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APPROVED MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
 CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
 MINUTES OF May 15, 2019

SEBASTOPOL CITY HALL
 CONFERENCE ROOM
 7120 BODEGA AVENUE
 4:00 P.M

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD:

The notice of the meeting was posted on May 09, 2019.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Luthin called the meeting to order at 4:02 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present:	Ted Luthin, Chair Cary Bush, Vice Chair Lars Langberg, Board Member Ron Hari, Board Member Christine Level, Board Member
Absent:	Gregory Beale, Board Member (excused)
Staff:	Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director Dana Morrison, Assistant Planner

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 17, 2019

Board Member Level amended the minutes.

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

Board Member Langberg seconded the motion.

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

4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Director Svanstrom provided the following updates:

- The next City Council meeting agenda will include review of;
 - The City's Annual Level of Service Report
 - An appeal of a Planning Commission approval for a non-hosted whole house vacation rental.

- At the last City Council meeting, the Council approved several entitlements for the Davis Townhomes project. These came after being reviewed and recommended for approval by the Planning Commission.
 - Remaining for the Davis Townhomes project is tonight's Design Review along with a second reading of the ordinance.
- The City Council recently adopted interim regulations for telecommunications.

Hearing no questions from the Board, Chair Luthin thanked Director Svanstrom for the update.

Board Member Level asked for a moment of remembrance for friend and colleague, Steven Sheldon who passed away last Friday.

Members of the Board, staff, and those in attendance expressed their condolences and thanked Board Member Level for the update.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Chair Luthin asked if members of the public wished to comment on items not on the agenda.

Hearing none, Chair Luthin closed the public comment period.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: There were none.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR: There were none.

8. REGULAR AGENDA:

- A. DESIGN REVIEW:** This is an application submitted by Kathy Austin and Dan Davis requesting approval for the Davis Townhomes project, proposing development of eighteen (18); 1,180 square foot, 2-bedroom, 2-story townhomes. The proposed development would occur on a vacant lot located at the end of Morris Street, south of Sebastopol Avenue/Highway 12, 6737 Sebastopol Avenue (APN 004-063-036).

Assistant Planner Morrison presented the staff report.

The Board asked questions of Director Svanstrom and Assistant Planner Morrison. The Board also asked a question of property owner, Dan Smith.

Director Svanstrom left the meeting.

Project architect, Kathy Austin introduced landscape architect, Parker Smith, gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Mr. Smith gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Ms. Austin made closing remarks and reiterated that she was available for questions.

The Board asked questions of Ms. Austin, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Davis.

Comments from the Board during questions of the applicant included:

- Whether these units would be rentals or for sale.

- Questioned why three different roof pitches (hip, gable and shed) are shown.
- Questioned the applicant's thinking with regards to the proposed color scheme.
- Dislikes the look of the carports and feels like they take away from the architecture of the project.
 - The carports should either be removed or designed to incorporate with the architecture of the project.
- While he was not advocating for this specifically, a member commented that solar panels on carports tend to work well and could be done in place of mounting the panels on the roof of the units.
- Questioned the choice to add more live oaks instead of valley oaks.

Responses from the applicant included:

- These will be single family units with each one being on their own parcel.
- At this point the developer is undecided but expects that they may be a mix of both rentals and for sale units.
- Has received calls from prospective occupants, most of whom wish to rent.
- Mr. Davis owns other properties in the area which he has been taking care of for years, this property would be no different.
- Mr. Davis is a property owner, not a developer. Mr. Davis' intention is to continue to own and manage the property.
- Expressed a willingness to modify the number of roof pitches based on Board feedback.
- Likes the proposed color scheme, feels the colors go well with the surrounding environment, the colors feel comfortable, warm and inviting.
- Expressed a willingness to adjust the colors based on Board feedback.
- Hears concerns, however, the proposed carports are the most minimalist in design which the owners like.
- Solar panels mounted on the roof of the individual units will go directly to each unit's meter.
- The energy generated through solar panels mounted atop carports, as they are on a common parcel, could be used for lighting in common areas.
- Happy to add more valley oaks instead of live oaks if that is the preference of the Board.

Hearing no further questions, Chair Luthin opened the public comment period.

A resident of Sebastopol named Douglas commented:

- This will be the first development that he's seen in the floodplain during his lifetime.
- Expressed concern about the impacts of flooding on this property.
- The Northeast Area Specific Plan was nixed for good reason in terms of residential development within the floodplain.
- These units should be built on pillars.
- The proposed carports are ugly and cheap and can be seen all over.
- We should prepare for future flooding based on our history of flooding.
- May be too late for a significant redesign.
- Believes the applicant has good intentions.
- Doesn't know the applicant personally.
- We can and should do better here.
- These are going to be market-rate rentals, not low-income.
- We need to tell prospective renters that they're going to be renting in a flood zone.
- The cost for flood insurance is probably too high to be worthwhile.
- It will flood in this area again.
- It has flooded upwards of 15 times here since the year 1950.

- Has talked to Mayor Slayter about this as well.
- The Youth Annex fared better than the Community Center in the recent flood due to its elevation.
- Thanked the Board, staff and applicants for their time.
- Wants protection for the renters and owners that will live in these units.
- We will see more floods in the future, and we need to better prepare.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Luthin closed the public comment period.

The Board asked additional questions of staff and the applicant.

The Board discussed the application as follows:

Board Member Hari commented:

- Expressed having no issues with this project at all.
- Likes the craftsman style of the architecture.
- Fully supports this project.
- Looked into Ms. Austin's work and understands that she has a political history in this city.
- This Board, as well as the rest of the city, should look at Ms. Austin's work not her politics, a person's political past has no place in the design review process.
- Reiterated his support for this project.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- Has spent a lot of time looking at the plans for this project.
- Thanked the applicant for all the effort they put forth.
- The plans read really well.
- A lot of time and money goes into this type of process.
- The project has been clearly defined so the scope is clear.
- Appreciates the applicant for enduring the design review process.
- Thought of this application in the context of Sebastopol's motto, "local flavor, global vision".
- Not much has changed with the proposal from what was submitted for preliminary review.
- The proposal is Kathy Austin-style architecture and it's safe.
- The proposal is a subdivision with charm.
- Agrees with not getting involved with politics.
- The Board's work is to review the proposal, not redesign it.
- The proposal has charm and décor and its scale is less than grand.
- From a local perspective, the proposal speaks affordable and romantic.
- The project is charming, it's cute, and it's acceptable.
- The site plan is good.
- The proposal is well situated and is sensitive to its surroundings.
- Hoped for a better connection with the Laguna.
- We suspect that the landscape will flood.
- Appreciates that the proposed plantings are common and easy to find. This means they'll be easy to replace if flooding were to occur and cause damage to them.
- The planting plan is ornate and contextually comes together as a whole.
- Appreciates the reference to Calflora nursery.
- The proposal has met the City's water use requirements.
- Noted a number of proposed species on the planting plan that show up on the 'Do Not Plant Invasive Species Index' and suggested that the applicant take a closer look at that.

- Suggested incorporating some plants that don't mind sitting in water due to anticipated flooding.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- Thanked Vice Chair Bush for his comments.
- The proposed carports are a non-architecture and should be investigated further.
 - Understands the intent of the simple design is to have them somewhat disappear.
 - Recommended removal of the carports altogether.
- The trash enclosures are trying to match with the architecture, so they have more character than the carports.
- The fencing on lots 1-5 is a big issue to him.
 - Suggested swapping the frontage for lots 1-5.
 - 4' solid fencing with 2' of lattice is imposing and unwelcoming.
- With regards to the plastic nature of the materials; understands the financial constraints, however, toxicity is also a concern.
 - Can choose a longer lasting material that is less toxic to manufacture, produce and install.
- Understands the challenge of the economy for architectural projects.
- Will not vote against this project because of the architecture.
- The architecture is fine.
- Sebastopol needs housing.
- This is screaming for something different.
- The possibility to do something different here is so exciting.
- Spoke on how eclectic Sebastopol is.
- The argument that this style is appropriate because it matches the style of Sebastopol is a false argument.

Chair Luthin commented:

- The double-edge sword of the eclectic architecture in Sebastopol is that anything can be viewed as appropriate in context.

Board Member Level commented:

- The plastic house concept is a societal issue.
- The problem is that building is so expensive.
- The proposed project is probably about the most affordable thing that can be built and will still cost a shocking amount of money.
- Appreciates that this design is what is feasible for the applicant.
- Expressed shock over the new homes that are being built in Coffey Park.
- Concurred with Board Member Langberg on the fencing for lots 1-5. The fencing doesn't feel right at that height due to it facing the common area.
- Appreciates that the applicant is trying to make each one unique, but it feels a little bit busy.
- Suggested more commonality.
- Likes colors found in nature.
- Suggested being bolder with the colors of the units.
- Suggested removing the carports.

Ms. Austin interjected that the applicant is open to eliminating the carports.

The Board discussed the carports and asked additional questions of Ms. Austin and Mr. Davis.

The Board discussed the planting plan and asked additional questions of Ms. Austin and Mr. Smith.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Understands both sides with regards to swapping the frontage on lots 1-5.
 - Can see justification for both options.
- Would like to stipulate that the fences be capped.
- There are too many different rooflines and roof pitches going on.
- Okay with the color scheme, wouldn't want to get bolder with colors in this location.
- Doesn't love the carports but understands the functional aspect and desirability of them.
 - Has yet to see a carport structure that he likes.

Board Member Level agreed with Chair Luthin's comment on carport structures.

Chair Luthin comments continued:

- Likes the site plan and how it opens to the Laguna.
- Believes this will be a pleasant place to live.
- Supports this project.
- Would support removal of the carports.
 - If the carports need to stay, he's okay with that too.
- Likes the idea of eliminating some invasive species.
 - Appreciates Vice Chair Bush for taking an in-depth look at the planting plan.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- Supports this project.

Chair Luthin asked for discussion of conditions and/or a motion.

Board Member Level commented:

- Supports approving the project today.
- Her comments were suggestions, not conditions.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- Part of what the Design Review Board does is reflect and give their opinion.
- The Board's comments are public record.
- Nothing that the Board has said is conditioning the project, but there is a lot of information for the applicant to think about.
- Encouraged the applicant to take the Board's comment to heart.
- This project is big, and it's an important one.
- Believes the Board can approve this project as submitted.

Chair Luthin and Board Member Level expressed being in agreement with Board Member Langberg on the Board being able to approve this project as submitted.

Board Member Hari commented:

- Thanked the Board for their professionalism.
- Has no problem with this application whatsoever.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- Would like to add a few conditions.
- Would like to condition that the invasive species shown on the planting plan are substituted with non-invasive species.

- Fencing is a big element.
- Suggested eliminating the extra 2' on lattice on the interior of lot #19 to keep the fence height at 4'.
 - Doing so would be of real value to the community.

The applicant asked a clarifying question of Vice Chair Bush.

Ms. Austin commented:

- Expressed a concern over privacy if removing the lattice and having a 4' solid fence on the interior of lot #19.
- Suggested doing something more decorative on the gates in order to create a more interesting element to connect that space.
- Hears and understands where Vice Chair Bush is coming from.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- People want to live in community more and more.
- Encouraged the applicant to embrace the idea of that.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Modifying the design could lead to a behavioral change.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- A great fence will make a great project.
- Bad fencing can cheapen a design quickly and he would hate for that to happen.
- Wants the fencing to look great.

Ms. Austin commented:

- Suggested that she and Mr. Parker be allowed to work on the fence design and have staff review any proposed changes.

Vice Chair Bush responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Austin commented:

- Assured the Board that they would make a real effort to not do a typical, usual fence while being reasonably economic.

Vice Chair Bush commented:

- Concurred with comments on carports.
- No issue with the proposed lighting.

Vice Chair Bush made a motion to approve the project as submitted with the following additional Conditions of Approval:

- The applicant shall look at substitutions for possible invasive species.
- The fences and invasive plant substitutions shall be reviewed and approved by Planning staff prior to implementation or final inspection.

Board Member Hari and Vice Chair Bush asked procedural questions of staff and Ms. Austin.

Board Member Level seconded the motion.

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

ABSENT: Board Member Beale

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS: There were none.

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

11. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Luthin adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Tree Board/Design Review Board meeting will be held on June 05, 2019 at 4:00 p.m., at the Sebastopol City Hall, 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kari Svanstrom
Planning Director