



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting
January 12, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Bressler, Combs, Eiref (Chair), Ferrick, Kadvany, Onken (Vice Chair), Strehl

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF – Justin Murphy, Assistant Community Development Director; Thomas Rogers, Senior Planner; Corinna Sandmeier, Associate Planner; Tom Smith, Associate Planner

A. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A1. Update on Pending Planning Items

- a. ConnectMenlo (General Plan Update) - Open House (January 8, 2015)

Senior Planner Rogers relayed that an open house was held at the Belle Haven Neighborhood Services Center, reemphasizing the topics discussed at the December Community Workshop. He stated that the attendance was good, with some active discussion.

- b. 700 Oak Grove Avenue (Fire Station #6) – City Council (January 13, 2015)

Senior Planner Rogers stated that tomorrow night the City Council would be reviewing the Fire Station #6 project that the Planning Commission had recommended approval of previously. If the main approval actions take place that night, there would be a follow-up item later in the month to formally adopt the Zoning amendments.

- c. Economic Development Plan – City Council (January 13, 2015)

Senior Planner Rogers stated that tomorrow night the City Council had been scheduled to consider the Economic Development Plan, which the Planning Commission had already reviewed earlier. However, this item had just been tentatively rescheduled for the January 27, 2015 City Council meeting.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS #1

There were none.

C. CONSENT

- C1. Approval of minutes from the December 8, 2014 Planning Commission meeting ([Attachment](#))

Commission Action: M/S Onken/Strehl to approve the minutes as submitted.

Motion carried 7-0.

- C2.** Approval of the excerpt minutes for 700 Oak Grove Avenue from the December 15, 2014 Planning Commission meeting. ([Attachment](#))

Commission Action: M/S Onken/Strehl to approve the minutes as submitted.

Motion carried 7-0.

D. PUBLIC HEARING

D1. Use Permit and Architectural Control/John Onken Architects/418 Willow Road:

Request for a use permit and architectural control to allow medical office at an existing building that is nonconforming with regard to parking and located in the C-2-A (Neighborhood Shopping District, Restrictive) zoning district. The architectural changes include comprehensively repainting the building. ([Attachment](#))

Commissioner Onken recused himself from consideration of this item as he was the project architect, and he left the dais.

Staff Comment: Planner Sandmeier said staff had no additions to the written report.

Public Comment: Ms. Diana Blum, Menlo Park, said she was a neurologist and was opening a concierge practice at the Willow Road location. She noted the maximum number of patients she would have would be 100.

Commissioner Ferrick asked staff whether this use could be continued to another medical use that would have greater parking demand should the applicant discontinue her medical business there. Planner Sandmeier said a future medical use occupant at the location would be held to the same conditions of the subject requested use permit.

Dr. Blum noted that three of the parking spaces were in City right-of-way. She said that at the most there would be four doctors and one patient each at any given time. She said she doubted that all four doctors would be there at the same time. She said there were 10 spaces on the premises to accommodate.

Chair Eiref closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Bressler said he was supportive of the use permit request. He moved to approve as recommended in the staff report. Commissioner Strehl seconded the motion.

Commissioner Kadvany asked if the signage would be parallel with the street and building. Planner Sandmeier said the sign appeared to be perpendicular to the street traveling north on Willow Road. She said the applicant had the option to make the sign two-sided when they submit their sign application.

Commission Action: M/S Bressler/Strehl to approve the item as recommended in the staff report.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 1 (Section 15301, "Existing Facilities") of the current 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. Adopt the following findings, as per Section 16.68.020 of the Zoning Ordinance, pertaining to architectural control approval:
 - a. The general appearance of the structure is in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.
 - b. The development will not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the City.
 - c. The development will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood.
 - d. The development provides adequate parking as required in all applicable City Ordinances and has made adequate provisions for access to such parking.
 - e. The property is not within any Specific Plan area, and as such no finding regarding consistency is required to be made.
4. Approve the use permit and architectural control subject to the following **standard** condition:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans prepared by John Onken Architects, consisting of two plan sheets, dated received December 19, 2014, and approved by the Planning Commission on January 12, 2015, except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.
5. Approve the use permit and architectural control subject to the following **project-specific** conditions:
 - a. The hours of operation shall be limited to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Motion carried 6-0 with Commissioner Onken recused.

Commissioner Onken rejoined the Planning Commission at the dais.

D2. Development Agreement Annual Review/Bohannon Development Company/101-155 Constitution Drive and 100-190 Independence Drive (Menlo Gateway Project):
Annual review of the property owner's good faith compliance with the terms of the Development Agreement for the Menlo Gateway (Bohannon Hotel & Office) project.
([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Planner Smith said there were no changes to the written staff report.

Public Comment: Mr. David Bohannon, Bohannon Development Company, said they were working with a hotel developer, those negotiations were going very well and they expected negotiations to conclude in several months. He said they have been working on the office building plan revisions and they have engaged a full time project manager, Mr. Jay Mancini. He noted that Mr. Mancini's resume included AT&T Park, Rincon Center and other larger office project development. He said they now have their full team for the office development plans. He said the hotel being negotiated for development would be a full service and four star luxury hotel.

Responding to questions from Chair Eiref, Mr. Bohannon said that the recovering economy had helped in moving ahead with a hotel developer. He said for several years since 2009 there was no new hotel development nationally, which was beginning to improve. He said the presence of Facebook helped to make their hotel development more viable. He said the type of full service hotel they wanted to develop was uncommon in the market still.

Replying to questions from Commissioner Onken, Mr. Bohannon said that there were no changes to the development agreement. He said the original hotel component had contained a large health club. He said that had been a particular product they had abandoned several years ago as it had not taken hold in the marketplace. He said with the development agreement and the Conditional Development Permit (CDP) there would be a process to change the hotel component to a full service and four star luxury hotel.

In response to questions and comments from Commissioner Kadvany, Mr. Bohannon said they were engaged in developing more robust plans for pedestrian connections in and around their project, as well as east-west connectivity with Bohannon East and the Belle Haven neighborhood. He said under the development agreement they would engage with the Belle Haven community about public benefits they have agreed to provide. He said they were working to bring the complete plan forward, and the only thing in the CDP they were looking to amend was the hotel component.

Replying to questions from Commissioner Combs, Mr. Bohannon said they were working with a hotel developer who has brought various types of hotels which have various flags attached to them as well as third-party managers. He said the current hotel under consideration was a nationally recognized brand and would be identified when they brought the complete plan forward in a month or so. He said they have also identified a third-party manager. He said the hotel developer and his company would contribute to the project financially but they would also need financial backing.

In reply to Commissioner Kadvany's question whether the hotel now under consideration would have more rooms and potentially provide more transient occupancy tax (TOT) revenue to the City, Mr. Bohannon said it would have more rooms than the hotel originally proposed and an assumption could be made that more rooms would equal more TOT revenue.

Responding to Commissioner Bressler, Mr. Bohannon said that they were having conversations with Facebook and the hotel would not be extended stay. He noted that was needed in the area.

Chair Eiref closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Several Commissioners expressed satisfaction that the applicant was making progress in their project development.

Commission Action: M/S Eiref/Onken to find and determine upon the basis of substantial evidence that the property owner has, for the period between December 2013 and December 2014, complied in good faith with the terms and conditions of the Development Agreement.

Motion carried 7-0.

E. REGULAR BUSINESS

There was none.

E1. Confirmation of Planning Commission Input on the Draft Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2015-2020 ([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Senior Planner Rogers said that the one page report on this item had accidentally been left out of the mailed agenda packet but had been posted online and was available now for the Commission and members of the public. He said if the Commission preferred they could continue the item to the next January meeting or they could take action on it this evening as it was on the agenda. He said the Commission had been clear that the first two items, "Downtown Parking Structures" and "Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines and/or Residential Development Ordinance Amendment" should be moved from the Non-Funded Project Requests into the Five-Year CIP. He said regarding improvements associated with the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan discussed by the Commission, that is one item that could possibly warrant some additional discussion tonight, or it could be transmitted as written.

Chair Eiref said he recalled passionate Commission discussion about crossing Ravenswood. Senior Planner Rogers said that the "El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan Recommended Improvements" included east-west connectivity including the rail undercrossing.

Chair Eiref said he thought they wanted to emphasize an east-west undercrossing specifically.

Commissioner Ferrick said how Senior Planner Rogers had stated the project number 3 captured the improvements in the Plan that focus on east-west connectivity.

Commissioner Strehl asked if the list was assembled by priority. She said if it was that number 3 should be before number 2.

Commissioner Combs said he thought number 3 should have a focus on east-west connectivity rather than generally emphasizing the Specific Plan recommended improvements as a priority.

Commissioner Ferrick said she was fine with adding that focus. She said the item was called out by the Commission last time as none of the improvements recommended in the Specific Plan were on a funded list.

Commissioner Kadvany said all three items needed the Commissioners input to the Council. He said number 2 could raise flags for the Council and it was important to convey that the guidelines were considered to be educational and not necessarily mandatory.

Commissioner Bressler said he agreed with Commissioner Kadvany about Commissioners speaking to the Council and that specific east-west connectivity projects needed to be identified.

Chair Eiref asked if the other Commissioners wanted to add to number 3 “with a focus on east-west connectivity.” There was consensus.

Commissioner Kadvany suggested adding “Advisory” after “Single-Family” and before “Residential Guidelines.” Through discussion, it was suggested adding “Advisory” before “Design Guidelines.” Commissioner Strehl said “Single-Family Residential Development Zoning Ordinance Amendment” spoke to something much stronger than guidelines. The Commission’s consensus was to remove Single-Family Residential Development Zoning Ordinance Amendment” and add “Advisory” to read: “Single-Family Residential Advisory Design Guidelines.”

Commission Action: The Planning Commission concluded its review with consensus on the following topics:

1. “Downtown Parking Structures – A Feasibility Study” (draft CIP p. 42) should be moved from Non-Funded Project Requests into the Five-Year CIP;
2. “El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan Recommended Improvements” (draft CIP p. 54-55), in particular those with a focus on east-west connectivity, should generally be prioritized and expedited.
3. “Single-Family Residential Advisory Design Guidelines” (draft CIP p. 48) should be moved from Non-Funded Project Requests into the Five-Year CIP; and

F. COMMISSION BUSINESS

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Thomas Rogers, Senior Planner

Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett

Approved by the Planning Commission on February 9, 2015