

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021 BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M. HELD VIA VIDEO/TELECONFERENCE PER EXECUTIVE ORDER N-29-20

Per California Executive Order N-29-20, the Commission will meet via teleconference only. Members of the Public may call (650) 242-4929 to participate in the conference call (Meeting ID: 147 709 1741 or via the web at <https://tinyurl.com/43kk2wwe>) 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 PlanningCommission@losaltosca.gov or Planning@losaltosca.gov. Emails received prior to the meeting will be included in the public record.

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Vice-Chair Doran, Commissioners Ahi, Marek (arrived after item No. 1) Mensinger, Roche and Steinle

ABSENT: Chair Bodner

STAFF: Community Development Director Biggs, Planning Services Manager Persicone and Senior Planner Golden

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. **Planning Commission Minutes**
Approve minutes of the regular meeting of August 5, 2021.

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Steinle, seconded by Commissioner Roche, the Commission approved the minutes from the August 5, 2021, meeting as written.

The motion was approved (5-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Ahi, Doran, Mensinger, Roche and Steinle

NOES: None

ABSENT: Bodner and Marek

PUBLIC HEARING

2. **D20-0008 - Packard Foundation – 374 Second Street**
The project proposes to merge and reconfigure the existing parking lot areas. The project proposes to create two-way drive aisles accessible from Second Street and eliminate the existing ingress/egress to the public alley. A carport structure with photovoltaic panels is proposed to cover a portion of the parking stalls. *Project Planner: Golden.* This item was continued from the August 5, 2021 PC meeting.

Vice-Chair Doran noted she was not at the last meeting for the item on August 5, 2021, but she did review the video tape and the agenda report from that meeting.

Senior Planner Golden presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application D20-0008 to the City Council per the findings and conditions in the Resolution – Attachment A. He noted the letter received from Green Town Los Altos committing to planting 27 off-site trees, larger specimens in downtown locations, 15-gallon trees for planting that are a manageable size, they will plant November through March, and 11-15 trees will be planted on site. He also noted five public correspondences received.

Commissioner Questions to Staff

Commissioner Mensinger questioned what was approved in 2010, asked if extra parking spaces are needed, and what the square footage of the existing canopy on Whitney is.

Commissioner Roche asked a question about the original approval for the building, landscaping, and open space.

Senior Planner Golden said there is no restriction in the deed recorded from the 2010 approval on the development of the parking lot and noted the ATMP Alternative Transportation Mitigation Plan is still in effect.

Craig Neyman, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for the Packard Foundation provided the presentation. He stated they have the need for the parking spaces for five reasons: 1) to address the original project's constraints; 2) the proposed plan is consistent with the ATMP already in place; 3) the level of hybrid work on average in the office may decrease, noting there is a relative increase on the number of days staff is spending in the office; 4) the existing parking lot is not in compliance with current code requirements for ADA compatibility and the new configuration will be; and 5) solar enabled EV charging will bring down the carbon footprint for the facility.

Vice-Chair Doran noted that Commissioner Marek had joined the meeting.

Commissioner Questions to Applicant

Commissioner Steinle asked the applicant the following: is this parking lot dedicated to the Packard Foundation employees and business guests; were the two parcels acquired after the project approval in 2010; the San Antonio Road lot/area buffer period of five years is over and the deed restriction for the overflow parking should be removed on that lot; if the development agreement allowed for the project to provide fewer parking spaces than required; the City's goal in reaching the agreement was to keep employees from parking in City lots or on the street; will fewer spaces still be provided than required in the zoning code with this new plan; and will the parking spaces be assigned or first come first serve.

Craig Neyman confirmed the above information and stated that the parking spaces will not be assigned at this point and would be first come first serve and encouraged use of electric vehicles but maintaining both types of parking on the site.

Commissioner Steinle asked about the angle of tilt on the solar arrays.

Community Development Director Biggs noted that the City Attorney conveyed that the solar arrays themselves are not subject to discretionary review because there are state laws in place that protect

the installation of these. The Commission's review is limited to that of design review for a carport structure.

Commissioner Steinle asked if there was any new information or recommendations from the project arborist.

Craig Neyman stated that the arborist has not changed his recommendations on the trees and they are just trying to save some of the trees recommended for removal by the arborist.

Vice-Chair Doran opened the meeting up for public comment.

Public Comment

Gary Hedden of Green Town Los Altos noted tree planting efforts, supports the project, and is happy to help with the tree mitigation.

Resident Roberta Phillips stated her concerns with trees being removed, said that there is no good reason to tear down trees for more concrete and asphalt, does not buy the stated reasons for parking spaces needs, and is concerned with the tree trimming done by the Packard Foundation on Second Street.

Resident Jon Baer stated he was on the Planning Commission when the original project was approved, said the Packard Foundation owned all the lots at the time of project approval, but that should be verified by staff, and he is sorely disappointed in the hypocrisy of the Foundation in taking down trees for parking and not keeping open space for their employees and the community.

The public comment period was closed for Commissioner discussion.

Community Development Director Biggs noted that Commissioner Marek had joined the meeting and asked him to confirm that he had reviewed the video from the previous meeting and the agenda report since he was not in attendance for the August 5, 2021, meeting on the item.

Commissioner Marek confirmed he had and was ready to participate in tonight's meeting.

PC Discussion/Comments

Vice-Chair Doran:

- Sees the parking as a benefit to the community;
- Commended the applicant for the efforts to minimize the need for parking with the project and landscaping the alley;
- Said it is visually pleasing and the applicant has made every effort to address the Commission's concerns; and
- Gave her support.

Commissioner Ahi:

- In favor of the project and should recommend approval to the City Council;
- Remove tree No. 10 since the arborist notes it is dead at the top and recommended removal; and
- The trees noted for removal are small and not in good condition/shape.

Commissioner Roche:

- Noted the modifications made by the applicant addressing his previous concerns about trees and appreciated the addition of more landscaping;
- The applicant has done a good job of addressing the parking lot changes with revisions; and
- Supports the project and changes that were made.

Commissioner Mensinger:

- Agreed and echoed Commissioner Roche's comments; and
- Would like the trees and green space to stay but supports the project.

Commissioner Marek:

- Supports the project and agrees with the other Commissioners;
- Will add a lot of positive attributes with solar and more parking spaces;
- The applicant has done their best to consider the issues that were raised; and
- Asked about the accountability for the trees to be planted by Green Town Los Altos.

Community Development Director Biggs said the required tree planting will be recorded in the resolution that is approved by City Council and signed by the mayor and those conditions remains on the property. If compliance is not met, the City has options to make sure conditions are being complied with.

Commissioner Steinle:

- New parking is an improvement;
- Too many EV chargers;
- Structure is monolithic and can it be broken up into finger islands as suggested;
- Not in favor of keeping trees for sake of keeping trees;
- Could landscaping be rethought to a strategic/decorative use to be considered;
- The parking recaptures some of the spirit of the current setup;
- Is encouraged by the second letter received from Green Town Los Altos; and
- He is in favor of moving the project forward to City Council for approval.

Vice-Chair Doran asked about the damage to the parking lot fences and the repair and maintenance of the landscaping and to look at options for undergrounding the utility poles as more development takes place in the area.

Community Development Director Biggs said the City could help facilitate discussion between the developer of the First Street project and the Packard Foundation for repairs of the fences and mentioned the City does not have the funds available to do a full undergrounding of the power lines.

Senior Planner Golden noted the alternative layouts that were submitted by the applicant and that the Commission should recommend a specific plan moving forward to the City Council. He then provided those options for the Commission to consider.

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Ahi, seconded by Vice-Chair Doran, the Commission recommended approval of design review application D20-0008 to the City Council per the findings and conditions in the Resolution – Attachment A and in favor of either Option A or B.

The motion was approved (6-0) by the following vote:
AYES: Ahi, Doran, Marek, Mensinger, Roche and Steinle
NOES: None
ABSENT: Bodner

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Ahi reported on the August 24, 2021, City Council meeting regarding the Objective Standards and asked Community Development Director Biggs to elaborate.

Community Development Director Biggs stated that the City Council introduced an ordinance with modifications to the draft that will lead to a set of Objective Standards for Multi-Family and Mixed-Use buildings here in Los Altos. The item is going back to City Council on September 14, 2021, with recommendation to adopt the ordinance that would become effective 30 days later. He stated the City Council also asked that the Commission do some more review of items in the Objective Standards and develop a recommendation.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Community Development Director Biggs gave an overview of future agenda items and let the Commission know that the September 16, 2021 Planning Commission meeting has been cancelled due to a holiday.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Doran adjourned the meeting at 8:13 P.M.

Jon Biggs
Community Development Director