

**MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON THURSDAY, MARCH 20,
2014, BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN
ANTONIO ROAD, LOS ALTOS,
CALIFORNIA**

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Chair MOISON, Vice-Chair BODNER, Commissioners BRESSACK, BAER,
JUNAID, McTIGHE and LORELL
STAFF: Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD and Senior Planner DAHL

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Planning and Transportation Commission Minutes

Recommendation to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2014 regular meeting.

MOTION by Commissioner McTIGHE, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2014 regular meeting.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION

2. Design Tour of Recent Projects

Discussion of recent projects.

Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD introduced the projects that were on the tour and summarized the study session agenda report.

There was no public comment.

The Commission discussed the various projects of the Design Tour and offered the following comments:

4400 El Camino Real (multiple-family residential)

- Needs genuine architectural details. (BRESSACK)
- Window quality is poor and there is no variation at the ground level in material, spatial relationship and articulation. (BAER)
- With regard to the context of El Camino Real the project appropriately “holds” El Camino but it has a dated style and needs better architectural details. (BRESSACK)
- The townhouse element at the rear was the best part of the project, but is not seen. (McTIGHE)
- It's important to keep in mind the project was a product of the time and first major development on El Camino Real. Was supported in that context, as it replaced a vacant under used, under cared for lot. (LORELL)
- We still need to set standard of excellence. (BAER)

5100 El Camino Real (multiple-family residential)

- The change to the two-story entry element facing Distel was not positive and added handicapped ramp takes away from the landscape plan. (BAER/JUNAID)
- Landscape soil, choice and maintenance is suffering. (BRESSACK)
- The project has better materials, better articulation, and better paint colors than the 4400 El Camino Real project and give the project a better perceived quality. (BAER)

396 First Street (multiple-family residential)

- Poor quality materials especially the stone, and the balcony railings do not reflect the character of the proposed design (BODNER)
- Cheap materials used. (BAER)
- Similar colors detracted from the design and there should be more differentiation of the elements. (McTIGHE)
- Materials and design looked better in the plan and there is a landscaping issue in that is too sparse and not as abundant as implied on plans. (JUNAID)
- The rendering provided was from an unrealistic view and the project used a cheap roof tile material. (BRESSACK)
- Project does not have a pedestrian feel at the street and the windows are too high from the first level to add to the pedestrian streetscape. (BAER)
- The Planning Commission and Architecture and Site Review Committee wanted higher quality windows, but it was not desired by the developer and the developer ignored the concern and City Council approved it without the recommended quality. (BAER)
- Details are lacking and building is “voluminous” from the side. In hindsight the Commission should have denied the plan and let the developer appeal to Council. (BRESSACK)
- We should have focused on actual material samples, we were deceived by the plans. (JUNAID)
- Should watch out for “fake” Spanish designs and insist on traditional architectural details appropriate to the proposed style. (BRESSACK)
- The project seems too bulky and the design should have reduced its scale by including two-story elements in a significant way. (BAER)
- Should vary color to mitigate bulk. (MOISON)
- Should do a study of what colors tone on tone, landscape changes, and roof changes for the City Council tour (BRESSACK)

373 Pine Lane (institutional)

- Project should have better landscaping at the rear as it looms over the school and impacts the Spagnoli Court properties too. However, the property owners did not want it in this case. (LORELL)
- Should focus on larger, fast growing trees (LORELL)
- We should factor that condominium HOA’s often over trim landscaping for a cleaner more easily maintained look. (MOISON)
- Good use, architectural details and residential scale. (BAER)
- Good setbacks too and mature trees were kept that helps it fit in well. (BAER)
- Articulated and differentiated elements are appropriate to the style and help the large building fit in. (BRESSACK)

950 N. San Antonio Road (mixed-use office and multiple-family residential)

- Good landscaping with larger trees, but trees along driveway not doing well. (BAER)
- On City Council's tour, the City Arborist should provide input on landscaping standards. (BRESSACK)
- Good elements and landscaping. (BAER)
- Good colors and materials. (McTIGHE)
- Elements are articulated well such as by having their own roof rather than just changes in wall plane. (BRESSACK)
- Looks better than planned. (JUNAID)
- Nicely organized material use adds to interest and character (BODNER)
- Large tree sizes at planning were nicely used. Staff should research site limitations (e.g. vaults, utilities, etc. that affect landscape) that affect the feasibility of the landscape plan. (MOISON)
- The driveway is easy to miss and should be marked better including the garage with visual cues and wayfinding. (BAER)
- The south driveway has reduced visibility to the sidewalk due to the neighbor's hedge. (BAER)

343 Second Street (office)

- Open space at the corner of property, was smaller than approved. (BAER)
- Parking lots are important too and well done in this project. (MOISON)
- Good material use and good lighting. (McTIGHE)
- Generous landscape achieved. (BAER/BRESSACK)
- Questions the pedestrian scale since the building faces inward. Looks better than drawings. (BAER)

240 Third Street (mixed-use office and multiple-family residential)

- Blank side wall is issue. (Universal)
- Sidewalk needs to be wider on the parking plaza driveway side. (BRESSACK)
- Different elements do not have the same scale reducing effects like the project at 960 N. San Antonio Road. (McTIGHE)
- Not a warm design, lack of pedestrian scale, and sterile. (BAER)
- Good design, not "village character" per se, but supports downtown core and that is okay on the fringe (JUNAID/BRESSACK)
- Should consider more landscape to soften appearance. (McTIGHE)
- This building drew in a tenant from San Antonio Road to downtown, which is great and reflects the high quality. (MOISON)
- Notes that the trees are bare. (LORELL)
- Fringe development downtown looks to the future. (BRESSACK)

ADJOURNMENT

Chair MOISON adjourned the meeting at 8:00 P.M.