

Kentfield Planning Advisory Board

P.O. Box 304, Kentfield, California 94914

Notes

Public Meeting – Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Meeting location: Via Zoom.

Call to order: 7:00 p.m. by Bitsa Freeman – Chair

Board members present: Bitsa Freeman, Julie Johnson, Ross McKenna, Anne Petersen, and Pamela Scott.

Board members absent: Neil Park.

Other attendees: Marko Blagojevic (Principal Architect for this project, with HMC Architects), Klaus Christiansen (Director of Facilities Planning, Maintenance and Operations at College of Marin – “COM”), Isidro Farias (Director of Capital Projects, COM), Kenneth Kerch (Project Manager), Ann Thomas, Beth Rhodes, David Schnee (Principal Architect in charge of working with Marko and HMC, with Group 4 Architecture), J.C. Saunders-Keurjian, Katy Todd and Katherine Lehmann, notetaker.

Meeting minutes: from July 25 were unanimously approved: 5-0.

Correspondence and announcements: None

Members of the Public who wished to comment on anything not on the agenda: None

AGENDA:

1. The main agenda item, and purpose, of this meeting was, as a courtesy, for the College of Marin to share the changes and modifications it has made to the design of their new Learning Resource Center (LRC) that is going to be built on the Kentfield campus. It was also to be able to receive additional feedback from the public about the design.

A. **David Schnee** gave an introductory update on the project:

- Said they are 50% of the way into the Design Development phase of the project.
- Believes that it fits the vision that students, faculty, et.al. have for the campus, of being:
 - Warm,
 - Casual,
 - Naturalistic, and
 - Ecological.

- The LRC is surrounded by other existing buildings on campus and is in the center of the property.
- The construction of this building will transform the entire campus.
- They presented the schematic design at the KPAB meeting on May 20, and feel that they heard what we said and are trying to:
 - Unify the campus.
 - Have the building fit well with the city of Kentfield.
 - Provide a lasting legacy to the community.
- David said they took to heart everyone's suggestions and made some adjustments:
 - Created more space for the ridge line of Mt. Tam to come through, and to be viewed, when standing on campus, at the exterior of the building.
 - Made the roof overhang on the upper deck, facing Mt. Tam, shorter (so as not to block the view unnecessarily.)
 - Created some small, private centers for meetings.
- Proceeded to walk the group through a PowerPoint showing various plans and elevations from different viewpoints and entrances.
- Emphasized that Marko is not just about aesthetics but is also about building and energy performance.

B. Marko Blagojevic explained some of the steps they have taken:

- Evaluated the sun and shade that will be appearing on these glass walls, and they energy use that will be required each day.
- Use as much natural daylight on the north side as possible.
- The east side has a roof overhang to shade the direct sunlight.
- Have created a few break-out collaboration rooms, and few new classrooms.
- Still have nice views Mt. Tam and of the landscape from the exterior of the bldg.
- Used shade calculators, especially for the summer months.
- Most mornings are chilly and need warmth.
- Interior shades are being added to allow folks to be able to control the light.
- Heard that it needs to feel like it "belongs in Marin," and so they chose an earthy color palette.
- The third floor has spectacular views of Mt. Tam, and is called the "Mt. Tam Floor."
- Added some aluminum panels on the exterior, to add texture and shading.
- Used a shading calculator for the south-facing shading.
- Added columns to create a porch with outdoor terraces on one level.
- Will use natural stone or porcelain/stone tile on the main entrances.

- C. **Bitsa Freeman** commented that:
- This building still looks massive compared to the LRC that was there before.
 - Wondered if we have any measurements to compare the two?
 - Is concerned how folks in the Kentfield community, and on campus, will react.
- D. **David Schnee** replied that:
- The other building was a square and this new building is definitely longer than the previous one.
- E. **Julie Johnson**:
- Asked how the previous square footage compares to the current one?
- F. **David** replied that:
- It is very comparable, in terms of square footage.
 - Instead of having a bulky building with a crummy parking lot, we will have a longer, more aesthetically pleasing, building.
- G. **Anne Petersen** wondered how easy the building will be to maintain.
- H. **Klaus Christiansen** replied that, "Yes. We are making it easy to maintain."
- I. **Bitsa** then asked about water storage.
- J. **David** noted that there isn't a grey water system.
- K. **Ken Kerch** noted that the only difference in size between the old and the new building is about 1,000 square feet.
- L. **Bitsa** is concerned about what people will think when they are driving by the college because the building is close to the curb and so massive.
- M. **Anne** is looking forward to seeing a building that says, "There's a college here."
- N. **Paula Scott**:
- Said that she and Anne were around when the old building was built.
 - Wondered why we can't do underground storage of water?
- O. **Ross McKenna** said that it is great to have your own water when you are power washing the stone.

- P. **David** said that is something we can talk about, but there are budget constraints.
- Q. **Marko** said that we don't want to drop the water in the nearby Corte Madera Creek; we want to use it for ourselves.
- R. **Ken Kerch** reminded folks that there is an existing well on campus, and wondered if we could use that water?
- S. **Bitsa** wondered if the building will have solar panels on the roof.
- T. **David Schnee** responded that they are not needed because COM already has them over the parking lot.
- U. **Julie Johnson** commented that:
- The vision is supposed to be "warm and casual, warm and comfortable," but there is a disconnect somewhere because the building is clad in aluminum panels and is the opposite of that with steel and glass.
 - There is a disconnect between warm and comfortable and some of the materials.
 - She isn't sure that the design of this new building connects much with the existing buildings.
 - She hopes COM doesn't cut back too much on the materials for the new LRC, so that it ends up looking like the stepsister of the existing buildings.
 - The 3rd floor blocks the view of Mt. Tam for the rest of the campus.
 - Historically, the campus has consisted of a series of one-story buildings from different time periods.
 - The goal was to make the LRC "The Place to Be."
 - It doesn't have a soft feel to it at all; it feels cold and mechanized.
 - The café across the street has 100-year-old brick.
 - We are missing an opportunity to break up all the glass windows in a row.
 - We need to break down the massive scale, to create more intimacy.
 - Maybe it even saves money to have less glass?
- V. **David Schnee**:
- Thanked everyone for their input.
 - Replied that there is actually very little metal used on the project.
 - Noted that the roof edges are almost always metal on modern buildings.

- Said they initially considered using wood on the underside of the overhangs, however had to reduce that again, because of the budget;
- They are using stained concrete instead.
- Noted that they are using a lot of wood in the interiors.
- Wished they could have top-of-the-line materials, but they can't.

W. Anne Petersen:

- Thinks that having wood on the exterior would be a real maintenance issue.
- Wondered about having some exterior stone artwork, or some art installation like that, along the corridor? Like the Bufano sculpture at the Ross Town Hall?

X. David Schnee:

- Took everyone through a tour of the interiors.
- Noted the folded roof with three main skylights.

Y. Other comments after David's presentation:

- **Beth Rhodes** noted the COM team is working on having a definitive "welcome" place for the campus, which is currently missing. Where do people go when they first arrive? It isn't obvious and needs to be.
- **Bitsa Freeman** said that she likes the interior much more than the exterior.
- **Ross McKenna** said he wanted to revisit the water issue, running off of the open space. He wondered if there is anything we can do now to help collect the water?

Z. Anne Petersen and Bitsa Freeman thanked everyone for providing such a thorough presentation to the board, and to the public.

After all of the presenters dropped off the call, the board met for a few minutes to discuss a few logistics and "housekeeping issues" with the passing of the chair position from Anne Petersen to Bitsa Freeman. A few details included:

- The board needs Greg's official letter of resignation before his position can be filled.
- Be sure to check the P.O. Box at the Kentfield post office, and make sure the box is renewed.
- Agendas need to be prepared at least two weeks in advance of each meeting, and possibly even longer.

The meeting adjourned around 8:15 p.m.