

**CITY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 9, 2015**

APPROVED

The meeting convened at 7:40 p.m. in the City of San Mateo Council Chambers and was called to order by Chair Drechsler, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those present were Commissioner Whitaker, Commissioner Massey, Vice-Chair Hugg (recused for Item 3 Gum Street Townhomes), Chair Drechsler.

Minutes May 12, 2015. Motion by Commissioner Massey, 2nd by Vice-Chair Hugg to approve the minutes as amended. Vote: 4-0

***** PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Drechsler opened the public comment period.

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

Vivian Ng, Acting Parking Manager, gave a staff presentation on the Downtown Parking Management Plan. The management plan was reviewed and approved by the City Council in April 2014 and includes implementation work such as adjusting meter rates, improving the valet parking program, installing new signage, etc. This is a multi-phased effort with a focus on better managing existing parking while planning for future parking. Those interested in the Parking Management an implementation should contact the Parking Manager.

ITEM 1 PUBLIC HEARING

PA15-009 221 South El Camino Real Planning Application

Simon Vuong, Associate Planner, gave the staff presentation.

Applicant gave a presentation on the project.

Planning Commission had the following questions:

- Were there any proposed hours for the loading zone? *Staff: the hours are to be consistent with those of Sleep Train, typically from 6am to 10 am*
- Front page of staff report indicates off-street loading zone, is this a typo? *Staff: yes, it should read on-street loading.*

The Chair opened the Public Comment period. The following people spoke: Joe Talcott, San Mateo; Carol Gillett, San Mateo; Andrew Lutomirski; David Zigal, San Mateo.

- Parking a large issue. 3 buildings on 3 lots. Construction on these corners combine various types of uses. Not sure these three corners can handle the parking load. Parking in this area is a disaster.
- Parking solutions are further out, beyond the time it will take to build these buildings.
- Is it realistic to think the workers at these buildings will take Caltrain to work? Or any other means of transportation?
- Recognize the benefit of the buildings
- Good solution for parking.
- Gateway to the downtown and many other good things.
- Balance need for cars with carbon footprints.
- Crossing El Camino Real is a problem for people who use the Library parking lot.
- Both projects are great.
- People travel outside the downtown and park in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Better signage for public parking is needed. For example, there are no signs indicating free parking at the Main Library on Friday and Saturday nights (until midnight).

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

Staff provided the following clarifications regarding the public comments

- *The issue with El Camino Real pedestrian crossing – The City Council accepted the Sustainable Streets Plan. There are some improvements in the plan and 3rd and El Camino Real was suggested. Reducing crossing length by bringing sidewalks out. Public Works Staff concurred.*
- *Downtown parking: major City Council priority. Emphasized through staff the importance of finding solutions for downtown parking. City staff spoke at length regarding the parking management plan, adjusting meter rates, etc.*
- *Parking In-lieu fee? How much? Review process? Fee is currently \$9,000. City Council has adopted a fee increase to \$12,000 effective 7/1/2015 with yearly increases over the next 3 years.*

The Planning Commission had the following questions:

- *Rather than have the loading berth on the street at 3rd Avenue, can it be moved to the alley? Staff: No. The alley is a designated Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) lane for emergency vehicles. No loading zone can be located there. Would the proposed loading zone be similar to the Sleep Train loading zone space –it would be a loading zone in the early hours and revert to regular parking at certain in the morning? Staff: Yes.*

- Please explain the parking in-lieu fee. *Staff: Projects located in the Central Parking Improvement District may opt to pay a Parking In-lieu Fee, which is a payment to meet the parking requirement in-lieu of providing the parking on site. The money is pooled together by the district to build parking facilities.*
- Please explain basis for environmental findings. *Staff: Basic premise is that the application has no impacts on various items and is in-fill development. Both of these corner projects have large square footage compared to residential. The air quality issue is under the threshold of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, qualifies as no impact. Does the downtown historic district have separate section for things to consider that relate to buildings in that area? Staff: Yes Downtown Historic Guidelines were followed.*
- Where would construction staging be located and where would workers park? There is no job site trailer and one cannot be located in the public right-of-way. *Staff: Will be handled by conditions of approval.*
- Conditions of Approval #8 and #9: please describe how above ground utilities and roof-top equipment will be given adequate screening. There are issues with free-standing utility vaults, underground? *Staff: Some utility equipment are designed to be integrated with the building such as building meters into an alcove in the side of a building and hidden behind an access door that is painted to look flush with the building.*
- Comment from the 12/9/14 study session – usage of outdoor space on the 3rd floor. Has that changed? Wider terrace for use? *Applicant: No, still for planting, landscaping only.*
- How long will it take before the building is occupied? *Applicant: Late 2016, early 2017.*

In closing, the Planning Commission welcomes the project back and is grateful the applicant persisted with it. The building looks stately and we are pleased how it sits on the corner. However, there is lots of white and there is a big blank wall on the north elevation. Window areas should display merchandise to increase foot traffic. Parking is a problem and it is limited in the immediate area, but paying in-lieu fees is the best approach. As a condition, the windows on the east elevation should be recessed 2”.

Motion made by Commissioner Massey to approve the project; 2nd by Commissioner Whitaker.
Vote: 4-0, motion passes.

ITEM 2 PA15-003, 2 East 3rd Avenue

Simon Vuong, Associate Planner, gave the staff presentation.

Applicant gave a presentation on the project.

The Planning Commission had the following questions:

- Does this project have a loading berth? *Staff: no, the small size of the project does not require one.*

The Chair opened the Public Comment Period. The following people spoke: Ann Fienman, San Mateo Downtown San Mateo Association (DSMA); Jocelyn Jamais, San Mateo. They had the following comments:

- Happy to see the corners developed.
- Like the synergy of both the projects; the sizes of the projects are good.
- Excited to see these developments. Parking issues are present. The DSMA is partnering with the city to mitigate parking problems.

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

The Planning Commission had the following comments/questions:

- Is this building in the downtown historic district? *Staff: Yes.*
- Does that imply any code or legal requirements with regards to side setbacks with the building next door? *Staff: The concern raised by the adjacent property owner pertains to light which is a building code requirement. The project was reviewed by the Building Division and there are no building code requirements which require a building setback to ensure light into an adjacent building. The adjacent building is at zero lot-line and there are no easements on the project site for the benefit of the adjacent building.*
- Larry Cannon, Design Review Consultant had four suggestions. *Applicant: Yes, we accepted #'s 1 and 2, but not 3 and 4.*
- Do you have tenants yet? *Applicant: We have a retail broker working with us but no tenants yet.*
- On the commercial data form it is indicated that there are 4 short-term and 6 long-term bicycle parking spaces. *Applicant: Yes, and tenants will be encouraged to take their bikes to work, walk.*
- I'm happy to see activity on this corner.
- Please consider the final placement of benches and street furniture. How that relates to other sidewalk amenities, trees, and pedestrian access.

In closing, the Planning Commission supports the project, which provides a more modern contrast to 221 S El Camino Real. Although it is a gateway to downtown, we still do not want it to look identical to 221 S El Camino Real. We would prefer a living/green wall or something more interesting as opposed to brick wall on south elevation. There are questions about artwork, but we will leave that to the Civic Arts Committee. The third floor appears top heavy with a fairly heavy overhang, and the corner element looks too angular. We like the color of the screening of the mechanical equipment. Encourage different bench design; street furniture should not impede access. Recommend supporting local labor force. It's a great project that activates the intersection and we're looking forward to it.

Motion by Vice-Chair Hugg to approve this project; 2nd by Commissioner Massey. Vote: 4-0
Motion passes.

ITEM 3

PA14-025 Gum Street Duplexes

Darcy Forsell, Zoning Administrator, gave the staff presentation.
The applicant did not make a presentation.

Commissioner Hugg has been recused from this item.

Planning Commission had the following questions for staff:

- Each unit has two separate entrances? *Staff: Yes, 1 main front door and one garage entrance.*

No notes from a neighborhood meeting? *Staff: this is a small project and therefore only an informal neighborhood meeting without the requirement for notes+*

Planning Commission had the following comments for staff:

- This project is a positive improvement to the neighborhood. Nice layout, close to Trinta Park and Hayward Park Caltrain Station.
- Is there a texture to the hardie panel
- Glazing on the windows as suggested by design consultant. *Staff: that has been added on and different windows put in to address the suggestion.*
- Two car garages have individual doors and want to ensure those are constructed. *Staff: condition of approval #1 requires building permit plans and construction to be in compliance with the approved planning application plans.*
- Sycamore trees that are shown on the plans, the tree on the left has lost a limb and has an open cavity with a major structural defect. Is the applicant/owner amenable to replacing the tree in the public right-of-way? *Applicant: Yes, we will replace it.*

Planning Commission had the following final comments:

- Satisfied with proposal. Good addition to neighborhood.
- Provides much needed three bedroom housing units.
- Likes design.
- Strongly encourages a taller fence along the southern property line on Gum Street knowing that they are near an industrial space and State Route 92.
- Likes shared driveways.
- Likes street trees.
- Thank you for working with staff so long to get it right.

Motion by Commissioner Massey, 2nd by Commissioner Whitaker to approve the project, with addition that the applicant can submit a variation to the fence height along the southern property line on Gum Street to be approved by the Zoning Administrator under the provisions of Condition of Approval Number 1.

Vote 3-0-1 (Hugg recused).

Communications/Announcements

1. Communications from staff
 - a. Chair Drechsler read the resolutions for Commissioner Massey and Vice-Chair Hugg.
 - b. Next Planning Commission meeting is on Thursday, June 25, 2015 at the Main Library, Oak Room. Discussion of the Brown Act and development review process.

Adjournment

There being no further items before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned at 11:52 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 2015.