

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2019 BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN ANTONIO ROAD, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Chair Samek, Vice-Chair Lee, Commissioners Ahi, Bodner, Bressack and Meadows
ABSENT: Commissioner Marek
STAFF: Community Development Director Biggs, Senior Planner Golden, and Assistant City Attorney Ethan Walsh

STUDY SESSION

1. **18-PPR-09 – Ivan Margaretic – 343 Main Street**
Design review study session for a new two-story mixed-use development. The proposal includes 1,925 square feet of commercial area and a 498 square-foot carport with two parking spaces at the first story, and a two-bedroom condominium unit at the second story. *Project Planner: Gallegos* **This project was continued to the November 7, 2019 PC meeting.**

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

2. **Planning Commission Minutes**
Approve minutes of the regular meeting of October 3, 2019.

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Meadows, seconded by Commissioner Bressack, the Commission approved the minutes from the October 3, 2019 Regular Meeting as written.

The motion was approved (6-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Samek, Lee, Ahi, Bodner, Bressack and Meadows

NOES: None

ABSENT: Marek

3. **19-D-03 and 19-SD-02 – Dutchints Development LLC – 444-450 First Street**
Design Review and Subdivision applications for a new four-story 26-unit multiple-family building with two levels of underground parking. The project includes four affordable units and is seeking an incentive for increased height. The site which includes 444-450 First Street is approximately 0.34-acres and currently has a 10,000 square foot commercial building that is proposed to be demolished. *Project Planner: Golden* **Request to continue to the November 7, 2019 PC meeting.**

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Bressack, seconded by Commissioner Meadows, the Commission continued agenda item 3 to the November 7, 2019 PC meeting without discussion.

The motion was approved (6-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Samek, Lee, Ahi, Bodner, Bressack and Meadows

NOES: None

ABSENT: Marek

PUBLIC HEARING

4. **19-CA-01 – City of Los Altos – Planning Process Amendments**

Code amendments to the City’s design review and use permit review processes (Zoning Code Chapters 14.76, 14.78 and 14.80) to increase the notification area to 1,000 feet for new development, clarify the role of the Complete Streets Commission in the design review process, formalize the public notification requirements for design review study sessions, clarify the public notification process for single-family variances, update the review requirements for use permits and design review applications and remove antiquated and outdated language. *Project Planner: Biggs*
This item was continued from the October 3, 2019 Planning Commission meeting.

Community Development Director Biggs presented the staff report recommending approval of amendments to Zoning Code Chapters 14.78 and 14.80 to the City Council subject to the listed findings.

Public Comment

None.

Commissioner Bodner stated that she does not believe the increased notification distance is necessary.

Commissioner Bressack agreed with Commissioner Bodner stating that there isn’t a need to increase mailings to a 1000-foot radius.

Chair Samek agreed that the extra need extra notification area is not needed.

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Bressack, seconded by Commissioner Bodner, the Commission recommended approval of amendments to Zoning Code Chapters 14.78 and 14.80 to the City Council, except for the 1000-foot radius notification recommendation.

The motion was approved (6-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Samek, Lee, Ahi, Bodner, Bressack and Meadows

NOES: None

ABSENT: Marek

Commissioner Bodner recused herself for agenda item #5 as she has interest in property within 500 feet of the project site and was excused for the remainder of the meeting.

5. **18-D-02, 18-UP-04 and 18-SD-02 – Loyola Corners Estates, LLC – 999 Fremont Avenue**

Design review, use permit and a tentative map for a new two-story mixed-use residential/commercial building with 1,500 square feet of commercial on the first floor three condominium units on the second floor. This item was continued from the September 19, 2019 PC meeting. *Project Planner: Golden*

Senior Planner Golden presented the staff report, recommending to the City Council approval of design review, use permit and subdivision applications 18-D-02, 18-UP-04 and 18-SD-02 per the findings and conditions contained in the draft resolution.

Applicant/owner Greg Bunker presented the project and gave general comments on the evolution of the project and that the revisions to the design of the project intended to address Commissioner comments and community concerns.

Project architect Peter Sandholdt answered questions and went over the trash enclosure area stating that there will be an opening allowing visibility into and out of the garage, but they would offer to provide security to the garage parking spaces with a gate or security. He stated that the lift system has a backup generator and it will be a puzzle lift system.

Public Comment

Unincorporated Santa Clara County resident Jan Thomas expressed safety concerns regarding bike lanes and is opposed to the project because of the lack of bike lanes on A Street.

Amy Feldman representing Loyola Corners Estates gave her support for the project and the additional housing it will provide.

Los Altos resident Don Andersen noted his concerns with construction impacts, soil contamination due to the former garage and gasoline station use on the site; construction vehicle parking; traffic congestion, garage entrance location; noise; and the bulk and mass of the structure. He noted businesses require pedestrian access and deliveries.

Los Altos resident Nancy Martin stated concerns with the safety of children coming down from the Hills on a bike path to nowhere; said the City should buy the land and protect it and the community.

Los Altos resident Sandra Salinger stated that the building doesn't fit with the Loyola Corners Vision plan and an office use is not allowed at the first story.

Los Gatos resident Terry Wild gave his support for the project.

Los Altos resident Tara Galofshon stated her support for the project and said it will add value to the area.

Los Gatos resident Darren Fadaie noted he works in Los Altos and gave his support for the project and additional housing it will bring. He said the project will reduce the number of cars due to the elimination of the drive-thru window at the coffee shop.

Saratoga resident Amanda Stuart stated her support for the project and the design of the building.

Monica Bunker stated she works at the current site; has not seen bike riders cross this property; it has been a financial burden trying to get plans for a project approved at this site; the coffee shop is not a successful business; and that the building is old and not visibly pleasing.

Saratoga resident Thomas Medeiros gave his support for the project, but stated concern with the bike lane and safety of children bikers.

Unincorporated Santa Clara County resident Paula Stanek expressed concerns with the lack of bike lanes on A Street and said that the parcel should be converted into open space.

Los Altos resident Debbie Skelton said she is opposed to the building; disputes the letter from the applicant's attorney's; added the Loyola Plan is not a moving target and was only changed in 2017; referenced the two-story specific plan limitation; and concluded by saying the project does not comply with the Specific Plan and zoning rules.

Los Altos resident Linda Roy stated her support for a denser building, but it needs to be balanced with street life and it should be a taller building with more pedestrian space at the sidewalks.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Ahi:

- Project complies with objective standards;
- Building is successful at the corners with massing pushed back;
- Changes at Miramonte and Fremont make it safer and more dynamic;
- Parking is a concern given vehicular flow with multiple cars; and
- Pedestrian opening into garage should be closed off for safety.

Commissioner Bressack:

- Intense development for small lot;
- Meets objective criteria;
- Traffic concern similar to the current downtown hotel, but choices were made not to address issues previously identified;
- Original Loyola Corners Plan wanted this to be an open space, but Council has not designated dollars to purchase the parcel;
- The project has evolved over a long period, but current plan is the most successful one to date to bring forward;
- Meets the objective criteria in the Specific Plan and Codes; and
- The garage needs to be secure with a transparent security gate.

Commissioner Meadows:

- The owner has submitted a proposal which needs to be reviewed against the Zoning and Specific Plan;
- Applicant costs to bring a project forward are not relevant to the decision on the discretionary applications the Commission has to consider;
- Reflected on the Loyola Corners Specific Plan Update Resolution approved in 2017 which the project complies with;
- Trimming corners of building improves safety at the site.

Vice-Chair Lee:

- Project complies with the Specific Plan, Zoning, etc.;
- Concerned with some of the features with regards to sidewalk and street level features;
- Concerned about no sidewalk on the A Street side;
- Concerned that there is no landscaping/trees on the Miramonte Avenue side;
- Concerned about the Miramonte Avenue elevation architecturally;
- Greenery on 2nd story is a start, but concerned overall with the architecture of the building; and
- Noted trimming the corner of the building on A street/Fremont is unnecessary, and the column leaves the volume of space unresolved.

Chair Samek:

- Concerned that there is no sidewalk on A Street;
- Concerned about the Miramonte Avenue Elevation. Windows into trash room do not solve the concern he has with the architecture of this elevation. There should have been more creative solution.
- Noted this is challenging because doesn't agree with previous direction given by the Commission;
- The planter box on the 2nd story doesn't work well;
- Garage area needs to be secured with a transparent gate;

- Needs more greenery/trees along Miramonte Avenue;
- Building feels more resolved if not trimmed at the first story;
- Not concerned about A Street/Fremont Avenue corner being close to the street;
- Staircase should be connected to the garage for direct access; and
- Good character building with some minor changes.

Commissioner Bressack asked if there can be some planters installed on the first story on the Miramonte Avenue side?

Vice-Chair Lee said the sidewalk along the Miramonte side is too narrow to accomplish this.

Commissioner Meadows asked if green walls can be added along Miramonte?

Commissioner Ahi stated that the rounded corner was to address safety. Thought that the corner would be trimmed on the first and second stories, and the corner at A Street and Fremont is less of a safety concern now that the plan has been discussed more.

At this point the Applicant requested a decision on the project as presented, with the option of either trimming the corners or leaving the corners and noted he was aggregable to conditions that required: Prefers to allow project to move forward with recommended conditions to:

- Addition of a security gate or system at the garage; and
- Restoration of the building the corner to a full two-story elements at the Fremont Avenue and A Street corner.

Discussion on Design Treatments:

Vice-Chair Lee said retention of the trim to the building corner will address safety concerns, and the corners should be trimmed on the second floor as well. He added the design feels awkward, especially the post at A Street, and the sidewalk treatment needs significant changes and greenery/trees.

Commissioner Ahi said to restore the corner of the building at A Street. Make the treatment on the second story the same as first story at the Miramonte/Fremont Avenue corner. Consider adding some greenery on the Miramonte side, but it will be challenging. Maybe add some greenery where the trash room is inset.

Commissioner Bressack said the project needs greenery, but at crossroads on how to move forward to Council.

Chair Samek stated the need for some greenery and encouraged the applicant to address it.

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Meadows, seconded by Commissioner Ahi, the Commission recommended to the City Council approval of design review, use permit, and subdivision applications 18-D-02, 18-UP-04 and 18-SD-02 per the findings and conditions contained in the resolution and with the following direction to change the plans as follows:

- A Street/Fremont Avenue – Restore original two-story corner element;
- Fremont Avenue/Miramonte Corner – add trim second story similar to first story;
- Include a gate/security system at the openings to the garage level;
- Explore opportunities for greenery/trees on Miramonte Avenue; and
- Re-evaluate the planter boxes on the second story because they are not accessible.

The motion was approved (4-1) by the following vote:

AYES: Samek, Ahi, Bressack and Meadows

NOES: Lee

RECUSED: Bodner

ABSENT: Marek

The Commission took a three-minute recess.

DISCUSSION

6. Topics for Joint Meeting with the City Council

A discussion on potential topics for the joint meeting with the City Council. This item was continued from the October 3, 2019 Planning Commission meeting.

The Commission discussed and evaluated the list of topics provided in the agenda report and noted they were satisfactory and elected to have these as topics for discussion subject to switching the order of the last two topics.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Meadows reported on a land use workshop that she took part in.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Staff provided an overview of upcoming projects on the Commissioner's meeting agendas.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Samek adjourned the meeting at 9:38 P.M.

Jon Biggs
Community Development Director