

BELVEDERE PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

August 16, 2022 6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Chair Pat Carapiet called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Belvedere Council Chambers. Commissioners present: Pat Carapiet, Ashley Johnson, Marsha Lasky, Kevin Burke, Nena Hart and Claire Slaymaker. . Commissioner Absent: Larry Stoehr. Staff present: Director of Planning and Building Irene Borba, City Attorney Ann Danforth, Associate Planner Samie Malakiman and Technician Nancy Miller.

B. OPEN FORUM

This is an opportunity for any citizen to briefly address the Planning Commission on any matter that does not appear on this agenda. Upon being recognized by the Chair, please state your name, address, and limit your oral statement to no more than three minutes. Matters that appear to warrant a more-lengthy presentation or Commission consideration will be agendized for further discussion at a later meeting.

No one wished to speak.

C. REPORTS

Chair Carapiet welcomed Kevin Burke, the newly appointed Planning Commissioner.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR

2. Motion to Approve Meeting by Remote Teleconference and adopt the following findings:
 - a. On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency declared by Governor Newsom under the California Emergency Services Act due to COVID-19, which is still in existence;
 - b. State or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing; and
 - c. The State of Emergency declared by Governor Newsom on March 4, 2020, continues to directly impact the ability of Commission members, staff, and the public to meet safely indoors in person; and
 - d. The Belvedere City Council has directed all legislative bodies within the City to meet by Teleconference until further notice.

MOTION: To approve Item 2 of the Consent Calendar.

MOVED BY: Kevin Burke seconded by Nena Hart

VOTE:AYES: Pat Carapiet, Marsha Lasky, Nena Hart, Ashley Johnson, Kevin Burke, Claire Slaymaker.

ABSENT: Larry Stoehr.

1. Draft **Minutes of the July 19, 2022**, regular meeting of the Planning Commission.
2. Consideration of the property at **206 Bayview Avenue** for local historic landmark designation. Applicants and Property Owners Gian Solomon & Ariane Mahler. *Staff recommends that the Commission recommend to City Council to approve the request for local historic designation.*
No Recusals.

MOTION: To approve Items 1 & 3 of the Consent Calendar.

MOVED BY: Ashley Johnson, seconded by Claire Slaymaker.

VOTE: AYES: Pat Carapiet, Marsha Lasky, Nena Hart, Ashley Johnson

Marsha Lasky, Kevin Burke.

ABSTAIN: Kevin Burke, Claire Slaymaker (Item 1 only: due to absence from this meeting)

ABSENT: Larry Stoehr.

Commissioners Slaymaker and Hart recused themselves from Item 4 (**19 Eucalyptus Road**) because they each own property within 500 feet of the subject property. Commissioner Slaymaker departed from the meeting. Commissioner Hart will be recused but speak as a private citizen on Item 4.

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. Design Review and Revocable License to construct a new tiered block retaining walls to repair a landslide upslope of **19 Eucalyptus Road** and to install landscaping and stairs. Portions of the proposed retaining walls and landscaping as well as some access stairs will be within the right-of-way and therefore a Revocable License is required. Applicant: Nathan Klemen (Miller Pacific Engineers). Property Owner: Gary Friedman. *Staff recommends approval of the proposed project. Recusals: Commissioners Hart and Slaymaker*

Planning and Building Director Irene Borba presented the staff report. A slide show accompanied her remarks.¹ She noted that late mail from the applicant was shared with the Commission tonight regarding possible options for alternative colors and materials.

Close public hearing.

Scott Stephens, Miller Pacific Engineers, applicant, presented the project. He explained that the source of the slide was determined to have come from the original steep cut when the road was constructed, as well as a water leak that developed during the last year. Repairs of these causes will be a part of this project. He stated that options for other block colors and styles was put forward today for discussion tonight. Currently the Weathered Sierra pattern is proposed and an alternative Weathered Cobbles is available. In addition to the wall materials there are landscape plantings proposed to further screen the walls. The Mosaic pattern was suggested and Mr. Stephens explained that the configuration of the Mosaic pattern may not be compatible with the geogrid spacing for repair stability. This would need further research to know if that could work.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether a wood or other option for materials is available as an alternative to the concrete blocks. The stair material and design was requested.

Mr. Stephens replied the current design is meant to work with the type of engineering being used to stabilize the hill. Wood would not work with the geogrid. The stairs will be same material as the wall material. There would be no railing except on the top wall.

Commissioner Burke asked how the new landscaping would integrate into the existing surrounding natural vegetation. Could trees be added to make a more consistent appearance?

¹ The slide show presentation is archived with the record of the meeting.

Mr. Stephens stated that each wall will have creeping fig installed to grow up along the walls with additional plantings in the level areas between each wall. Adding trees does need consideration due to the long term consequences of tree roots on retaining walls.

Chair Carapiet asked whether at the street level, a few more trees could be installed to emulate the current native vegetation. She stated that the Mosaic pattern should be usable according to her research.

Mr. Stephens replied there is about 5 feet between the street curb and the wall. Adding trees could be possible depending on City approval of having trees very close to the roadway. They would need to study how the Mosaic pattern would work with the proposed geogrid connections.

Open public hearing.

Sandy Donnell, 137 Golden Gate Avenue, is the owner of the adjacent property affected by the current slide. There was also an earlier slide. She asked what assurances there are for monitoring the irrigation system.

Serge Marquie, 16 Eucalyptus Road, stated that the proposed project is out of character for Belvedere and especially on this small road. It needs to be kept organic and natural looking.

John Wilton, 2 Eucalyptus Road, expressed support for the Mosaic pattern if at all possible for the wall material. Vegetation is key to soften the appearance. A timeline case study of this project would be valuable.

Maureen Johnson ceded her time to Nena Hart.

Nena Hart, 26 Eucalyptus Road stated she is the most impacted neighbor of the project and speaks as a private citizen. She would prefer to see this wall made of reinforced concrete faced with natural stone. That type of wall is found all over Belvedere. The currently proposed project is not in character with this street. She has conducted extensive research into the colors and treatments of the proposed materials and urged the applicants to do further research before settling on only this one option for the type of wall design. Plantings should be native, and drought tolerant.,

Justin Faggioli, 137 Golden Gate Avenue, owner of the adjacent property asked whether the proposed French drain could be moved off of his property so that he would not have any maintenance responsibilities. The construction of the project will require access from his property, and restoration of part of his fence and his Eucalyptus Road access; he would like the approval to ensure that he is protected from any liabilities arising from the work and the project.

Ken Johnson supports a condition to include leak monitoring as a part of the project. He supports the comments of the neighbors tonight.

Mr. Stephens stated that there is a sub-drain component in the project design. These are the smallest and tightest walls that are allowed in the Building Code. They will find the best looking pattern that will work with the geogrid. The proposed plantings can be modified to accommodate the requests. The proposed French drain would not require any maintenance but would be very beneficial. Water meter technology is advancing and available for leak monitoring.

Close public hearing.

Commissioner Lasky stated that the multi-tiered wall design is preferable to a single taller wall. She stated that the proposed or chosen plantings will eventually screen the walls. Her preference

is the Mosaic pattern with the more irregular stones, in the Sierra color. She can make the findings for the Design Review and can recommend both Revocable Licenses.

Commissioner Johnson would like to see a continuance to study alternative designs and colors that would better blend in with this neighborhood. Additional questions around drainage and irrigation need to be clarified. She understands the need to get the slide repaired as soon as possible once the plans can be approved.

Commissioner Burke stated that he shares the concerns expressed about the colors. The weathered Mosaic color and materials pattern would be better. He would like to understand how a blended landscape aesthetic will be achieved so that this will make this project more in character with the neighborhood. He can make the findings if the project is conditioned that the wall materials and the landscaping are adjusted according to the meeting comments tonight.

Chair Carapiet supports the requests of the neighbors for the Mosaic pattern in the weathered Sierra color. The landscaping may need some more revisions but those can be handled as a condition of approval by Chair and planning staff. The issue of the source of the water leaks and monitoring methods should be investigated with MMWD. The request for the approval should be conditioned to protect the Faggioli-Donnell property as they have requested.

MOTION: To adopt the Resolution for Design Review as conditioned per the meeting discussion tonight for a retaining wall and landscaping at **19 Eucalyptus Road** and repairs of associated stairs and facilities at the adjacent property.

MOVED BY: Ashley Johnson, seconded by Marsha Lasky

VOTE: AYES: Pat Carapiet, Marsha Lasky, Ashley Johnson, Kevin Burke
NOES: None
RECUSED: Nena Hart, Claire Slaymaker
ABSENT: Larry Stoehr

MOTION: To make a recommendation to City Council for approval of Revocable Licenses for the **Eucalyptus Road** right of way.

MOVED BY: Ashley Johnson, seconded by Marsha Lasky

VOTE: AYES: Pat Carapiet, Marsha Lasky, Ashley Johnson, Kevin Burke
NOES: None
RECUSED: Nena Hart, Claire Slaymaker
ABSENT: Larry Stoehr

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

PASSED AND APPROVED at a regular meeting of the Belvedere Planning Commission on September 20, 2022, by the following vote:

VOTE: AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

APPROVED: _____

Pat Carapiet, Planning Commission Chair

ATTEST: _____

Beth Haener, City Clerk