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SAUSALITO PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 18, 2012
Approved Summary Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Keegin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 420 Litho Street, Sausalito.

Present: Chair Stafford Keegin, Vice-Chair Joan Cox, Commissioner Richard Graef, Commissioner Bill Werner

Absent: Commissioner Stan Bair

Staff: Community Development Director Jeremy Graves
Associate Planner Heidi Burns, Associate Planner Lilly Schinsing,
Assistant Planner Alison Thornberry-Assef, City Attorney Mary Wagner

Approval of Agenda

Vice-Chair Cox moved and Commissioner Werner seconded a motion to approve the agenda. The motion passed 4-0.

Public Comments On Items Not on the Agenda

None.

Approval of Minutes

December 14, 2011 January 4, 2012

Commissioner Werner moved and Commissioner Graef seconded a motion to approve the summary minutes of December 14, 2011 as amended. The motion passed 4-0.

Vice-Chair Cox moved and Commissioner Werner seconded a motion to approve the summary minutes of January 4, 2012 as amended. The motion passed 4-0.

Public Hearings

Declarations of Public Contacts

Vice-Chair Cox indicated that regarding Item 1 she had met with Geoffrey Butler, the applicant, and the daughter of the owners, and that regarding Item 2 she had met with Bill Werner, the applicant.

Commissioner Graef indicated that regarding Item 1 he had met with Geoffrey Butler, the applicant, and the neighbors at 30 Edwards Avenue at their residence, and that regarding Item 2 he had reviewed the project with Bill Werner, the applicant.

1 Commissioner Werner indicated that regarding Item 2 he had met with Vice-Chair
2 Cox and Commissioner Graef, but the conversation was of a technical nature
3 describing the criteria and technical aspects of the project as opposed to the
4 entitlements.
5

6 Chair Keegin indicated that regarding Item 2 he had met with Bill Werner, the
7 applicant, during the project's conceptual stage and has not met with him since
8 then.
9

10 **1. DR 11-297, Design Review Permit, DeBoisblanc, 24 Edwards Avenue.**

11 Design Review Permit to allow for the construction of two exterior decks located
12 on the rear of an existing four-story single-family dwelling located at 24 Edwards
13 Avenue (APN 065-301-15).
14

15 The public hearing was opened.
16

17 Associate Planner Burns presented the Staff Report.
18

- 19 • There are slight inconsistencies in the Staff Report and project plans partly due
20 to last minute changes in the plans after the Staff Report was written.
 - 21 ○ The Staff Report identified 209 square feet of building coverage whereas
22 the proposal is actually for 221 square feet.
 - 23 ○ The Development Standard table in the Staff Report indentified that the
24 east side yard setback is 5 feet whereas it is actually 6 feet, 6.5 inches.
 - 25 ○ The previous proposals showed wood railings on the east and west
26 elevations but they were changed to glass as shown on the plans before
27 the Commission this evening. The Staff Report was written based on a
28 different set of plans. The scope of the project has not changed, but the
29 materials were slightly modified.
- 30 • Staff received late mail from Jan Hodgson, owner of 30 Edwards Avenue,
31 voicing concerns related to views, privacy and light and air impacts. She is
32 concerned the proposed decks would create shading on the property. She also
33 voiced concerns regarding mass and scale and neighborhood compatibility.
- 34 • Staff received a late email from John Quigley, the adjacent property owner to
35 the east at 20-22 Edwards Avenue voicing concerns regarding a potential view
36 impact and containing a photo showing the view from his dining room looking
37 west.
38

39 Commission questions to staff:
40

- 41 • Staff said the setback on the left side of the project would be 6 feet, 6.5 inches.
42 Is that what the existing setback is as well? *Staff responded no, the existing*
43 *right side yard setback on the east side is 7 feet, 5 inches and it is proposed to*
44 *be 6 feet, 6.5 inches.*
- 45 • Why was staff unable to document whether the northwestern deck would
46 obstruct any primary view from the interior of 30 Edwards Avenue? *Staff*
47 *responded they had sent an email to the property owner of 30 Edwards asking*
48 *if they would like a staff member to visit and view the property and its views but*
49 *staff did not receive a response back.*
50

- 1 • Has staff seen the photograph submitted by the owners of 30 Edwards Avenue
2 with their letter, and if so is it accurate from staff's perspective? *Staff*
3 *responded they did receive and review the photograph. Based on staff's*
4 *understanding of where the windows are located they do not know which angle*
5 *the photos were taken from and whether or not that room is actually considered*
6 *a primary viewing area.*
- 7 • Is the deck at 30 Edwards Avenue off a primary view room? *Staff responded*
8 *they do not know.*
- 9 • The room in question at 30 Edwards that has the impacted view is a dressing
10 room off of an accessory bedroom that is a secondary view. Would staff
11 consider a dressing room a secondary view? *Staff responded yes.*
12

13 The public testimony period was opened.

14 Presentation was made by Rene Deboisblanc, the property owner, and Geoffrey Butler,
15 the applicant.
16

17 Commission question to Mr. Deboisblanc:

- 18 • Regarding the proposed stair that goes down, where does it go and what
19 purpose does it serve? *Mr. Deboisblanc responded it provides an access off*
20 *the deck to the side yard.*
21
22

23 Comments were made by the public.
24

25 Amy Johnson indicated the following:

- 26 • She is the daughter of the applicant.
- 27 • As a correction, she has been inside the house at 30 Edwards Avenue and
28 believes their deck is off of a second bedroom and is not a primary view.
29
30

31 Seth Hodgson indicated the following:

- 32 • He is the son of the owner of 30 Edwards Avenue and also resides and works
33 there.
- 34 • Their aim is to maintain the views from areas that his mother uses. Mrs.
35 Hodgson spends most of her time in the downstairs bedroom, so it is a very
36 important space for her.
- 37 • The home at 30 Edwards is so small and with such small window areas that
38 they consider all their views to be a primary. The proposed deck will impact the
39 way that they use their home.
- 40 • He presented photographs to the Commission.
- 41 • His mother hopes they can reach a compromise. She would like the deck to be
42 brought back a little bit.
- 43 • They had always thought from communication with staff, the architect, and
44 looking at the plans that the dining area would be on the far end of the deck
45 and did not realize it was to be in the dining room doorway until reading Mrs.
46 Deboisblanc's letter.
47
48
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1 Mr. Deboisblanc's rebuttal statements:

- 2 • The windows and viewing areas described by Mr. Hodgson are all secondary
3 views.
- 4 • With respect to the Hodgson's bathroom concerns, there will be no seating
5 near the corner of the deck. However the bathroom window can also be looked
6 into from the street, so is if privacy is a concern they should put the shade
7 down.
8

9 Commission question to Mr. Deboisblanc and Mr. Butler:

- 10 • When you read the letter from Mrs. Hodgson and listen to their presentation
11 tonight, they are requesting that the width of the deck be reduced by 2 feet to
12 be and 8 foot decking instead of a 10 foot deck, or that the deck be angled on
13 the side closest to their home. Were either of those alternatives considered,
14 and if so why were they not feasible? *Mr. Deboisblanc responded those*
15 *options were considered but they would prefer a 10-foot deck. An 8-foot deck*
16 *would be crowded and is a safety issue because their table would not have the*
17 *proper clearances. Also a 10-foot deck would only impact five-percent of the*
18 *view of a secondary window. Removing the corner would require a redesign*
19 *and reengineering when again there is only a small impact of a secondary*
20 *view. Mr. Butler responded with respect to cutting off the corner of the deck,*
21 *the structural issue is they would end up with an extra set of posts at the lower*
22 *level, which has an impact on the view as well.*
23
24

25 The public testimony period was closed.

26 Commission question to staff:

- 27 • In this particular case what would be considered the primary views? *Staff*
28 *responded based on this evening's testimony as it relates to the diagram*
29 *provided by the applicant it does not appear as though the windows in question*
30 *constitute primary views.*
31
32

33 Commission comments:

- 34 • It is troubling that staff was unable to have access to 30 Edwards Avenue to
35 determine what are primary and secondary views.
- 36 • The letter written by Mrs. Hodgson has not been substantiated by either the
37 photographs or an onsite inspection.
- 38 • None of the view obstructions are primary views.
- 39 • The privacy issue is not relevant because privacy is the responsibility of the
40 person who wants it.
- 41 • There are decks all over the neighborhood, some much larger. If the applicant
42 is willing to reduce the second floor deck to 8 feet, that would be nice, but that
43 should not be a requirement. These decks have no impact on the residence at
44 20-22 Edwards Avenue, which itself enjoys a huge rooftop deck, so issues of
45 architectural compatibility are not germane.
- 46 • The findings can be made for this project as it stands.
- 47 • The decks are not out of scale with the building. The applicant has gone to
48 great lengths to mitigate any impacts of the deck with the glass rail, et cetera.
49 In looking at the story poles from 30 Edward Avenue there are some spaces
50

1 where they are quite visible, however there is a huge expanse of view there,
2 much of which is not take advantage of because of trees that have not been
3 trimmed. There is no major view impact.

- 4 • While it would be nice to see the upper deck brought back to 8 feet it is not
5 required by the findings the Commission needs to make, which is that the
6 proposed project has been located and designed to minimize obstruction of
7 public views and primary views from private property. There is no requirement
8 to minimize obstruction of secondary views and although some of the views
9 from 30 Edwards are from areas of the home that are used routinely, under the
10 definition that the Commission is bound by they are considered secondary
11 views.
- 12 • The outreach efforts and modifications made by the applicant are appreciated.
13 They made four separate changes to the shape and size of the deck over time
14 resulting in the current 10x24 foot decks. There is no basis to not make the
15 findings.
16

17 **Commissioner Werner moved and Commissioner Graef seconded a motion to**
18 **approve the resolution approving the Design Review Permit for 24 Edward**
19 **Avenue. The motion passed 4-0.**
20

21 The public hearing was closed.

- 22
- 23
- 24 **2. DR/TRP 12-004, Design Review Permit, Tree Removal Permit, City of**
25 **Sausalito, 700 Block of Bridgeway.** Design Review Permit for the demolition
26 of the existing downtown restrooms and construction of new restrooms and a
27 bus shelter, and a Tree Removal Permit to remove one protected tree along the
28 700 block of Bridgeway (APN 065-073-02).
29

30 The public hearing was opened.

31

32 **Commissioner Werner indicated he would recuse himself from participating in the**
33 **hearing as he is the applicant and the decision will have a material and financial**
34 **impact on him. Commissioner Werner left the room.**
35

36 **Chair Keegin indicated that since there were only three Commissioners present a**
37 **unanimous vote would be required for the Commission to take action on the**
38 **project.**
39

40 Associate Planner Schinsing presented the Staff Report.

41

42 Commission questions to staff:

- 43 • Are the three panels of glass at the back of the bus shelter curved or flat? *Staff*
44 *responded they are flat.*
- 45 • The arborist's report recommended the removal of the Monterey Pine trees.
46 Are those the trees in front of the Bank of America building? *Staff responded*
47 *yes, and the trees were removed last winter.*
48

49 Staff Engineer Andy Davidson presented a report.
50

1
2 Commission questions to Mr. Davidson:

- 3 • Would the City's decision to remove graffiti with sandblasting as opposed to
4 using graffiti coating have any impact on the brick exterior? There is not much
5 texture already and it is not very thick. *Mr. Davidson responded they assume it*
6 *will not be an ongoing problem. If needed the brick would be replaced if it*
7 *became too thin from sandblasting.*
- 8 • Would it be cheaper to use a coating than to replace the bricks? What is the
9 price of the coating? *Mr. Davidson responded he did not know the price but it*
10 *was recommended they not use the coating and that sandblasting would be an*
11 *appropriate method for dealing with graffiti.*
- 12 • What is your take on the reduction of the size of the bus shelter? *Mr. Davidson*
13 *responded that it will still provide seating for eight people on the benches with*
14 *some room for an accessible stall. It is his understanding that this shelter is not*
15 *as used as much as it used to be.*

16
17
18 The public testimony period was opened.

19
20 Mike Monsef, 211 Fourth Street, indicated the following:

- 21 • He hopes the restrooms will be approved because they have been trying to get
22 restrooms downtown for 12 years.
- 23 • Removing the restrooms from Village Fair put pressure on the merchants for
24 restroom facilities, especially during Jazz by the Bay.
- 25 • The design has taken into consideration the needs of the community and
26 complements the other buildings downtown.

27
28 Tom Gangitano, 729 Bridgeway, indicated the following:

- 29 • He is the vice-president of Gene Hiller Inc., across the street from the subject
30 site.
- 31 • He is very excited at the idea of finally getting new bathrooms, as the existing
32 restrooms are an embarrassment.
- 33 • He discussed the proposed design with Mr. Werner and is very happy Mr.
34 Werner is seeking to emulate the design of the City Hall building across the
35 street, which is a beautiful building and a great source of pride.
- 36 • He looks at the seating area of the bus shelter all day and a lot of people do
37 not sit there but stand out front instead. The proposed seating in front of the
38 plaza will alleviate any problem with people sitting in the sheltered area.
- 39 • He is concerned about the boxwood shrubs, which have rats living in them. He
40 would support anything landscape-wise that can eliminate that problem.

41
42
43 Julie Warren, 1707 Bridgeway, indicated the following:

- 44 • She is a docent at the Ice House. Part of her job is directing visitors to restroom
45 facilities, including the existing restrooms on Bridgeway.
- 46 • Because Public Works staff cannot always keep up with basic maintenance of
47 the bathrooms she likes the design of the automatic flush toilets and automatic
48 lighting.
- 49 • Visitors to the Ice House have complained about the existing restrooms.

1 Mary Lee Bickford, 274 Glen Drive, indicated the following:

- 2 • The design of the restroom is clinical with the modern glass block and the brick
- 3 siding. In order to honor Sausalito's historical past, the façade should be
- 4 reconsidered to more resemble buildings such as the Ice House, the Sausalito
- 5 Woman's Club or the newly restored historic building that faces Cibo.
- 6 • Regarding the protected tree on the property, communities such as Monterey
- 7 and Carmel go to great lengths to protect and preserve their trees, and
- 8 Sausalito should too.
- 9

10 Vicki Nichols, 117 Caledonia, indicated the following:

- 11 • She read comments from Morgan Pierce, Chair of the Historic Landmarks
- 12 Board who could not attend the meeting.
- 13 ○ The restroom is a civic building on a prominent stretch of Sausalito's
- 14 streetscape and should be treated as such.
- 15 ○ Because durability, performance and economy are significantly important
- 16 the building materials must receive a high level of design attention.
- 17 ○ The proposed design should be reconsidered in favor of a scheme more
- 18 reflective of Sausalito's community, history and future. The current brick
- 19 box capped with a pyramidal metal roof does little to address this. Both the
- 20 restrooms and the adjacent barrel-roofed bus stop are foreign and
- 21 unimaginative compared with the context of Sausalito.
- 22 • Her own comments:
- 23 ○ This design is inappropriate, too close to the streetscape and bulky. With
- 24 the pillars, brick and barrel-roof the bus stop almost looks like a portico of
- 25 a southern building, having nothing to do with the downtown.
- 26 ○ There is an urgent need for new restrooms, but the public did not attend
- 27 all the hearings for this project and there will be blowback if there is not at
- 28 least an architectural rendering offered. This is a prominent public building
- 29 in the downtown. Even a month more would save a lot of grief.
- 30
- 31

32 Alice Merrill, 200 Johnson Street, indicated the following:

- 33 • The restroom building as designed is an eye sore. It is not set back from the
- 34 street and there is nothing around it.
- 35

36 The public testimony period was closed.

37 Commission comments:

- 38 • The design is thoughtful with attention paid to how it works and is maintained.
- 39 There is state of the art equipment inside. The design is appropriate.
- 40 • It is a concern that the restrooms are right at the rear edge of the sidewalk.
- 41 Perhaps the bicycle parking area could be reduced or moved in order to set
- 42 the restrooms back from the street.
- 43 • A condition of approval should be added that staff look into whether boxwoods
- 44 are particularly attractive to rats and if so find a suitable alternative.
- 45 • The new design is a vast improvement over the previous modular design.
- 46 • The protracted process gone through in trying to issue an RFP and find a
- 47 design that is affordable and combines utilitarianism with some design
- 48 aesthetic has been very challenging.
- 49
- 50

- There is an extreme current need because the restrooms have languished so long and because there will be a large influx of visitors for the America's Cup in 2013. The City would not be well served by delaying this project. Better designs may not be forthcoming because they have not come forth so far during the long process.
- The Commission would like to see graffiti coating used to minimize the maintenance costs and preserve the thin brick façade.
- There should be a sign on the north side of the building to identify it as a restroom, as is done on the south side.
- There is a history of brick buildings in Sausalito, which is reflected in this design.

Vice-Chair Cox moved to continue the public hearing to the meeting of February 1, 2012. The motion died for lack of a second.

The public testimony period was re-opened.

Alice Merrill, 200 Johnson Street, indicated the following:

- If the restroom has to be close to the street, could there be public art or something that does not look like a brick wall?

Mike Monsef, 211 Fourth Street, indicated the following:

- He likes Ms. Merrill's suggestion for public art on the wall.

Additional Conditions of Approval:

- Pull the building back from the street if feasible with respect to: Ordinance No. 1128; the resulting change in elevation and plumbing; the impact on the handicapped access; the impact on the infrastructure; and the cost. If not feasible, then break up the street-facing façade with softening of some sort, either artwork to the right of the window or some other softening technique. If the restroom facility is moved back, the bus shelter should be moved back a commensurate amount if possible to keep the scaling and placement in synch. Staff shall work with the applicant to ensure that it remains aesthetically appropriate.
- Staff shall look into whether boxwoods are particularly attractive to rats and if so find a suitable alternative.
- Staff shall look into the possibility of graffiti coating being used.
- There should be a sign on the north side of the building to identify it as a restroom, as is done on the south side.

Vice-Chair Cox moved and Commissioner Graef seconded a motion to approve a Design Review Permit and a Tree Removal Permit for the project, subject to the additional Conditions of Approval.

Vicki Nichols, 117 Caledonia, indicated the following:

- She asks on what other projects the Planning Commission has given staff this much discretion to move a building or these many factors, and then bring it back to the Planning Commission without continuing it?

1
2 Commission comments:

- 3
- 4 • The Commission has not asked for much change. It might be little or no
5 change for a variety of reasons. The Commission has expressed some
6 preferences, has taken public testimony into consideration, and wants to get
7 the project moving. The Commission action is appropriate.
 - 8 • In the past when the Commission has deferred to staff on various issues the
9 Commission has also asked that the project come back to them if there is any
10 issue that staff is not able to resolve pursuant to the guidelines provided by the
11 Commission. That is inherent in the Commission's direction. Staff has never
12 been shy about bringing something back to the Commission that exceeds their
13 ability at the administrative level.

14 **The motion passed 3-0.**

15
16 The public hearing was closed.

17
18 **Old Business – None.**

19
20 **New Business – None.**

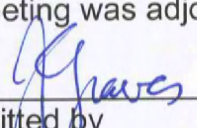
21
22 **Staff Communications**

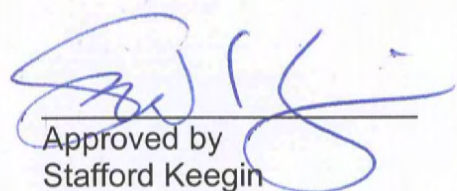
- 23
- 24 • There are no projects for the February 1st Planning Commission meeting. If
25 projects come in between this evening and January 20th there would be time for
26 the 10-day public notice. Staff will hold off on canceling the February 1, 2012
27 meeting until it is certain there are no projects.
 - 28 • On January 23, 2012 there will be a joint meeting of the Planning Commission
29 and City Council to review the recommendation that the Housing Element Task
30 Force made for the Planning Commission and City to commence their review of
31 the Draft Housing Element. The Planning Commission will receive a revised
32 Housing Element prior to the meeting.
 - 33 • Staff will shortly again begin the subcommittee for the Single-family Standards.
 - 34 • Staff has been working with the Legislative Committee on a monthly basis to go
35 over the list of needed amendments or possible new amendments to the Zoning
36 Ordinance and will be meeting again on January 19th.

37
38 **Adjournment**

39
40 **Vice-Chair Cox moved and Chair Keegin seconded a motion to adjourn the**
41 **meeting. The motion passed 3-0.**

42
43 The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

44
45 
46 _____
47 Submitted by
48 Jeremy Graves, AICP
49 Community Development Director

50

_____ Approved by
Stafford Keegin
Chair