

LARKSPUR PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 27, 2019

The Larkspur Planning Commission was convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers by Chair Ziesing.

Commissioners Present: Chair Todd Ziesing, Daniel Kunstler, Laura Tauber,
Ignatius Tsang, Brock Wagstaff

Staff Present: Planning Director Neal Toft
Senior Planner Kristin Teiche

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no comments.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Staff has been involved in the recruitment for an Associate Planner and will continue the search. The strong job market and the housing crisis make this a challenging process.
- The Council will hold a Public Hearing at its September 3rd meeting regarding three ordinances considered "renter protection measures". He discussed the three ordinances.
- The Council will also be discussing current controls on commercial cannabis including delivery and retail. The interim ordinance will expire in October.
- There were two filings for the two open Council seats- Scott Candall and Gabe Paulson. They will be appointed by the Council and there is no need for an election in November.
- He reminded the Commission about the "Fun-Paloosa" Picnic at Piper Park on Friday, September 6th at 11:30 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

1. **DR/V/FHE #19-14; 106 Alexander Avenue (APN: 021-183-10); Kenneth Holder, Designer, Applicant; Jay Sternberg, Owner; R-1 (First Residential) Zoning District. Request for the following permits to allow demolition of the existing two-story single-family dwelling, and construction of a new 1,800 sq. ft. two-story single family dwelling: 1) Design Review (DR); 2) Variance (V) to the on-site parking requirement to allow three on-site parking spaces where four are required by code for a new single family residence; and 3) Fence Height Exception (FHE) to allow an 8-foot tall fence (six feet of solid wood, two feet of lattice on top) on the interior side and rear lot lines, where a maximum of 6 feet is allowed under the code on interior side and rear lot lines.**

Senior Planner Teiche presented the staff report. She noted the project has been substantially revised from the prior application. There were several items of late mail.

Commissioner Tsang asked about the detail on the guard rail. Senior Planner Teiche stated she did not think this has been submitted. Commissioner Tsang stated it would probably be 42" high above the light well and perhaps see through.

Commissioner Tsang had a question about the bottom elevation light well. Senior Planner Teiche stated this was sent to the Building Department and it is required to be a secondary egress. The elevation will be required to be a minimum distance above floor so they can climb out the window. Commissioner Tsang stated the dimension needs to allow for the clearance of the ladder.

Commissioner Tsang asked if staff received any comments from the neighbors about the Fence Height Exception request. Senior Planner Teiche stated they did not raise any objections during the first hearing.

Commissioner Tauber asked about the basement and the purpose of the 8 foot high ceiling. Senior Planner Teiche stated they indicated it would be used for mechanical and storage.

Chair Ziesing opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Jay Sternberg, owner, made the following comments:

- They went back to the drawing board.
- They redesigned the house but with the same intentions and goals- to create a compliant structure.
- They moved the house away from the setback.
- They changed the lay-out of the entire house.
- It will be an efficient three bedroom, two bath house.
- The second-story location was moved.
- They reduced the overall size of the house.
- The basement will be utility and storage.
- The plan includes a one-car garage.
- They will be three off-street parking spaces (an increase of 50%)
- They will accommodate the neighbors with respect to the fence.
- They listened to the feedback from the Commission and the neighbors.
- This is a solid compromise and a reasonable design.

Mr. Kenneth Holder, designer, made the following comments:

- They took the comments from the Commission to heart.
- There are trying to stay true to the original overall attitude to the site- the connection, the parking, etc.
- There are two bedrooms upstairs giving them flexibility to modulate the second floor.
- There are simple gable roof forms.
- This is a fairly modest structure.
- Staying within the allowable FAR posed a challenge. It is tough to design a modern house in a small space.
- The design is attractive from both sides and the attitude towards the street.
- They have not yet developed the use of the basement- it will be utility and storage.
- He discussed the window well- a 42" enclosure with open slats that comply with the clearance requirements.
- The upstairs is a unique shape and is oriented to minimize the impact to the neighbors.
- He studied the request to change the slope to 4:12.
- He discussed the shadow study. The only view that indicated an inconsequential change was in the summer.
- The second story is 15 feet back from the property line.

Chair Ziesing asked about the impact of the two huge trees on the shadow study.

Commissioner Kunstler asked Mr. Holder to elaborate on how changing the slope of the roof would disrupt the integrity of the design. Mr. Holder stated it would change the overall composition of the already challenged design - the architectural integrity would become uninteresting.

Commissioner Kunstler stated the stairwell window was a preponderant feature and he asked if it would impact the energy efficiency of the home (large amount of south facing glass). Mr. Holder

stated window technology would eliminate any concerns. They would even out any afternoon spike. They looked at smaller windows but the house lost something.

Commissioner Kunstler asked if they would support a 6 foot fence with the addition of some lattice if supported by the neighbor. Mr. Holder stated "yes".

Commissioner Wagstaff stated the section shows the window heads at the upper floor at 7 feet but they are shown at 6'8" on the elevations. Mr. Holder stated that was a late change and they would prefer 7 feet. Commissioner Wagstaff stated he liked the 6:12 roofs but the back gable element is wider than the cross element and would extend higher at that pitch. Mr. Holder stated that was reduced to 5:12. Commissioner Wagstaff stated there would be significant "crickets" at the front. Mr. Holder agreed and stated it could be a single membrane that is very low sloped. Commissioner Wagstaff stated that should be a "non-element". The two windows that surround the bed in the upper bedroom are off centered. Mr. Holder stated he would take a look at that. Commissioner Wagstaff asked about the 6" difference between the garage floor and the main entry. Mr. Holder stated the garage is tied as closely as possible to the sidewalk in front so it would have an "all-court" feel to it where the kids could play. The owners want a house that is "very close to the ground". The rear patio has very few steps out to natural grade.

Mr. Rich Epidendio, Larkspur, made the following comments:

- His cousin (Epidendio/Skafini) lives in the Monte Vista house that has been referenced.
- The original story poles were shocking and depicted a structure would be looming.
- The new story poles indicate an effort to accommodate the neighbors.
- The owners of the Monte Vista house are pleased but would prefer the roof lowered.
- He referred to the roof pitch (4:12) and stated it was not a shadow/sun thing but rather looking at a large roof and ridgeline from the kitchen window.
- A 6' fence and 2' lattice was acceptable to the Skafinis.

Mr. James Holmes, Larkspur, made the following comments:

- The previous proposal seemed smaller.
- They should consider Mrs. Epidendio's request.
- The impact of the project on 2 Monte Vista is much greater than if the two houses were side by side. The backyard of 2 Monte Vista abuts the side yard of the proposed project.
- The "side yard mass" of the proposal is a "back yard mass" to 2 Monte Vista.
- The mass is exacerbated because the backyard of 2 Monte Vista is very narrow.
- The mass of the proposal should be on the other side to minimize the effect on 2 Monte Vista.
- There are a lot of minor instances where the plans are not finalized and he was not sure how the Commission could be able to proceed.
- The fence should be 6' tall with no lattice.

Mr. Terry Sternberg, Monte Vista, made the following comments:

- His home fronts the north side of the subject property
- He wants a 6' fence with 2' of lattice.

Chair Ziesing closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Tsang provided the following comments:

- He referred to the proposed use of the basement and noted they would need more air intake.
- They have done a fantastic job with respect to the layout and design to keep it at a minimum.
- The neighbor has concerns about privacy- the two bedroom widows on the second floor (east and west) look big. They could be a transom or clerestory window.

- The gable roof does not pose a shadow issue but a hip roof (sloping front to back) would be less imposing.
- There are two windows in the bathroom- one in the shower and one behind the sink which is where a mirror should be placed.
- The garage has two nice big windows.
- The big stair window could have a bigger landing.
- They did a good job screening the noise from the Monte Vista neighbor.
- He could support the Fence Height Exception and Parking Variance.
- They met all the code requirements with respect to Design Review.
- He can make the Design Review findings.

Commissioner Tauber provided the following comments:

- She could approve the Fence Height Exception- the neighbors want a higher fence.
- She could support the Parking Variance.
- The layout is strange but that seems to be what the client wants.
- They have done a lot of work trying to address what they could on this small lot.
- She could make the findings for Design Review.

Commissioner Kunstler provided the following comments:

- He thanked the applicants for the thorough presentation and the solar study.
- He could support the Parking Variance and the Fence Height Exception.
- He referred to the letter objecting to the roof pitch due to the potential jeopardy to sunshine. The solar study concludes that the impact will be “de minimus”.
- There has been an effort to address the issues that were raised.
- He is satisfied that this development program is appropriate and meets the goals of the applicant and addresses the community’s concerns.
- He could make the findings for approval.

Commissioner Wagstaff provided the following comments:

- He has no problem with the fence height or the parking.
- The current proposal is an improvement over the previous proposal both in design and usability.
- It could be lowered a bit. The plate heights seem strange (8’9” and 9’9”).
- He can make the Design Review findings.

Chair Ziesing provided the following comments:

- The proposal has been improved.
- He likes the slightly contemporary design. It looks great!
- The basement is a cool idea.
- He can support the proposal.

M/s, Kunstler/Tauber, motioned and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve DR/V/FHE #19-14,106 Alexander Avenue, based on the findings and conditions set forth in the staff report.

Chair Ziesing stated there was a 10-day appeal period.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Planning Commissioner’s Reports

Chair Ziesing asked staff about the upcoming General Plan Update meetings. Planning Director Toft asked GPUUC members Chair Ziesing and Commissioner Tsang to meet with him after the meeting about the schedule.

Chair Ziesing stated he would not be available for the September meetings.

2. Approval of the July 23, 2019 draft meeting minutes

M/s, Tauber/Wagstaff, motioned and the Commission voted 4-0-1 (Chair Ziesing abstained) to approve the minutes from the meeting of July 23, 2019 meeting as submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Larkspur Planning Commission on September 10, 2019.



Neal Toft, Planning Director