

**CITY OF SAN MATEO  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
AUGUST 14, 2012**

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Approved

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

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

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Massey, seconded by Commissioner Moran to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of July 24, 2012.

Vote – Passed 4-0-1. Commissioner Bonilla abstained having been absent from the meeting.

**\*\*\* PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Whitaker opened the public comment period.

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

**ITEM 1**

**\* PUBLIC HEARING**

**PA 12-033 SLEEP TRAIN LOADING ZONE**, request for “dual use” loading zone on E. Fifth Avenue. Two metered parking spaces are proposed to be used as a loading zone before 10 am and would be available for public use as regular metered parking spaces after 10 am., 487 S. El Camino Real, (APN: 034-144-220).

- A. Categorical Exemption (CEQA Class 1 §15301, Existing Facilities - streets)
- B. Site Plan and Architectural Review for the designation of a loading zone on a public street.

The project site is located in the downtown retail core area as designated in the General Plan and the property is zoned Central Business District (CBD).

**PROJECT PLANNER:** Julia Yeh, Associate Planner  
330 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
(650) 522-7209  
[jyeh@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jyeh@cityofsanmateo.org)

**APPLICANT:** Greg Aguirre, Director of Real Estate for Sleep Train  
2205 Plaza Drive  
Rocklin, CA 95765

(916) 751-4429, gaguirre@sleeptrain.com

**PROPERTY OWNER:** Karen Wandvik, Senior Property Manager for Tan Group  
870 E. Charleston Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
(650) 493-1005

Ronald Munekawa, Chief of Planning, gave the staff presentation. It was noted that Condition of Approval G1.0 incorrectly references Condition #C3.2 Public Works; should reference Condition #C1.2 instead.

Greg Aguirre, Director of Real Estate for Sleep Train gave the applicant presentation.

The Planning Commission had no questions for the applicant.

Chair Whitaker opened the public comment period for this item.

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

Motion by Vice-Chair Massey to:

Adopting the Categorical Exemption (CEQA Class 1 §15301 Existing Facilities – Streets); and Site Plan and Architectural Review for the designation of a dual loading zone on a public street based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit B as modified by staff.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Moran

Vote 5-0, Motion Carries. Decision is final with the Planning Commission pending the 10-day appeal period.

## **ITEM 2**

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

**PA 10-060, St Matthew Catholic Parish and School Master Plan, St. Matthew Catholic Parish and School, 1 Notre Dame Ave, (APN 034-232-340, -350, -370).** The project includes the construction of an approximately 12, 000 sq. ft. school gymnasium and reconfiguration of the existing parking lot to add 108 new parking spaces.

- A. Mitigated Negative Declaration to assess potential environmental impacts of the project.
- B. Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) for the design and construction of the gymnasium building and parking areas;
- C. Reclassification of the site to add a Qualified (Q7) overlay zone designation over the existing R1-C zoning for the property to establish development standards for

- the campus, including the maximum allowed floor area ratio and parking to back out onto Notre Dame Avenue;
- D. Special Use Permit (SUP) for the approval of a master plan to regulate uses on the site;
  - E. Site Development Permit (SDP) for the removal of major vegetation.

The property encompasses three parcels and is approximately 310,400 sq ft (7.12 acres). The site is located west of El Camino Real between Notre Dame Ave and Aragon Blvd. The property is zoned R1-C.

**PROJECT PLANNER:** Stephen Scott, Principal Planner  
(650) 522-7207  
Email: scott@cityofsanmateo.org

**APPLICANT'S REPRESENTATIVE:** Brian Swartz  
Cascade Consulting  
240 Cascade Drive  
Mill Valley, CA 94941  
Phone: (415) 272-6897  
Email: brian@cascadecapitalllc.com

**PROPERTY OWNER:** Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco

Stephen Scott, Principal Planner, gave the staff presentation.

The Planning Commission had the following questions for staff:

- Site has 3 parcels. No other project has been approved with parking on another parcel without having a condition to require they be linked. Staff: do have a new condition of approval to require a lot tie agreement or a parcel map to merge the parcels – Exhibit C. Condition B.1. Where are the revisions in the new documents? All revisions are indicated in bold-faced type.
- Is the language correct on the pink sheets? City Attorney gave 2 corrections.
- Have local area schools been canvassed regarding the use of their gyms? Yes. 4 middle schools were contacted. Their gyms are used for multiple types of events; rented out when not in use by the school; typically closed by 9-10pm. No specific limitation on hour of use.
- Frequency of events? Bayside uses their gym year-round, but didn't gather details regarding frequency.
- Is there a pattern for when schools close their gyms? Questions to schools were focused on use and any established restriction of hours.
- Special Use Permit, Conditions of Approval #11-5 (page 5) refers to the lease of 40 parking spaces at Pacific Western Bank. It also references 100 parking spaces leased at

520 S. El Camino Real. Is this a new arrangement? (No). What is the name of the business? (Westlake). Is there a formal/written agreement? (No).

Brian Swartz gave the applicant presentation.

The Planning Commission had the following questions for the applicant:

- Can the closing time for the gym be 9 instead of 9:30?
- How is the gym cleaned after an activity? Will the activity and cleaning of the gym be complete by that time? Yes.
- How long for new trees to reach same level as the ones today? Hard to calculate as it is based on species of tree, diameter, growth rate, etc.
- Parking space rental at 520 So El Camino Real; available for long-term rental? Has the church looked into this parking lot? Yes, alternative sites have been looked into.
- Discussion on vegetative swales and what is being proposed. Recent studies show a common practice on swales; list of trees that do well in vegetated swales. Discussion with landscape architect for applicant.
- Treatment of landscaping on the wall along El Camino Real; applicant open to ideas.
- Alternative parking locations; has noticed different lots that are vacant during church hours.
- Any chance the closing time of the gym would go beyond the stated times? Doesn't happen now – don't anticipate that changing. Applicant has reduced the hours for Sunday – Thursday. Friday and Saturday would remain at 10pm. Sports events sometimes go beyond 10pm.
- Faculty parking? Church would require that faculty park at the rear area of the parking lot in order to reserve the front area of the parking lot (nearest Aragon) to maximize opportunities for parent parking (pick-up/drop-off) on site.
- Nine additional trees will be planted along El Camino Real totaling 15 trees. Will have some irrigation installed.
- Can you please indicate the location of the playground area on a site plan? (SW quadrant of site, in parking area).
- Who created the 356 parking plan? Parking consultant in consultation with a parking design firm, the civil engineer, and the parking management firm currently under contract.
- Could Q overlay zone be later modified to allow a garage? Yes, but would require modification to the zoning code to raise the floor area cap that would be established by this project.

Chair Whitaker opened the public comment period for this item. The following individuals spoke: Ed Colloff, Phyllis Leonhardt, Don Schubert, David McGuerty, John Hermann, Cynthia Wilcox, Paul Hui, Joan Claybrook, Ryan Tiru, Edward Evans, William Nack, Mike Cunningham, Rich Hedges, John Love, Florence Bulatovich, Michael Geller, Mark Wilcox, Emma Abesamis, Joanne Norris, Mike Scully, James O'Brien, Jessica Maltz, Isabella Love, Patty Dwyer, Bertha Sanchez, Joel Winnie, Carolina Fernandez. Their comments were:

- What is this new structure going to be used for?
- Why not an underground garage?
- The property has a main church, rectory, school buildings, parish hall, auditorium, convent, all playgrounds would be paved. Diagonal parking is not permitted in the alley.
- Why can't the existing gym be retrofitted? Why can't the old convent be retrofitted?
- Application has misrepresented the project.
- Students do not live close to the school, not in San Mateo.
- Conditions of Approval: no staff to enforce conditions. Neighbors will wind up having to "police" the conditions of approval.
- One hundred eight additional parking spaces in a lot already too small.
- Twenty six trees being removed and sound levels will be increased without the trees.
- Question Hexagon Transportation studies and when they were done. Why were they not done during school days/hours? They are not accurate. Traffic studies are flawed because they are using data from 2006 and the church has changed a lot since then.
- Parking lot owner not in favor of leasing his parking lot to the church because of the liability to his business.
- Special Use Permit – Church has worked to make changes as a result of the hearings with the Planning Commission.
- Where are playing fields for the kids?
- St. Matthew's has been supportive and helpful.
- I'm worried about lack of supervision in the gym. Kids in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades generally need a lot of supervision.
- Vehicles speeding along Notre Dame Ave is still a problem. One individual was speeding and going the wrong way.
- Too much traffic with this project.
- Size of the gym is too big. Elementary school children do not need a middle-school sized gym.
- Gym hours need to be reduced.
- The church is not building extra parking spaces, they are only restriping the current parking lot(s) and removing trees to make it appear that there is more parking.
- The church wants a community center and not a gym. They are calling it a gym.
- The focus should be on the students, they need the proper facilities.
- Parking is still a problem. I am confused about zoning and the permits.
- This is not about San Mateo's kids, it's about St. Matthew's kids.
- Tear down the convent and the old auditorium and build a new gym in that location.
- I have concerns over the trees and architecture of the buildings.
- What about the sound from the new gym?
- Some public schools do not operate on weekends.
- Overlay zones should be reserved for major institutions; St. Matthew's is not a major institution.
- The church has made improvements and the Master Plan that is proposed has controls and other items in it to ensure that things are done appropriately.

- Sports facilities are at a premium; these kids currently have to be bused to other locations to practice
- Number of Masses and activities has increased, this is a larger parish, more variety (Spanish)
- 8:45am Sunday Mass needs a parking management plan
- Is there evidence anywhere that proves that there was an event where 380 vehicles were parked in the parking lot? No. No factual evidence to support.
- Unlawful to NOT allow a church were the Municipal Code allows it.
- I would appreciate having this gym built so that my little sister might be able to use.

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

Chair Whitaker called for a 5 minute break.

The Planning Commission had the following questions:

- How many unregistered parishioners are there at St. Matthews? What is the definition of an unregistered parishioner? It was explained that there are approximately 1400 individuals that have their emails/addresses, etc., on a mailing list, but that perhaps twice that many are considered unregistered. So, 2800-3000 people could be considered unregistered, they come to church but do not participate in other church activities/events.
- Why not remodel the auditorium? Analysis showed that it couldn't be remodeled easily due, in part, to "historic" issues.
- Tree removal? The environmental document considered the impact of noise. Charles Salter & Assoc, Noise Consultants evaluated the noise impacts. Trees do not mitigate noise, solid objects do. Vegetation doesn't provide a noise barrier.
- Hexagon Surveys were always done when school was out? Hexagon responded that 3 types of surveys were done: 1) during all seasons during mass; 2) during school activities to observe drop-off and pick-up of students; and 3) times were unannounced, with one exception. Traffic counts were done in October.
- Oversight of students in the evenings – adequate oversight of the students/children? Coaches are there as well as at least 2 parents. Parents come at different times. The school has rules/regulations regarding parent supervision.
- Does church qualify for a Q7 overlay zone? Legally defensible if the city can make a case for it – which the project planner has done. How is this unique? Use has been in existence for a long time and 3 parcels are larger than the surrounding parcels.
- The parking plan calls for 108 new parking spaces. Concern with the use of compact spaces. The ratio of regular stalls to compact stalls has been designed to meet the city's requirement regarding the number of regular & compact stalls. Parking attendant should be hired to guide vehicles into the correct sized spaces. City parking code calls for 30% of the required spaces to be for compact cars. Studies show that more than 70% being SUV's doesn't happen. Also, the city code applies all over the entire city and most are not being management by a parking attendant.

- The formal written parking agreement can be terminated with 90 days notice. The church has had this in place for about 5 years with the bank across the street, 3 years with the Westlake Building where parking has been arranged.
- What constitutes parish activities? Adult Bible studies, night meetings, carnival to name a few.

The Planning Commission had the following comments:

- There are changes in the proposal and there is an evolution occurring. There are still a number of concerns, parents don't want their children out all night. There are also people who just don't follow the rules.
- This is an opportunity to solve a long-festering conflict and an opportunity to give the kids a nice gym. The privilege of the Q zone and gym can be traded for a level of accountability to the community.
- What are the neighbors describing as a problem? There are two types of problems. One centers around the school drop-off and pick-up of children. The school and parents have done a lot of hard work to address this problem. The mid-day kindergarten drop off/pick up could be addressed through parking changes for staff that have been suggested by the school, but are not codified in the documents in front of us. All of these changes are procedural, so unless the city's approvals formalize and require them, there is reasonable fear that the situation might regress.
- The second problem is around the church uses. This church is probably the busiest in all of San Mateo. There are activities at many hours and on many days of the week. This isn't like other churches with one service on Sunday and generally low activity the rest of the time. The ongoing inability to predict when you can get out of your driveway or when it is safe to plan have friends over is the problem. The neighbors believe that the root cause of this problem is that the church lacks adequate parking and is unwilling to do anything meaningful about it, and that the city doesn't respond to the parking problems. They see that the parish is more active at certain times during the year than at others, yet the reviews occur during the quieter periods.
- In general, the idea of the Q7 zone and the gym are a good thing. Together, these could potentially be worked through to create a framework to address the long-festering problems and to provide the legal ability to construct the gym. One problem is that we do not have all the pieces in front of us. What's missing is the city's part—the enforceable legal framework for addressing this problem. Another problem is that the church has not come up with a realistic plan to provide the parking capacity recommended by Hexagon (356 spaces).
- As suggested by a commenter, the city's Special Events Permits for the church's carnival are a good model. These permits provide clear accountability, and are enforceable through a strong mechanisms—the city can refuse to issue the permit next year. The church seems to have done a good job under this framework based on the feedback I have heard from neighbors about the carnival event.
- The documents in front of us do not account for growth. While they restrict student enrollment, they do not address the potential continuation of growth in church activity.

- I believe that our community should continue to work to create an enforceable framework with enforcement and accountability. I think it is possible to create this framework and that it is the role of a city to do this. The documents in front of us do not do this, but I think that they could be revised to make it work. I would like to continue working toward this goal.
- I do not believe an acceptable resolution can be achieved until and unless the church agrees to provide parking capacity commensurate with its level of activity and the size of its membership. As noted earlier the City can and should require tradeoffs for the grant of the Q zone and resolving the parking problems must be one of them.
- There is a definite lack of trust between the neighbors and the parish.
- An example of things that need to be revised in the current documents is the communications structure. Like Serra, the Church should be more proactive in telling people when major holidays or events are going to occur. People should not have to go to the Church's web calendar and should not have to know the major Catholic holidays. Some members of our community practice other faiths and are unfamiliar with Catholic holidays. Instead, the church should provide notice to neighbors. This could even be through email, and could even cover unexpected events on short notice this way. Then neighbors would be able to plan ahead.
- Another problem is the reliance on the web calendar as the basis for identifying who to call if there is a problem. Right now, a resident would have to go online and try calling all of the contact numbers for events that are occurring. The community should have a single point-of-contact.
- Looking for something more substantive in a parking plan.
- This parking plan doesn't meet the need, only addresses a minimum.
- Uses for this gym too broad – should be for school sport activities only.
- Hours of the gym are too long – need to be shortened.
- Gym is designed to serve the students, so what activities are appropriate for the gym? Have hours of operation from 8am – 8pm; no need to accommodate an adult league schedule.
- The Master Plan document currently organizes parking management strategies around type of events (major, minor, typical religious and school gatherings). This activity-oriented organization should be replaced with a structure based on the expected number of vehicles (less than 306; 306 – 356; more than 356 vehicles) and then assign an appropriate response/solution for each level.
- How are the components of the applicant's Master Plan document (dated June 12, 2012), which identify, limit and restrict permitted uses and activities, incorporated into the documents the Planning Commission is being asked to review and approve tonight?
- The conditions need to be more enforceable.
- More attention paid to El Camino Real frontage and the wall.
- Need enough guaranteed parking for 356 vehicles; proposed parking improvements do not achieve the desired result.
- Proposal has come a long way; supports the use.
- Parking maximized; okay with building.

- If we cannot support the Q zone, we cannot approve most of the other items before us.
- I do not think that the SPAR is ready to be voted on. We lack basic information that we would usually have for a SPAR vote. I am also uncomfortable with the amount of tree removal, the building design, and the design of the El Camino Real frontage. Another commissioner has pointed out that with a good design on the El Camino Real frontage, the building itself would not be particularly visible; this affects my view of the acceptability of the design of the building itself.
- Negative Declaration adequately addresses environmental impacts. However, the conditions of approval do not ensure that the gym would be only a school gym, which is the basis of the Negative Declaration. Therefore, I cannot vote to certify the Negative Declaration. If the conditions provided that it would only be a school gym, I could vote to certify the negative declaration.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Massey recommending certification of the mitigated Negative Declaration. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Hugg. Motion passes: 4-1 (Moran).

Motion was made by Vice Chair Massey recommending denial of the Resolution for the Q7 overlay zone, the Special Use Permit (SUP), and the Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR). 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Moran. Motion passes: 4-1 (Bonilla)

Motion was made by Commissioner Moran recommending denial of the Site Development Permit (SDP). 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vice Chair Massey. Motion passes: 3-2 (Hugg and Bonilla)

It was then made clear to the Planning Commissioners that a Resolution for Findings for Denial would be brought back at the August 28, 2012 meeting for adoption.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. No communications from Staff
2. Vice Chair Massey will be out for both meetings in September

There being no further items before the Planning Commission, Chair Whitaker adjourned the meeting at 12:30am on Wednesday, August 15, 2012.