

# Tamalpais Design Review Board Special Meeting Minutes

## Regular Public Hearing : 07.15.2020

### I. Meeting Location :

online virtual meeting via ZOOM

### II. Call to Order :

7PM Logan Link : chair

### III. Board Members Present :

Logan Link (LL) : chair,

Doron Dreksler (DD): secretary

Alan Jones (AJ)

Andrea Montalbano (AM)

Douglas Wallace (DW)

### IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes :

- meeting minutes dated : 7.01.2020
- corrections : DW - a let DD know about a couple corrections. AM : change "letter to county" to letter to state.
- Motion to Approve with above corrections as written: AM 1<sup>st</sup>/ AJ2<sup>nd</sup> : 4-0 ; DW no internet connection/no vote

### V. Correspondence + Announcements:

**item 1:** LL : said that she received a letter on weismann development (dipsea ranch) : 455 panoramic highway : and that a july 27 zoom meeting is scheduled and that at least one of us needs to attend. AM: stated she would attend and report back.

**item 2:** AM stated that she was made aware that a potential project on an unbuilt lot on madera was in the works and that we should reach out and encourage an informal review LL: stated to AM, if you give me the info i will reach out .

**item 3:** AM: my neighbor came up with a document from 1991 which organized the muir woods park community as a separate design review board. stating that we should investigate and maybe we include elements in the tam plan if we ever

update. AJ: said" i remember it" it never really worked stating further that it was a mixed bag.

## **VI. Public Comment on Items not on the agenda:**

**item 1:** Em-j (member of the public) presented the following two items:

**a) possible tam junction shop:** presented the potential vintage retail shop at 234 shoreline retail space + artifacts.

board comments: LL "sounds cool ", AJ : "local business is desirable", AM "any changes to the outside ?" applicant responded none are planned and added that the back space would be used as an exhibition space. AM added that maybe the signage could be public art. LL : added that the use fits in with the tam plan. also suggested an initial review before you get to far is encouraged. AM : commented that we have specific signage regulations in the tam plan that you should review.

**b) mural at good earth :** presented the background/history of the mural.

described a discussion with the artist to add additional faces to the mural to represent the community. further explaining that the artist originally accepted the idea and now is not responding. applicant further explained that good earth is open to changing the mural. applicant started a go-fund-me plus gained backing of 6 artists supporting the change to the mural. further stating that the activity is currently at a pause and asked what we thought and how she could go forward.

board comments: LL: "we dint have any input with the current mural. AM : i wish there was a second spot to create another mural rather than changing the existing. LL: aske d the applicant if she had talked to the county ? applicant responded that kate sears office suggested she come to the tam design review board. AM: "how did the existing mural happen ?" applicant responded that no concept was approved before the art went up and added that the artist wasn't paid, further adding "it got complicated". AM: " did the artist get approval from the building owner" applicant responded "yes", further adding that she gave the building owner feedback from several local business owners and artists regarding the mural. sarah estes smith commented : kate sears recommended that the TDRB find ways to move forward, further adding that she didnt think the county has control over the mural. DW: what about creating an informal pole on next door to gain feedback ? applicant responded that lots of

comments on nextdoor regarding the mural, lots of opinions, most not in support of changing and "felt negative". AJ: i appreciate you attempting to get consensus, there are no regulations that i am aware of, i support your wish for community support. LL agreed. AJ : commented that this is touchy. LL: should we add this to a formal meeting to get feedback ? AM: this needs to come from the applicant. she needs to come with information "like a survey" rather than going back and forth on nextdoor, i think a formal TDRB meeting is premature. LL: do we create a letter of support from the TDRB ? DW: we need a concept before we can respond. DD: this is sort of a super graphic and would not be something that we address in the tam plan or that i am aware of in any county documents. it is very easy to create a digital image of what you are suggesting. however, the concept is not something i would not support in any way. who says your idea of art is the same or different from the artists vision ? LL: added that we need something visual to understand what you are proposing.

**item 2:** brooks mcdonald brought to the boards attention that the project at 327 boring that we previously approved has had several changes of materials that were not previously approved. further commenting that he is a neighbor to the property and an architect and that he is concerned with the project. replacing wood with stucco, introducing a bright colored stone that is not appropriate. the project doesn't represent the tam plan objectives and further stating that the owner of the project is unresponsive.

board comments: LL: this is a frustrating situation, DW agreed. AM: suggested contacting planning. AJ + DD: suggested a call to code enforcement, but not sure if they can do anything. AM: suggested that the board contact planning. LL: agreed, adding that it is amazing that it is so difficult to stop. brooks mcdonald commented that it is a breakdown in the process. adding that he would email the entire list of recommendations and follow up with code enforcement. AJ: i suggest that LL write an email to planning and code enforcement. AM: suggested "plus a call" LL agreed. AM: stated that we voted on materials and they are not following the approval / standards.

## **VII. Items on Agenda:**

**A. Lotus Sign Review | 160 Shoreline Hwy, Mill Valley (Holiday Inn Express)  
Parcel Number: 052-371-09 Project Planner: Sabrina Cardoza,  
415.473.3607, cardoza@marincounty.org Applicant: David Ford,  
510.387.0546**

Project Summary:

The applicant requests Sign Review approval to install a new 24 square-foot, non- internally illuminated, wall mounted sign on an improved lot developed with a "Holiday Inn Express" hotel building in unincorporated Mill Valley. The wall mounted sign is proposed to reach a height of three feet, four inches and a length of seven feet, five eighths inches. The sign is proposed to be located approximately two feet from the top of the building wall located along the northeastern building elevation. The sign is proposed to be externally illuminated. Sign Review approval is required because the sign is proposed to be located along the rear of the building where signs for individual tenants in multi-tenant buildings are permitted only on the primary entrance elevation of the space occupied by the business pursuant to Marin County Code section 22.28.050.A.8(a)(iv).

Zoning: CP (Planned Commercial) | Countywide Plan Designation: GC (General Commercial, FAR=0.10 to 0.30) | Community Plan: Tamalpais Area Community Plan

PROJECT PRESENTATION + SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION :

- david ford presenting for holiday inn. reminded board of previous presentation in February for a freestanding sign also adding that the new configuration took into account comments from the previous meeting and the revised signage package will hang on an existing building wall with downlighting to minimize impact while still being visible from the freeway
- owner also presented: stating that this is a 3rd generation family business. existing lobby is undergoing upgrades and that they are frustrated with traveling guests seeing the hotel from the freeway also adding that current travel numbers are deviated and down from 85% to 15% occupancy. further adding that they are asking for approval for the current sign location to help there business opportunities during current COVID times.

BOARD QUESTIONS, COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- AM: the sign seems close to the overhang, is it actually seen from the highway ? applicant: "yes, it is seen from the highway."
- AM: : this is for drive-up rather than reservation ? applicant: "yes, this is for non-reservation travelers"
- AM + LL: the description doesn't describe the height from the ground
- LL: can this be a more humble sign ? not as flashy ? can you use more unified colors ? applicant: "the logo and colors can't be modified, there are strict standards" owner added: we actually struck the sign to minimize the impact.
- AJ: i appreciate the location, seems fairly appropriate. reasonable scale and location. seems like a reasonable request.
- LL: a more natural pallet would be an improvement. would the chain make concessions ? applicant: "this is not possible and not the case" "very strict guidelines" "proprietary logo, colors and proportions"
- AM: if you paint the wall a darker color, then you would not need the bright blue ? applicant: "i think so" "building has been painted" "i would gladly paint it any color"
- DW: i would be concerned with a darker color, seems like things are going lighter for heat gain...
- AM; this is an east facing wall and not a heat gain issue.
- AM: the tam plan specifically describes no signage as a billboard on the marsh. why would we allow it or go against the tam plan ? applicant: it faces the freeway, not the marsh, its up to the TDRB, planning says it is good. AM: the county has a different signage code, the tam plan is more restrictive in this case. applicant: this sign is more about identifying. it does not face the marsh. the location seems to be least intrusive.

#### PUBLIC QUESTIONS, COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- none

#### BOARD COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- LL: i appreciate the locations and size which are all good steps compared to the previous application. i also agree that the signage should not face the freeway and/or the marsh. this is a slippery slope, we need to preserve the marsh. this is not an appropriate place. signs facing the marsh or the freeway should not be allowed.
- DW: did you look at other alternatives that dont violate the tam plan ?
- LL: the intent is to draw people in from the freeway. its a digital world now, i feel that people find things in a digital way rather than by signage.

- AM: i agree. the future of tam junction will transform radically in the next 20 years. everyone will want a sign/\.
- LL: we can't say yes
- DW: its easy to find anything online. dont need this sign
- AJ: location and size is a different condition. although i agree with AM+LL, this is different.

#### BOARD ACTIONS :

AM motions 1<sup>st</sup>: Board recommends that application be rejected based on not meeting the tam plan signage requirements, specifically the location at the freeway and marsh / DW 2<sup>nd</sup> : 5-0 Unanimous

#### **B. informal review / consultation for a potential project at 205 Tennessee Valley Road, Mill Valley. An application for this project has not yet been submitted; this is a preliminary conversation. No vote or ruling.**

- david hughes presented a potential preschool project in the existing education buildings at the lutheran church. the applicant described a history of running and operating preschools and that he currently runs a non-profit school in ross and that this project would represent a second campus / extension to the ross operation. applicant further added that the zoning is approved for the preschool use and that they have different ideas to maybe add a nature garden with animals and fruit trees and maybe a future home / ADU further up on the site, but that everything is just conceptual and nothing is written in stone. the applicant further discussed the tam plan and that there is a section discussing children on Tennessee valley road and suggests improved access circulations and safe walking plans.

#### board comments:

- LL: sounds very cool and fits with the village concept
- DW: hom wamy kids ? potential applicant: dont know yet, currently we are serving 49 and this site should be similar
- AJ: love the idea and the use. community serving. enhances the area. it is a little challenging for safely getting access by foot. works well for automobile access. maybe a pedestrian crosswalk could be added
- LL: what building changes do you inversion ? potential applicant: initially none on the outside, only things like changing out toilets to make it functional for staff and the children. no big changes, its a blank slate for

ideas. goal is to get in and operate as soon as possible to open during COVID times.

- april post (member of the public) asked : is it currently being used for child care ? potential applicant: "no", most recently the real school occupied it but it is now closed. also added that the state of california has strict childcare/ daycare rules.
- april post (member of the public): i anticipate the neighbors will have an issue with noise. potential applicant: i have contacted the neighboring property owners to make them aware.
- DW: it is an awkward intersection and could create congestion during drop off and pickup. i can't visualize the crosswalk across Tennessee valley road.
- AM: are you buying ? potential applicant: yes
- LL: the project access needs to support and encourage locals to walk + bike. maybe flashing lights at crosswalk ?
- DD: also the crosswalk and all access points need to be ADA compliant which isn't going to be easy with the current crosswalk that doesn't go anywhere. potential applicant: agreed.
- AJ: we need to encourage our kids to walk and bike. the intersection concerns me. should reach out to DPW
- AM: the access further south would be a better entry point
- LL: sound being an issue is a good point. using trees and plants to minimize sound is a good idea. developing plans showing landscape plans, vehicle and pedestrian access is important. applicant: we talked to planning about fencing and planting. we also have lots of experience planting fruit, herbs and edible gardens. this is a blank canvas and we are excited to create something amazing.
- AM: the fruit stand blocks a direct access from the footbridge. this area could be developed. it could become a plaza and be more of a safe crossing. the intersection would be pedestrian activated and would impede shoreline traffic, maybe move the crosswalk further down Tennessee valley road ?
- DW: i have never seen anyone use the crosswalk because it doesn't go anywhere.
- LL: i think we would be an advocate and i think we would support the improvement. make sure to talk to us a lot during the planning. potential applicant: the tam plan says the boundary line should be adjusted for more efficient connection between sausalito / tam valley.
- AM: nextdoor has a lot of conversations on marin city combining school districts. potential applicant: would the TDRB support what the tam plan is saying ? AM; we are chartered with supporting anything that follows and reinforces the tam plan.

•

**C. Discuss new state housing laws and the future of housing and community planning in general. Review and vote on a board letter to officials.**

board comments:

- AJ + DW: the idea was to create a letter that encapsulates the nine proposed pieces of legislation. the thrust of the letter was to demand a comprehensive plan to deal with development.
- LL: i think the letter is very readable and succinct.
- AJ: would be easy to post on the website, so that everyone knows where we are coming from
- AM: there is a slight danger in the letter, that we are saying we dont want development. might be helpful to encourage particular items like workforce housing, reasonable development. the iron triangle neighborhood in richmond is a perfect example, lots of opportunity, right location for development. we need to point out this could backfire and not promote affordable housing.
- DW: can the public weigh in ?
- AJ: the letter is public when we talk in a meeting.
- LL: i will put the letter on the screen and then anyone can read it
- DW: we can't just say no, we need actions that help encourage / support appropriate development.
- AJ + AM: send any updates as soon as possible so we get this out this week. our representatives need to be aware. the current legislation will not result in affordable housing
- LL: makes sense to add AM's suggestions / sentences
- AJ: you can combine the document as the chair and forward the info.
- april post (member of the public): other design review boards need to be aware of the TDRB letter, i would suggest that the letter is forwarded to them. LL: maybe ask if they would endorse. AM: we should put all of our names on the letter.
- april post (member of the public): i suggest adding infrastructure be added to the developers responsibility. the community is usually stuck with what the developer creates

BOARD ACTIONS :

DW motions 1<sup>st</sup>: make changes and edits to the letter as needed, incorporate AM's info and prepare the letter for signature / AM 2<sup>nd</sup> : 5-0 Unanimous

**D. Discuss illegal signage issues in the Tam Junction area, along with board and Code Enforcement involvement.**

- LL: no updates

- AM the martin sign is still there but the graffiti is gone

**E. Discuss County's Objective Design and Development Standards project, along with the board's survey, recommendations, and involvement.**

- LL: the response to the 782 survey closed tonight
- AJ: i think it was really good PR
- AJ: results ? LL: overall good community involvement. the village concept was supported.
- AM: we need to get in depth analysis. they supported all 9 design elements portions of the survey
- LL: the process will go like: 1) develop a list of recommendations to add to the countywide development standards. 2) meet with Julian who will help us review / make suggestions. 3) go to consultants to review and make suggestions on what should be added and what will not.
- AJ: it sounds like the consultant has all the power and makes the key decisions. AM: agreed. LL: that doesn't not sound good
- AJ: is there an opportunity to say that it is important to have design review ? LL: it is a shame that design review may or may not have any power. that makes thoughtful standards in lieu of thoughtful design review so important..
- AM: i have been the victim of subjective design review. these objective design standards must be really really good. the laws take away our environment.
- LL: 1) do we have permission to encourage julian to send the survey ? 2) wednesday july 29th zoom meeting with julian is important.
- AM: we need to review, qualify and quantify the info and review comments that drive the decisions to more than the 9 items. example: we need more open space, lots of people said they dont want restrictions on affordable housing.
- AJ: we need more incentives to encourage affordable housing. are there other things beyond density bonuses ?
- LL: what we should do is to include all 9 items in the survey plus add items in the comments that the community added and then send everything to julian and maybe the consultant.
- april post (member of the public): i like more open space as possible. affordable housing rotates out of the definition of actually being affordable. we can't afford to lose affordable housing in our area with minimal land. the consultants power doesn't seem legal.... its ridiculous ! AM: i agree, how can they replace the public process ? april post (member of the public): the board should get legal advice. feels like they are trying to slip it through.

- AM: should be a public process of review and approval with public feedback / comment.
- AJ: that's why we created the survey. april post (member of the public): but it didnt convey the importance. LL: we couldn't make it to political.
- AM: now the data will allow us to tell the public and educate the people.
- DW: the survey shows a powerful message. must clarify delivery method. thanks to LL + AM for survey and the outcome.
- AM : we should ask the county to reimburse the survey monkey survey costs.

**BOARD ACTIONS :**

LL motions 1<sup>st</sup>: board permits AM + LL to create draft letter of survey information and additional public comments gained from the survey. / AM 2<sup>nd</sup> : 5-0 Unanimous

**VIII. Informal Review Items not on Agenda:**

None

**IX. Forthcoming projects reviewed without comment:**

None

**IX. Adjournment:**

9:40 P.M.

**END OF DOCUMENT**