

## TAMLAPAI DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (TDRB)

### Approved Notes

**Public Meeting – Wednesday, November 17, 2021**

**Meeting location:** Via Zoom.

**Call to order:** 7:00 p.m. by Alan Jones, Chair

**Board members present:** Alan Jones, Logan Link, Andrea Montalbano, Doug Wallace, and Michael Wara.

**Other attendees:** Meredith Jacobson, Guillermo Loyola, Greg Van Houten, and Katherine Lehmann, note-taker.

**Comments from the public** about any items *not* on tonight’s agenda: None.

#### **Approval of the minutes from:**

- September 15: Approved unanimously 5-0.
- November 3rd: Approved unanimously 5-0, with these edits:  
Page 4, 4<sup>th</sup> bullet: change the attribution of “The Coastal Commission and the SFBCDC (*San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission*) are becoming very concerned” to Michael Wara.  
Doug does not recall the statement about “Elevate construction while the plate is subsiding?” This sentence can be deleted.

**Next meeting on:** Wednesday, December 1, 2021, when new officers of the Tamalpais Design Review Board will also be elected.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #1:**

**Applicant:** Guillermo Loyola  
**Address:** Shoreline Office Center De LLC Sign Review  
(Club Evexia & Every Man Jack)  
100 Shoreline Highway, Mill Valley  
**Assessor's Parcel:** 052-227-17  
**Project ID:** P3352 and P3353  
**Planner:** Sabrina Cardoza

**The applicant requests** Sign Review approval to install a 60.75 square-foot, internally illuminated sign on the front façade of an existing, multi-tenant commercial building identified as “Building A” at 100 Shoreline Highway in Mill Valley. The sign would read “Club Evexia.” The sign would be wall- mounted with a two-inch projection constructed with stainless steel channel letters with orange and teal acrylic. The sign would be 20.25 feet in length and three feet

in height on a building element with a length of approximately 50 feet. The sign would be located approximately 12 feet above grade. The illumination would be LED modules.

Sign Review approval is required because the proposed sign is internally illuminated.

**The applicant also requests** Sign Review approval to install an 84 square-foot, internally illuminated sign on the front façade of an existing, multi-tenant commercial building identified as “Building A” at 100 Shoreline Highway in Mill Valley. The sign would read “Every Man Jack.” The sign would be wall mounted with a two-inch projection constructed with stainless steel channel letters with white acrylic on a black backer. The sign would be 28 feet in length and three feet in height on a building element with a length of approximately 72 feet. The sign would be located approximately 12 feet above grade. The illumination would be LED modules.

Sign Review approval is required because the proposed sign is internally illuminated.

**Zoning:** BFC-RSP

**Countywide Plan Designation:** GC

**Community Plan (if applicable):** Tamalpais Area Community Plan

**Presentation:**

- **Greg Van Houten:** Presented the revised design for signs. Sizes have been reduced and illumination has been changed to “halo” lighting.  
The area for *EVEXIA* is 48.4 sq. ft. Face of the letters is solid and the background is clear. The illumination will shine on the inside face and then back on to the wall.  
*EVERY MAN JACK* size is reduced to 49.6 sq. ft. Removed the back panel from the previous presentation. Changed the color to company brown. Letters are solid face and clear back with halo lights that reflect back from the building.  
Elevation drawing shows that the signage is back lit. The LED lights are set so that there are no hotspots, and lighting is even.

**Discussion:**

- **Doug Wallace:** Thanked the applicant, Mr. Loyola, for being responsive to the Board’s concerns. The revised sign is definitely an improvement over the previous version.
- **Alan Jones:** Thinks there is a precedent for halo lighting at the Holiday Inn. This configuration is more quiet and dignified.
- **Logan Link:** Wondered if backlighting is more acceptable by the Tam Plan? Approval of this type of design might set a precedent.
- **Alan:** Tam Plan does not specifically refer to this method of lighting. However, the letters in the signage are *not* internally lit, which *is* specified in the Tam Plan. The letters will appear as shadows, and they will be readable at night. The design is quieter, more dignified, and better than a sign that is brightly lit from the front, and so these new signs would be legal.
- **Andrea Montalbano:** This design looks better. This location could be a good place to test the design. Maybe we could record it as a test or pilot project.
- **Doug Wallace:** This design is subdued, and I am inclined to give this a “go,” if we can record it as a test case.
- **Discussion:** Regarding other signs in the area. If any lessons can be drawn from them: DeLano’s, Good Earth, The Junction, or the Log Cabin?
- **Logan:** Wondered just how bright can signs be? Are there any guidelines for wattage? Are some halo lit signs brighter than others? Can the light be dimmed?

- **Greg Van Houten:** In my experience, this is a specific LED module, and what we are using is a standard wattage. Any halo lighting in other areas will be fairly consistent with what we are using here. Is not aware of any lower intensity of LEDs.
- **Logan:** What are the color temperatures?
- **Andrea:** Plain White, 7000 degrees. This is a very cool blue-white. (2700 is yellow light, and 4000 is white light used in hospitals). In interior space, this feels very cold. In exterior lighting, it appears brighter. So, you are using less light to get more brightness.
- **Alan:** The light would bounce off the colors of the building and what you see would be a mix.
- **Greg:** These are the only modules for LED lighting that I am familiar with. But my understanding is that there are no other options for the colors except for those shown on our specs.
- **Andrea:** This is a leap of faith, as a test case and an experiment. This type of signage was not around when the Tam Plan was written. It should be recorded that this is a *test case* and it should not necessarily set a precedent. This design is an improvement on the previous *GLASSDOOR* sign. And if this design does work out, then it would be a nice example to follow.
- **Doug:** As soon as these signs are up, let's put it on the agenda for discussion and ratification, so that it is on record to give it some weight.
- **Michael Warra:** I think these signs are a huge improvement. I like Doug's suggestion that we look at these signs after they are up for future development and signage in Tam Junction and possibly on Shoreline, as well.

**Public Comment:** None

**Motion:** Was made to approve both of the sign applications for 100 Shoreline, with the stipulation that it is designated as an experiment to be evaluated once the signs are in place. Motion approved unanimously, 5-0.

## AGENDA ITEM #2:

### Communications and Correspondence:

- **Alan** (Alan and Doug attended the Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup> by Zoom). The supervisors voted, as Andrea predicted, to support the application of 150 Shoreline. The BOS was extremely lax. They allowed the applicant extended time, and to speak to staff, and they took a motion before they heard any public comment. One hundred percent of the public comments were negative, and yet the motion was positive, to approve the application. It appeared to be a "done deal."
- **Andrea:** Isn't that illegal to approve a motion before public comment?
- **Alan:** Members of the County Council didn't say anything about it. It was frustrating. They tend to defer to the supervisor whose district is involved, in these matters.
- **Doug:** Supervisor Katie Rice's only question was to ask how many parking spaces were planned for EV chargers? The architect, Benjamin Young, was pleased to tell her that there were several. Zero comments were made by the other supervisors, and the chair neglected to observe procedure. In Doug's opinion, it would have been the job of the County Council to correct that.

- **Doug:** Exchanged emails with Ethan Levine. He is the permits manager for the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Was asking for clarification about what 100 feet from the shoreline means.  
The battle is all but lost. There are existing buildings between the bay shoreline and this new development, and this is a small parcel. Serious pressure for more housing is going to override other considerations.
- **Michael:** Did the BCDC know with whom we can work? Did you get any sense of BCDC's position in terms of sea level rise, and development policy?
- **Doug:** Would be surprised if 100 feet from Mean High Water, as Ethan Levine put it, is a permanent regulation or standard. They have put in a lot of effort in regional adaption of a shoreline strategy, and then something like this can slip right under the wire. Stephanie's comment was, "Not parcel-by-parcel protection but a comprehensive protection has to be put in place." Since other structures would need protection from rising waters, therefore this little one is not going to hurt.
- **Alan:** The Planning Commission was very sophisticated, but the BOS was not. They did offer to Stephanie to change the motion, after the public comment, but she declined to change it. This time, the person making the presentation for the applicant on 150 Shoreline was much more polished and gave a very slick presentation.
- **Doug:** There was an attorney presenting on behalf of 150 Shoreline. He was reciting chapter and verse of housing law, to show how difficult it would be for them to resist the state directives.
- **Andrea:** Attended a meeting about Housing Laws a couple of weeks ago with Mark Levine. He was saying this is just the tip of the iceberg, "There are so many pro-housing laws that are coming down the pipeline; you haven't seen anything yet." Public safety, like wildfires, may be one way to slow down development, but flooding not so much.
- **Logan:** Disappointed that procedure was not followed. Just a little reminder may be useful. Feels the engagement between the community and the County is at an all-time low, at least in our area. Maybe Stephanie doesn't understand that we are an asset? Would be happy to reach out to her.
- **Michael:** All of these supervisors need to push back against this housing if they want to keep their seats. Marin has to figure out where the laws do bind and where they don't. Maybe Supervisor Stephanie Moulton-Peters has a different set of priorities than we understand. The first two things on her website relate directly to this project; flooding as a core concern and sea level rise as a second concern. It would be good to know her better before the matter comes up before the supervisors again.
- **Alan:** We thought it was not ethical to reach out to one supervisor and not to all others, immediately before the meeting. So, we chose not to contact Stephanie privately. There are two issues here. With regard to following procedure, Alan will follow up privately. But the issue to do with housing and the legal precedents of the supervisors taking a stand; whether the Tam Board, as a whole, could write a letter addressing that broader issue, as he feels our future is at stake.
- **Michael:** Was on Stinson Beach this weekend in the Sea Drift complex, and the entire place is a construction site, even as there is regular flooding on the main street at this point, at high tide. There has been an extensive county planning process in West Marin and concern with the sea level rise. It comes down to this: Where is the money going to come from, because it will be really expensive? Whether to decide in the short-term, or plan for the long term? It is difficult when each election cycle is four years.

- **Alan:** The next meeting will be held on December 1, with a couple of projects to review. Also, we should have elections for our officers for next year at our next meeting. (Alan's term ends on the first of March).

Thinks he can write a letter on procedural matters on his own. The other letter could be drafted along with Doug about the broader issues, and the Tam DRB Board can discuss it at the next meeting.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.**