



City of Sebastopol
 Incorporated 1902
 Planning Department
 7120 Bodega Avenue
 Sebastopol, CA 95472
 707-823-6167
 707-823-1135 (Fax)
www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us

Email: ksvanstrom@cityofsebastopol.org

APPROVED MINUTES

CONCURRENT MEETING OF THE
 TREE & DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
 CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
 MINUTES OF December 18, 2019

SEBASTOPOL REGIONAL LIBRARY
 MEETING ROOM
 7140 BODEGA AVENUE
 4:00 P.M

TREE BOARD:

The notice of the meeting was posted on December 12, 2019.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Luthin called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present:	Ted Luthin, Chair Cary Bush, Vice Chair Christine Level, Board Member Lars Langberg, Board Member Ron Hari, Board Member Gregory Beale, Board Member
Absent:	None
Staff:	Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director Alan Montes, Associate Planner Becky Duckles, City Arborist

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Design Review Board – August 21, 2019

Vice Chair Bush made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Board Member Langberg seconded the motion.

AYES: Vice Chair Bush and Board Members Beale, Hari and Langberg
 NOES: None
 ABSTAIN: Chair Luthin and Board Member Level
 ABSENT: None

Tree Board – September 18, 2019

Vice Chair Bush made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Board Member Level seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Luthin, Vice Chair Bush and Board Members Hari, Level, and Langberg
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Board Member Beale
ABSENT: None

4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Director Svanstrom provided the following updates:

- Introduced new Associate Planner, Alan Montes, who began on Monday, November 18, 2019.

Members of the Board welcomed Associate Planner Montes.

Director Svanstrom update continued:

- During last night's meeting, the City Council adopted modifications to the City's Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance, most of which were required by State Law.
- In addition, the City Council approved some financial assistance for the Huntley Square project which is proposed to be located at 7950 Bodega Avenue.
 - This project will be before the Design Review Board in the new year for Preliminary Design Review as they are requesting a Planned Community Rezone.

The Board had no questions for Director Svanstrom at this time.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: There were none.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Board Member Beale disclosed that he worked on a remodel for one of the neighbors of the proposed project site. The neighbors that he worked for have submitted written comments relating to this application as well.

Director Svanstrom commented that an actual conflict does not exist and asked Board Member Beale if he felt he could be unbiased.

Board Member Beale expressed having no issue or concern with his ability to be completely unbiased during his review of the proposed project.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR: (none)

8. REGULAR AGENDA:

- A. PRELIMINARY REVIEW – 7716 and 7760 Bodega Avenue (Project #2019-101)**
– Preliminary Review of a proposal from Pacific West Communities, FNC, for a residential development including approximately 84 dwelling units, along with various site improvements and modifications. This is a preliminary review, and no decision will be made.

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report.

A member of the public interjected with questions of staff.

Chair Luthin asked the member of the public to hold her questions.

City Arborist, Becky Duckles made a brief presentation and was available for questions.

Director Svanstrom continued her presentation of the staff report.

The Board asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

Board Member Level referred to the chart in the staff report which identifies the different trees proposed for removal which appears to indicate trees that are clearly not on the subject property.

Director Svanstrom responded in the affirmative and commented that the site needs to be resolved so that that does not happen. She added that the applicant would need the property owner's signature in order to do so, and based on conversations she's had, she does not see that happening.

Board Member Langberg commented that the drawings need to be revised to show that those trees are not a part of this project. Trees that may be impacted by this proposal should be identified as a separate category.

Director Svanstrom concurred.

Board Member Beale asked if there is precedence, or specific wording that affects what kind of setbacks or interaction as it relates to the different types of zoning around the parcels in that the subject parcels are zoned for high density and borders parcels that are zoned for much lower density.

Director Svanstrom responded:

- Spoke on what the required setbacks would be in this case and commented that the development standards in our Zoning Ordinance do not provide for what Board Member Beale was asking for.

Board Member Beale asked if there is precedence of a project such as this that was recommended or required to take different restrictions regarding setbacks because of the zoning or use of the neighboring property.

Director Svanstrom responded:

- That has not happened with projects that are not subject to design review.
- The City's Design Review Guidelines talk about appropriate transitions to ensure that neighboring properties aren't being overshadowed, etc.

Chair Luthin responded to Board Member Beale as follows:

- To his first question; he read the following from the City's Design Review Guidelines, 'In areas where there are changes in land use or density, new development should be designed to provide a transition between current and planned future uses through the use of setbacks, site plan, building massing and height, landscaping, driveway locations, etc.'
- There are Design Review Guidelines that speak to what he was asking about.

Board Member Beale thanked Chair Luthin.

Director Svanstrom commented:

- There are some places like in commercial zones where if you're commercial adjacent to residential then you need to adopt the residential.
- Generally, between residential zones we don't have that same kind of change.

Board Member Hari asked why this project doesn't have to go before the Planning Commission.

Director Svanstrom responded:

- The Planning Commission reviewed these parcels for zoning and land use appropriateness during the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance Update processes.
- The design of this project falls under the purview of the Design Review Board.
- If this was a subdivision, the tentative map for the subdivision would be going before the Planning Commission.
- Another type of application that would require Planning Commission review is a rezone.

Board Member Hari asked if this is to be farmworker housing.

Director Svanstrom responded that that information is not provided in their submittal and requested that the applicant clarify that.

Board Member Hari asked for the estimated timeframe for this process.

Director Svanstrom responded:

- Requested that the applicant speak on the matter of timing.
- In terms of the Planning process, the applicant will likely revise their submittal in response to the feedback they receive during this preliminary review to be consistent with the City's Design Review Guidelines and Zoning Ordinance and to resolve the tree issues.
- The Initial Study and CEQA analysis will take some time as well.

Chair Luthin commented that traffic is a concern for many and asked about the Traffic Study.

Director Svanstrom responded:

- The traffic study will be part of the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) analysis.
- The City does not have a traffic engineer on staff, but it does have a number of consultants that are traffic engineers.
- The City hired a traffic engineer that lives in town, but outside the recusal area, to provide the preliminary comments on the access and on what is needed for the traffic study.
- The City can require a traffic study and the applicant can request that the City prepare it, or the applicant can hire somebody to prepare their own study. In cases where the applicant would hire somebody to prepare their own study, the City would have it peer reviewed by the City's traffic engineer. The City's traffic engineer would review all the assumptions and analysis and will generally do more due diligence on any mitigations or requirements to address the impacts.

Hearing no further questions of staff at this time, Chair Luthin asked the applicant to make a presentation.

Ken Koss introduced Lauren Alexander and Doug Gibson, provided a presentation and was available for questions.

The Board asked questions of the applicant team.

Board Member Beale asked the applicant to provide some background on how the applicant selected this site and this town to better understand why this feels like a good fit with what they do and what they're wanting to achieve.

Mr. Koss responded:

- Does affordable housing projects throughout California.
- If there wasn't a need for this in Sebastopol, they wouldn't have brought this project forward.
- This site is zoned for multifamily.
- They do not buy sites that are not zoned multifamily.
- In their experience it is virtually impossible to rezone property from anything to multifamily.
- Sebastopol needs this.

Board Member Level asked for the applicant's definition of workforce housing.

Mr. Koss responded:

- Affordable housing for people who work for a living every day.

Board Member Level commented that she'd heard some discussion about the target market being farmworkers.

Mr. Koss responded that it will be a farmworker project.

Chair Luthin asked if that meant that occupancy would be restricted to farmworkers.

Mr. Koss responded in the affirmative.

Board Member Level asked how they determined the need for farmworker housing in Sebastopol.

Mr. Koss responded that a market study was done by an outside consultant before they put the property under contract and started on this project.

Board Member Level asked why they emphasize California for their projects.

Mr. Koss responded:

- It takes different types of financing to make it work.
- In order to do affordable housing, you have to bring your debt down.
- On this particular project the applicant has some 514 USDA funds which require that the project provide farmworker housing.
- After that the applicant expects to apply for 9% Federal Tax Credits that are allocated through the State.

- California, being a very populous State, has a very large amount of tax dollars available for affordable housing because the tax dollars are based on each person that lives in the State.

Board Member Level deduced that the emphasis on California is based on the financing that is available in California.

Mr. Koss responded in the affirmative and added.

- There is a huge need too.
- They couldn't have built 97 developments that are all extremely successful in they built in places where there is not a need.

Board Member Level asked how the applicant plans to retain all stormwater and drainage on site.

Mr. Koss responded that he knows it will be done but doesn't know how.

Board Member Hari asked about project timeline.

Mr. Koss responded that they'd like to break ground in October/November if everything goes smoothly but recognizes that a more realistic timeframe may not be until Spring of 2021.

Board Member Hari commented that Sebastopol has a very high water table.

Mr. Koss thanked Board Member Hari for that information.

Chair Ted asked about tree protection given the proposed retaining walls running very close to property lines.

Mr. Koss responded that he did not know.

Chair Luthin responded that protection of neighboring trees doesn't seem possible based on this proposal.

Chair Luthin asked how the applicant plans to keep kids from climbing a 16' tall retaining wall especially with the play area nearby.

Mr. Koss commented that the play area will probably be relocated to the middle of the site.

Chair Luthin asked for clarification on the number of parking spaces as conflicting information had been provided.

Mr. Koss responded that 152 parking spaces are proposed.

Board Member Beale asked about a realistic project duration as the applicant indicated two phases for construction.

Mr. Koss responded:

- Has done 17 developments for Pacific Companies since 2007.
- Out of those 17, 3 of them have been phased and all were constructed within 12 months of the completion of phase 1.
- Additional funding can be requested after the initial phase.

Board Member Beale clarified that the period of construction, from excavation to painting, would be approximately 1 year.

Mr. Koss responded in the affirmative.

Board Member Beale asked how long their recent similar project in Chico took to build.

Mr. Koss responded that they built a 54-unit project in Santa Rosa recently that took about a year to construct.

Board Member Beale reiterated his question about the project in Chico.

Mr. Koss responded that he was not involved in a project in Chico.

Ms. Alexander commented that they have different teams that work on different projects.

Board Member Level asked who would build the project.

Mr. Koss responded:

- Pacific West Builders, which is a company inside the Pacific Companies, would build the project.
- The construction manager would come from Idaho.
- They hope to hire everyone else locally.

Vice Chair Bush asked if a soils study had been done.

Mr. Koss responded that a geotech study had not yet been done.

Board Member Hari commented:

- The Board has asked many technical questions, of which the applicant has not been able to answer.
- Suggested that the applicant come prepared during formal review with members of the team who can answer such questions.

Chair Luthin asked Mr. Koss or the project architect to respond to the following:

- Requested an explanation of this design concept.
- Why does this design make sense for this specific piece of property?
- Why can't the slope be worked with?
- Why can't the trees be worked with?
- How does this project work in Sebastopol?

Project Architect, Mr. Gibson, responded:

- Has done 95 projects with Pacific Companies over the last 13 years, about \$700 million dollars' worth of construction, and over 5,000 units.
- Has done projects all over California.
- About to begin phase 2 of a project in Lakeport.
- One of the reasons that they do phased projects is because it's easier to get money for development after phase 1 is complete.
- With regards to how this site was selected and why and how the design was selected and why, and other questions raised by the Board he stated:
 - They're already working on the next iteration in hopes of getting on the Board's docket in February.
 - The next iteration will be more consistent.

- Expects the next iteration to meet a lot more of the metrics that the City is looking for.
- The density drives the project in terms of design.
- Super pads are needed throughout the site because of the number of units.
- Fire Code limits the setbacks.
- ADA requires the site to be uniformly accessible to all individuals in a wheelchair.
- Does not want to and cannot legally design a site that doesn't meet that requirements.
- Part of his charge is to ensure that a holistic approach to site design is taken.
- The next iteration that they're working on now will assist in reducing the number of retaining walls which will hopefully help with tree protection.
- Their project in Lakeport is a USDA 514 financed project for farmworkers.
- Has worked on about 20 farmworker projects.
- Aside from title, the difference between workforce housing and farmworker housing is indistinguishable.
- Groundbreaking for a project of this status and size will probably take 14-18 months.
- Pacific West Builders is also known as Idaho Pacific West Builders.
- The Project managers that they work with are out of Idaho, but all of the site superintendents and bidders would be local (Northern California area).
- Here to provide affordable housing.
- If they are able to meet the metrics that the City is requiring, the outcome will be a quality product that the City and residents can be proud of.
- Thanked the Board for their time and commented that he was available for any additional questions they may have.

Based on Mr. Gibson's statement about a new iteration already being worked on, Board Member Level asked Mr. Gibson to explain what changes were being made to the site plan.

Mr. Gibson responded:

- The changes are not significant.
- They are material changes relative to feedback from the Planning Department as well as the neighborhood.
- Because this is preliminary, they intend to take feedback from the Board and incorporate it as well.

Board Member Level asked for more specificity on the planned changes to the site plan.

Mr. Gibson responded:

- Can't speak to any specifics on the retaining walls at this time.
- The buildings are being brought into the center of the site.
- The parking that was initially shown parallel to Bodega Avenue will be flipped with a building.
- The intent and direction that they provided was that the 16' retaining wall and adjacency to the property line is a concern.
- Their direction was to work on reducing the amount of mass grading.

Chair Luthin stated that in this case the applicant is having the Board review something that is already outdated.

Board Member Level asked how much the scope of the retaining walls will change.

Mr. Gibson responded that he believed that the retaining walls will still be there and that some of them may still be substantial (in the 12' to 16' range).

Vice Chair Bush asked if there would be variations between finished floor heights across the site.

Mr. Gibson responded that there could and would be variations between finished floor heights.

Board Member Level commented that the applicant is taking a sloped lot, conforming to ADA stands, and turning the lot flat.

Board Member Langberg asked a clarifying question of Mr. Gibson on ADA requirements.

Mr. Gibson stated that there is a Federal form to allow for noncompliance with ADA requirements in some cases and noted that they'd done so for one of their projects in Oroville, however, only very rare and extreme cases would qualify.

Hearing no further questions of the applicant at this time, Chair Luthin spoke on process and opened the public comment period.

Nick Stewart, 7772 Washington Avenue, commented:

- Really appreciates the staff report and encourages the Board to insist that staff's recommendations be followed.
- Has been an affordable housing advocate for over 30 years.
- Has worked with and for affordable housing developments.
- Supports the development of affordable housing in Sebastopol.
- The development should be compatible with the neighborhood.
- Appreciates that the City, over decades now has created a policy framework that should insist that that happen.
- Particularly concerned about the request for a variance of the rear yard setback from 30' to 10' which he considered problematic in that it may result in damage to a number of property line trees.
- Property line trees should be retained so they can act as a buffer for this development.
- His wife was an original author of the City's Tree Ordinance.
- The purpose of the ordinance was that trees are a feature of the community, are amenities, and should be preserved.
- Trees create the possibility of wildlife corridors as well.
- Heartened to hear about the Board's concern of the survival of these trees.
- It is baffling that a developer would consider killing trees on neighboring properties.
- Parking should be relocated away from the front of the site in order to preserve a residential character on the streetscape along Bodega Avenue.
- Doesn't see why a 3-story building can't be designed in a way that would breakup the massing of it.
- It is possible to incorporate architectural features to break up the massing.
- Hopes that neighborhood context will be sincerely addressed in future iterations of this project.
- Thanked the Board for their time.

An unidentified man commented:

- Arrived late.
- Referred to the traffic on Bodega Avenue and asked if a traffic study had been done.

- Asked if a traffic study will be required.
- Asked if there is a plan to place 150 cars somewhere special.
- It already takes 20 minutes just to get from one side of town to the other and a project like this will exacerbate that problem.
- Would like reassurance that this project will be thoroughly and adequately reviewed and that the concerns will be substantially addressed.
- Asked if there is a chance that this project will not be built.
- Asked if a study would be conducted regarding the impacts on neighboring property values if this project were to be built.

Chair Luthin responded that a traffic study, while required, had not yet been completed. He added that he would not speculate on whether this project would be built but that it is the Board's job to make sure that this project conforms with the City's Design Review Guidelines. He further stated that he was not aware of a study on property values being conducted or required.

Director Svanstrom responded that a study on property values would not be conducted and reminded the public that this opportunity was for public comment, not questions of the Board and/or applicant.

Arnold Lavine, a resident of Jesse Street in Sebastopol, commented:

- Inspected the drawings and paperwork related to this request at City Hall so his comments may not be based on the most current iteration.
- Concerned regarding the orchards being replaced with almost all tarmac and building footprints.
- Because of the sloping site, there is a wonderful opportunity to place parking under the buildings themselves to provide for more open space.
- Common electrical and mechanical equipment can be placed under the buildings as well for easy distribution and maintenance.
- With regards to stormwater, the current design will move all opportunities for onsite retention and collection of stormwater will attach to the City's storm system at a single point in the street.
- Removing outside parking to buildings as detailed would allow for more onsite stormwater retention, collection and use.
- Retaining walls have been discussed.
- We need more trees and the old ones should be retained.
- The one entry/exit design on Bodega Avenue is problematic as access will be difficult and there is already significant traffic.
- With the Burbank project across the way the traffic situation will only be getting much worse.
- The Police Department indicated that this project would have no impact in terms of law enforcement.
 - With an open entry there will be easy access for nefarious purposes or homeless encampments.
 - Suggests many additional police patrols would be needed with substantial department costs required.
 - Callouts required by the additional 200 people that may be living there would have an impact on law enforcement as well.
- The play area should be brought into the site, along with the buildings.
- Asked about any sustainable elements (solar, electric and water) that may be incorporated into the design.
- Electric vehicle, bike and scooter parking stations should be provided throughout the property.

- Thanked the Board for their time.

Karen Felker, a resident of Jesse Street, commented:

- Speaking as somebody who loves nature.
- The heritage trees have been on the site for a long time and support a vast amount of nature.
- There have been reports on the huge decline of birds in California.
- There is no way you can replace all the native vegetation that's required to support nature in our area if these heritage trees are removed.
- Replacement trees should be native.
- Urges support of nature by retaining the heritage trees.
- Thanked the Board for their time.

Joel Abrivada, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- We all know the traffic situation on Bodega Avenue.
- Why do we need a traffic study when we already know it's a disaster?
- The pollution that 150 more idling cars will bring is a problem.
- It already takes too long to get from one place to another in this town.
- Lives in Bears Meadow which is right next door to the project site.
- We all need to remember one thing, and that is that this is being built for profit and that's all these developers care about.
- There's no benevolence here.
- Hopes people's words will resonate.
- We've talked about a lot of things, but we haven't talked about people.
- We're talking about 4 acres of land with somewhere between 250 and 300 people living on it.
- This is a low rent, low rise project.
- Bodega Avenue is already the densest corridor in Sebastopol.
- Believes in affordable housing.
- A proposal for a 30-unit affordable housing project would be palatable.
- 84-units is not that.
- There's no parking on Bodega Avenue.
- Thanked the Board for their time.

Catherine Murray, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- The combined impact of this development and the other near O'Reilly is concerning.
- There has been a water rate study which has resulted in rates being increased for residents.
- The water rate study indicated that the increase was needed for planned capital projects.
- The timing of this rate increase is curious.
- These two large developments would lead to a vast increase in population here.
- Perhaps these developers should have to pay to improve the infrastructure to support these projects.
- Will the traffic study consider what doesn't, but is about to exist, in terms of proposed developments (Huntley Square, City Ventures and possibly others) and the traffic they will bring?
- Heard an audible gasp in the room when it was mentioned that this will be farmworker housing.
- The term 'farmworker housing' was not mentioned during the community meeting and the fact that it's coming up now feels disturbing and deceptive.
- While it is true that we need farmworker housing in the State and County, low-income housing is also necessary for people who are not farmworkers.

- Any low-income/affordable housing that we build should be made available to a greater number of people.
- The decision to make this farmworker housing is due to finances not for the good of the farmworkers.
- Is farmworker housing really what Sebastopol needs as a community?
- 10 days ago, in the San Francisco Chronicle was a very large article about Santa Rosa's desire to have housing built downtown.
 - Perhaps these developers should build in Santa Rosa where they're cutting their requirements to pave the way for more development.
 - Encouraged people to read the article.
- This project site has a lot of issues for a project like this.
- Thanked the Board for their time.

Bob Anderson, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- Has been an architect in Sebastopol for the past 45 years.
- Has been a resident of Sebastopol for 72 years.
- Served 17 years in local government as a Planning Commissioner, City Councilman and Mayor.
- Cannot recall having ever seen a project come to town with such an arrogant approach.
- This project is like trying to force a huge jacked up pickup truck into a compact parking space.
- It's almost insulting that you've come to the Board to discuss your project in a preliminary sense while indicating that another iteration is already in the works before having heard from the Board.
- Why are you asking the Board to respond to a design that is already changing?
- It is great that your civil engineer is working through the holidays, but the Board needs to see the current plan to react to, otherwise there is no point.
- This is not a smoke and mirrors game.
- The developer needs to bring in a plan that addresses the needs of the community.
- The developer has picked the wrong town.
- This project is like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole.
- Sebastopol needs housing, and certainly affordable housing but this project is not the answer.
- We don't need this density of units on one of our busiest streets, especially if you're going to have to go in and completely destroy what mother nature has put there and create your concept of how to grade a property to build a building.
- This is the wrong project for Sebastopol and is certainly the wrong project for this property.

Katie Sanderson, 7720 Bodega Avenue, commented:

- Asked who would be doing the traffic study.

Director Svanstrom responded:

- The developer has elected to do a study.
- The City will have their own hired consultant review said traffic study.
- If the study is deemed unacceptable, the City will have its own study prepared.

Ms. Sanderson comments continued:

- Doesn't understand why the City wouldn't have its own study prepared regardless.
- The person completing the peer review might not share the concerns of the community.

Director Svanstrom responded:

- The applicant has a right to have their own study prepared.
- Whether the City accepts that study or not is our right.
- The City does not have a traffic engineer on staff.
- The City works with two or three consultants regularly.
- One of the consultants that the City often uses lives in town and has an office in Santa Rosa and he is who will be reviewing the study that is prepared for this project.

Ms. Sanderson comments continued:

- Understands staff's explanation.
- Would prefer for the traffic study to come from the City, not from somebody selected by the applicant.

Janice Gomech, 7720 Bodega Avenue, commented:

- Asked how the data for the traffic study would be collected, especially at different times throughout the year.
- Bodega Avenue is especially bad during the summer months.
- Already avoids Bodega Avenue as is, when traveling east, which adds to the increasing problem of people cutting through town by using side streets.
- The addition of approximately 80 units and 150 cars would be insane and outrageous.

Marsha Levine, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- Her property borders the rear setback of this project.
- Five of the heritage trees that the applicant has said should be removed are on her property.
- Showed the Board, staff and public an image of the view going south as it is currently as well as a view of what it would be without the trees.
- The views from other locations would be noteworthy too.
- Saw a previous iteration of the plan.
- The plan she saw showed all of the buildings in the back.
- A 15' setback from trees that are 40-50" will all die as their roots will be cut 10' from the tree.
- Previously submitted a letter which was provided to the Board.
- The applicant has indicated that they intend to grade the site and build a 16' retaining wall 10' from the rear setback.
- She and her husband support affordable housing.
- She and her husband also strongly support good design.
- All six of the apartment buildings are nearly the same.
- The design is nearly identical to other projects that Pacific Communities has built everywhere, along with a two-story version for the last 20 years.
- Innovation and concern for residents' views doesn't have to disappear just because it's affordable housing.
- The three apartments that they saw that would be built in the rear would be buried against a retaining wall.
- Will solar be provided?
- Why is there no variety in roof height?
- Where is water catchment?
- Where is concern for the existing neighborhood?
- The applicant knows what their proposal would do to these trees and even still, they're attempting to move forward.
- The applicant wants to basically level and strip the site and remove trees on neighboring properties.

- Then, if required by the City, the applicant will plant replacement trees.
- Thanked the Board for their time.

Linda Rude, 7720 Bodega Avenue, commented:

- Works at Analy High School.
- Lives at Bears Meadow.
- Really appreciates the questions that are being asked and the critical thinking that is going into this project.
- First place she ever purchased was her condo.
- She received two job offers on the same day and she purposely chose to live and work in Sebastopol, a decision she has always been happy with.
- Raised her daughter in Sebastopol.
- Loves the nature here.
- Deer, fox, and other animals occupy the proposed project site.
- Has loved living in Sebastopol for 13 years.
- Concerned regarding the traffic on Bodega Avenue and the increase to it that a project like this would bring.
- Somebody was hit by a car and killed on Bodega Avenue not far from where she lives about a year ago.
- There have been other accidents.
- People speed when driving on Bodega Avenue.
- Parkside Elementary School is nearby.
- We should think about our kids and ensure that they can access their school safely.
- The sidewalk along Bodega Avenue is kind of small.
- A lot of kids walk to school in the morning.
- Thanked the Board for their time.

Marcia Horn, Nelson Way, commented:

- Hoped to come to this meeting and find that the applicant had changed their plans, but it doesn't really look like they have.
- Doesn't want to lose her trees.
- It sounds like she will lose trees if the applicant proceeds with their plan to have a huge retaining wall.
- Doesn't particularly like the idea of having a three-story structure in her backyard.
- The more she hears the more upset she becomes.
- Questioned where all the extra cars would park.
- The 150 parking spaces that they will provide won't be enough.
- Nelson Way is already used as a parking lot for the townhouses that are there because adequate parking was not provided for them.
- Does not have a sidewalk in front of her house.
- Does not want vehicles that are not hers parking in front of her house.
- The trees in her backyard will have to go if the developer puts in the retaining wall.
- If there is a 3-story building behind her home people will be able to look down into what should be her private backyard.
- The developer has chosen the wrong site for this project.
- Leveling the property for wheelchair access doesn't make sense.
- There are probably other sites in Sebastopol that would provide a level access without so much grading.
- This site is not appropriate for this type of project.
- Thanked the Board for their time.

Jackie Lufler, 7720 Bodega Avenue, commented:

- Has lived at Bears Meadow for 28 years.

- Previously owned a condo on Virginia Avenue for 5 years.
- Bears Meadow has 4 buildings and 27 units and they're basically, 'row houses.'
- They have very strict rules regarding parking at Bears Meadow.
 - The development has 27 units, 27 garages, 28 parking spaces and 35 cars.
- Expressed concern over the access easement (on the proposed project site) that the residents of Bears Meadow use.
- Asked how that easement would be treated?
- The access configuration will need to change regardless of what type of development goes in.
- There is a lot of concern regarding traffic.
- Hopes her comments will be taken into consideration.
- Thanked the Board for their time.

An unidentified man commented:

- It's hard to make an intelligent decision because we don't have all of the relevant information.
- At the last meeting the applicant indicated that they would be providing a lot of information and that has not yet happened.
- Interested in seeing more information on the proposed project and how it would relate to the neighboring properties.
- The applicant hasn't been able to answer the questions that have been asked.
- Concerned that the Board will decide before the community has a fair change to provide input on the actual proposal.

Chair Luthin responded that information about this project is available on the City's website. He also stated that he was hoping that the applicant would provide a presentation that could walk everybody through the project but that didn't happen today.

The unidentified man reiterated his comment about the applicant not being able to answer the questions that are being asked of him.

Chair Luthin responded:

- Part of the problem is that we have a plan that is in progress.
- The Board is here to provide guidance to the applicant.
- The Board will not be making a decision at this time.
- Encouraged interested persons to follow up with staff or go on the City's website to retrieve relevant information regarding this project.

Director Svanstrom added:

- For projects of this scale, the City requests that the applicant put together a website.
- It is her understanding that the website has been completed.
- Once the link is provided, staff will place the link on the City's website.

The unidentified man continued:

- Traffic is so bad.
- A traffic study isn't needed to know that.

Mr. Koss responded:

- What is before the Board tonight is what was sent to staff before the community meeting was held.
- The next application will include an updated plan.
- The developer isn't trying to fool anybody.
- Things got held up due to the fires.

An unidentified woman commented:

- Asked if the City could require that the traffic study be conducted at certain times of the year.
- Traffic now is lighter than when comparing it to traffic in the summer.
- Similarly, traffic is heavier on weekends and at certain times throughout the day.

Director Svanstrom responded that the City looks at the periods (time of year and time of day) that are studied to ensure accuracy and relevance.

The unidentified woman responded that it's important to study traffic in both directions as well.

Director Svanstrom responded in the affirmative.

The unidentified woman comments continued:

- This project should be open to more than just farmworkers, like teachers for instance.
- Teachers and the elderly need affordable housing too.

An unidentified woman interjected that Sebastopol doesn't have large farms. Many of the people who live here will commute to Sonoma, Healdsburg and maybe even Windsor.

Chair Luthin asked members to the public to refrain from interjecting with questions and speaking out of turn.

Chuck Lavine, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- Appreciates all of the hard work that is being done.
- The Board has done remarkably well.
- Owns the property at the back of the site.
- A lot of what he wanted to comment on has already been mentioned.
- The traffic study should be broader and should include Washington Avenue.
- Washington Avenue has turned into a ring road around Sebastopol which adds a lot of traffic into a residential area that should be residential, this project will make that worse.
- Hopes the issue of runoff is pursued vigorously.
- Turning 3 ½ acres of mostly permeable area into something that is 70% paved or roofed will have a significant impact on the City's drainage system.
- Owns several large heritage trees on his property, the largest of which is 52".
- The rule of thumb is that you should stay 1' away from the base of the tree for every inch of diameter it is.
- Supports affordable housing.
- Concerned regarding farmworker housing.
- Would like better information from the developer.
- Hopes the Board and City will be advocates for the residents that live here, not the outside developers.

An unidentified woman commented:

- Thankful for the questions that have been asked.
- Hopes the Board will be advocates for the residents that live here, not the outside developers.
- Fully supports affordable housing.
- Thrown for a loop regarding farmworker housing.
- What does 'affordable' mean in terms of rent.

- Doubts that farmworkers will be able to afford living here.
- Hopes the Board will be an ally of the concerns that are expressed, not the developer.
- Knows we need housing.
- Knows about our senior population.
- We already have a lot of people that live under the poverty here.

Tiffany Lucus, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- Lives on the rear side of this project as well.
- The trees are a concern of hers as well.
- Concern regarding traffic study and with the fact that the applicant is hiring somebody to prepare it.
- Hopes the traffic study will take into account the City Ventures project.
- Traffic on Bodega Avenue is an issue.
- Currently takes alternate routes when trying to get out of town.
- This project will make others take alternate routes too.
- The City should conduct its own traffic study.
- Traffic throughout the entire town is already a concern.
- This project will bring a lot of extra cars to town.
- The impact of this project and the City Ventures will have a big impact in town.
- The traffic impact of this project will reach beyond Bodega Avenue.

Tamaki Myers, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- Lives on Washington Avenue.
- Her property adjoins the rear side of this project as well.
- Has young kids.
- Her backyard has become a sort of playground for a lot of the kids on the street.
- This project would change the whole feel of the neighborhood.
- The loss of a couple of trees in their backyard would totally change the feel of it.
- Can't image the kids playing in the shadow of a huge three-story complex.

An unidentified woman who previously spoke added comments on the heritage trees and the habitat that they provide.

An unidentified woman who previously spoke for the allotted amount of time interjected with additional comments.

Chair Luthin asked previous speakers, especially those who used their allotted time to refrain from making additional comments.

Renee Kramer, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:

- Lives at Bears Meadow.
- Purchased her property because of its adjacency to the apple orchard.
- Concerned about the stability of the structure of her building which is the building that is closest to the fence of all the buildings at Bears Meadow.
- From what she has read, a 30' setback is needed.
- Concerned with soil erosion if the retaining wall is near the building.
- Also concerned with deterioration of the foundation of the building and increased vulnerability during an earthquake.
- Sleeps up on a third floor.
- There should be a contingency fund in case of soil erosion structural damages to the neighboring buildings.

An unidentified man who previously spoke commented:

- Lives on Washington Avenue.
- Washington Avenue is becoming Bodega Avenue.
- Traffic is horrific.
- The tone of the meeting is consistent.
- Hopes that this project is stopped.

An unidentified woman commented:

- Arrived late to this meeting.
- Asked if an environmental impact report is required and/or being prepared.

Director Svanstrom responded that an environmental review will occur once the formal application is submitted. She noted that an environmental review does not occur for projects that are under preliminary review like this project is currently.

Chair Luthin commented:

- The Board is here to provide guidance to the applicant.
- The Board will not be making a decision at this time.

Board Member Level asked Ms. Kramer if she knew the distance from her unit and to the property line.

Ms. Kramer responded that it was probably only 10' but would need to measure to confirm.

Board Member Level thanked Ms. Kramer for the information.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Luthin thanked the public for their input and closed the public comment period.

Chair Luthin adjourned the meeting for a brief break.

Chair Luthin reconvened the meeting.

Director Svanstrom requested that any members of the public wishing to submit written comments do so by giving them to her or Associate Planner Montes.

Chair Luthin discussed process.

Comments from the Board on trees (proposed removal, mitigation plans, etc.) included the following:

Board Member Hari commented:

- Extremely sympathetic with the neighboring property owners that would be affected by the removal of these trees.
- Removal of roots can create hinges which can create tree falling hazards.
- Walked the site twice.
- Regardless of what happens with this project, the site will eventually be developed.
- Most of the trees (row of pine trees and apple trees, etc.) are past their prime and should probably be removed, both for being able to build on the site and for safety.
- Very sympathetic to native trees.
- Works as a docent at Armstrong two times per week.

Board Member Level commented that the trees and the siting are linked.

Chair Luthin responded that the Board could comment on both trees and siting at the same time.

Board Member Level commented:

- Based on the way this project is presented right now she cannot support it.
- This is a flat lot project on a sloping lot.
- If you're already working on proposing something else, then that is what the Board should be providing feedback on, not this.
- Can only comment on what is in front of her.
- Recommended Preliminary Review of the next iteration since this iteration is out of date.
- Flattening this sloped lot will destroy all the trees and is not supportable.
- The retaining wall needs to be positioned in a way that would ensure the safety of the property line trees.
- Not an expert on trees and the space that they need.
- Knows about retaining walls.
- Drainage needs to be accommodated when constructing 16' retaining walls.
- This is a Class D site.
- Tiebacks to support the tops of the retaining walls will be required which will likely require drilling back into the neighboring property which will destroy tree root systems.
- There is no way a cantilever will work for this type of circumstance.
- The neighbor's trees should be absolutely protected.
- Wants assurance that the neighboring trees will not be damaged by the construction.
- Wants to see the new iteration as mentioned by the applicant.
- Would like the new plan to show some attempt of protecting some of these inboard heritage trees.
- The project should be designed around the trees.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- Has walked the site as well.
- The site is beautiful and has a great slope and body.
- The site has been neglected which is probably why the trees have done so well.
- There are a number of trees on the site that don't really have a lot of long-term value, but there are some that really should be preserved.
- Echoes Board Member Level comments on this project.
- Site design and tree preservation are really one in the same and that is something that should resonate with any great site design.
- This sloping lot is clearly very beautiful and unique which is what appeals to the neighbors.
- To be sensitive to the trees is one thing, but to treat the site in full respect is a whole other.
- There are a lot of failing trees (eucalyptus, fir, etc.) on the site that should be removed.
- The history behind the property is quite unique.
- Part of what the Board looks at is what's allowed in terms of zoning and density which is what makes this site attractive to developers.

Board Member Beale commented:

- In the past, when presented with a vague request for tree removal (no explanation or justification of request to remove, no exploration of potential mitigation measures), the Board has postponed or denied the application.
- The plan that is before the Board presently appears to show zero attempt to preserve and protect anything on the site.
- There needs to be an attempt to work with what is on the site.
- Agreed that site design and tree preservation are linked.
- Suggested that the applicant specifically show and address the concerns that have been expressed if/when they return to the Board.
- Recommended a greater setback, rather than a variance requesting a setback reduction.
- A development like this would be significant for a small town like Sebastopol.
- The community needs to feel like this project is being with a sensitivity to the community and to the neighbors and right now it doesn't feel like that at all.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- We are learning that the best solution to combat climate change is to preserve existing trees.
- Every effort that can be made to preserve trees like this should be done.
- If the ADA rules are such that this site must be graded to make your proforma work, it's a nonstarter.
- Spoke on a recent project he completed on a very hilly site in Occidental.
- If the baseline (both graphically and financially) is grading the site, the site isn't the right location for your project.
- This is a hilly, rolling site and it deserves a different solution.
- This site is located in a transitional zone between urban and rural in that it is walkable to downtown and two really awesome city parks, but it is also somewhat rural.
- This lot provides a huge opportunity to create a design for this really interesting transitional zone.

Chair Luthin commented:

- The trees appear to have been looked at as liabilities.
- The easiest way to build a flat lot development is to remove the trees.
- This proposal is offensive.
- This proposal is offensive to the neighbors whose trees are going to be killed.
- This proposal is offensive to the neighbors who will be at the top of a 16' retaining wall that has no business in a residential development.
- To think that someone's yard is going to have a fence on top of a 16' retaining wall is offensive.
- The applicant doesn't appear to care enough to come up with a workable solution which is shocking and troublesome.
- The applicant keeps changing the design.
- This type of project doesn't work on a sloped site.
- It sounds like this project is a nonstarter.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- This is a decent solution for getting a lot of housing for people who need housing.

Board Member Level commented:

- Sonoma Gardens in Santa Rosa is a lovely project, but it wouldn't work on this site.
- Agreed with Chair Luthin's assertion that this project is offensive.

Chair Luthin commented:

- The parking lot on Bodega Avenue is not something that this town supports.
- It is unlikely that the applicant would have brought this proposal forward if they had read the City's guidelines and codes.
- Parking lots should be shielded and put behind buildings.
- Placing three-story buildings all the way at the perimeter of the site adjacent to single-family dwellings is unacceptable.
- Amenities should be focal points, not hidden in the rear.
- Swain Woods is a great example of a place where they preserved a lot of heritage trees.
- There are trees on this site that if left could be real assets to this project.
- Doesn't see how water retention would work.
- There doesn't seem to be the acreage required for water retention.
- The largest tree on the landscape plan is a 15-gallon tree which is way too small for a project like this.
- This project looks like it was designed in a bubble.
- You can't do 16' cuts with houses 5-10' away.
- This project doesn't work.
- The applicant has figured out a formula that works, but it doesn't work for this site.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- On a positive note; the applicant hired a great arborist. The tree inventory that he prepared is fantastic and should be used.
- Urged the applicant to use the arborist's report to design their project.
- The topography of the site is great.
- The project needs to respect the site.
- This project can work, but the applicant needs to be architecturally creative and sensitive to the site.
- The most important thing is to understand the site or the neighborhood.

Board Member Hari commented:

- Because this is a government sponsored project and the money is coming from the government there are probably all kinds of restrictions and requirements attached.
- This is not like other private projects that we see.
- Presumes that this project is highly restricted due to the bureaucracy of it all.

Chair Luthin commented:

- The developer seems to have figured out a formula where they can make money doing a certain type of project.
- The issue is that the type of project that they do doesn't fit on a piece of property like this.

Board Member Hari commented:

- Absolutely agrees with Chair Luthin.
- Upset that this project would be limited to farmworkers.
- If you look at the demographics, there are a lot of older retired folk in town that are on a fixed income.
- Farmworkers are going to have to leave Sebastopol to go to work which will generate a significant amount of traffic. Much more so than if retired folk lived there.
- Nothing has been proposed, from anyone (City, State, County), to address the infrastructure of our roads and how they may be improved.
- Everything affects everybody from here to all the way over there at some point.
- Hopes to come up with something that can work.

Board Member Level commented:

- The ideology behind high-density affordable housing infill projects is that housing can be provided for people that work in the immediate vicinity, so they walk or bike to work.
- Has nothing against farmworkers but they will be driving to get to their jobs as there is no farm in the immediate vicinity.
- The traffic problem in Sebastopol is a disaster and this will undoubtedly add to it.
- Sebastopol is used as a transit corridor and there is no plan to fix it.
- She already avoids driving through town.
- More and more people are avoiding driving through town every day which has had and will continue to have broad and lasting impacts.
- 84 units with presumably two cars per unit (at a minimum) is 164 cars and that doesn't even park out onto the property which means that parking for guests and visitors isn't provided for.
- In this case visitors will park on collector streets which is already limited.
- This problem cannot be fixed because the roads aren't wide enough.
- Understands what this project is.
- There are too many problems for this location.
- This site is not right for a project like this.
- This developer isn't going to design a project that transitions up a hillside, that is not what they do.
- This developer fulfills a specific need, has a specific funding goal, has a game plan, a business that is growing and expanding which has its service in a community.
- But what they do doesn't work on this site.

Board Member Hari commented that this site is a poor choice.

Chair Luthin commented concurred in that their business model doesn't work on this site.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- Business plan architecture doesn't give character to our town.
- Business plan architecture doesn't look at the site and the views and the opportunities of the site.
- Business plan architecture is imposing.

Board Member Beale commented:

- The proximity of this project to the neighboring properties is problematic to him.
- Perhaps a development like this (1/3 scale) fronting Bodega Avenue is something the Board would be more open to consider.

Board Member Hari responded that that is a great idea although the profit motive would be significantly less for a project like that and probably wouldn't even work.

Board Member Beale responded that it's not in the Board's purview to think about the applicant's finances.

Board Member Level commented that she would be happy to look at a project like that if that is what was being presented by an applicant.

Board Member Beale commented:

- If the Board wants the applicant to return with another proposal for Preliminary Review, the Board needs to provide some direction on what they might be more open to.

Chair Luthin commented that it sounds like the Board agrees on the site, in general.

Board Member Level commented:

- Does not agree with phasing the project as described because large cuts would have to be made regardless and it is impossible to know what may happen from one day to the next.
- Similarly, when people want to remove trees to make way for construction, she doesn't want to see them removed until after the building permit has been pulled because if the construction never happens the trees shouldn't be removed.
- Doesn't see how the retaining walls would fit in terms of transitioning to the neighboring lots and couldn't support retaining walls with a 16' or 8' drop off as it wouldn't be appropriate.
- Couldn't support the proposed phasing either.

Chair Luthin expressed agreeing with Board Member Level.

Chair Luthin asked if the Board was in consensus on being in general agreement on the site.

Board members responded in the affirmative.

Chair Luthin asked to hear from the Board on matters relating to traffic.

Director Svanstrom spoke on process and responded that the Board would be reviewing the traffic study as part of their review and asked to hear from the Board on matters relating to scoping.

Board Member Hari commented:

- A lot has already been said on traffic.
- We live here and we know what it's like.
- We all know that a project like this, just like any other, will increase traffic.
- We also know that the City, County and/or State aren't going to do anything about our traffic issues, at least probably not in any of our lifetimes.
- Traffic will continue to get worse, no matter what.

Chair Luthin commented:

- In terms of scope, he encouraged the traffic study to include the neighboring streets.

Board Member Hari responded that the whole city should be studied as it will all be impacted.

Ms. Duckles commented:

- Has worked for multiple jurisdictions across Marin and Sonoma counties for the past thirty years.
- Has never seen a project that cavalierly and disrespectfully showed trees to be removed on other people's property.
- It's one thing to get agreement from other property owners after having discussed it.
- Has heard from a lot of residents about this proposal in the past few weeks.
- You're talking about trees that could be hundreds of years old on other people's properties and the applicant has targeted them for removal.

Board Member Hari commented that the applicant has a lot of work to do before they return with a new proposal.

Vice Chair Bush asked Director Svanstrom if Caltrans owns Bodega Avenue.

Director Svanstrom responded that Caltrans owns Highway 12 up to Main Street. The section west of Main Street belong to the City.

Board Member Level commented:

- These items may not be feasible but we've talked about the width of the street and the requirement to upgrade the sidewalk to accessibility standards which is 10'.
- An increase in sidewalk width to 10' would have to be done by going inboard to the property because there's no way it could be achieved by cutting into the roadway.
- There is also a median which would need to be studied before any modification.
- We currently have a width of a road that is traveling with one car in each direction with no center left hand turn lane and a bike path.
- Bodega Avenue cannot get any wider.
- This is a serious issue in town because we can't do anything about it even if we wanted to because we can't widen Bodega Avenue.

Director Svanstrom responded that there is potential for a turn lane in this area, similar to Healdsburg Avenue. She added that this is something that will be looked at during the traffic study.

Board Member Level commented that she would like the scope to include:

- Options for widening Bodega Avenue to make it so there's a turn lane and that it's usable.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- The comment about who will live in these units should be part of the scope of the traffic study.

Director Svanstrom responded that the amount of traffic based on use would be a considered.

Board Member Langberg commented that the shared access piece with the neighbors needs to be resolved.

Chair Luthin responded in the affirmative.

Hearing nothing further on traffic, Chair Luthin asked to hear from the Board on the buildings and architecture.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- Suburban architecture is being placed on a site that doesn't call for it.
- The proposal doesn't fit the character of Sebastopol or the site.
- Curious why the community building is a one-story standalone building when the rest of the site has three-story buildings.
- The community building looks very out of place as proposed.
- The language of the materials can help give character to the buildings.
- The materiality of the community building doesn't really work.
- There is very little variety in the volume of the buildings.
- Doesn't understand why there is a laundry room in the community building when every unit has laundry.
 - Seems like a waste of space in the community building in this case.

- The floor plans show what look like a lot of very dark spaces with limited exposure to light.
- The living room in many of them is surrounded by the bedrooms.
 - The place where people tend to spend the most amount of time will have the least amount of light coming in.
- Knows how difficult it can be to get everything together and put it into a nice and efficient package that works.
- This doesn't seem like it works, these don't feel like they'd be very nice places to be.
- The buildings don't have a sense in terms of view and solar orientation.
- Architecturally there is a huge missed opportunity in the real big picture of this site being quasi-urban and quasi-rural.
- The project could have an urban front with buildings being placed right on the street with courtyard possibilities and parking in the back.

Board Member Beale commented:

- The architecture and siting of this project feels as if it was cut and paste from anywhere USA with zero attempt being made to make it relate to the neighboring properties.
- This feels like a spreadsheet driven project.
- Agreed with Board Member Langberg on the layout of the units feeling dark.
- This is clearly a formula that works for a business strategy.
- Most of us are in the private sector and are in business to make money.
- Recently accused of being too concerned with the human condition.
- Things like traffic, aesthetics and the neighborhood lead him to have zero impression that any of those things are a motivator behind this project.
- Has a hard time getting behind how to make something work here when it feels like it's so detached from the human condition.
- Lives, works, and raises his family here in Sebastopol.
- This feels very personal.
- Feels offended by this project.
- Has never had a project come before him and affect him personally in a way that didn't allow him to review it completely subjectively until now.

ila Benavidez-Heaster, Bodega Avenue, commented:

- Has rarely seen the Board all speak the same voice.
- Wants to support the applicant but it is rare to hear them all speaking in the same voice and what they're saying is true.
- The applicant needs to listen to the Board.
- Appreciates the Board's comments.
- Feels proud to live here and doesn't want to leave.

Other members of the public agreed with Ms. Benavidez-Heaster on the Board making them feel proud to live here.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- This proposal lacks intention, the creativity just isn't there.
- Certain things have been clearly articulated during this meeting.
- Encouraged the applicant to take these comments with them.
- Is not offended by this proposal at all.
- Understands that it takes a ton of guts to bring an application forward.
- Thanked the applicant for coming forward with their application.
- Recognizes that this process takes time and money.
- Knows what it is like to present to a board.

- The feedback that is provided (both from the Board and the community) is intended to make a better design.
- The applicant should take the inventory and the feedback from a positive perspective and make the connection.
- If the applicant is just going to be driven by the matrix the project probably won't work and the Board clearly won't support it.

Board Member Level commented:

- We're a small and very close-knit community.
- Has lived in this community for 30 years.
- Urged the applicant to hear the comments of the Board and the community.
- A project like this would definitely degrade the value of the neighboring properties.
- This project is your typical boilerplate stack and pack housing.
- Urged the applicant not to bring this project to this community.
- A minimal effort has been put into the material selections.
- It's unclear where the materials will fit on the various buildings.
- The colors on the Sonoma Gardens project work well.
- The Board would need to see some renderings of the buildings with color and material details and samples of the materials.
- It feels like the Board is kind of being railroaded here and that doesn't feel good.
- Read up on all of this in terms of how affordable housing works, funding issues, etc.
- Urged the applicant to pick a site that is appropriate for their project or to come up with something completely different.

Board Member Hari commented:

- Reviewing these plans seems like a waste of time because it just isn't going to happen.
- Sure, this site will be developed at some point, but it won't be with something like this.
- Asked if the Board has the final say on this project.

Board Member Langberg responded that, if denied by the Board, the applicant to appeal to Council.

Board Member Hari commented:

- Would prefer for the applicant to have come forward with an affordable housing project of some form that could house our local people.
- Farmworkers who live here will have to drive out of town to get to work.
- Could never support this project if it is intended to only house one specific group of people, regardless of what that group is.
- Can't vote for a project that will bulldoze the entire property.
- This project belongs in the Midwest, where all the farmworkers are.
- Has yet to vote against any project as a member of this Design Review Board.
- Cannot support this project as proposed.

Chair Luthin commented:

- If you look at the record, this Board is overwhelmingly pro-development.
- The Board has been very supportive of development in this town.
- Can't think of a development in the last several years that the Board has given a lot of resistance to.
- In general, this Board is very supportive of development.
- This Board really tries to work to make things happen.

- Served on the General Plan Advisory Committee and as such, he helped write the revision to the City's General Plan.
- The City's General Plan promotes infill development.
- Believes this Board is supportive of infill development.
- The Board would like to see something done on this site that is respectful to the community, and especially the neighbors.
- One of the biggest shocks to him about this proposal was the display of disrespect to the neighbors and that needs to change in order to gain his support.
- The staff report is fantastic.
- Asked if members of the Board wished to give specific direction to the applicant.

Board Member Beale commented:

- There are a couple of unique factors here.
- This plan is already in the process of being revised.
- Sounds like this is the only type of development that this applicant does.
- The type of development that they do simply won't work on this site.
- How does the Board give the applicant direction for something that the Board would have a higher likelihood of getting behind when that doesn't seem possible given their formula?
- Would advise the applicant to look for another site more so than talking about how to alter citing or architectural materials.

Chair Luthin commented the following:

- The parking needs to move up.
- The scale of the perimeter buildings needs to be broken down to relate to the neighbors.
- A setback of 5-10' probably won't work.
- The amenities should be centralized.
- Wants to see water retention.
- Large cuts for retaining walls are not acceptable.
- Does not support large retaining walls.
- Retaining walls shall be no more than 3-4'.
- Wants additional information on phasing.

Board Member Level commented:

- Specifics on exactly what the materials are and how they relate on the various buildings would be helpful.
- Specifics on windows, etc.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Specifics on materials are needed.
- Would like to see massing studied more.
- The materials should make sense in how they're used and can't be just surface applied.
- Articulation of interior spaces and light quality are important and should be considered.

Board Member Langberg commented that the tree issues need to be addressed.

Board Member Level commented that she would like to see site sections to better understand how things relate.

Board Member Hari asked for information on the sale of this property.

Mr. Koss responded that both properties are in escrow.

Chair Luthin commented:

- There are only five criteria that can be used to allow the removal of a heritage tree.
- The only one that seems to fit is, "4. A situation exists or is proposed in which structures or improvements, including, but not limited to, building additions, second units, swimming pools, and solar energy systems, such as solar panels, cannot be reasonably designed or altered to avoid the need for tree removal."
- In order to meet that criteria, the Board would need to see overwhelming evidence that there is no reasonable solution to allow the applicant to remove these trees.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- In the big picture, it's very reasonable for the applicant to do the formula that they're doing which means it's reasonable for them to remove the proposed trees.
- This brings the Board back to the ultimate question which is about the appropriateness of this development for this site.

Chair Luthin commented:

- The applicant should still demonstrate that there's no alternative way to develop while preserving these trees, or to at least make some sort of gesture there.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- The heart of an amazing project is site design and architecture.
- Creating new beautiful places for people is amazing.
- Knows it takes invention and possibly more money.
- Could cost less money if doing away with those 16' retaining walls as they will cost a fortune.
- The applicant's best foot forward is to break the mold and invent something that will create a ton of value for the neighbors and the residents.
- The Board supports building higher levels.
- There are new infinite ways of creating beautiful places that can house more people because we're in a downtown and we're looking for density.
- We don't want sprawl.
- Sprawl will kill even more of our natural resources.
- The Board understands why this property is zoned this way.
- There's an opportunity here.

Members of the Board concurred on being supportive of taller buildings.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- The proposal shows two playgrounds and a basketball court which he did not consider very necessary.
 - It's his understanding that they are necessary per the funding requirements.
- Suggested getting more dense in the buildings.

Board Member Beale commented:

- Expressed being curious to know if the developer has other approaches, or if this is their singular approach to development with the caveat being that it is farmworker housing.
- Interested in hearing about alternatives that the Board may be open to.
- Asked if there is a backup plan for these potentially soon-to-be owners of this property.

The applicant responded that there is no backup plan at this time, however, that doesn't mean that they're not willing to review and engage.

Board Member Beale asked if Pacific Companies does other types of developments.

A representative of the applicant responded that they do a variety of projects including, podium, market-rate, and four-story projects with different configurations and layouts.

Board Member Hari asked if all their projects are government funded.

A representative of the applicant reiterated that they do market-rate projects which are not government funded.

A representative of the applicant spoke on their process and commented that there can always be a plan b.

Board Member Beale commented:

- Interested in knowing if the applicant is willing to come up with an alternative as that will help the Board in determining whether it is beneficial to provide guidance.

Mr. Koss commented:

- They came before the Board for Preliminary Review to gather the information that has been provided which can then be used for the next iteration.
- Any good businessman will have a plan b, and even more than that.

Board Member Beale asked about funding and if other options can or will be considered and commented that his questions are aimed at being able to leave this meeting with something of value having come out of it.

Board Member Langberg commented that the applicant has received a lot of feedback from the Board and from the community. Now it's up to the applicant to figure out what they can make work and how they want to move forward.

Mr. Koss asked if there was any more direction from the Board.

Board Member Beale commented:

- It feels like the Board's direction will lead to a path of nothing happening with this development.

Mr. Koss responded that that is not true at all.

Board Member Level commented:

- Doesn't want to see these big vertical cuts.
- Would like to see site sections.
- Would like to see site sections from neighboring properties to grade as well.
- Would like to see some attention paid to the neighbor's trees.
- The neighbor's trees shall not be touched.
- Would like to see some attention paid to the heritage trees that are on the site.
- We're already overburdened with traffic as is.
- The traffic study will be a big deal no matter what.
- Wants to see how the applicant plans to drain the site on the site.
- We have a problem with flooding because we already have too much development water going into the Laguna.

- Would like to keep the heights of the retaining walls away from the neighboring properties.
 - Anything for than a couple of feet at the most would be too invasive to their property value and we're supposed to be talking about transitioning.
- Not sure how the applicant can make this work with their program.
- Wants more specifics on the buildings.
- Reiterated her comment on the buildings at Sonoma Gardens being attractive.
- This proposal lacks too many details.
- Hopes the applicant finds her feedback helpful.

Board Member Hari commented:

- Agrees with Board Member Level's comments.
- Reiterated his position of not being able to vote for a project that is limited to serving one group of people which in this case, is farmworkers.
- This project needs to be accessible to the people in this community.

Board Member Langberg commented that there are farmworkers in this community.

Board Member Level commented:

- That issue will be manifested in the traffic study because the type of residents will have an impact on traffic.
- The intent of this town with infill is to provide housing for people that live here.
- We want our town to be walkable and bikeable.
- We have a traffic problem in this town that cannot be resolved because we cannot widen the main arteries.
- Unless Caltrans is willing to pay for a bypass, we're stuck.
- Interested in seeing what the traffic study will say on the collector streets.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Luthin concluded the Board's discussion of this item.

The applicant team thanked the Board for their time.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS: (none)

10. REPORTS FROM THE BOARD/STAFF: There were none.

11. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Luthin adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Tree and Design Review Board meeting will be held on January 15, 2020 at 4:00 p.m., at the Sebastopol City Hall, 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA. The regular meeting of January 01, 2020 will be cancelled due to the holiday.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kari Svanstrom
Planning Director