be community concern that the project was under-parked.

Commissioner Kadvany said he hoped the Commission could revisit the aesthetics of the project as the roof line very long and linear. He said that Spanish-style roofs were interesting. He said he was comfortable with the parking proposed with estimates based on empirical averages. He said that he thought there was too much parking at the surface and that parking should be more underground than aboveground. He said he did not think that two parking spaces for each residential unit should be assumed. He said the parking for the residential units might be limited to one space with potential perhaps to lease or buy additional space. He said that would free up more open green space. He said that additionally storage for the residential units might be located in the underground parking area. He said the setback from El Camino Real was generous, but he was skeptical about outdoor use along that roadway. He said public space was a need and there were great aspects to the design, but the paradigm for the project's location was to drive in and drive out of the site. He said there was a very narrow pathway on the Derry side from Derry Lane and then to this site and that the interface between the two large projects was important. He said the narrow pathway did not produce connectivity, which was another objective of the visioning plan. He said the best thing to improve El Camino Real was to maintain the goal of connectivity and pedestrian friendliness. He said that was the key and this project should be oriented to

the Derry project and the new Derry Lane. He suggested that the applicant would work with the Derry project applicant on that connectivity and perhaps on parking.

Commissioner Bressler said he agreed with Commissioner Kadvany in that he preferred greenscape rather than parking. He said the emphasis should be on getting the most public benefit from such a project.

Commissioner Kadvany said that the availability of public space, connectivity and parking might be the elements to look at in regard to public benefit.

Commissioner Pagee said she liked the addition of residential. She said two-bedroom units would mean there would be children and they would need somewhere on the site to play. She said it was important that all of the units have access to light. She said that restricting parking per residential unit was a good idea with the possible purchasing/leasing of additional spaces. She said that another level could be added to increase parking underground to allow for more of the surface to be open space. She said that then the courtyard for office and residential could be enlarged to protect the tenants from El Camino Real noise. She said she would like the materials and colors to be replicated. She said a traditional Spanish style with overhangs on windows would provide shade in the summer. She said the building style was a good start but needed to be enriched. She said she would like to see the redwood tree preserved and more significant trees added throughout the site to improve the landscape.

Chair Riggs said that parking would be an issue even though he considered six spaces per 1,000 square feet a lot to ask. He said that office parking with housing parking was a more easily approved reduction. He said he would like to support consideration for both traffic and parking reduction solutions that might not have results in the first or second year. He said that the scale of the building, its linear quality and relative lack of height, noting that two-story commercial projects were usually built on more intimate streets than El Camino Real, might dilute its effect. He suggested that there might be consideration of the third story, particularly if it involved housing and was set back from El Camino Real. He noted that the Menlo Office Center was three-and-a-half stories tall. He said the massing of the project would benefit from Spanish colonial finishes. He said he was enthusiastic about the project moving forward noted that El Camino Real was overdue for investment.

Summary of General Comments by Individual Commissioners:

- Including housing in the project is preferable;
- Silver LEED certification is preferable;
- Additional ADA accessible parking spaces in the underground portion of the parking garage should be provided or another elevator added;
- The healthier redwood tree along El Camino Real should be maintained and preserved;
- The buildings, courtyards, setbacks, and materials are appropriate for the site;

- Quality buildings on El Camino Real are desirable;
- Parking locations and ratios for the project may be a concern for the community;
- Some building design elements may need to be enriched/improved;
- The design of the roofline should have more variation to add interest and depth;
- Outdoor spaces such as dining along El Camino Real may not be appropriate with the currently proposed setback;
- Improve goals of connectivity, reducing car dependency, and creating a pedestrian friendly environment;
- The residential alternative should include a play area for children;
- Parking alternatives such as purchasing or leasing spaces is a potentially good option;
- Adding a level to the garage to reduce surface parking would provide an increase in open space and courtyards;
- Make sure all spaces are well lit with natural light;
- The project would benefit from additional landscaping throughout the project;
- The architectural details of the building need to be further developed to replicate the examples shown on the colors and materials board;
- Support of the parking reduction; and
- The design of the buildings can benefit from Spanish colonial elements.

E. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Update on clarifications to the draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment regarding Gross Floor Area.

Staff Comment: Development Services Manager Murphy said it came to staff's attention that some minor changes were needed to the recommended Zoning Ordinance Amendment. He said those changes were called out in the document, and staff requested that the Commission review those revisions before the document went to the City Council for review and action.

Commissioner Ferrick said that the revisions were minimal and lent better understanding. Commissioner Bressler said the revisions seemed fine.

Commission Action: M/S O'Malley/Riggs to approve the proposed changes as part of the recommended Zoning Ordinance Amendment to the City Council.

Motion carried 6-0 with Commissioners Keith absent.

F. COMMISSION BUSINESS

1. Review of planning items on City Council agendas.
 - A. El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan (Phase II) Process

Menlo Park Planning Commission

Minutes

April 6, 2009

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Planner Chow said there would be a community workshop on April 16 and provided information on the location and time.

B. Gross Floor Area Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Planner Chow said this would go before the City Council on April 14.

C. Menlo Gateway (Bohannon Hotel/Office Mixed-use Project) Council Subcommittee

Planner Chow said that the Council subcommittee of Council Members Cohen and Fergusson would report back to the Council on April 14 about the public outreach and development agreement negotiation process for this project.

D. 1706 El Camino Real – Traffic Impact Analysis Determination

Planner Chow said the Council would consider on April 21 whether this project could be deemed less than significant and whether a Negative Declaration or EIR should be prepared.

Chair Riggs asked if the Menlo Gateway project had changed since the Planning Commission had previously seen it. Development Services Manager Murphy said the 2007 basic concept was very similar to the proposal at this point, and the applicant was in the process of updating the project plans, preparing the draft EIR and the draft fiscal impact analysis, which would be released at the end of June. He said it was an extensive public process.

Commissioner Kadvany said there had been a letter to the editor in The Almanac recently about a public meeting and survey for the Menlo Gateway project, and the letter writer wanted to know why there were so few people involved. He asked if the Commission had been invited to the neighborhood scoping meeting. Development Services Manager Murphy said there had been no City-sponsored meetings on this project, and outreach was being done by the applicant. Commissioner Kadvany said he had a problem with reading in the newspaper that his/ the Commission's absence from the public outreach was being questioned, and thought it would behoove the project sponsor to revisit how public outreach was conducted.

G. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Ferrick said the GRCC was sponsoring a driveless challenge and referred Commissioner's to <http://drivelesschallenge.com>.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Deanna Chow, Senior Planner

Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett