

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 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, Commissioners MEADOWS, and WHEELER
ABSENT: Vice-Chair KIRIK and Commissioner MOISON
STAFF: Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD and Assistant Planners 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 3, 2014.

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER, seconded by Commissioner MEADOWS, to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2014 regular meeting as-amended by Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD to clarify the names regarding the prior review of the 1145 Laureles Drive item. THE MOTION PASSED BY A 2/0/1 VOTE, WITH CHAIR BLOCKHUS ABSTAINED.

DISCUSSION

2. **14-SC-24 – Chapman Design Assoc. – 1145 Laureles Drive**
Design review for a new, two-story house. The project includes 2,458 square feet on the first floor and 1,446 square feet on the second floor. *Project Planner: Gallegos*

Assistant Planner GALLEGOS presented the staff report recommending consideration of design review application 14-SC-24 per the Design Review Commission's direction and subject to findings and conditions. He summarized two neighbor letters received after the report publication one in favor; one concerned about landscape needs; and read an additional letter from absent Vice-Chair KIRIK restating his concerns about the proposal.

Applicant and property owner Mr. Tenta stated that new homes use a nine-foot tall second story wall plate and noted taller structures at 1183 Laureles Drive, 1060 Laureles Drive and 1079 Orilla Court and he opposed a lower eight-foot tall plate on his second story because it gives a "squashed" appearance, making the front porch more prominent. He disputed the staff's plate height measurements as incorrect indicating that the second story at 1060 Laureles Drive had 14-foot tall plate due to the shed roof form, and that the second story at 1183 Laureles Drive had nine-foot tall plates.

He also said that adding columns to the porch would make it more prominent or crowded, that he would consider additional trees as an alternative, and provided an additional letter of support from a

nearby resident. Project designer Walter Chapman stated that property rights have been diminished over time by changes in the City's zoning regulations: overall height has gone from 30 feet to 27 feet, the daylight plane has no exceptions, and the design guidelines and neighborhood compatibility worksheet are used to minimize towers and tall elements and provide a narrower context for considering a project's character.

Neighbors Richard Bartlett, Payne Freret, Mike George, Lynn Freret and Richard Yee spoke in support of the project. Mr. Bartlett stated that 29 percent of the houses in the neighborhood are two-story and that they reflect variety of styles, and the project meets the "defined" zoning rules. Mrs. Freret stated that the Design Review Commission's recommendation seems unreasonable and would need to lower both wall plates to keep the design proportions. Neighbor Dr. Rulison stated his view that that the prior hearing did not consider their concerns as the most impacted property; that the prior review was imbalanced; and that his current letter explains an agreement that he has with the applicant that landscaping at a height of 11 feet in height would preserve his privacy from the balcony, that the landscaping should extend 90 feet from the rear property line and that the landscape screening should be implemented prior to the occupancy of the project.

Commissioner MEADOWS stated that she spoke ex parte with Walter Chapman to discuss design review process questions. The Commission discussion included that the second floor wall plate heights seem in range in the area; that the passive balcony and the landscape screening mitigates privacy impacts; the relative bulk and mass of the second story; the project appeared too large in relation to the immediate neighborhood context that is single-story in character, and that for design review purposes the immediate character included the 12 or so surrounding houses; privacy seems maintained, but seems like a lot of landscape mitigation proposed as a hedge; that the relative support of the neighborhood is noted; that the orientation of the property to the street should be considered as a hardship and might justify allowing the bulkier appearance, and that the changes to the wall heights and window header would reduce the bulk.

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER to continue design review application 14-SC-24 subject to the original staff report recommended direction and the following additional direction to:

- Reduce the appearance of bulk and mass on the second story in relation to neighboring structures.

THE MOTION FAILED DUE TO LACK OF A SECOND.

MOTION by Commissioner BLOCKHUS, seconded by Commissioner WHEELER, to approve design review application 14-SC-24 per the following conditions:

- Lower the second story wall plate height to eight feet;
- Lower the second story window header height to seven feet; and
- Lower the eave line of the element above the entry to the second story eave.

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 2/1 VOTE, WITH COMMISSIONER MEADOWS OPPOSED.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

None.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair BLOCKHUS adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.

David Kornfield, AICP
Planning Services Manager