

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2013,
BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN
ANTONIO ROAD, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA**

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Chair WHEELER and Commissioners MEADOWS, BLOCKHUS and KIRIK
ABSENT: Vice-Chair FARRELL
STAFF: Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD, Senior Planner DAHL and Assistant
Planners DAVIS and GALLEGOS

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Design Review Commission Minutes

Approve minutes of the regular meeting of September 4, 2013

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS, seconded by Commissioner BLOCKHUS, to approve the minutes of the September 4, 2013 regular meeting as-amended by Commissioner MEADOWS. THE MOTION PASSED BY A 3/0/1 VOTE, WITH COMMISSIONER KIRIK ABSTAINED.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. 13-V-08 – R. Mayer – 950 Seena Avenue

Variance to decrease the required distance between a main structure and an accessory structure to five feet, where the minimum distance required between such structures is 10 feet. The variance would allow an addition of 109 square feet to the rear of the house. *Project Planner: Gallegos*

Assistant Planner GALLEGOS presented the staff report recommending approval of variance application 13-V-08 subject to the listed findings.

The project architect, Rob Mayer, noted that the original development of the property was under Santa Clara County. There was no other public comment.

The Commission discussed the project and expressed their general support for the design and saw no impacts.

MOTION by Commissioner BLOCKHUS, seconded by Commissioner MEADOWS, to approve variance application 13-V-08 per the staff report findings. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. 13-V-06 and 13-SC-08 – J. Desai – 670 Torwood Lane

Variances from the permitted floor area ratio and single-story height limit to allow a second story addition to a nonconforming two-story house on a flag lot. The variances would allow for the redistribution of 94 square feet from the first story to the second story for a bathroom addition. *Project Planner: Davis*

Assistant Planner DAVIS presented the staff report, recommending approval of variance application 13-V-06 and 13-SC-08 subject to the recommended findings.

Commissioner MEADOWS stated that the notice was not posted at the street (near the front door) and asked about the carport floor area/coverage issue. Assistant Planner DAVIS clarified the intent of the carport floor area code.

The project architect, Lei Yuan, invited questions from the Commission. The property owner, Julie Desai, stated that she spoke to the neighbors about the project. There was no other public comment.

The Commission discussed the project and expressed their general support. Commissioner MEADOWS noted that the bathroom does not have great privacy impacts due to the orientation and Commissioner BLOCKHUS added that the bathroom design does not change privacy over the existing deck and removing the chimney makes the house appear smaller. Commissioner KIRIK commended the design to emphasize the front, was uncomfortable with the floor area swap, wanted the project to return with a master bath floor plan, and stated that adding new square footage should meet code. Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD explained the non-conformities, the history of the floor area regulations, and basis for the variance.

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS, seconded by Commissioner BLOCKHUS, to approve variance application 13-V-06 and design review application 13-SC-08, per the staff report findings and with the following condition:

- Keep the footprint of the addition and window no larger.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. 13-V-09 and 13-SC-12 – D. Giannella – 1060 Laureles Drive

Variance to allow a left side yard setback of three feet, where seven feet is required and design review for a two-story addition to an existing one-story house. The project includes an addition of 920 square feet on the first story and 817 square feet on the second story. *Project Planner: Dahl*

Senior Planner DAHL presented the staff report, recommending approval of variance application 13-V-09 and design review application 13-SC-12 subject to the findings and conditions, including reducing the scope of the balcony and adding privacy screening.

The property owner, Vishal Gauri, stated that he worked out the plan with staff, spoke to the neighbors and incorporated their suggestions, and to correct the setback means demolishing the entire house. Project architect, Davide Giannella stated that the small second story minimizes impacts, there are minimal windows to the sides, he tucked the balcony into the second story, and used a taller wall and screening to minimize the balcony impacts.

Neighbor Ramesh Nakra spoke in opposition to the project due to privacy concerns about the balcony. Neighbors Vikas Sehgal, Bill Bares, and Sharyl Montague spoke in support of the project,

and did not see any privacy issues with the balcony as designed. There was no other public comment.

The Commission discussed the project and the majority gave their general support. Commissioner KIRIK stated that increasing the non-conformity by increasing the wall height into the setback is akin to building a new house that could be reasonably built to code. The remainder of the Commission felt the variance seemed reasonable given the lot limitations, and, although the balcony was an issue, they could support it per staff's condition to reduce the balcony dimensions.

MOTION by Commissioner BLOCKHUS, seconded by Commissioner MEADOWS, to approve variance application 13-V-09.

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 3/1 VOTE, WITH COMMISSIONER KIRIK OPPOSED.

MOTION by Commissioner BLOCKHUS, seconded by Commissioner KIRIK, to approve design review application 13-SC-12 per the staff report findings and conditions.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION

5. 13-SC-16 – E. Ganitsky – 767 Santa Rita Avenue

Design review for a new, two-story house. The project includes 2,528 square feet on the first floor and 1,465 square feet on the second floor. *Project Planner: Gallegos*

Assistant Planner GALLEGOS presented the staff report, recommending approval of design review application 13-SC-16 subject to the listed findings and conditions.

The project applicant, Enrique Ganitsky, stated that as a result of neighbor input they improved the landscape plan. Neighbors Clinton Nagy, Jon Jacob, and Don Kinell spoke in opposition to the project stating concerns with scale, compatibility issues, and privacy impacts from the balcony. There was no other public comment.

The Commission discussed the project and expressed concerns with the bulky rear elevation, rear windows, and privacy impacts from the balcony.

MOTION by Commissioner KIRIK, seconded by Commissioner BLOCKHUS, to continue application 13-SC-16 with the following direction:

- Re-consider window design and reduce the privacy impacts toward the rear.
- Reduce bulk of the rear elevation.
- Reduce the privacy impact from the balcony.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

None.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair WHEELER adjourned the meeting at 8:56 PM.

David Kornfield, AICP
Planning Services Manager