

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

Those present were Commissioner Bonilla, Commissioner Drechsler, Commissioner Whitaker, and Chair Massey. Vice-Chair Hugg is recused.

Motion made by Commissioner Bonilla and 2nd by Commissioner Drechsler to approve the minutes of January 14, 2014.

Vote: 4-0 – Motion passes

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chair Massey opened the Public Comment Period.

Kris Kasianovitz, Burlingame had comments regarding the Bridgepointe Ice Rink. No one else wishing to speak, the Chair closed the public comment period.

ITEM 1

STUDY SESSION

PA13-059 HILLSDALE INN REDEVELOPMENT PRE-APPLICATION, preliminary review for demolition of the existing Hillsdale Inn and construction of 180 residential condominium units. The 3 and 4 story residential buildings are a height of 40 feet and total approximately 193,586 square feet. An underground parking garage with 330 parking spaces is also proposed, as well as, 14 surface parking spaces. Project location is 477 E. Hillsdale Boulevard. The project site is approximately 3 acres and is located off East Hillsdale Blvd near Highway 101. The site is zoned C2-.5 (Regional/Community Commercial with a Floor Area Ratio of .5

Christy Usher, Associate Planner gave the staff presentation.

Aaron Barger, Barry Swenson Builders, gave the applicant presentation.

Chair Massey opened the public comment period. The following people spoke: Dennis Murphy, San Mateo; Julie Lindsay, San Mateo; John Ebnetter, San Mateo; Karen Goff, San Mateo; Steven Sangervasi, San Mateo; David Shum, San Mateo; Greg Grialou, San Mateo; Holly Hayashida, San Mateo; Shaina Larson, San Mateo; Bob Schreifels, San Mateo.

Their comments include:

- Concerned about increased traffic into the San Mateo/Glendale Village neighborhoods.
- Traffic situation already quite heavy. Increased wait times at the red light at Hillsdale and Saratoga will occur.
- A total of 180 units a bit too much for the neighborhood. Can this be scaled down at all?

- Will there be enough parking?
- Can another entrance be created instead of the one directly across from BevMo?
- Please look at all alternatives.
- Concerned about George Hall school capacity.
- Traffic study should be done at peak times and during holidays.
- Disagree with the Public Noticing procedure. Speaker indicated she did not get a notice.
- Crossing the street at Hillsdale and Saratoga is a Level of Service "F". Needs to be another egress out of the Village so that the one street egress from the Village is not overwhelmed.
- The entire street would benefit from a new better project. We need a new approach.
- To drop in one building that is completely different from every other building with only one egress is not feasible.
- Can fire and ambulance get through the intersection?
- Most residents in the Village have lived there a long time.
- The proposed 180 units in this project will increase traffic over 12%. This is a small street from the project to Saratoga.
- Water is a concern for me. As we are in a drought with no end in sight I don't understand how the builder can foresee the water needs of the project.
- Fire and police would have some difficulty with the small street.
- What will be the impact on George Hall School? Parents drive their children to school; children do not walk to school. The addition of Bay Meadows 2 adds children to the school. The impact of Bay Meadows 2 when built out is unknown, can something be adjusted in the traffic study?
- Everyone in the Village should be getting notices regarding the meetings. Even people at the very back of the Village should be noticed.
- F rating for the intersection is bad and no way to improve. How can we add more homes and more cars to this intersection?
- Is there something else that can be put on that property? Senior residences?
- Moved to the Village because of the attractiveness for my family. Concerned about the size of the project. People are skirting the intersection by going through the Chevron station and the BevMo parking to avoid the intersection. The intersection is also dangerous to children. I'm considering shopping elsewhere (and not Whole Foods) because I do not want to cross the intersection with my children.
- More privacy. Four stories will take away some privacy. This proposal will decrease the quality of life and property values. Not necessarily against the project but should be scaled back.
- I would like to address traffic. When Bay Meadows and Bay Meadows 2 went in, speaker was part of the committee addressing traffic. No plans in this project to show alleviation of the increase traffic. More traffic will come. Too much cut-through traffic will occur.
- Unhealthy air, harmful particles will be flying in the air. I don't think they meet the criteria for a special use permit.
- Palo Alto citizens are getting fed up with zero lot lines in their city and defeated a recent ballot measure. Too many projects go straight up to the lot lines.
- As a real estate agent I am grateful for more housing but the project is too large. Too massive for that corner. Bring the 3-story down to 2-story and the 4-story down to 3-story.
- Only one exit is not good. Can another exit onto Hillsdale be created? With added traffic people are trying to cross Hillsdale and cars are stopping compounding an already bad traffic situation.
- Is a walk-over bridge possible, over Hillsdale?

- Traffic is a huge problem. For those of us who need to use Hillsdale to get home, this could be a problem. Traffic consideration is a very real one. That size of a project on that little street with the small entrance/exit isn't feasible.
- The impacts of Bay Meadows 2 are still unknown as it is not built-out yet.
- We live on Santa Clara and people are already speeding up and down our street. The project will impact this even more.
- Parking is an issue. During the holidays, parking increases on the surrounding side streets.
- The Hillsdale/Saratoga intersection is bad and another exit/entrance should be considered. The project is too big for the corner.
- Intersection at Hillsdale/Saratoga is too congested and cars are not able to get through the intersection in a timely manner.
- Traffic mitigation a must.

The Chair closed the public comment period.

The Commission addressed the following concerns of the speakers:

- Traffic. *City staff: A traffic study has yet to be done. CalTrans interchange jurisdiction goes up to the crosswalk at Saratoga and they have different rules regarding that area. . When Kaiser put in a driveway they had to have CalTrans approvals. The main thing is to make safe exiting and entry. Cars need to be able to "weave" safely on Hillsdale overpass going into Foster City. There will be meetings with CalTrans.*
- Is this intersection rated F? *City staff: Will have to look at the last traffic study, such as one from Bay Meadows to see what the most recent level of service rating is.*
- When the traffic study is done, current ratings will be done? *City staff: Yes.*
- Concerns over George Hall school. Has there been any discussion with the school district regarding this? *City staff: Not yet. Should a formal planning application come in discussions with the school district will take place.*
- Noticing. 1) brief explanation on noticing rules; 2) is there a way for the residents of the Village to receive notices? *Staff planner: 300' foot radius is State standard. However, the City did a 1,000 foot radius consistent with City code requirements. Many of the residents in the Village are not in the 1,000 foot radius. If there are individuals who wish to receive notices, we can add them to an Interested Parties list.*
- Water availability – how has this been reviewed by staff? *Staff: we will be meeting with the water agency when a formal planning application is received.*

The Commission had the following questions:

- Parcels are currently zoned C2-.5. Applicant is not changing the zoning but the C2 allows them residential density consistent with the R4 zoning? *City Staff: Yes, and the number of stories and the setbacks are governed by the C2 zone district.*
- When looking at the parking garage, I heard the applicant describe 3 elevators, but I can only see 1 elevator at the entrance on the plans, and a group of handicap spaces at the center of the garage. Is that where another elevator is going to be located? Where is the 3rd elevator? *Applicant: these plans do not show a 3rd elevator, there are only 2.*
- How will access be provided from bicycle parking? *Applicant: Bicyclist will use the elevator or the ramp.*
- Are the elevators big enough for a gurney? *Applicant: I don't have specifics yet, but yes. We will be looking at that as this project progresses.*

- Did not see Spanish architecture. *Applicant: We showed some renderings that don't reflect the Spanish architecture. However, the intent is that some of the stone and brick blend to give the Spanish look.*
- More modern Spanish architecture? *Applicant: Yes*
- When the bikes leave and come up the elevator is this where they will exit (Commissioner indicated area)? *Applicant: Yes*
- Some consideration for a dog-run, haven't seen more detail about that. Why aren't we hearing more about pedestrian friendly, electrical vehicle friendly proposals in this development? *Applicant: The parking garage has 306 spaces and there will be a number of car-charging stations; locations and types will be determined later. Amenities such as the dog park will be further developed as well – expanded along the culvert by Hillsdale Blvd going towards Foster City. We understand the challenges with the west side of the project where Hillsdale/Saratoga meet. We have suggested a city park at that west end and have discussed it. New sidewalk design guidelines will be incorporated.*
- Special Use Permit and the State Density Bonus. The density bonus is a requirement of state law if a developer provides the requisite number of affordable units. *City Staff: – Correct, State law requires granting of a density bonus. Commission needs to first consider if the Special Use Permit should be issued. What are the findings that we have to approve in order for the Special Use Permit? City Staff: There are proposed findings in the staff report that you would have to make at a later date. For the special use permit that would allow residential in a commercial zone, staff read the proposed finding.*
- We have to make the findings for the special use permit before we can consider the density bonus.
- What is the status of the pedestrian bridge across the freeway? . *City Staff: The pedestrian bike bridge is in the process of being considered. There will be a joint study session with the Planning Commission and Public Works Commission to discuss this. Class 1 bike path. This project, as currently conceived, doesn't interfere with the bridge project. City Staff: No, they have left areas for the benefit of the project.*
- Developer suggesting a change in parking plan along Hillsdale Court. *City Staff: This will be discussed in the traffic study. Parallel parking works better with vehicles and bikes. The study would address the number of spaces lost when changing parking patterns.*
- The traffic study will also study parking? *City Staff: Yes.*
- Please describe the access to the actual buildings, in particular those buildings on the west side. *Applicant: If someone parked on the street or if someone walked in, there will be a security gate that people will have to enter in a code to access.*
- The spaces between the two buildings, are they open? *Applicant: No, they are enclosed corridors.*
- Residents will walk in through an arbor, then to entrances to the buildings directly off the arbors. Those are the only entrances to the buildings? *Applicant: Yes.*
- What about access to the buildings to the west. *Applicant: Access will be provided by a private stairwell to the surface level and the parking garage.*
- Can walk into the complex from Saratoga Avenue, through the proposed park. *Applicant: Yes.*
- Can you provide any more comments regarding the design and what it is going to be. *Applicant: We have not examined the elements of building design other than the one rendering. The idea is to use indicated sample elements and incorporate them into the building designs. There will be walking spaces between buildings; high glass lines on the buildings, dressed with stone. Entry off Hillsdale will have indicated planter boxes, trellises, etc.*

- Three elevators that we are looking at – there are only 3 elevators serving the project?
Applicant: Yes
- Are there interior stairwells within the building? *Applicant: Yes.*
- On the northern edge of the project, what is to prevent someone from crossing Hillsdale and entering the project? *Applicant: To get into the actual courtyards individual must enter code to go through security gates.*
- A resident will be able to enter/exit with no problem? *Applicant: Yes*
- Concerned about the trash staging area located in front of open space. *Applicant: The garbage management will be consulted regarding moving the trash staging area to a different location.*
- What is the City's below market rate unit requirement? *City Staff: For ownership 15% units must be affordable to moderate income households or 10% affordable to low income households. For rental, 15% units must be affordable to low income households or 10% affordable to very low income households.*
- Do applicants qualify for a density bonus for just providing below market rate units already required by the City? *City staff: Yes. There has also been a recent court case that mandates this approach.*
- What trigger would allow us to not treat this applicant any differently than another when Home Owner Associations (HOA's) are requesting a greater radius for noticing? *City Staff: Interested members of the public can be added to the to the interested parties list, the HOA also receive notices and they should make sure they notify their members. City supplied noticing must be uniformly provided.*

The Commission had the following comments:

- Special Use Permit – to allow a residential use in a commercial zone district.
 - Problem with making findings for approval for the special use permit. I believe as presented the project may adversely affect the surrounding properties. Will be placing a lot of weight on the traffic study and want to see what the applicant comes back to us with.
 - Am concerned about the applicant asking for three-fold increase in FAR. They are asking for 1.45 and C2 has .5.
 - Need to pay close attention to methods of minimizing traffic impacts on the neighborhood. The impact of Bay Meadows 2 on the Village is significant.
 - I would like to see something more consistent with a residential design, including street-level stoops and a softer look. Something that is more in harmony with the residential district nearby.
 - Share concerns regarding traffic.
 - This is a situation where the applicant is requesting a change of use. The applicant should give more thought to whether they need this density bonus. All the extra units exacerbate the traffic problems already present at Hillsdale/Saratoga. The increased number of units will make it more difficult for us to agree on the special use permit.
- Site Plan including site layout of residential buildings, interior courtyards, vehicle access, and below grade parking garage.
 - Residential layout looks fine to me except they may contain too many units. Like the overall look.
 - Vehicle access is probably too close to the Hillsdale/Saratoga intersection. Need an exit onto Hillsdale. Perhaps the access ramp can be moved to the other end of the building.
 - Garage circulation both for pedestrian and cyclist safety is going to be important.

- Preliminary Design – architectural style, materials, massing, interior residential entries, and building forms.
 - Current design seems too harsh and linear.
 - Images presented and called conceptual are very nice. Everything in the packet I received isn't agreeing with the images presented however. Applicant statement discusses use of plaster and stucco as base building material.
 - Looking at the floor plans, it is clear that the first 3 levels of each building are identical. Stacking the same unit type upon each other. No plane changes as you go up the building. Almost feels more like a college dormitory project and not a rental. Should examine providing more setbacks and offsets. This is mentioned in the Urban Design Element of the General Plan.
 - Examine a more vibrant color palette.
 - Haven't seen enough to make many comments. Everything is conceptual. I have a concern with massing. Seems too massive considering number of units.
 - Interior residential entries I'm not satisfied with. Looks very square.
 - Articulated roof lines not evident. Please include some of that.
 - Not enough truly conceptual drawings tonight. This project appears too harsh, too square. Needs to be softened.
 - Location of main entrance so far to one side seems strange. Examine placing the main entrance in the middle. Mailboxes and other amenities are quite far from residences on the west end.
 - Has the status of tenants and provision of tenant relocation assistance been discussed further with the applicant? *Staff: No, will be discussed in formal application.*
 - Have taken long walks around this project. It appears that people are actually living at this location as opposed to this being a motel/hotel/inn.
 - Encourage hiring local workers.
 - Spent some quality time on the proposed site. I see a lot of garbage, abandoned cars, construction debris. This area should be cleaned up.
 - Don't know what the solution for traffic is at the Hillsdale/Saratoga. Have tried to ride my bike through this intersection and it is very difficult and feels unsafe.
 - Air quality is an issue given the proposed residential use near Highway 101. . *Staff: An air quality analysis will be done.*

Announcements/Communications

1. From staff
 - a. At a recent City Council meeting, the Council voted to create a Sustainability Commission
 - b. Neighborhood meeting for Hillsdale Terrace on 1/29/14. Will be held at the former Taxi's building.
 - c. 1/30/14: Serra bi-annual neighborhood meeting
 - d. 2/3/14: 2nd reading on Sustainability Commission. Study session on the Downtown Parking Study.
 - e. 2/5/14: 1) Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on Essex project and, 2) Public Works Commission/Planning Commission joint on Hillsdale/101 pedestrian bridge. The Public Works Commission chair will lead the joint meeting.
 - f. 2/10/14: City Council annual goal-setting session in the Oak Room at the Library. Major part of Planning's work plan will be implementing stage 1 of the management audit.

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- g. 2/11/14: Planning Commission Meeting, Station Park Green Development Agreement annual review. Amendments to the Planning Commission by-laws discussed at last meeting. Reasonable accommodation.
 - h. 2/18/14: City Council study session on the Community Development Department audit.
 - i. 2/25/14: Planning Commission Meeting, 2 pre-application study sessions – Essex and Hillsdale Terrace
 - j. Please reserve Monday March 3rd joint study session with City Council on the Housing Element.
2. From the Commission
- a. Public notice for Hillsdale Terrace. *Staff: for mailers sent by the planner, we are not giving out your home address. If mailed by the applicant, we will ask for 5 notices and mail them ourselves.*
 - b. Commission was able to provide information for the City Council goal-setting session. This is something that should be considered for the Commission for a future meeting.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 28, 2014.