

APPROVED

**CITY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 8, 2013**

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

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Drechsler, seconded by Commissioner Bonilla to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of September 24, 2013.

Vote – Passed - 4-0

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Massey opened the public comment period.

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

ITEM 1

PUBLIC HEARING

PA 12-009 BARNESON TOWNHOMES, construction of seven two-story multi-family townhome units, with two-car garages, on a vacant paved lot, 10 Barneson Avenue (APN 034-383-370).

Required Approvals:

- A. Environmental Clearance (Categorical Exemption Section 15332, In-Fill Development);
- B. Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) for the construction of seven residential multi-family units on a vacant paved lot;
- C. Site Development Planning Application (SDP) for the removal of seven trees (one Pear, one Sycamore, and five Pepper Trees); and
- D. Vesting Tentative Map to subdivide the parcel into seven condominium units.

The project site is approximately 19,342 square feet in area. The project site is located adjacent to the corner property located at the northwest intersection of El Camino Real and Barneson Avenue. The site is generally bounded by a mix of land uses such as residential to the north, office to the west, fast food to the south, and residential to the west. The project site is zoned Multiple Family Dwellings (R3).

Christy Usher, Associate Planner, gave the staff presentation

Manoochehr Javaherian and Hamid Hekmat gave the applicant presentation.

The Chair opened the Public Comment Period. No one wishing to speak, the Chair closed the Public Comment Period.

The Planning Commission had the following questions for the applicant:

- Regarding the informal Neighborhood Meeting in January 2012, other than the revisions suggested by Larry Cannon, Design Review Consultant, were there any other suggestions regarding the project? *Staff: No requests for revisions were requested by any of the attendees of the neighborhood meeting.*
- Is the auto court area counted toward required open space? *Staff: No. Refer to the Open Space exhibit on (plan sheet DD-4) which indicates that auto court area was not counted as required open space and the proposed pavers in the auto court will be permeable.*
- With regard to the 38 new trees. The conditions of approval are not specific but are more general regarding trees; basically the standard condition that applies to all projects. *Staff: The exact number of replacement trees is not listed in the conditions of approval but is codified in both the "plant list" of the landscape plan sheet L1.0 and on the City's Required Tree Planting Form which is printed on plan sheet DD-4*
- The Lophostemon species tends to have some negative features such as being heavy and top weighted. In which case, the Podocarpus may be a more appropriate choice for the site. *Applicant: The Landscape architect confirmed the owner is amenable to changing the species of the Lophostemon to the Podocarpus.*
- The future residents of the project may be better served by more 24 inch box size Maples rather than fewer 36 inch box trees. *Applicant: The landscape architect also indicated the owner was amenable to this change and will ensure that in doing the adjustment the required LU values for replacement trees is satisfied.*

The Planning Commission had the following comments:

- Support the proposed materials. The building style also matches nearby buildings. Storm water containment seems appropriate.
- Support local workers and prevailing wages during construction of this project.
- Appreciate the quality materials proposed. They are compatible with the neighborhood.
- Appreciate the comments from the City's design consultant, Larry Cannon. The comments are worthwhile improved the project design greatly.
- Support 95% of this design but not the construction of the bridge over the driveway at both ends. Like what it achieves but not the look from the street.

- Support the look of the auto-court and the way the garages are interior to the site and not visible from public view.
- Because the project is being developed on a vacant paved lot the project should result in an enhancement of the neighborhood.
- Impressed by the quality of materials and how the project fits into the neighborhood.
- Compliments to the architect on the short term bike racks in front of the project and the bike racks in the garages.
- Are the backflow preventers hidden by a fence, privets, metal cages, soft shrouds? Or are they visible from the street? *Applicant: The backflow preventers will be screened with landscaping.*

Motion by Commissioner Whitaker to:

Adopt the Categorical Exemption Section 15332 for In-Fill Development Projects based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A.

Approve the Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) for construction of seven residential units on a vacant paved lot; Site Development Planning Application (SDP) for the removal of seven trees (one Pear, one Sycamore, and five Pepper Trees); and Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map for the delineation of seven residential condominium units and associate common space based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A, subject to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit B.

With the modification that the applicant can work with staff to develop a modified tree planting plan that meets the minimum requirements of the City's tree replacement ordinance. Seconded by Commissioner Drechsler. Vote: 4-0 – motion passes.

This decision is final with the Planning Commission unless an appeal is filed according to the San Mateo Municipal Code.

ITEM 2

STUDY SESSION

PA 13-044 CENTRAL PARK SOUTH PRE-APPLICATION, preliminary review for demolition of existing structures and development of a 33,400 square foot four-story office building and a 77,800 square foot four-story residential building with 60 units, 885 South El Camino Real and 15, 25 and 31 9th Avenue, San Mateo, (APNs: 034-200-130, 034-200-140, 034-200-150 and 034-200-220).

The project site is approximately 1.84 acres, located at the northeastern corner of South El Camino Real and 9th Avenue, bounded by South El Camino Real to the west, Central Park to the north and 9th Avenue to the south. The project site is zoned E2-1 (Executive Offices) and R6-D (Multiple Family Dwellings Downtown).

Art Henriques, Contract Senior Planner, gave the staff presentation.

Julie Baigent, Representative for property owner Trans World Assurance and Dawn Jenkins from DES Architecture, gave the applicant presentation.

The Planning Commission had the following preliminary questions for the applicant:

- Regarding the sidewalk widths, could someone address this? What are the existing sidewalk widths? Measured 5 ½ feet on El Camino so showing a planter strip and sidewalk at 7 ½ feet is an improvement on El Camino Real. On 9th Avenue it appears smaller. So is it going from 7 foot to 5 foot in front of the commercial building? In front of Project Ninety it currently goes to 8 feet. Concerned with it going down to 5 feet there. This sidewalk is used a great deal for many different reasons: the park, the church on the other side of El Camino, families with children, dog walkers, the sidewalk gets used a lot. Very busy, especially on the weekends with cars parked all the way to 11th Avenue. *Applicant: we were asked to look at the Pedestrian Guidelines and the sidewalks came from that. It recommends a 4 foot parkstrip and a 4 to 6 foot sidewalk. We could accommodate a 6 foot sidewalk by encroaching 6 inches into the property.*
- 4 foot parkway strip, why are we going to 4 feet here? *Staff: we had a number of discussions on this issue. We conferred with the City's Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Coordinator in Public Works. We will continue to work with the applicant to refine this during the formal Planning application stage. There are different standards that apply whether it is a residential use or a commercial use. Reviewed slides from the Pedestrian Master Plan showing recommended planter strip and sidewalk widths from the City's Pedestrian Master Plan. We will continue to work with the applicant on implementation of the recommended standards.*
- The mailer to the public described this as mixed-use; how is this defined? *Staff: this is not a vertical mixed-use but rather a horizontal mixed-use on two separate properties. It is a family of two buildings that in combination create a mixed-use that can create some synergies and will be managed in common.*
- They are taking 3 eastern-most parcels and combine for residential: this has no bearing with the definition of mixed-use? *Staff: some communities don't call this mixed-use because it is not vertical. Vertical mixed-use though can at times be harder to finance. The prior Polo Court project was like this. Staff: the applicant is proposing more parking than required in part as this is not a vertical mixed use project. This approach can achieve some City objectives, such as higher density and gateway development, protecting mature trees on the site, providing affordable units. Some of the synergy between the two buildings may depend on the type of ground-floor tenants that go into the office building, such as a bank.*
- The 3 eastern-most parcels are designated R6-D, please explain how that is different from the straight R-6 zoning? *Staff: R6-D is the highest density in the Downtown with up to an FAR of 3.0*

- So in areas zoned TOD, where there might be high-density, the designation would be TOD and not R6.

The Chair opened the public comment period. Those speaking are: Neil Sofia, San Mateo; Todd Pellizzer, San Mateo; Vic Catanzaro, San Mateo; Rich Hedges, San Mateo; Barto Price, San Mateo; Don Kirby, San Mateo. Their comments included the following:

- Financial assistance to Project Ninety for their relocation, however, in the applicant presentation, it was noted that no relocation for tenants was to be provided. Will there be relocation assistance for low-income and seniors that are now living on the proposed development site and whether provision can be made for priority given to these same individuals for eventual return to the property? Is there any estimate of time of demolition?
- Are these units going to have 1-car or 2-car parking? We already have problems with parking. Couldn't this residential building be condos instead?
- Assume that Vice-Chair Hugg has recused himself as he is on the Housing Leadership Council.
- There was discussion regarding trees. There are certain trees that do not do well in San Mateo, Alder is one type. Redwood trees would do well and provide good screening. The sidewalks should be as wide as possible; no entrance/exit on El Camino Real. People don't pay attention when driving so this would be a dangerous idea.
- Earlier comment about the bus stop not being officially listed by Sam Trans. It is used by SamTrans, not every stop is listed on their map.
- Below-Market-Rate units – only 6 units? This project could easily do 9. People displaced should be given those units at the rents they are paying now.
- This needs to be a prevailing wage job.
- There are 95 parking spaces at the office building and it is in the CPID. Recognize that the Central Parking and Improvement District (CPID) allows reduced parking. This parcel appears to be the farthest from the CPID. Trust that they will be using the closest public parking garage in the park about 1,000 feet away from this parcel. It suggests that people working in the office would choose to park on the local streets instead of walking to the parking structure. 74 stalls in the Central Parking Garage are allocated to CPID. If this project were outside the CPID they would have to provide 136 stalls rather than the 95 provided. Recommend there should be some consideration of this in the traffic study.
- Beautiful project but have concerns over height and density and shade. Putting the office space on the corner bothers me – we lose the sight of the corners on El Camino. It should be pushed further back. Traffic exiting onto 9th Avenue will be a problem. 9th Avenue has become a truck route and this project is going to add additional difficulty getting out onto the street. The way the signal works you almost have to come out with left turns and that street does not support it. Only 12 visitor parking spaces on a 60-unit complex site seems very low. There is no street parking. There should be more parking for visitors or reduce the number of units. See this as 2 separate projects and not 1, so is there going to be two phases of construction or both constructed at the same time?

- See some danger problems with the curb-cut on El Camino, but there are going to be serious traffic challenges without it. A 4-story building is going to have a huge effect on the area. Consider a 2 or 2 ½ story massing on the corner of El Camino vs. the four-story.

No one else wishing to speak, the Chair closed the public comment period.

Planning Commission response to questions from the public.

- *City Attorney response to the ordinance regarding relocation assistance: – 27.02.180 Relocation Assistance/Allowance was cited. Applicant is to give each head of household a list of comparable housing within San Mateo County. A relocation allowance equivalent to 3 months' rent and other reasonable assistance/allowance to be determined by the final approval body in a condition of approval. No discussion has taken place with the applicant yet. The confusion sometimes arises because San Mateo is a Charter City and is allowed to have some laws that general-law cities do not have in place.*
- *There is no requirement for relocation assistance to those moving back into the new building if they qualify for the low-income units? City Attorney: That is correct. Staff: Recalling the earlier Bay Terrace project this is something that can be worked out with the applicant at a later stage.*
- *The applicant is offering 6 below-market-rate units. Do 6 units meet the City's 15% requirement? Staff: The applicant has opted for 10% very low. Does this impact the density bonus? Staff: With 10% very low-income they still qualify for 32.5% density bonus and 2 development concessions/incentives.*
- *When would demolition begin? Applicant: when the project is approved and also with the relocation of the bank that occupies the current office building.*
- *Is financing an issue? Applicant: no, this could potentially be self-financed. We very likely will not have to go out for 3rd-party financing.*
- *The plan is to build both buildings at the same time? Applicant: correct. 18-24 months construction. The intent is to build both projects at the same time.*
- *Could the building be condos? Applicant: yes, they could, but that is not the desire of the property owner. The intention is to hold it in an ownership portfolio and manage as an investment/rental property.*
- *Questions of prevailing wage: City Attorney: there is no ordinance regarding payment of prevailing wage. The Planning Commission has no ability to force prevailing wage outside of a development agreement. At a number of Planning Commission and City Council meetings, this subject has been brought up and it is important to both entities that we do this. Attorney: it has been brought up but it has not become a requirement. It has not been codified.*
- *Regarding adequacy of parking for the office building. How many parking spaces per unit is the project going to provide? What are the City's requirements in this area? Staff: parking is proposed 111 spaces for the residences and the office building is proposed at 95 spaces with 55 in the garage and 40 at-grade. Three of the visitor spaces*

for the multi-family need to be moved to the garage and secured for residents. Will be looking in more detail as the project moves forward to make sure bike parking is adequate and it does not affect the garage parking.

- If the project were outside the CPID, would the required parking for the office be more than is currently proposed? *Staff: yes. It is within the CPID. If project meets the code for parking staff typically does not study it further. Applicant: there are some common areas in the building, such as hallways and meeting spaces in the office building so they believe that the parking can reasonably accommodate the expected people on the site.*
- Discussion about the 12 visitor parking spaces required for the multi-family vs. the 15 provided. *Applicant: maximized the on-grade parking but there are 3 parking spaces there that should be accommodating the tenants.*

The Planning Commission had the following questions:

- For the multifamily, could the 3 visitor parking spaces be handicapped spaces? Where are the garbage cans located? *Applicant: on the west side of the building on the first floor there is a room dedicated to trash collection. We also added a loading zone on the same side. The trash collection room will be moved closer to the front of the building for the weekly collection.*
- This project may be worthy of a traffic study.
- Parking and traffic are forever and the bane of large development projects. Would this project be for a red curb on 9th and perhaps a turn-lane to help the residents get in/out of their driveways? Surprised there was no circulation internally between all the lots. Parking lot resurfacing projects over the recent years have done serious damage to the large trees at the office building. Look carefully at protecting the root zones of the existing trees.
- Would the curved balconies of the office building look good on the residential building?
- Has consideration been given to the softer setback of the roof line on the office building at the corner? The softer look that is apparent on the residential building. Could there be balconies like those on the office building on the multi-family? Coordinate with Parks and Rec on the trees and overall landscaping.
- The 55 parking spaces at the office building are completely underground as well as the 96 spaces for the multi-family? *Applicant: Yes.*
- The State density bonus. What is the current Below Market Rate (BMR) percentage? *City Attorney: 10% for very low income and 15% for low income.*
- So 32.5 percent density bonus and 2 development concessions/incentives? *Staff: Yes.*
- *Staff: 60 units doesn't represent the maximum. The applicant is currently at 56 units per acre. They could go higher.*
- Regarding existing tenants, Project Ninety has been in San Mateo 41 years and 30 years on 9th Avenue. Am concerned because they will need to move and have provided an invaluable service to many individuals that they might have to move away and what type of assistance could they get, and the loss to San Mateo if they have to move outside the City. Is there a way to fit them into this location and have them stay? Or a

way to have them stay in San Mateo? *Applicant: we are happy to work with them. It wouldn't work for them to come back to this project. There has been an ongoing dialogue with them.*

- What about the relocation of the other residents? There are 12 in the building next to Project Ninety, then there is a residential house for Project Ninety. Would really like for us to make every effort possible for a first opportunity of existing tenants to move back into the low-income units.
- It would have been interesting to see what the buildings would look like from the park and also what the park looks like from the building. *Applicant: we will work something up and submit it.*
- There are no 3-bedrooms in this project. How many bedrooms in the BMR units? *Applicant: we will work with the City to establish the correct proportion.*
- St Matthew's Catholic Church has an agreement to use the bank parking lot. What accommodation do you foresee making for this project? *Applicant: TWA is happy to help where they can. There is some consideration for the building occupants once the project is completed but as long as it's not causing problems they will try to be accommodating. Staff: recapped the St. Matt's parking item using best faith efforts but that it is not required. We will continue to work with them and TWA on this voluntary condition.*
- Does the amount of rent paid include parking? *Applicant: there may have been some discussion at the neighborhood meeting. We have not finalized how this will work. Staff: read the zoning ordinance that states that parking is required a part of a lease. Staff: the City Ordinance requires project residents have all required off-site parking provided and that be noted in their sale, rent or lease agreement unless the Commission approves otherwise. It is in the Zoning Code, Section 27.64.165.*

Planning Commission discussion of the list of topics

Site Plan & Access

- Dangerous to have driveway on El Camino Real. We need to find another way to get cars in and out of this location.
- Difficult accessing this corner on 9th Avenue. Don't think all the ingress/egress from this site should be on 9th Avenue.
- One residential driveway is directly across from one of the proposed driveways. Any way to move the driveway(s) at the residential building so that this is not the case? *Applicant: will look at the movement from each driveway.*
- Know it's in the guidelines about pushing the building to the corner, but would prefer it be pushed back away from the corner. The east elevation of the commercial building is the most interesting. It is a shame to have it turned inward. If that could be flipped so that it faces El Camino and to step back the building at the corner would help soften the look.

- El Camino, could there be some type of hammerhead/other design there?
- It appears the commercial building is over 8 spaces but how would a design (not having El Camino access) address that?
- Agree about the rotation of the commercial building to face El Camino.
- Like the softening of the sidewalk with the trees and related design.
- Agrees that all of the traffic alternatives are challenging. Perhaps we should step back a bit and perhaps look at moving the commercial building away from the corner. We should consider some other alternatives, more flexibility.
- Have mixed feelings regarding the 4-story office building.
- Regarding the multi-family building and the idea of individual entrances it makes sense in an area of small commercial buildings and single family homes. But this area is not like that. You want to preserve many of the existing trees and fit in with the office layout. The 15 parking spaces (for visitors) have to be 12.
- Looking at the A3 project plan shows 2 curb cuts. Looking at the artist's rendering it looks like the second curb cut is a walkway. That would be a nice way so you would not use the area left of the walkway for cars. Make the residential parking area more pedestrian friendly.
- The suggestion of reorienting the office building to be more accommodating the parking is good.
- Like the design/architecture of the residential building, but perhaps the space between the street and the building could be better utilized.
- Have a concern that the damage may have already been done to the redwood trees over the past years. The commercial building seems to be anchored to the trees. Work through this with the City arborist.
- Reduce three of the visitor parking spaces and move them to the residential garage.

Preliminary Design/Architectural Style/Multi-Family Design Guidelines

- Like that the two buildings are different but work together: approximately the size height, the red brick area, the middle area and the cap materials. Like the front of residential building, the way it is articulated; style appropriate for don't like the articulated elevation of the office building. Needs improvement to look at flipping the building or adding some of the east elevation elements on the west side.
- Work with Hexagon on the traffic improvements
- Think we should make an exception to the guidelines and in terms of the individual entries on the ground floor of the residential building. Look forward to Larry Cannon's comments.
- Support the comments for the residential, appears that the single entry can work.
- Believe that the residential building should have some different window looks. Like the roofline and the commercial building. Some different exterior finishes would be nice. This exterior reminds me too much of the Sunrise Assisted Living building down the street – we don't need two of those.
- There are root issues on the redwood trees and that should be addressed.

Relationship to Central Park

- Aware of Parks and Recreation Master Plan efforts. This project needs to be aware of that. The northwest corner of Central Park, at 5th & ECR has a cutout that is a pedestrian friendly space. Would like to see something like that on this corner, 9th & El Camino Real.
- There are many mature trees on the property so tree protection zones need to be set up.
- Not committed to keeping these redwood trees (significant root damage done during prior paving); still wanting pedestrian friendly, say, perhaps a nice oak tree. The area in Central Park next to the commercial building is very active.
- The trees in Central Park do a good job of screening along the property line. These are also an asset.
- The current office building sufficiently backs up to the park although the new one will not the way it is currently proposed. Whoever is using the office building will have to know that because the picnic area backs up to the property line that large parties on the weekend are possible.
- Regarding the residential building, there is the potential for noise coming from the park. The open space amenity that you are proposing is close to this area. The trees in the northeast corner are worth preserving. *Applicant: in a design review meeting, a suggestion was made regarding a "green screen" on the property line between this amenity for the residential and the park. Believe that we can work this out.*

Miscellaneous comments from Commission:

- Thank you for including very low-income housing units.
- Please do what you can to protect Project Ninety.
- Don't believe the El Camino driveway will work, but reorienting the building and moving it back may work.
- Remember to look at the driveways on 9th Avenue
- City cannot afford to give up any sidewalks.
- Residential differentiated from the office/commercial building.
- If this is approved as one project, it should be built as one project.
- Is it feasible to add a center turn lane on 9th Avenue? Please review this. Please work with Public Works regarding 9th Avenue.
- The balconies on the front of the residential building, we really don't want to see miscellaneous stuff on the balconies.
- Encourage local employment. Please speak with Bill Nack, Building Trades Council to use local workers.
- Like the residential building as it is and would like staff to be flexible about it- expand the pedestrian walkway and the landscaping in the front there.
- Height and size of buildings appropriate for the location.

- The Planning Commission will need the external reviews including the traffic, design review, environmental and other reports in before the next Commission review.

COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Communications from Staff

- a. Planning Commission meeting for 10/22 is cancelled.
- b. Currently have 4 large formal pre-applications under review.
- c. On 11/12 we have scheduled another study session on the redevelopment of the Avalon Motel. Neighborhood meeting scheduled for 10/24 at 7pm. You are invited to that and will receive the meeting notices in the mail. Project planner is Christy Usher in case you have any questions.
- d. City Council meeting of 10/21 includes the proposed amendments to existing professional services agreements to allow for the continued use of on-site consulting contract planners. Need to extend time frame until end of March 2014 and increase the budget amount
- e. Appeal for Michaels/Borders to be heard by the City Council on 11/4.
- f. Public Works Commission meeting on 10/9 includes a presentation on the Downtown Parking Management Plan. That will be a public forum in Room C which is followed by the Public Works Commission meeting. The Draft Plan is online for review. Staff member is Matt Bronson, Assistant City Manager, in case you need to follow up.
- g. Central Park Master Plan. Proposals were received and interviews will be held at the end of October. Planning staff member Julia Yeh will be very involved and represent the Planning Division. This master plan will come before you for review prior to going before the City Council.
- h. Handed out a roster of commissioners tonight and will be updating errors that were pointed out already. If there are any other corrections please let staff know. Did have a request for the roster from Chair Massey related to needing to reach out to Commissioners. This is an internal document should Commissioners need to contact each other.

Question posted about whether anything had transpired with respect to the Ice Rink. Staff responded that it had not.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items before the Planning Commission, Chair Massey adjourned at 11:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 8, 2013.