MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020 BEGINNING AT 7:05 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN ANTONIO ROAD, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

Please Note: Per California Executive Order N-29-20, the Commissions will meet via teleconference only. Members of the Public may call (773) 231-9226 to participate in the conference call (Meeting ID: 148 147 4723 or via the web at https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1481474723. Members of the Public may only comment during times allotted for public comments. Public testimony will be taken at the direction of the Commission Chair and members of the public may only comment during times allotted for public comments. Members of the public are also encouraged to submit written testimony prior to the meeting at DesignReviewCommission@losaltosca.gov **or** Planning@losaltosca.gov**. Emails received prior to the meeting will be included in the public record.**

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT:	Chair Ma, Vice-Chair Bishop, and Commissioners Glew, Harding (arrived before Item 2) and Kirik
STAFF:	Planning Services Manager Persicone and Senior Planner Golden

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 June 3, 2020.

Action: Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Bishop, seconded by Commissioner Kirik, the Commission approved the minutes from the June 3, 2020 regular meeting as written.
The motion was approved (4-0) by the following vote:
AYES: Kirik, Bishop, Glew, and Ma
NOES: None
ABSENT: Harding

DISCUSSION

2. **SC20-0002 – Steve Collom, RH Associates Architects – 1035 Ray Avenue**
   Design review application for a new two-story house. The project includes 2,137 square feet at the first story and 1,144 square feet at the second story. This project was continued from the June 3, 2020 DRC meeting. *Project Planner: Golden*

Senior Planner Golden presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application SC20-0002 subject to the listed findings and conditions. He then answered Commissioner questions.

Property owners Nelson and Nellie Liu spoke about the project.

Project landscape architect Pam Jones spoke regarding the landscaping for the property.

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Project Architect Steve Collum spoke about the modified design of the house per the DRC direction, and other previous recent DRC approvals of rear yard balconies for similar properties, and requested approval of the project since it is designed similarly to other approved projects in other neighborhoods throughout Los Altos.

The applicant answered specified Commission questions regarding the project.

Public Comment

Mariel Stoops, 1030 Rilma Lane, spoke in opposition to the project stating privacy concerns with the second story deck and windows, light pollution, and lack of privacy screening due to the existing mature landscaping being taken out and new smaller landscaping that will be put in after the house is built. Also expressed concern regarding the proposed trees were too tall and close to her property.

David Crawford, 1027 Ray Avenue, spoke in support of the project, the new landscaping, A/C location. and did not have any privacy concerns with the second story deck or otherwise.

Julia Weiner, 1045 Ray Avenue, gave her support for the project, the landscaping, and outreach made by the applicant. Requested immediate removal of unmaintained trees since they have attracted pests.

Mike Stoops, 1030 Rilma Lane, spoke in opposition to the project stating loss of privacy from the second story balcony and windows, light pollution at night, and lack of privacy when the existing landscaping is taken out and the new privacy screening may not survive or become mature enough to properly screen new residence.

Stephen Vernon, attorney for Mr. and Mrs. Stoops, stated that the Stoops support adding a second story to the project and their main concern is about privacy impacts from the rear facing balcony and glare from the second story windows at night. He stated that the proposal is out of character with the neighborhood per Section 4.1 of the Residential Design Guidelines and impacts should be mitigated with a revised design.

Kate Disney, 184 Del Monte Avenue, stated that the project has features that prevent it from being a good neighbor design. She asked the Commission to condition the project based on the following points: 1) the size of the balcony is large enough to enable active uses, so the balcony width should be reduced to avoid any active uses, and as it is the balcony is primarily an architectural feature; 2) the railing around the balcony is partially translucent and due to the large floor to ceiling glass doors leading to the balcony, it is likely there will be significant light intrusions into the Stoops property, so the balcony railing should be completely solid to protect both the parties privacy and mitigate any light intrusions; 3) the balcony is going to require exterior lighting and it should be minimized to a single light that is mounted below the top of the railing or it should be a shrouded light; 4) there is potential for stairwell lights to be left on at night, therefore it would be more respectful to the neighbors if the stairwell glazing was eliminated or reduced by 50 percent; and 5) this large project needs effective screening and the proposed will probably be sufficient for the first ten years, but it may not provide adequate screening once mature. She would like to suggest the Commission condition its approval on the applicant planting three Category II evergreen screening trees at least 15 feet in from the rear fence, requiring a hedge row at the fence as recommended by the arborist Don Cox, and a recommends a Category I street tree at the front of the house along the public right-of-way. If the project is approved with these conditions, she believes it will be a successful project.

Anand Ganesan, 1055 Ray Avenue, said he was in the same position as the Liu's are today when he built his two-story house ten years ago. The same Rilma Lane neighbors opposed his project on unfounded reasons. He did everything the same, the friendly outreach, he listened to the neighbors' viewpoints and was willing to work with them if their concerns were genuine, but everything they demanded was just unreasonable. His application was appealed to the City Council after it was denied and the Council finally approved the project. The Liu's project is a beautiful design, City staff has looked at it for code and guidelines and have confirmed the compliance and gave his full support for the project and asked the Commission to approve it.

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Stefi Ganesan, 1055 Ray Avenue, said the Liu's reached out to the neighbors and have been very accommodating, trying to mitigate any concerns, doing more than what is necessary, they've been very reasonable and supports the project.

Jessica Mullen, 1044 Ray Avenue, said they met with the Lius's, has been a collaborative effort, and she supports the overall design. The existing house is becoming unsightly and creating a variety of nuisance related issues and welcomes a new residence to the neighborhood.

Janaki Tenneti, 1040 Rilma Lane, noted that the public has the right to oppose a project at a public meeting, she invited the Commissioners to her back yard to see the impact that tall structures have on single story homes such as hers, and asked them to look to the future and the precedents they are setting and changing the character of the neighborhood and to preserve privacy.

Patricia Mullen, 1044 Ray Avenue, stated that it's been a contentious battle in their neighborhood regarding two-story homes, said to check the accuracy of the Stoops illustrations, and asked the Commission and staff to follow the rules and guidelines in place and not be swayed by emotional pleas of the neighbors.

Commissioner Kirik asked the Stoops about the addition of two feet of lattice on top of the six-foot fence. A: Mike Stoops replied that two feet of lattice would be fine as long as it extends out to the wall of the ADU on 1035 Ray Avenue. Mariel Stoops added that an eight foot fence is okay, they still need to maintain that back area between their accessory structure and the fence for insects and pest control, and said there is no recorded easement on the back property line when asked by Commissioner Kirik.

Commissioner Glew asked neighbor Julia Weiner about the video she referenced in the letter regarding views, and she deferred to Nelson and Nellie to answer. A: Nelson Liu stated that the video was created to show the back neighbor the viewpoints from the balcony at their request but was not shared with the Planning Division or the Commission.

Chair Ma asked the Stoops about the trees in their backyard. A: Mariel Stoops responded that they have two privet trees in the rear and that is all they have room to grow.

The project applicant then got three minutes for a rebuttal from Chair Ma. Project applicant/architect Steve Collum stated that they could make the railing of the balcony solid and get rid of the glass. Nelson Liu then spoke about the back fence line and how the rear neighbor is asking them to jog the fence back into their property two feet so they can maintain their accessory structure that is one foot from the property line.

Commission discussion then proceeded.

<u>Action</u>: Upon a motion by Commissioner Kirik, seconded by Commissioner Harding, the Commission approved design review application SC20-0002 per the staff report findings and conditions, with the following additional conditions:

- The rear yard fence shall have two feet of lattice along the entire length of the fence;
- Two windows on the rear elevation of the stairwell shall be removed identified as windows 2030 and 2040 on the site plan;
- The railing on the second story deck shall be solid material; and
- The lighting on the second story deck shall be installed below the railing; however if installation below the railing is not compliant with the Residential Building Code, shall be installed with sufficient shrouding to reduce glare.

The motion was approved (5-0) by the following vote:
AYES: Ma, Bishop, Glew, Harding and Kirik
NOES: None

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COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Kirik mentioned that for future meetings, instead of opening the public comment to all, that the planner or Planning Services Manager call the person by name to have more structure in the meeting.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Planning Services Manager Persicone mentioned the AB 1234 Ethics training that the Commissioners have to do every two years and the City Clerk's request that it be done in the next month if they are due.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ma adjourned the meeting at 9:15 PM.

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Guido Persicone, AICP
Planning Services Manager

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