

**PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES**

**TOWN OF ATHERTON
October 27, 2021
6:00 pm
*This meeting was held virtually.***

1. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

**Eric Lane
Nancy Lerner
Perry Narancic
Gabia Konce**

EXCUSED:

Randy Lamb

Principal Planner Stephanie Bertollo-Davis, Assistant Planner Ralph Robinson and Town Arborist Sally Bentz-Dalton were present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting.

M/S Narancic/Lerner Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Excused: 1

4. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Variance – 50 Lilac Drive, Atherton (APN 061-062-060) – Request for a Variance to allow for construction of a detached accessory building (garage) to have a reduced front yard setback.

Principal Planner Stephanie Bertollo-Davis presented the staff report.

Commissioner Konce asked if any trees would be removed as part of the proposed project.

Principal Planner Davis confirmed no trees are to be cut down.

Open Public Hearing.

Carrie and Adam Tomasi, homeowners and applicants at 50 Lilac, provided background on the reasons for the variance request. Stated desire to maintain house and property as it is and add to living space to extent possible without demolishing existing buildings. Unique shape of building envelope and presence of many trees limits areas that can be developed on the property, leading them to select the proposed location for the garage. Property is well screened and secluded. Also stated that neighbors were supportive of the project when they conducted their own outreach.

Closed Public Hearing.

Chair Lane said that he went by the site and that it is tucked away, and no one is likely to notice the new building.

Commissioner Narancic asked about location and status of ADU also proposed on the property.

Principal Planner Davis stated that no formal submittal for an ADU had been received yet.

Open Public Hearing.

Ms. Tomasi replied that the submittal for an ADU would not be finalized until the garage was approved.

Closed Public Hearing.

MOTION to approve a Variance at 50 Lilac Drive to allow for construction of a detached accessory building (garage) to have a reduced front yard setback.

M/S Lane/Konce Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Excused: 1

b. Special Structures Permit (SSP) – 358 Walsh Road, Atherton (APN 073-202-100) – Request for a Special Structures Permit to allow for a detached accessory building (garage) to have a reduced front yard setback.

Principal Planner Stephanie Bertollo-Davis presented the staff report.

Chair Lane noted that the site has an unusual access.

Open Public Hearing.

Project representative Sean Lopes noted presence of easements on site that limited developable area. Intention was to keep the existing drainage paths in place. Proposed garage has a low profile and will have minimal visual impact when combined with proposed landscape screening.

Commissioner Konce asked what the square footage of the proposed garage and house would be.

Mr. Lopes replied that the garage would be 1400 square feet and the house itself would be around 15-16,000 square feet.

Chair Lane noted that the site is steep, so applicant will want to be sure to have ample clearance for vehicles. House is not visible from the road.

Commissioner Narancic asked if applicant had done any outreach to neighbors.

Mr. Lopes replied that they had not done any outreach.

Chair Lane asked Principal Planner Davis if public notices were mailed, which she confirmed and noted that no comments had been received to date.

Closed public hearing.

MOTION to approve a Special Structures Permit at 358 Walsh Road to allow for a detached accessory building (garage) to have a reduced front yard setback.

M/S Narancic/Lerner Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Excused: 1

c. Special Structures Permit (SSP) – 95 Mercedes Lane, Atherton (APN 070-230-150) – Request for a Special Structures Permit to allow for a detached accessory structure (sports court) to have a reduced front yard setback.

Assistant Planner Ralph Robinson presented the staff report.

Open Public Hearing.

Penelope Joye, homeowner and applicant at 95 Mercedes, added detail on location of sport court and reasons for application. Also discussed outreach to neighbor who is in support of the project. Additional landscape screening will be added with the new court.

Closed Public Hearing.

MOTION to approve a Special Structures Permit at 95 Mercedes Lane to allow for a detached accessory structure (sports court) to have a reduced front yard setback.

M/S Lane/Narancic Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Excused: 1

d. Special Structures Permit (SSP) – 86 Tallwood Court, Atherton (APN 074-130-300) – Request for a Special Structures Permit to allow for a detached accessory structure (sports court) to have a reduced front yard setback.

Assistant Planner Ralph Robinson presented the staff report.

Open Public Hearing.

Project representative Steven Kikuchi thanked the Planning Commission for their prior approval and provided detail on geotechnical issues that came up when considering an indoor sport court. Applicant decided to consider an outdoor court instead due to these issues. Sport court will be situated with a lower profile than previously approved indoor court and will be substantially screened. Neighbors had been supportive of previous submittal but did not reply to outreach regarding changes to the design.

Chair Lane asked what the intended activity for the court is.

Mr. Kikuchi stated that the court is intended to be multipurpose (i.e., badminton, pickle ball, volleyball, etc.).

Commissioner Konce asked what intent of previously approved indoor court was.

Mr. Kikuchi stated original intent was for the indoor court to be a badminton court.

Closed Public Hearing.

Chair Lane discussed his initial impressions of the original submission and challenges of building in that area that were apparent when he visited the site.

MOTION to approve a Special Structures Permit at 86 Tallwood Court to allow for a detached accessory structure (sports court) to have a reduced front yard setback.

M/S Lane/Lerner Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Excused: 1

e. School Master Plan Update (MPU) – 1000 El Camino Real (Menlo College), Atherton (APN 070-360-100) – Request for review of the 2021 Annual Master Plan Update.

Principal Planner Stephanie Bertollo-Davis presented the staff report.

Commissioner Narancic asked if the MPU is intended to be more informational than something for the commission to act upon.

Principal Planner Davis stated that the MPU is required by the Municipal Code, but there is no formal action the commission or school is required to take.

Chair Lane added that the MPU is an opportunity for the community to provide feedback that can inform policy in the future. The report helps the commission anticipate future changes and helps the school maintain positive relationships with the community.

Commissioner Narancic asked what major changes had been made to the 2022 report from the previous year.

Commissioner Konce said she also had a question related to security for students.

Open Public Hearing.

Project representative Steven Weiner thanked Principal Planner Davis for her report. Added that the recent Silicon Valley Sculpture Show was a success and an opportunity to engage with community members. Noted slight decline in enrollment due to impacts of the pandemic, but school is optimistic enrollment will rebound. Also spoke to security measures on campus. Campus has also mandated vaccines, with 98 percent of students now vaccinated, and does weekly testing of on campus students.

Chair Lane asked about non-affiliated traffic entering and then immediately exiting the campus, presumably to turn around on El Camino Real. Asked if there is any way the town could help with this issue. Could lead to people who should not be on the campus entering the campus.

Commissioner Konce asked if college ever considered having a guard gate at the entrance.

Mr. Weiner said that the cost benefit analysis for having a guard gate had not shown that to be worthwhile.

Chair Lane noted that annual report has improved from past versions to become closer to what the commission prefers to see. Asked how construction of dormitory was proceeding.

Mr. Weiner replied that the project is on track to be completed in June, with occupancy to take place in August 2022.

Chair Lane stated that school has been doing a good job of posting signage on neighboring streets to prevent parking on these streets. Asked how overall engagement with community has been going.

Mr. Weiner replied that the college engages with neighboring community. Neighbors along athletic fields are subject to the most noise and disturbance, but the college tries to notify them when there are events.

Chair Lane stated there is past damage in the relationship between the college and those neighbors, so anything the school can do to be more helpful to those neighbors is welcome.

Commissioner Konce asked whether dorms are single-sex or coed and how they are accessed.

Mr. Weiner noted dorms are mixed gender and all residences accessed by key cards.

Closed Public Hearing.

MOTION to accept the 2022 School Master Plan Update (MPU) at 1000 El Camino Real (Menlo College).

M/S Narancic/Konce Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Excused: 1

5. STAFF REPORTS

Principal Planner Davis noted that there will be no November Planning Commission meeting. The commission will next meet on December 1.

Staff is continuing to work with the Town's legal team to develop a course of action regarding SB 9.

Staff will be moving into the new Civic Center as of Thursday, October 28th.

6. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Nothing to report.

7. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned 7:21 PM

Respectfully Submitted:

/s/Stephanie B.-Davis

Stephanie B. Davis, Principal Planner