

**CITY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 28, 2012**

Approved

The meeting convened at 7:30 p.m. in the City of San Mateo Council Chambers and was called to order by Chair Feinman, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those present were Chair Feinman, Vice Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Massey, Commissioner Moran and Commissioner Hugg.

A motion was made by Commissioner Massey, seconded by Commissioner Moran to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of November 22, 2011 as revised.

Vote – Passed 5 - 0

A motion was made by Commissioner Moran to approve the minutes as revised and further revised per comments this evening, seconded by Commissioner Massey to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of February 14, 2012.

Vote – Passed 5 – 0

***** PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Feinman opened the public comment period.

(No persons wishing to speak, the Chair closed the public comment period.)

ITEM 1

*** PUBLIC HEARING**

PA 11-056 CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SAN MATEO COLUMBARIUM SPECIAL USE PERMIT AND SPAR: Special Use Permit for the ongoing operation of a religious institution, the establishment of a 500 niche columbarium and the use of off-site parking and Site Plan and Architectural Review for a 230 square foot addition on the south side of an existing church sanctuary building and a 59 square foot enclosure of the current wheelchair access entrance on the north side of the sanctuary. The project site is located at 225 Tilton Avenue, (APN: 032-294-100)

Required Approvals:

- A. Categorical Exemption (Class 1 §15301(a))
- B. Special Use Permit (SUP)
- C. Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR)

The project site is approximately 58,213 square feet and located at the northeastern corner of San Mateo Drive and Tilton Ave. The project site is zoned E2-1.5 (Executive Offices).

PROJECT PLANNER:

Darcy Forsell, AICP, Associate Planner
330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403
(650) 522-7209
dforsell@cityofsanmateo.org

**APPLICANT &
PROPERTY OWNER:**

Congregational Church of San Mateo
Jim Berthelsen, Representative
225 Tilton Ave
San Mateo, CA 94401
(650) 343-3691
info@ccsm-ucc.org

Stephen Scott gave the staff presentation, which included a power point presentation.

The Planning Commission had the following questions for staff:

- None at this time.

Jim Berthelsen, Congregational Church of San Mateo gave the applicant presentation.

The Planning Commission had the following questions for the applicant:

- Do the police consider the path through which people will be going through a corridor and is it considered a safe narrow corridor? Staff: The police representative reviewed the project and looked and did not find any security or safety issues with the proposal. There is existing security lighting on the building.
- I was at the church on Sunday and noticed the barrel tile on the roof of the church; why not include the barrel tile on the building addition as well? Applicant: We considered this the best design solution.
- Has there been outreach to the neighboring multi-family property? Applicant: We have been in touch with the ownership and there appear to be no concerns on their

part. There is an open common area at the second story between them dwelling units and I think they would prefer to look down at a Memorial Garden as opposed to what is there now. We hope the neighbors will use it.

- Someone looking down watching would hear noise from the service and also from the other side. Applicant: We had between 5-8 Memorial Services this last year and we don't anticipate there would be a significant increase.
- I'm concerned about the wall and the pathway. Is the pathway intended for a wheelchair to get through? Applicant: It will actually be a foot wider than it is today, and it would be wide enough for a wheelchair.
- There were two gates next to the labyrinth? Staff: Yes, the narrowest spot is five-feet. Applicant: We will have motion lighting inside the Garden as we wish to make it a more secure area.
- Have you thought about how the neighbors would feel having a funeral next door? Applicant: We do not anticipate having any kind of extensive services in the garden. The neighbors will primarily see the Memorial Garden without much activity. The service itself happens inside the sanctuary including music. The last part of the service happens outside and is a very solemn quiet moment. It is just the interment that happens outside and usually lasts ten minutes. It's a very intimate gathering with twenty people at the most for the interment.
- You mentioned 3 parcels. What are they? Applicant: The Church buildings are on one lot and the parking lot located on two adjacent parcels.
- The Oak tree # 2 is up against the wall. When you demolish that wall what guarantee would there be from the arborist that there would not be any root damage? Applicant: We will have our arborist on site to supervise.
- What about the olive tree? Applicant: No change to the olive tree.
- There is an eight-foot wall. Is there any thought of adding a lattice-like screen on the top of the wall? Applicant: We feel that eight-feet would give us what we need, gives them the privacy and doesn't make it so confining

Chair Feinman opened the public comment period for this item.

The following people spoke: (street name, city only)

- Doug Henton, Avila Road, San Mateo
- Carol Boes, Maple Street, San Mateo
- Mike Mullery, Isabelle Avenue, San Mateo
- Jim Granucci, Alhambra, San Mateo

Their comments included the following:

- I am a member of the congregation and I speak in favor of the approval. I have the opportunity to see this committee putting together this good work. I speak for those that are here today about the enthusiasm of this project. This is something that they have been working on especially with the sense of accessibility which is very much a part of the spirit of our church.

- I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Lesley Foundation, owner of the Pilgrim Project next door to the church. The Church and the Pilgrim Project have had a very good long term relationship. There is a lot of interaction. We do not see any problem with the proposed project. We encourage you to approve it.
- My wife and I have been attending the Church since 1972. We are very much in favor of this. I think the Columbarium is a good idea and I hope that you do too.
- I am a resident of San Mateo and also a member of the Congregational Church. I am a retired Police Chief with over 43 years of service and I would like to respond to one question to the alley way. Because of the lighting there and because it has openings on both ends it will be safer with the improvements than in its present condition.

(No other persons wishing to speak, the Chair closed the public comment period.)

The Planning Commission made the following comments:

- Two items I'd like to discuss are the security of the alley way and the churches intent not to use the outdoor space for funerals but for interment and for brief ceremonies without amplification. Would like to come up with something that says that this is the intent for the Garden to be used in this way. It would include small gatherings and would not preclude general events and no amplification. I'd word it so that it would not preclude something unusual. Indicate that the intent of the use of the Garden would include small gatherings but not full funeral services without amplification. Applicant: We suggest we put in some language that we won't use amplification. However, we are apprehensive about adding too much restrictive language about something as sensitive as interment with the family. Staff: We are talking about an area that is about as large as a basketball court.
- Findings for Approval under Finding IV page 3, the project requires adequate parking in that it meets the requirements of the Zoning Code. I didn't see anywhere in the staff report where there was a statement to that. Staff: Parking is meets Zoning Code requirements.
- Would you be willing to add some lighting on the north side of the wall that comprises the south side of the walk way? Applicant: We believe that the lighting is sufficient. Staff: I wouldn't want to mandate lighting. Adding lights could have neighbors complain that lights are too bright. Commission could add a condition of approval pertaining to Police Department review of the final building permit plans in accordance with the City's Security Ordinance and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, particularly for the walkway between the project site and adjacent residential building. Would like to have the security condition mentioned by staff added.
- How is public access communicated to the public? Applicant: The garden will be open during daylight hours 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM and then gates will be locked and monitored.
- Would like to add support for the level of detail and how much you were willing to work with staff.
- You are adding a beautiful reflective garden.

- Add my support for the level of detail and how much you were willing to work with the staff.

A motion was made by Commissioner Massey, and seconded by Commissioner Moran to approve the project by making the following motions.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission approves the project by making the following motions:

- A. Approve the Categorical Exemption from environmental guidelines, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Class 1 Section 15301 (e) Existing Facilities, based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A; and
- B. Approve the Special Use Permit for the ongoing operation of a religious institution, the establishment of a 500 niche columbarium within a memorial garden and the use of off-site parking based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit B and the two Conditions of Approval – Use Limitation of Garden Area – There shall be no amplified sound in the garden. (Planning) and Review of Pathway Condition on North Side of New Wall – The building permit plans for the project shall be subject to the review and approval of the Police Department, especially with respect to meeting CPTED Principles regarding the walkway on the north side of the new wall facing the adjacent residential project. (Police)
- C. Approve the Site Plan and Architectural Review planning application for a 230 square foot addition on the south side of an existing church sanctuary building and a 59 square foot enclosure of the current wheelchair access entrance on the north side of the sanctuary based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit B.

~~A motion was made by Commissioner Massey, and seconded by Commissioner Moran to approve the project by making the following motions.~~

Vote Passed 5 - 0

COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Communications from Staff
 - a. We forwarded you a memo regarding utility boxes from Public Works. Commissioner Moran has been in contact with Public Works and we will provide that to you know as

we develop more information. Public Works is not present this evening to talk about utility boxes.

- b. March 13 - Planning Commission Meeting – Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Code Amendments.
- c. March 27 – Planning Commission Meeting – Draper University (Re-Use of the Ben Franklin Hotel) Study Session.
- d. April 27 Commissioner Moran and Commissioner Massey absent and excused from Planning Commission Meeting.
- e. Tonight is the last meeting for Attorney Cecelia Quick who has been filling in and doing a great job for Gabrielle Whelan who will be returning to work shortly. We would like to thank Cecelia for the time filling in for Gabrielle.
- f. This is also the last meeting for Chris Monahan who has been doing a terrific job as Planning Commission secretary. She will be moving over to the secretary position for Information Technology Department.

2. Communications from the Commissioners

- a. Commissioners would like to have a discussion of the Utility Boxes and have it agendaized for a future meeting. Would like to have a moratorium put on the Utility Boxes until their design and placement can be addressed- Traffic Control Boxes (installed by Public Works) and AT&T are two of the primary Utility Boxes.
- b. Staff: SB 385 which is the Land Use component of AB 32 which was adopted for the reduction of Green House Gases generated by small trucks and automobiles. We have had a number of sessions with City Council pertaining to this issue. We cc'd the Planning Commission. MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) and ABAG (Association of Bay Area Government) will be coming up with a preferred alternative in March. They are under a legislative Mandate to do this. Commissioner: What about the infrastructure funds? Staff: Maybe Public Works has been involved with this. Two bench marks are a certified Housing Element and Complete Streets. We have a Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Master Plan coming up on March 13.

3. Other

- a. None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items before the Planning Commission, Chair Feinman adjourned at 9:25 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28, 2012