

# **Tamalpais Design Review Board Special Meeting Minutes**

## **Regular Public Hearing : 10.21.2020**

### **I. Meeting Location :**

online virtual meeting via ZOOM

### **II. Call to Order :**

7:06PM 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 :**

- Motion to Approve the meeting minutes dated : 10.07.2020 as written: AM 1<sup>st</sup>/  
DW 2<sup>nd</sup> : 5-0 Unanimous

### **V. Correspondence + Announcements:**

- a) AM discussed the alta way project issues and the positive efforts by Lee Budish (friends of west tam valley) to gain information from the county. AM continued that she was concerned that the project was being moved along without any public notice or tam design review approval. further stating that they merged the 10 lots into 6 and any new property should be reviewed by TDRB. also indicating that the application appears to be complete and they are stating the environmental impact study. to help bring the importance of the issue, Lee has asked for our support and asked if we could write a letter to the county indicating: the evident problems with the process, the tam plan requirement for review of all new properties. AM agreed to do a letter outline the issues and LL would finalize and send the letter to the county. AJ agreed that the chair should send the letter to the county.
- b) LL informed the board that the stakeholder community design standards meeting has been scheduled and that LL would attend and inform the board on the meeting.

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

None

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

### **1. Lewis Design Review :**

Address : 201 Morning Sun, Mill Valley

Parcel Number: 051-164-12

Project Planner: Michelle Levenson, 415.473.3615, mlevenson@marincounty.org

Applicant: Andre Rothblatt

#### Project Description:

The applicant requests Design Review approval to construct 711 square feet of additions on a lot developed with a single-family residence in Mill Valley. The 711 square feet of proposed development would result in a floor area ratio of 26-percent on the 7,428-square-foot lot. The proposed additions would reach a maximum height of 25.6 feet above surrounding grade and the exterior walls of the addition would have the following setbacks: 2 feet from the west front property line; 18 feet from the north side property line; 33 feet from the south side property line; and over 100 feet from the east rear property line. Various site improvements would also be entailed in the proposed development, including a 91-square-foot deck at the rear of the residence.

Design Review approval is required because the project involves new construction in a planned development district, not otherwise exempt from the requirement to receive Design Review approval (Marin County Code Section 22.42.020(A)).

Zoning: RMP-7 (Residential, Single Family) | Countywide Plan Designation: SF6 (Single Family) | Community Plan: Tamalpais Plan Area

#### PROJECT PRESENTATION + SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION :

- owner - michael lewis said that they love the property, the location, neighbors and the charm of the house. further discussing that the intent of the project was to create a modest, minimal remodel / addition to meet the needs of his family. the addition includes a 1 bed / 1 bathroom addition.
- architect - andre rothblatt presented the project, stating that they have addressed the following items: minimized the poppet dimensions to increase the setback, reduced the roof profile and changed a gable to a hip to minimize the shadows generated on the neighboring property, reduced the north elevation window size and added a 6 ft high fence to maximize privacy, added a drainage design with a bio retention basin, added a drought resistant landscape plan and provided a shadow study showing the existing and proposed design impact on the neighboring property.

#### BOARD QUESTIONS, COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- AM + AJ confirmed that they went to the site and indicated that the story poles helped a lot
- DW asked how much reduction in square footage for the new plan as compared to the original application ? architect indicated that a reduction of 15 sq.ft.
- AM- building setback at the poppet was 3 feet, now what is it ? architect indicated 4.6 feet
- AJ + LL- indicated that the shadow study helped a lot and indicated that the applicant listened to the boards previous comments.
- LL- asked about the plant types. architect indicated that the applicant hired a landscape architect to design a basic, low impact, low water use, deer resistant planting scheme.
- LL- asked if any exterior materials have been changed ? architect indicated "no"
- LL- did you reach out to neighbors ? architect indicated, yes, no feedback

#### PUBLIC QUESTIONS, COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- joe, neighboring properties son made the following comments: that he has empathy for the homeowners for the project needs and that they should be allowed to add to there home, but that the proposed addition is like a 20ft high fence next to his parents house, its just not appropriate and not fair to my parents, stating that they built there house, wondered if the pine crest manor planned unit development standards are in effect ? and also stating that the shading study is not accurate for winter because the trees would lose there leaves.
- AM- asked what the ages of the homes are ? joe answered 1950 for his parents home and the applicant stated 1941 AM- stated that the growth of the neighborhood is an organic process, things happen over time. also adding that the addition on the proposed project may effect one area on his parents home but that there are other areas that are really nice and could be developed.
- AM- stated that the shadow study and story poles helped a lot and that she felt that the addition is very modest and will not be an impact to the neighboring property.

#### BOARD COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- AM + board agreed that the shadow study helped

- AM stated that the proposed improvements are very thoughtful and far improved
- AJ- commented that the improvements are commendable and that they minimized the impact further adding that he understands the neighboring property concerns but it would be minimal impact and he would support the project as presented.
- DW- commented that a tear down and replacement house , based on current trends, would be much more intrusive. also adding that he understands that the neighbor does not want change. finally adding that the proposed project is worthy of a green light.
- LL- stated that the neighboring property is awesome and still will be after the addition / remodel is completed.

BOARD ACTIONS :

Motion to Approve the project as presented AM 1<sup>st</sup>:/ AJ 2<sup>nd</sup> : 5-0 Unanimous

**2. O'Donnell Financial Group Master Plan Ammendment / Design**

**Review :**

Address :150 Shoreline Hwy, Mill Valley

Parcel Number: 052-371-03

Project Planner: Immanual Bereket, 415.473.2755,  
ibereket@marincounty.org

Applicant: Benjamin Jones, Architect, 415.858.5525

Project Description:

The applicant requests Master Plan Amendment and Design Review approval to construct a two-story, mixed-use building consisting of 10 studio apartment units and 11 studio extended-stay hotel rooms on a vacant lot in Mill Valley. The proposed 11,321 square feet of proposed development would result in a floor area ratio of 44.3 percent on the 25,559 square foot lot. The proposed building would reach a maximum height of 30 feet above surrounding grade and exterior walls would have the following setbacks: 33 feet from the west front property line; 23 feet from the south side property line; and 49 feet from the north (side) and east (rear) property lines. Various site improvements would also be entailed in the proposed development, including a new concrete curb, sidewalk, 20 onsite parking spaces and landscaping at the current entrance at Shorelines Blvd.

Residential units will be located on the proposed building's first floor, while hotel rooms will be located on the second floor. Proposed residential floor area totals approximately 5,344 square feet, including a proportionate share of building common area. Hotel floor area totals approximately 5,977 square feet, including its apportioned share of common area.

Zoning: Planned Commercial (CP) | Countywide Plan Designation: General Commercial (GC) | Community Plan: Tamalpais Community Plan

#### PROJECT PRESENTATION + SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION :

- Architect / Applicant Benjamin Jones provided a detailed presentation showing the original project conditions with the improvements and changes to the new proposed project based on comments from the previous tam design review board meeting. the changes included adding a cafe to the front with simplified rafter details at the flat roof area, modified front elevation by removing craftsman detailing , reduction of window mullions to simplify all the openings, simplified exterior detailing, improved material selections/ finishes and material pallet, lighting improvements to reduce glare and landscape changes .

#### BOARD QUESTIONS, COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- AM- what is the material over the porch ? applicant responded, elastomeric roofing
- LL- are the balcony railings glass ? architect responded, yes, tempered glass or possibly a punched metal grille material
- AM- are those high walls next to the ramp ? architect. yes, added recently
- LL- the vines on the walls is a great move, can you add vines to all the walls all the way around the building ? architect responded, yes.
- AM- what is the second floor area above the entry ? architect responded, the penthouse / bigger unit. AM- asked, did you look at making it a balcony ? architect responded, yes but it doesn't work. it draws away from the tower which anchors the building.
- AM- what is the wall height at the start of the ramp ? architect responded 6'-6". AM- commented, maybe step the wall down ? DW- agreed. architect responded, i could do that
- DW- commented that grape vines shed leaves in winter. architect stated that the vines are a type of creeping fig
- architect announced that the project will be called "water side"
- DW- what is the elevation of the property ? architect responded 9.5 ft and that it is almost dead flat
- LL- any consideration given to the window coverings ? architect responded, no. LL- added that there are a lot of windows and the window coverings could through off the design. architect, commented that they need to be consistent throughout.

- LL- asked if signage was part of the application. architect responded, no, not formally. LL- added do something more contemporary
- LL- what is the sidewalk width ? applicant responded 5 ft and 6 ft at the ramp / entry to the building
- LL- commented that the vines are important, can you add more around the building. applicant responded, "yes" continuing, by adding planter slots at the base of the buildings edge. LL- are the trees maple, applicant: "yes"
- AM- at the flat roof area about the cafe space, which is highly visible, why don't you use standing seam metal roof ? applicant responded, "we could do that". AM- could you consider lowering the walls at the ramp to minimize the tunnel feel ? i think it would help the elevation. applicant responded, "agreed". AM- the outdoor sitting area would work better if you lowered the walls and added a half rail above. AM- the guardrails works much better as a opaque material rater than clear. applicant "agreed". AM - i love the idea of access to the roof, i hope you can make that work. applicant responded, "me too"
- LL- the project looks really good. the only item i don't understand is the square window on the front elevation. AM- agreed, can you simplify the detailing in that area and maybe remove the window ? applicant responded, we need the window and it is similar to another window on the back of the building, but i can simplify the facade which will help. also, i believe there is a tree in front of the window.
- AM- great job on the building, you really listened to our input.
- LL- what are the window frames ? applicant responded "painted metal frames"
- DD- you did a great job on the building, it is much better. how are you going to protect all of the critical detailing that this building represents when the client is more developer based and some of the important stuff could get removed in the interest of budget. applicant responded, i will make sure the building isn't compromised.
- DW- what is the mix of trees ? maybe use a combination of evergreen and Ddeciduous trees. applicant responded: "we could do that".
- AJ- the application says "The applicant requests Master Plan Amendment and Design Review approval" how can we rule on the project when we don't have any information on the master plan ? applicant response: "i am the design architect, the master plan issues are being dealt with by the clients lawyer directly in communication with the planning department". AJ- we can't rule on the project without knowing the rules. the Tam Plan is specific on what this site should be. it used to be a gas station, this is much better and is a nice design, but the fundamental starting point is not clear. i

don't think it meets the Tam Plan height which is 25ft i believe and your layout is 30 ft tall. AM- continued, the master plan is 30ft and the tam plan is 25ft, see (3-74H of the Tam Plan). as i recall, there is no physical record of the master plan and i believe they are asking to exceed the maximum FAR (floor area ratio). AJ- we need more information to judge / rule on this project. AM- the state laws trump everything.

- AJ- you made a pretty building on a site where it doesn't belong.
- AJ + AM- agree that we don't have any criteria on the master plan. we don't have a basis to rule on this project.

#### PUBLIC QUESTIONS, COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- bhupen & sage (neighboring property owner : holiday express ) stated the following: this is complicated and complex and is not ready for a decision. this is attractive but not appropriate in this location which is problematic. the board should be careful on this project and i would urge you not approve the project. short term rentals in this location is not good, no monitoring, its like airbnb. short term rentals are not intended for corporate companies to own and operate. parking is a major issue at the moment and this will make it worse.
- stephen delapp- the aesthetic is nice and i like what you have done. its a hotel or an airbnb by another name. it needs to be regulated like a hotel. this building will not meet the hotel requirements in the code. the tam plan (appendix D) talks about vision and it does not say anything about allowing a 30ft high building. the building needs to meet the vision of the Tam Plan. everyone needs to understand the use and location better. the applicant responded: "its an extended stay hotel with staff and apartments"
- bill higgins (one of the floodwater owners) stated that he was very concerned with the parking impact, adding that 20 spaces is not adequate.
- tania (holiday express manager)- added that parking is a big concern that they are already dealing with and 20 spots are not near enough. its a beautiful building but it doesn't belong in that location. applicant responded: "yes, there are 20 parking spots and the project is within 3 blocks of a transit center, further adding that the parking meets the code requirements."
- ricky (owner of property across the street / muir woods lodge) - this seems like a hotel use and would require a different rules
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#### BOARD COMMENTS + CONCERNS :

- AM- commented that the plans state the occupancy correctly as R1 = hotel and R2 = apartments and that airbnb would be R3. this entire project is based on hotel planning and indicated correctly on the plans. "also we are adding a major walkway to the transit center".
- LL- can we say we want more parking and reduce the building size ? also, flooding makes it difficult to access the transit center.
- DW- the cafe is intended to have customers ? which would require additional parking. DD- added, is there a parking agreement for the development ? applicant responded " the chimney company is utilizing many parking spots which makes it more difficult and less flexible. AM- responded there is commercial vehicle storage in other locations, i think the chimney company parking in that way is not legal. commercial vehicle storage is a different use and should not be in this location.
- AJ- the parking may meet the letter of the law but i think it is inadequate. i think we can mention / rule that this is not an appropriate use for this site.
- LL- good job on the building but this project has parking issues, flooding issues nearby. if we say no, what do we do if it goes on and we dont get to see it again?
- AJ- thoughtful design and well put together but we need to address the fundamental issue.
- DW- is this so far along that we run the risk of approving with unanswered questions ? its perplexing. not our job to minimize competition. i dont know our criteria.
- DD- as AJ said, if we go back to the description provided by the planner, we are here "The applicant requests Master Plan Amendment and Design Review approval to ..... ":we can't rule on the project without an understanding of the master plan requirements.
- AM- tam plan, state regulations and the county max number of hearings would indicate that this is our last meeting. we can't really deny the project based on use because the tam plan indicates more hospitality is preferred in this location. also, short term rental is better for parking but the overall issue is incomplete information.
- DW- if the planning can't be here to explain, we can't rule on anything

#### BOARD ACTIONS :

Motion to rule the project incomplete based on inadequate information to make a decision on the master plan ammendment : DW 1<sup>st</sup>:/ AM 2<sup>nd</sup> : 5-0  
Unanimous

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

None

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

None

**I. Adjournment:**

10:0 P.M.

**END OF DOCUMENT**