

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2014,
BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN
ANTONIO ROAD, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA**

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Chair BLOCKHUS, Vice-Chair KIRIK, Commissioners WHEELER,
MEADOWS, and MOISON
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 April 16, 2014.

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS, seconded by Commissioner WHEELER, to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2014 regular meeting with amendments.
THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. 14-SC-09 – C. Haber – 660 Hollingsworth Drive

Design review for an addition of 51 square feet to the second story of an existing two-story house. *Project Planner: Dahl*

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS, seconded by Commissioner WHEELER, to approve design review application 14-SC-09 per the staff report findings and conditions.
THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC HEARING

3. 14-V-03 and 12-SC-29 – J. Fusco – 1075 Los Altos Avenue

Variance to allow a gable roof to project two feet into the daylight plane and design review for additions of 66 square feet on the first story and 330 square feet on the second story. *Project Planner: Davis*

Assistant Planner DAVIS presented the staff report recommending approval of variance application 14-V-03 and design review application 12-SC-29 subject to the listed findings and conditions.

Vice-Chair KIRIK asked if staff and the applicant had discussed alternatives to avoid the variance and Assistant Planner DAVIS replied yes.

Commissioner MEADOWS asked if the existing accessory structure was within code. Assistant Planner DAVIS replied that it was, clarified the accessory structure and the uses permitted.

Commissioner MOISON asked if the applicant planned to remove the window in the vestibule. Assistant Planner DAVIS said yes and conveyed that the distance to the rear neighbor was approximately 200 feet.

The project applicant/owner addressed the Commission in support of the project stating that she rents room to international students for hospitality. Neighbor Sybil Kramer objected to the new window on the side wall at the second story and said that the hetch hetchy was not as wooded as reported. There was no other public comment.

The Commission discussed the project and gave comments. Vice-Chair KIRIK said he could not support the variance and the project could easily be amended to avoid it. He also stated that he wanted the Building Division to confirm the stairway as legal access. Commissioner MOISON gave her support stating that it was a modest remodel that improves quality, has heavy vegetation from large oak trees, and saw no privacy issues toward the rear yard. Commissioner MEADOWS said that she might support the variance, but was not convinced and was more concerned about the “hodge podge” design. Commissioner WHEELER stated that perceived use was beyond their purview and was a code enforcement issue. He also said that the design could be revised to reduce privacy impact to the Via Del Pozo neighbor and to avoid or remove the variance all together. Chair BLOCKHUS stated the project could possibly be designed to minimize the variance, saw no privacy issues, and felt the Commission should continue the application.

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER, seconded by Vice-Chair KIRIK, to continue variance application 14-V-03 and design review application 12-SC-29 with the following direction:

- Reevaluate variance; and
- Provide landscaping at the rear for Via Del Poza.

THE MOTION FAILED 2/3, WITH BLOCKHUS, MEADOWS, AND MOISON OPPOSED.

Vice-Chair KIRIK stated that the design should conform to code. Commissioner WHEELER said the applicant should attempt to meet code and minimize privacy impacts. Commissioner MEADOWS said the design needed work.

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS, seconded by Vice-Chair KIRIK, to continue variance application 14-V-03 and table design review application 12-SC-29.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION

4. 14-SC-02 – M. Junaid – 1055 Ray Avenue

Design review for a new, two-story house with a basement. The project includes 2,223 square feet on the first floor and 616 square feet on the second floor. *Project Planner: Davis*

Assistant Planner DAVIS presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application 14-SC-02 subject to the listed findings and conditions. She summarized the changes, recommended approval, noted the post staff report correspondence received, and answered the Commissioner’s questions.

Property owner, Anand Ganesan, spoke in support of the project stating that their intent was to meet code, residential guidelines, and neighborhood concerns and made compromises to mitigate.

Property owner, Stefi Ganesan, stated that the neighborhood is close, that prior tree removals of adjacent lot exposed their neighborhood to The Marriott and privacy impacts, and they made extra effort to communicate with the neighbors. Project architect, Malika Junaid, showed the neighborhood context with two-story elements and heights and went over the design guidelines.

Neighbor Janniti Tenneti (speaking on behalf of John Fadley) stated concerns that the bulky design would result in reforestation of lots; the compound like structures are anti-social and excessive in bulk; the bulk or FAR should be reduced; and the two evergreen trees and sunlight loss are concerns. Neighbor Mariel Stoops stated bulk concerns from Rilma Lane, the project needs to reduce bulk by 2.5%, and seven families are in opposition to the project. Neighbor Patsy Mullen stated that this is a transitional neighborhood and it would be the first second story on Ray Avenue. She addressed the Rilma Lane neighborhood regarding the bulky structures on Ray that back up to the houses on Rilma that set a precedent of 15 feet in height on the rear property line that blocks the line of sight. Neighbor Darren Jones stated that the house does not fit in with the neighborhood context and second stories are not common; said that the spirit of the FAR limits was to limit bulk, and this project breaks that; and was concerned about the impact on the calm and tranquil street of Rilma Lane and the inappropriate removal of large screening trees. Neighbor Valerie Taylor spoke in support of the project. Neighbor Ramen Tenneti stated his biggest concern was the rear of the property, the clear story element, and loss of sunlight. Neighbor Carolyn Posch said she took offense to John Faley's letter since he removed 52 trees. Neighbor Mike Posch stated that he liked the development on the street; that the tree removals were appropriate; and the Rilma illustrations, although flashy, are distorted and exaggerated creating an unreasonable characterization. Neighbor Mike Stoops voiced concern with volume, bulk, and the design being out of scale. Neighbor Mary Skougaard said that there was no consideration of the rear properties, as they were not shown as adjacent structures on the plans; she objects to the privacy impacts and lack of screening to mitigate it. Neighbor Lue Bousse stated concern with the bulk of the clear story, but did not object to a second story. There was no other public comment.

Chair BLOCKHUS adjourned the meeting for a two minutes recess. When the meeting reconvened, he offered the project applicant a five minute rebuttal period.

Project architect, Malika Junaid, stated that during the early neighborhood meetings there was wide support for the project. She then showed new perspectives, since the front neighbor's views were not accurately shown with the line of sight. Landscape architect, Jason Bowman, stated that he mapped surroundings to 12 foot screening and medium trees for privacy, bulk, and Marriott mitigation.

The Commission discussed the project and expressed the following concerns: Commissioner MOISON said that she appreciated the redesign effort; that Ray Avenue is a transitional neighborhood and Rilma Lane is a consistent character neighborhood; she had issues with bulk, the clearstory at the rear and the attic/non-habitable areas; and that the FAR was maxed out, but the design was still bulky with the revisions. Commissioner MEADOWS stated that the FAR for the project meets regulations; she appreciated the changes that resolved the privacy issues; the non-habitable spaces still contribute and add bulk, but well within the setbacks; and it was not a matter of style for her, so she was inclined to support the project. Commissioner WHEELER said he visited the project site twice; evaluated both streets; commended the applicant for addressing the direction; commended staff's analysis and reevaluation of the neighborhood context; and said it was an abrupt change and would set an extreme precedent, and therefore he could not give his support. Vice-Chair KIRIK was in agreement with Commissioner WHEELER'S comments about the extreme mass and bulk; he recommended dropping the attic plate to eight or nine feet, reducing the attic question; said to reduce the rear element to a story and a half with approximately 14-foot plates; and

that the conventional eight-foot plate heights were only at the garage. Chair BLOCKHUS concurred with both Commissioner MEADOWS and Vice-Chair KIRIK; stated that he viewed the properties from the rear and the subject property is around one and a half feet higher, adding to height; and said there is a need for a well executed landscape plan for privacy, without blocking out sunlight .

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER, seconded by Commissioner MOISON, to deny design review application 14-SC-02 per the discussion that the design is out of context with the neighborhood.

THE MOTION PASSED 3/2, WITH MEADOWS AND KIRIK OPPOSED

Chair BLOCKHUS asked for reconsideration of the motion and clarification on denial vs. continuance of the application. Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD clarified the difference between the two processes stating that a continuance is more expeditious and revisions can be made; and denial would be a new application that can be appealed to City Council.

MOTION by Chair BLOCKHUS, seconded by Commissioner MEADOWS, to reconsider the previous motion. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION by Vice-Chair KIRIK, seconded by Commissioner WHEELER, to continue application 14-SC-02, with the following direction:

- Lower side walls to a nine or ten feet height plate;
- Reduce the living room to a 14-foot plate height;
- Consider reducing intermediate roof lines; and
- Encourage outreach to rear neighbors.

THE MOTION FAILED 2/3, WITH Vice-Chair KIRIK and Commissioner MOISON in favor of continuance.

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER, seconded by Commissioner MEADOWS, to deny design review application 14-SC-02 per the applicant's request.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. 14-SC-06 – D. Harris – 231 Valencia Drive

Design review for a first and second story addition to a one-story house. The project includes an addition of 138 square feet on the first story and 981 square feet on the second story.

Project Planner: Gallegos

Assistant Planner GALLEGOS presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application 14-SC-06 subject to the listed findings and conditions; provided a revised condition No. 5 to remove the attic windows to better reflect the staff report; noted the late correspondence in opposition to the second story addition and privacy concerns; and answered Commissioner questions.

Designer Sean Owen, speaking on behalf of project architect and applicant Daryl Harris, stated that the owner had the neighbor's support and opposed staff's revised condition No. 5.

The Commission discussed the project and gave the following comments:

Commissioner MOISON gave her support for the project because it minimizes height and conforms to the neighborhood character and guidelines.

Commissioner MEADOWS stated that it might be an abrupt change.

Commissioner WHEELER stated he had reservations, that it was good “step” into two stories, and supports keeping the attic windows for bulk reduction.

Commissioner KIRIK concurred with the other Commissioners; said it was a creative remodel; and that the two-story wall at the kitchen facing the court could be broken up with a porch or another good solution.

Commissioner BLOCKHUS agreed with the other Commissioners and supported keeping the windows.

MOTION by Commissioner MEADOWS, seconded by Commissioner MOISON, to approve design review application 14-SC-06 per the staff report findings and conditions without the revised Condition No. 5.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

None.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner BLOCKHUS adjourned the meeting at 9:50 PM.

David Kornfield, AICP
Planning Services Manager