

Draft Meeting Minutes

Strawberry Design Review Board
[118 E. Strawberry Dr. Mill Valley, CA 94941](#)
Strawberry Recreation Center
April 1, 2019

Members Present:
Joe Sherer
Julie Brown
Rebecca Lind
Matt Williams

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 by Joe Sherer, Chair

Item #1 Open Time for public comment

Board member Rebecca Lind noted concerns over length of prior meetings and resulting late nights for constituents. (The prior meeting ended around 11pm at night). Board members agreed to discuss this at future meeting and set a loose goal to complete the nights agenda no later than 10pm.

Item #2 Approval of Minutes.

The Board reviewed minutes from the previous two meetings.

1/21/19 Meeting Minutes- approved

M/S Brown/ Williams to approve minutes as drafted.

Vote: JS: Yes, JB: Yes, MW: Yes, RL: Abstain (since absent from meeting)

3/4/19 Meeting Minutes- approved

JB suggested one modification to language regarding 431 E Strawberry Dr.

M/S Lind/ Sherer to approve minutes as noted.

Vote: JS: Yes, JB: Yes, RL: Yes, MW: Abstain (since absent from meeting)

Item #3 Greenwood Bay Sign.

Michael Heckman made a presentation to address issues raised at the last meeting.

He distributed new drawings (not shown on County website) that correlate to the story poles recently erected. New proposal responds to height and massing concerns by stepping down on upper corners to reduce blockage of the bay views. Mr. Heckman noted a strong preference for the earlier submittal of a rectangular sign but wanted the board to have two alternatives based on concerns voiced.

Community comments on proposal:

Doreen Gluckin, a neighbor, was in support of revised step design. She felt it was a better design and serves the stated purpose of clarifying direction to different addresses.

Collin Probert, a resident of the condominiums, expressed his support for the original rectangular sign as being a more elegant option. He felt the condominiums long deserved good signage and felt the junipers blocked the bay view already.

Board members noted the discrepancy between story poles and drawings on website. Accepted a hard copy of drawings** dated March 9, 2019 from Michael Heckman for records. It was noted that county staff had lost an employee who typically made sure all drawings were updated on line.

Board comments:

RL clarified old sign was to be removed in entirety and area replanted.

JB clarified that existing leash law sign would be relocated so as not to conflict with new sign.

JS noted the code allows 6 square feet of signage and the goal was to allow increase within reason. He noted that as he approached the sign on foot and via car the story pole height shows the sign should not be any taller. He preferred the stepped sign which decreased obstruction while providing direction. He noted that if the juniper were to die or be removed, the sign would be blocking the bay.

RL supported the design change and felt the steps were clarified the purpose of the sign. She supported height demonstrated by the story poles.

MW stated that the height and smaller design are appropriate. He felt the overall design could be more elegant but that the form and shape of the stepped design are the right scale.

JB agreed with MW comments. Supports the smaller stepped sign and would understand if the owner wanted to tweak the graphics to achieve a more elegant final.

M/S Williams/Lind to approve as re-submitted tonight. **Note drawings are dated March 9, 2019

Vote: JS: Yes, JB: Yes, RL: Yes, MW: Yes

Item #4 431 East Strawberry Drive.

This is a follow up to the initial SDRB presentation on 3/4/19. The project was continued to allow time to try to resolve neighbor concerns regarding privacy screening and pool cabana location.

Sutton Suzuki architects recapped the following changes made to the proposal. The massing and height of auxiliary storage behind the cabana were altered to open up the views. A new separate storage facility was created on the south side of the property enabling the cabana footprint to shrink. As a result, the distance from the side yard property line has been increased to 15' and 20'. Height variance being sought is related to the reframing of existing house in order to increase drainage and insulation. The current condition is grandfathered in, but the new construction is not, hence the variance. Story poles reveal the roof surface is still visible from the neighbor, but will have a gravel surface to minimize presence. D Thorne landscape architect added five laurel trees at the northern edge of the large live oak remaining to provide privacy screening to northern neighbors home.

Public comments on the proposal.

Sam Dorrance, neighbor to the north, continued to express his concerns that the proposed screening was insufficient to maintain their privacy. Specifically, he pointed to currently screening from Tree #2 – a coastal live oak w/ 20" trunk slated for removal. He asked that the arborist report be reviewed. He also felt that despite the Krasnoff's attempts to mitigate the impact on their home, the screening proposed and current cabana location was still too intrusive compromising both their privacy and views. Mr. Dorrance also noted that there was question about whether the meeting had been noticed properly on the county's website and that he had not received any update via the County's automatic notification system where he is signed up. Mr. Dorrance noted the lateness of the last meeting and that many of their supporters could not remain late into the evening. He stated for the record they had eleven people attending in support of their position. He also stated he thought the county should have 18 letters in support of their position. Joe Sherer responded that the SDRB had only seen two such letters thus far. He suggested Mr. Dorrance follow up with the County to confirm.

David Thorne landscape architect produced the arborist's report and submitted a copy for the record. The report rated tree #2 a 2.5 on a scale of 0-5 and recommended removal noting that the tree had been topped in the past and was situated close to the existing house.

Ellen Kotter, friend of the Dorrances, spoke of the concerns she had for the stress that Cathy Dorrance is under. She stressed the impact of the loss of privacy on the Dorrance family and her desire that the board share her concerns. Ms. Kotter noted that she herself almost bought the residence at 431 and was

struck but how closely the two houses related to each other. She made note that she could wave off the deck to her friends' kitchen window. Ms. Kotter noted how active Mrs Dorrance is in the community and appealed to the board to maintain the simple modest nature of the Strawberry neighborhood.

Cathy Dorrance stated with surety that the property value of their home would be negatively impacted by the cabana, noting both the view disruption and the reduced privacy from vegetation clearing. She asked why the applicant wouldn't simply relocate the cabana to the south side of the property where they have no immediate neighbors.

Krasnoff stated that they have gone to great lengths in both time and expense to try to reach a place of compromise. But that they were unable to reach a place where both they and their neighbors were happy. They are at peace with the proposed plan.

Sam Dorrance noted that while they appreciated the efforts, the changes made are insufficient to protect their privacy and views.

Board comments

JS noted several points from his conversations with planner, Michelle Levinson
-Variance required on 40' height limit must meet certain specific conditions in order to merit approval.

-CC&Rs for the property state that no accessory buildings are allowed. But they also state that design decisions are the jurisdiction of a now defunct architectural board. The CC&Rs were not adopted by the county and are not currently enforced.

-Code 22.14060 regarding shoreline views does not apply to this proposal

RL noted that the dispute regarding the cabana siting appears to be a private matter.

MW noted the neighbors privacy concerns but also drew attention to the siting of their home oriented over the lower section of 431 E. Strawberry Drive property. He noted the applicant's accommodations to the project in order to mitigate the impact. Ultimately the applicant is entitled to what they are proposing.

RL noted two separate issues 1- variance, which is without findings and 2- the privacy issue which she thinks can proceed.

JB Agreed with RL and Matt Williams. Acknowledges the pressures being placed on neighbors and impact on their views, but also noted the significant changes made to the site plan by the applicant. The CC&Rs mention of an architectural review board that is now defunct is a condition of several older developments in Strawberry. She concluded there were no grounds to reject the cabana.

JS concluded cabana move is substantive and privacy screening is imperative. He supports 24" box trees to ensure privacy is accomplished as quickly as possible. He is not against the variance.

M/S Lind/Williams to deny the variance based on conversation with public that there is no special circumstance on which to base support. We do not support the variance over the existing condition, which is an intensification of the existing non-conforming use. We cannot make the required variance findings in support of intensification.

Vote: JS: No, JB: Yes, RL: Yes, MW: Yes

M/S Lind/Williams to approve application of drawings as presented of site plans showing revised cabana location and landscape screening with the stipulation that five 24" box Saratoga Bay Laurel trees be used in lieu of 15 gallons noted on the plans. (Site plans dated 3/27/19 and L4.0 dated 4/1/19)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30pm.

Vote: JS: Yes, JB: Yes, RL: Yes, MW: Yes

Notes by Julie Brown