

Kentfield Planning Advisory Board

P.O. Box 304, Kentfield, California 94914

Notes

Public Meeting – Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Meeting location: Via Zoom.

Call to order: 7:02 p.m. by Bitsa Freeman – Chair.

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

Board members absent: None.

Other attendees: Thomas Ahlberg, Allen Berland, Saleem Bukhari, Paul Cunningham (“PC”), Charles Gardiner, Dan Hughes, Barbara Johnson, Jonathan Kaufman, Kevin Krystofiak, Kenneth Kuchman, Eric and Mrs. McClosky, Kathleen McKenna (Floyd), Ralph Miller, Ann Thomas, and Katherine Lehmann, notetaker. Also: Ghassan F. (“Gus”) and Grant (without last names).

Meeting minutes: from August 11, 2021, were unanimously approved: 6-0.

Correspondence and announcements: None

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

AGENDA:

1. Application by Eric McCloskey to subdivide a plot of 2.3 acres into two lots. Before the meeting took place, the application was withdrawn. The main agenda item was to allow neighbors, and others, to air their views to the Board.
 - A. **Bitsa Freeman** gave an introductory update on the project and explained that the McCloskys have temporarily withdrawn their request for approval to subdivide their existing lot, located at 60 Wolfe Canyon Road, along Brushwood Lane, between Wolfe Grade and Bret Harte Road in Kentfield, in order to hear their neighbors’ objections before determining how to proceed.

Parcel: 071-091-36. Planner: Michelle Levenson

The applicant requests Tentative Map approval to subdivide an existing 2.3-acre lot (100,188 square feet) with an average slope of 51.8-percent into two lots as follows: Lot 1-1.16 acres (50,529.6 square feet), average slope of 56-percent and Lot 2-1.14 acres (49,658.4 square feet), average slope of 46.9-percent.

Zoning: R1-B2 (Residential, single family, 10,000 square foot minimum lot area)
Countywide Plan Designation: SF5 Single family
Community Plan Area: Kentfield/Greenbrae

B. Bitsa asked to hear from other **KPAB board members:**

- Both Anne Petersen and Pam Scott went out to look at the property before the meeting.
- Anne noted that the roads are extremely narrow.
- Pam said it was fairly congested because of the existing McClosky construction project at 60 Wolfe Grade Lane.
- Pam also noted that the roads are quite narrow there.
- Neil Park said that the original easement only allows for one building.

C. **General Discussion:**

- There was a question of an existing road easement assigned to the property, and whether the easement is restricted to only one lot.
- There are two access roads to the lot, Wolfe Canyon Road and Brushwood Lane. Both are narrow and difficult for access, especially for fire trucks in case of emergency.

D. **Gus F.:**

- Now lives nearby at 61 Wolf Canyon Road.
- Was attending the Zoom meeting with his parents, with their camera turned off.
- His parents had owned the land previously and sold it as a vacant lot.
- They are not sure whether the easement (which was restricted to one lot at 60 Wolfe Canyon Road) was included with the deed or not, at the time of sale.

E. **Jonathan Kaufman:**

- Is a next-door neighbor to the McClosky's plot, and lives at 66 Brushwood Lane, to the south.
- First met the McCloskys when they bought the property in 2018.
- Came to hear from the McCloskys why they want to split the plot?

F. **Kevin Krystofiak:**

- Also lives at 61 Wolfe Canyon Road.
- Wants to hear the McCloskys explain/comment on their proposal.

G. **Thomas Ahlberg:**

- Lives at 500 Vista Grande, with Bushwood Lane just behind them.
- Thinks it's a very dangerous area.
- Says any truck, even a UPS truck, blocks the whole road.

- A few years ago, there was a fire at 66 Brushwood, which quickly became a 3-alarm fire because of the primitive nature of Brushwood Lane.
- Narrow roads restrict access of fire trucks and emergency vehicles.
- There is no separate means of egress.

H. Allen Berland:

- Has has lived at 6 Wolfe Canyon Road for 54 years.
- At that time, there were only 7 houses on Wolfe Canyon Road.
- After one subdivision, a very narrow (existing) road was put in.
- Over the years, land has since been subdivided several times without ever notifying the neighbors.
- There has subsequently been a piling up on Wolfe Canyon Road.
- Thinks 28 Canyon Road looks like a hotel.
- Thinks if this lot is approved, it would be intolerable.
- If this lot split is somehow approved, would like to see access only on Brushwood Lane, please, which has less traffic than Wolfe Grade Road.
- Says that if there is an easement, it is a matter of record. The conditions of the easement would show up on searches in the title of the property.

I. Kathleen McClure:

- Has lived at 1 Wolf Canyon Road for 27 years.
- The road is already a bottleneck, and a tremendous amount of earth has already been moved around.
- People use their driveway as a turn-in to allow passing traffic, which has caused it to deteriorate.

J. Paul Cunningham:

- Objects to the subdivision and thinks it is almost impossible to build on that lot.
- Has been down there and looked at it, and it seems almost impossible to build in that location.
- When Bank of America owned the property, after foreclosure, about five years ago, their representative/assessor thought that building a driveway would cost at least \$700,000 and did not think it was a viable lot to build on.
- The Greenbergs, who were the previous owners, had the same idea to split the lot ten years ago, and they decided not to go through with it.

K. Eric McClosky:

- Says they have performed their due diligence on this lot, to understand the complexity of the situation.

- They are keen to get views from their neighbors (Jonathan, Kevin, and others), and have reached out to their neighbors with only a light response.
- This is the first real feedback from the neighbors they have received.
- It is currently an underdeveloped lot and is a tinderbox. The McCloskys might be able to get a fire hydrant on the site.
- All aspects of the property will be taken care of: aesthetic, environmental, economic, social, etc. It would be an improvement.
- Said the property is equidistant between Wolfe Canyon Road and Brushwood Lane, and both roads are 12 feet wide.
- Would like to review any letters or emails that were sent to the Board.
- Have a property that is a tinder box and would like to improve the fire risk situation for themselves and everyone.
- He and his wife love challenges and are open to suggestions.
- Said everything is at a very preliminary stage.

L. **Kevin** asked if it was their intention to have the entrance, and access to the property, on Wolfe Canyon or Brushwood Lane? The McCloskys said they are discussing both options with the County, the engineers, etc. Kevin said that many more people are living and using the Wolfe Canyon side than the Brushwood side.

M. **Jonathan:**

- Appreciates the open dialogue.
- Says there were already clearly some concerns about access issues with respect to one house, but the McCloskys have now opened up a tinderbox regarding two properties, which doubles the problem.

N. **Eric:**

- Felt they were caught flat-footed by this public forum but are open to suggestions.

O. **Allen:**

- Would like to see a copy of the easement before the next meeting.

P. **Charles Gardener:**

- From 25 Brushwood Lane.
- Thinks that due diligence has not been done by the McCloskys.
- Thinks that the lot does not have permission to access from Brushwood Lane.
- The proposal to subdivide the existing lot is essentially creating a land-locked property, which doesn't have easement permission on either road.

Q. Bitsa Freeman:

- Received close to 20 emails objecting to the permit to build, and she will share them with the McCloskys.

Discussion then moved on to the Mobile Lights at Marin Catholic:

R. Anne Peterson:

- Noted that Marin County planner, Sabrina Cardoza, said the Dept. is moving in the direction of approving the mobile lights in early September.
- Nancy Vernon at the County also said it was going to be approved by the Planning Dept.
- Expects the neighbors are going to appeal.
- We need to find out if we can appeal (as KPAB).
- There is only about an 8-day window to appeal.

S. Neil Park:

- Is surprised that the permit would be approved in its current condition.

T. Allen Berland:

- The Board could appeal, even if the appeal is not legally recognized, and the commission could see how the board feels.
- This situation (i.e., the Board's ability to appeal) has not arisen in the past as the planners always accepted the Board's recommendations in the past.

U. Ross McKenna:

- Is in favor of the lights at Marin Catholic.

V. Julie Johnson:

- Thinks the board should appeal.

The meeting adjourned: at 8:44 p.m.