

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2020 BEGINNING AT
7:06 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: 148 546 3337) 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: Chair Ahi, Vice-Chair Bodner, Commissioners Bressack, Lee, Marek and Meadows
ABSENT: Commissioner Samek
STAFF: Community Development Director Biggs and Planning Services Manager Persicone

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

STUDY SESSION

1. PPR19-0008 – HOMETEC Architecture – 140 Lyell Street

Design Review and Tentative Map Subdivision for a new two-story five-unit multiple-family condominium building. The project site is currently developed with a one-story single-family residential building at the intersection of Gabilan Street with Lyell Street. 140 Lyell, LLC proposes to develop 5 new attached condo units. All units will be 2 story units with 1 car garages. There will be 4 market rate units and 1 BMR (Below Market Rate) unit for sale. June 4, 2020 will be a study session with the Planning Commission to receive preliminary feedback about the project prior to formal submittal of the application. *Project Planner: Persicone*

Planning Services Manager Persicone introduced the project and presented the staff report recommending that the Planning Commission review the submitted material and provide preliminary feedback to the applicant so they can address these before submitting the formal application.

Applicant/owner Samir Sharma presented the project, provided a PowerPoint presentation, and answered Commissioner questions.

The Commission asked a number of clarifying questions about the project of the applicant and staff.

Public Comment

Resident Jon Baer stated that the project has too much square footage and not enough parking; and the design looks busy and he expects more and better of the applicant. He further noted privacy, congestion, and design issues that need to be improved dramatically.

Resident Liz Cole commented on the lack of parking, traffic congestion, and privacy issues.

Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Lee

- It is clear multi-unit housing exists in the area and there is a precedent for it with higher density in the neighborhood;
- On a planning standpoint it fits in and is consistent with existing neighboring buildings;
- Is not over-scaled and the applicant has made an effort to further reduce its volume;
- Straight forward and modest; however, a bit of work still to do on massing;
- Demarcate units so it does not look like one big housing unit;
- Suggested more work is needed on the east elevation to demarcate the units and use elements that pop in and out;
- North elevation is busy lots going on;
- Simplify, but use some of these elements on the East and West elevation accordingly;
- Materials make sense however; color wise, he would go lighter vs. darker to mitigate the appearance of the building being one large mass;
- Landscape has been planned pretty well given the corner location; and
- Project has potential and is a great opportunity to develop this parcel.

Commissioner Bressack:

- Noted history of when up-zoning was accomplished by the City in this neighborhood;
- In earlier times there was lots of under-parked multi-family structures;
- The architect did a really good job at getting the required parking on-site;
- Recommended adding a defined pedestrian way to indicate to the public that it is okay to walk along perimeter pathway;
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- Differentiate units and make each identifiable.
- Break up elements of roof plane;
- Gable roofs could have a steeper pitch that might make project more aesthetically interesting;
- Windows do not really have a style and are gender neutral;
- The privacy is going to be an issue with units facing each other;
- Good start but can be refined more to have an architectural style that is cohesive and distinctive that people can recognize; and
- The units need to be broken up in some way visually to give them relief.

Commissioner Meadows

- Noted excellent comments by Commissioners Bressack and Lee;
- Better differentiate the units in ways besides using the front door to break them up;
- Good use of space, but the unit on the end has a large yard and the other units do not;
- Better utilize the space and provide some equity amongst the open space that each of the units gets – unbalanced distribution of open space;
- Completely agrees with sidewalks and making a pathway because it is a busy street with a lot going on;
- Stylistically an eclectic neighborhood, but also a little bit more rustic;
- Tone down the materials and style a bit;

- Noted that at 20 percent affordable housing, the applicant could actually ask for a lot more; and
- A five-unit project meeting parking at a height of 30 feet is a good outcome and proposal w has potential.

Commissioner Marek:

- Thought the drawings looked well done; and
- Seems like a nice architectural design that will fit nicely in the neighborhood.

Vice-Chair Bodner:

- Likes the project;
- This is an example where the City made a policy decision to try and achieve more housing and now it is coming to fruition with the benefits of what was envisioned;
- Supportive of the density in this proposal;
- Really likes the idea that we are getting a BMR unit with three bedrooms that could accommodate a family; this is very desirable;
- Appreciates the differentiation in the size of the units is relatively small;
- Likes the colors and appreciates the contrast in colors between the upper and lower levels;
- Likes the combination of materials and the contemporary modern residential style;
- Feels the design is very compatible and it fits into the neighborhood;
- Agreed with Commissioner Bressack's comments on the room layout and storage;
- Landscaping could be a more generous with more variety as it seems very spare particularly at the corner;
- Agrees to making the sidewalk a pathway as others have said; and
- Is supportive, likes the materials and the colors and likes that we are getting five homes in place of the current one.

Chair Ahi:

- Is fine with the project;
- In terms of height, he is fine with the 27 feet;
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- More landscaping in between the fence and the patio area of the proposed project and neighboring property at 132 Lyell Street would be better;
- Stop the driveway and walkway at the property line;
- In the area for the garbage bins, do not swing the trash enclosure door into the guest parking spot;
- The side yard for unit 1 is pretty big and could be utilized better as an interior space where people could walk in and also have bike parking;
- Would be helpful to see a colored elevation to better evaluate the colors and materials;
- Even though there is a step back on the second floor of the building, the elevation feels very flat to him;
- Explore extension of porches some more to provide articulation;
- Liked Commissioner Lee's suggestion on colors and maybe having units 1 and 2 different colors than units 3, 4 and 5 or some combination so it does not look like one single house and looks more like an actual multi-unit building;
- Do not select a monolithic color, differentiate units;
- A lot of repetition with the windows should be explored as well as an alternative window layout;

- Suggested moving the window to the other wall on the second floor of unit 1 to give 132 Lyell some relief;
- Implement storage into the garages if possible; and
- Explore different elevation techniques to better articulate the building.

Planning Services Manager Persicone then went over the next steps for the applicant.

The project applicant and architect gave some final comments and thanked the Commission for its input.

CONSENT CALENDAR

2. Planning Commission Minutes

Approve minutes of the regular meeting of May 7, 2020.

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Bressack, seconded by Commissioner Meadows, the Commission approved the minutes from the May 7, 2020 Regular Meeting with corrections to page 3.

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

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

NOES: None

ABSENT: Samek

PUBLIC HEARING

3. Zoning Text Amendment- ZTA 20-0001 (Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance)

Zoning Text Amendments (ZTA 20-0001) to Chapter 14.14 (Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance) of the Los Altos Municipal Code pursuant to recent modifications to state law.

This item was continued from the May 21, 2020 PC meeting. *Project Manager: Guido F. Persicone, Planning Services Manager*

Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Meadows, seconded by Commissioner Bressack, the Commission continued the Zoning Text Amendment and ADU Ordinance to the June 18, 2020 Planning Commission meeting.

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

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

NOES: None

ABSENT: Samek

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

None.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Community Development Director Biggs provided an overview of upcoming projects on the Commission's meeting agendas.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ahi adjourned the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

Jon Biggs
Community Development Director

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