

City of Los Altos City Council Meeting

Code Amendment Application 18-CA-03

August 27, 2019

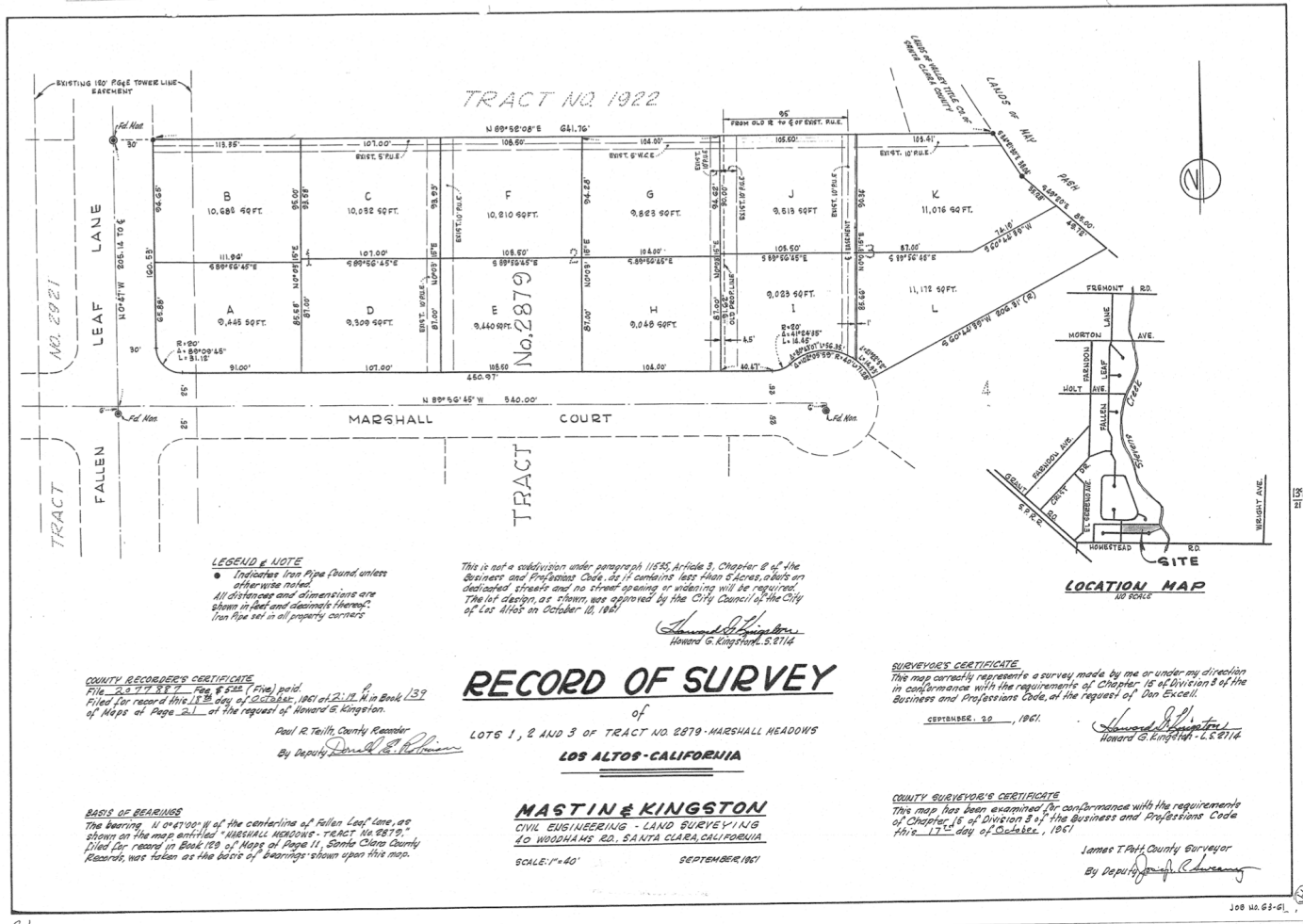
7:00 PM

History

- May 2017 visited Planning Department to determine zoning criteria for our home at 1680 Stevens Place – “Sorry, you can’t change anything!”
- This started a two year long odyssey to get a complete building code for our entire neighborhood.
- There was some belief that this lapse was the result of Los Altos acquiring the property from the county but this was dispelled by a visit to the county recorders’ office.

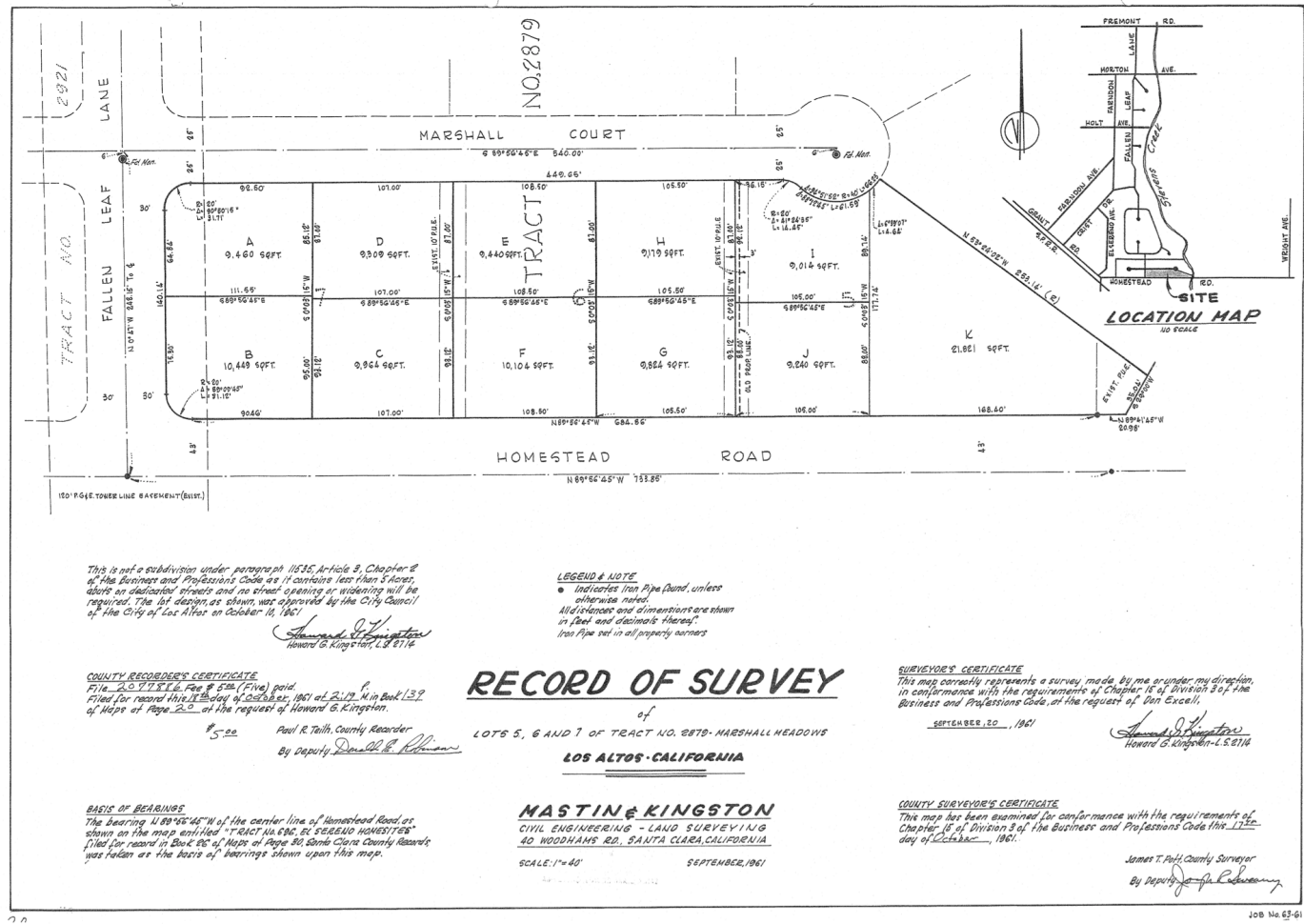
Subdivided Marshall Meadow

“Approved by the regular meeting of the Los Altos City Council October 10, 1961”

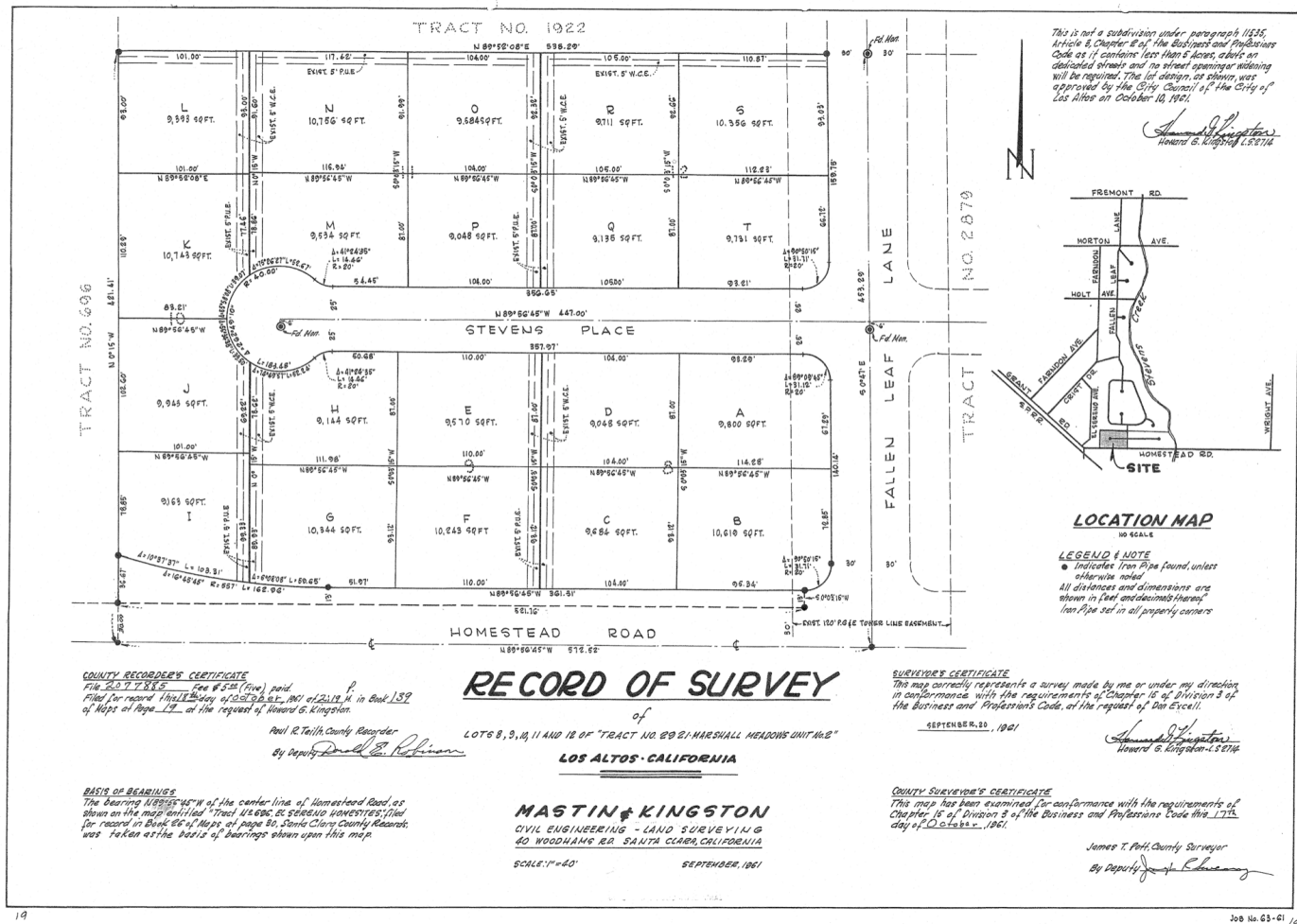


Subdivided Marshall Meadow

“Approved by the regular meeting of the Los Altos City Council October 10, 1961”



Subdivided Marshall Meadow Unit 2



“Approved by the regular meeting of the Los Altos City Council October 10, 1961”

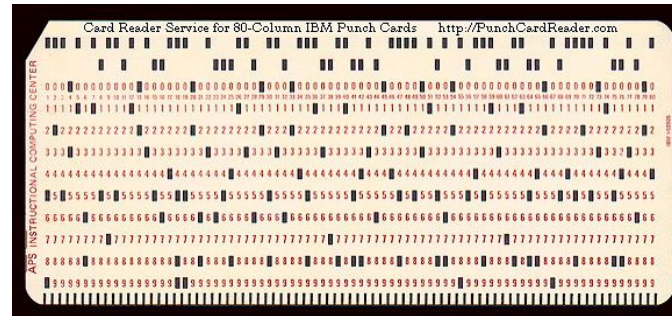
The Red Highlighted Clause Never Happened

Excerpt From Current R3-4.5 Code

- 14.16.050 - Coverage, front yard, side yards, rear yard, distances between structures, off-street parking, and height of structures (R3-4.5).
- The entire site area shall be planned and developed as an integrated unit with such coverage, front yard, side yard, rear yard, distance between structures, off-street parking, and height of structure requirements **as may be approved by the council after the consideration of a report of the commission. . .**
- And it has remained this way for 58 years.

Why Did This Happen?

- Data on population in 1961 VS today
 - US population 180 M vs 340 M
 - Santa Clara County 642 k vs 1.988 M
- My grandfather sold his apricot ranch in Campbell to IBM to make punch cards



- Growth in Santa Clara was very high with nearly a new subdivision tract approved each working day
- House size in 1961 vs 2018
 - 1284 sf vs 2657 sf
- During this era of explosive growth and change some details were left behind such as a building code for Marshall Meadows

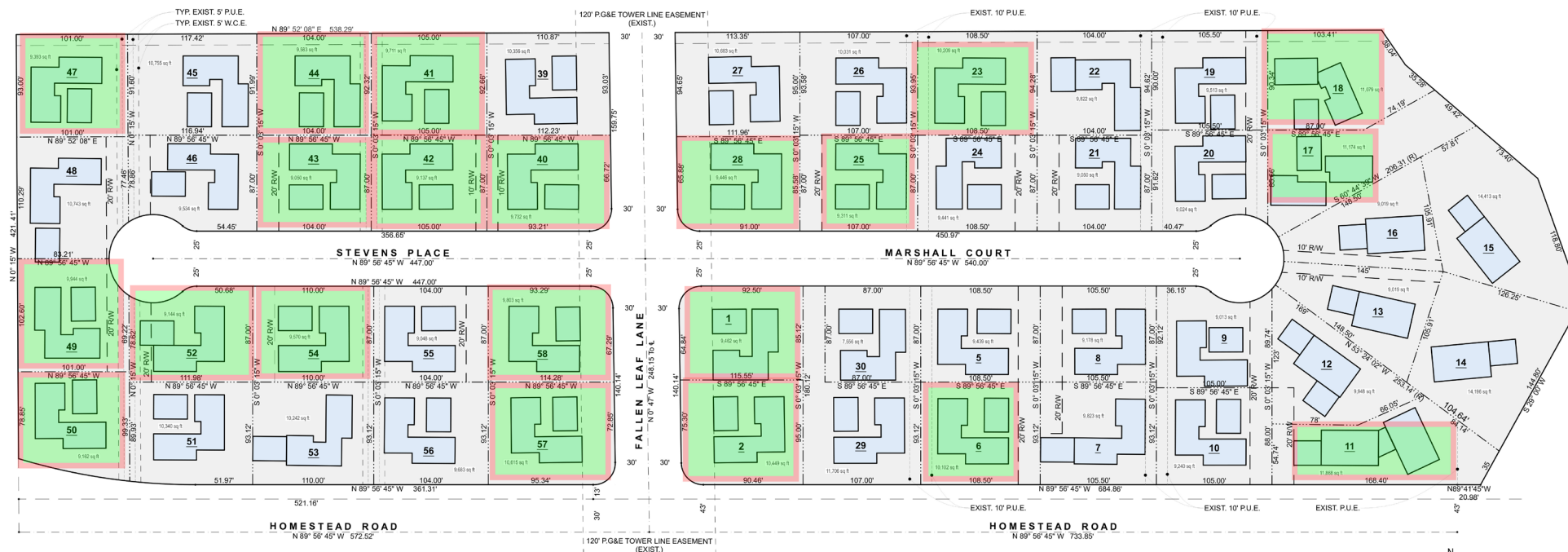
Planning Commission Study Sessions

Two Stories vs One

- The issue of two stories brought forth the only significant comments at the Planning Commission study sessions and meeting
 - There are 48 duplex units in the Marshall Meadow/2 development and there are 14 single family (R1-10) homes that are adjacent to us
 - R1-10 single family homes adjacent to Mountain Meadow are allowed to consider remodeling with two stories
 - Four of Marshall Meadow Development homes were originally built as two stories
 - Four R1-10 homes adjacent to Marshall Meadow Development are currently two stories

Neighborhood Owners Support

- We initially reached out to owners with two letters asking for support
- The green indicates the 21 owners that have signed letters of support
- Receiving almost half positive responses from an unsolicited letter is remarkable



Single Story Overlay

- There was some opinion expressed that allowing a second story was not strongly supported at the second Planning Commission study session.
- Approximately half of the properties are not owner occupied and many of those owners live remotely thus making them unlikely to appear at the Planning Commission meeting
- We quickly sent letters to owners and asked if they would sign a letter stating that they would vote against a "single-story overlay" for our neighborhood
- We received 10 signed return letters, nearly a quarter of all owners

Neighborhood Owners Support

- The red indicates the 10 owners that have signed a "no single story overlay"
- Copies of the letters are available (in the Planning Commission package)



Lot Area Coverage

- Planning staff recommended a 40% coverage
- There was no public comment opposing 40%
- There were only 5 members of the Planning Commission present when this came up for a vote and they voted it down 3 for and 2 opposed (with 4 required to pass)
- When a vote was proposed for 35%, one of the commissioners confirmed that they would vote against 35% as they believed MM2 deserved 40%
- What would that have meant to vote down all the amendments?

Then What?

- The commissioners asked what the applicant wanted?
- To get a amendment passed so we can move on the the City Council and then get on with our lives

Conclusion

We urge the City Council to approve the draft amendment to R3-4.5 with 40% lot coverage as originally drafted