

- The City's annual Level of Service report.
- The Planning Commission will be hosting a series of housing presentations during upcoming meetings.
- Recent staffing changes in the Planning Department.

The Board had no questions for Director Svanstrom.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: None.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: None.

7. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Huntley Square – Conceptual Review of Planned Community District – The applicant has submitted a zoning amendment to modify the zoning from R7 to a Planned Community, Use Permit, a Tentative Map, and an Environmental Review. This project is being referred to the Design Review Board as a conceptual review as the Zoning Ordinance requires that Planned Communities be reviewed by the Board prior to the Planning Commission. The project proposes to construct ten (10) ownership studio units that are all under 600 sq. ft. Six (6) of the units will include lofts, while the remaining four (4) units will be single story units.

Director Svanstrom presented the staff report.

The Board asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

Beth Farley introduced Bob Massaro, Dante Love, and herself who are all members of the applicant team. Ms. Farley presented and was available for questions.

The Board asked questions of Ms. Farley, Director Svanstrom, and Mr. Massaro.

Chair Luthin opened public comment.

Director Svanstrom spoke on process.

Tom

I must speak quickly because I only have three minutes. I thank you for the opportunity to do this. I appreciate all the effort that has gone into making this a green project, and affordable housing, I am all for that. I am a property owner at 128 Golden Ridge Avenue. What I am looking at it is, this is .39 acres, 2/5 of an acre, for 10 units. That is way too many units for such a small space. Especially if it going to come through their development on Golden Ridge Avenue. It is just not made for two-way traffic of that type. I look at the way it is laid out and I think of FedEx. Instead of having one or two units on .4 acres, you will have FedEx, UPS, USPS, Amazon, delivery and appliances and furniture, times 10. This is a lot of traffic in and out. There is no turnaround. It is 25' wide which is as long as my truck. That means that every big delivery coming in is going to come in and then backup with the backup buzzer all the way down to Golden Ridge Avenue. This will affect the noise and the ambience of our community there. I think that is a problem that needs to be addressed. The other part of that is that Bodega Avenue is the address, but the access is Golden Ridge Avenue. That is not going to work for a lot of deliveries, believe me. I lived on Valentine Avenue, but the access to my driveway was off Orchard Lane and nobody could figure out where I lived. This is a disconnect already just on the address. I do not see any place for mail. I do not know where the mail gets done, where it gets distributed, or how

often mail trucks will come in. I look down at the Bodega Avenue parking and I think, well, maybe that is where it comes in. There is no yellow loading zone on the off-street parking for commercial deliveries. It is just 10 because you have made it on the formula to make sure that there are 10 parking spots on Bodega Avenue, and 10 parking spots up at the site. Obviously, I have some issues with using the access from Golden Ridge Avenue. I also have issue with a building 22' high, 8' from my back fence. At 22' high, I have a 6' fence, that is four times as high. This is my view to the west where I would normally get my breezes and views of the sun setting. That is going to be gone, and it is only 8' from my fence for their 8' backyard which is another issue I have on rear yard setbacks, but I will save that.

Director Svanstrom informed the public of their option to submit comments to City staff which will become part of the public record. Comments received by City staff will be forwarded to the developer and the Design Review Board as we go through this process.

Tom

I will, thank you.

Candace Nagle

We did send in several questions and concerns. As I am listening to the whole presentation today, what I am seeing loud and clear, is almost a lack of attention at all to the fact that the community you are creating is coming into another community, and you are part of a bigger community. How are you going to address the discomfort and the needs of the people next door to you whose lives you are changing? Building these walls is going to take the sun away from my backyard. Their use of our driveway is going to make it so congested; it is going to be a lifestyle change for all of us. Where is the community sense in all of that? That is directed and Mr. Massaro and the people that are putting this project together. Have you considered us in your program as you have been designing this building?

Marcel Degross

122 Golden Ridge Avenue. Everyone has talked for an hour and seven minutes and we get three minutes per person, I think that is wrong. We just got the notice for this meeting last Thursday. We have had no chance to contact legal counsel or anything like that. You are going to be running equipment up our driveway for the better part of a year and a half making our lives miserable. I know you are going to be running excavators, backhoes, etc. up there. This is going to make our lives a living hell for the better part of a year and a half. When do we stop the density of a community? Do we get as big as San Jose, as big as San Francisco? Do we keep going up, up, up? This whole parking situation, like Tom said, you cannot get a 14' pickup truck that will be able to turn around back there. He is right, they are going to come right back down the road. What if there is a fire? Are you going to be able to get two fire trucks, one coming in, and one going out? No, you are not. We are living in a fire zone.

Candace Nagle

I think there is a big hypocrisy in creating a nice community by destroying the communities around it. That is what I think.

Marcel Degross

This is called 7950 Bodega Avenue, but really it is Golden Ridge. You are using our access easement which was an agreement signed in 1993. Instead of having 10 parking spaces on Bodega, you should have less units, you should lower the height of the project, so you don't block out the sun from people, and run the driveway up Bodega Avenue.

Ana Ressler

I live at 124 Golden Ridge Avenue. This is a small community and we have so many safety concerns, plus the trees, I am concerned about the trees. We have somebody here who checked the diameter of the trees and they are checking next to that because they will damage our trees. The safety concern that we all have is that we cannot see 32 cars coming in and out of the access from Golden Ridge Avenue. First, the entrance to the parking lot is very narrow, there is no way, it is not appropriate for two cars, it is only for one car. I do not see how; we have had two accidents already. There is not enough space in there. My concern is, if we are coming out, we are not going to be able to go to the parking lot due to the cars that are coming in and out. There are a lot of people that drive fast. Safety issues, my concerns, the trees, and all the noise that are going to interrupt our lives. Please, have somebody come and check the fire trucks. We have so many issues with that, people are saying, how are we going to get out of our carport when another car is coming in and out, we have a narrow parking lot. There are a lot of concerns, please. I am not talking about the number of units, although consideration of less than that would be great. Having 10 units, 32 cars in and out of our parking lot with only one exit will be very hard, accidents will happen. Who knows, somebody can get hit coming out of the parking lot, coming out of our places. Very concerned for safety. Thank you so much.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Luthin closed public comment and spoke on process.

The Board commented as follows:

Christine Level, Board Member

I think Tom at 128 Golden Ridge Avenue made a couple of good points that I had not thought of, which is the inability to turn around. If those spaces are parked out, if everybody is home, there is no way to turn around. You are going to have to back in and back out. For anything of any size, like UPS or FedEx or other, they are not going to be able to turn around either. That is a good consideration with this sort of new normal that we have where everybody works at home and you get UPS and FedEx deliveries all the time. That is something to consider and that is really all I have to say about it. It seems a bit hazardous to me with the inability to turn around, to have a big truck backing down and the backing through the townhouses, yes, that does seem very problematic to me. The other thing that I had mentioned before, and I would like to see a drawing or something that shows, here are the units, and here is the Golden Ridge complex, that shows what they look like side by side because this is a western exposure, and it is very reasonable to assume that the light into these people's buildings is going to be completely blocked by these units. Maybe that is not it, it just depends on the relative perspective and the sun angles? It would be interesting to see that.

Ted Luthin, Chair

It is interesting too, Board Member Level, I am look at page 9 of the staff report and comment 2g from the Fire Department says, 'hammerhead turnarounds as required'. I am not up on my fire code in terms of turnaround in fire trucks, but that is something they noted as well. I think as this goes through, probably at the Planning Commission level, there is property going to need to be a little more research on what exactly that means.

Christine Level, Board Member

A hammerhead turnaround at that site is going to eat up a lot of the site. It is interesting to think about it when they are trying to get up there because I had a fire at the end of my road some years back and the house burned to the ground because they could not access it because they could not turn around. They will not go up there if they cannot turn around so that is an interesting point. This is going to be interesting. I think that that would be

something that should be looked at with the Fire Department, pretty much immediately to see how that goes. I watched in real time; they rolled the hose all the way up my road because they could not turn around. It was quite impressive, but the house burned down because they could not get there quick enough, they could not get there. It is interesting to think about.

Beth Farley, Applicant

It has been by the Fire Department. The Fire Department does not require a turnaround as long as they can get their truck within 100 feet of the extent of the building, and this is within 100 feet of the building if they would park on Bodega Avenue and go up the steps.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Their approach would be off Bodega Avenue, not Golden Ridge.

Christine Level, Board Member

What if the fire comes and the parking spaces along Bodega Avenue are all parked out?

Beth Farley, Applicant

They would park on the outside of the cars and go through them.

Ted Luthin, Chair

They would block the street and set up?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

This is certainly something that as staff, we can discuss with the Fire Department to clarify that comment as well so that if there are any modifications, we know that.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes.

Christine Level, Board Member

That is such a critical thing, maybe the applicant would want to get that handled and signed off on sooner and not later.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

Not fire related, but parking related. I do not know if there is a drawing in the packet that shows that the driveway is a continuation, essentially, of the driveway on the other property. There is parking shown on the north side of that driveway, the northwest corner. From that visual, it looks the same as what would be on the new parcel. If you can turn around from there, you can do it from the new property, or at least that is what it looks like.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Right.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

I do not know if that is true, or accurate, but I see it in the drawing.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes, it looks like it is continuing the same width as it moves to the west there onto the new parcel. If you cannot turn around, I guess you would back up for that extra distance. It looks like pretty much the same condition as what is existing. You have carports on one side and you have a couple of parking spaces on the other.

Cary Bush, Board Member

It follows the easement.

Christine Level, Board Member

There is a very beautiful, protected tree on the southeast corner of the Golden Ridge townhouse complex, right there on the corner.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes.

Christine Level, Board Member

Interesting enough, it is not shown on the site plan, but it is right up against the wall there. That tree is going to be an impediment to putting in that wall, there is no question about it. I went out there and measured it and looked. There was this discussion about hand probing and drilling piers, but those piers for that wall are going to be substantial. I am very concerned about that tree because it is a nice, protected heritage tree in that corner there and somebody has obviously gone to some great length and care to maintain that tree, unlike the other oaks that are down on Bodega Avenue that would be removed to put the sidewalk in.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes.

Christine Level, Board Member

This tree has been maintained and cared for. It is on the corner property there, so I am putting that out there.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I believe that is tree 780 as identified in the arborist report. That was one of the ones that she wanted to take a closer look at.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes. I agree. I think that trees 780, 774 and 773 are the biggest concern trees. 774 and 773 are kind of in the northwest corner and I think that are a big concern because of how crowded that parking and trash enclosure area is. It is just really packed in there.

Christine Level, Board Member

To me, the project is very ominous and oppressive from the Bodega Avenue venue. I would wonder why you would not consider putting one of the less tall units, so that when you are up against that wall, you just do not have so much height. You have got at least 30 to 32 feet going straight up from the sidewalk. I thought, well, why would you not put on of the single-story units in that location to soften that? That is going to be a big, big, big, oppressive, tall thing.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes, on lots 9 and 10?

Christine Level, Board Member

Yes, lots 9 and 10, single-story. I suspect if you mark it next to the adjacent buildings, it is going to seem tall compared to the Golden Ridge buildings. Nonetheless, when you are

coming across there, it is going to be substantial. 32' is substantial. That is just another idea. I am putting thought out there, I am not making anything beyond that.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

To that point, the applicants have already agreed to look at the neighbor buildings in relation to theirs. They are not just one-story buildings on a flat piece of ground in downtown Sebastopol, they are on a hill, and they are two-story. I was just over there. From the cemetery side, I looked across and took a picture. It goes up to those houses pretty tall. I would be surprised if these buildings are that much different, they are obviously different in character, and there is a different density, but in terms of height, I would be surprised if they are much different than some of the ones in that corner. We have already heard that the applicants will address that in a drawing.

Christine Level, Board Member

In this particular case, I am just saying, as you are going along the sidewalk there, that existing unit is softened somehow by the roof slopes and the landscaping, and I do not know how to express it more than that right now. Once you transition to the next thing, it is like a wall. The wall and the style of the architecture is pretty much straight up. I am just making a comment about that.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Yes. It will be interesting to see them, and it will be interesting to see them in context because the neighboring buildings are softened by street trees and shrubs, but they are two-story buildings with steep roofs on a slightly lower ground plane, but they are pretty tall relative to Bodega Avenue as well. It would be interesting to see that illustration, I think, that would be valuable. I do not disagree that lots 9 and 10, maybe they could flip flop those things? I know it kind of changes the rhythm of the development because they probably want the distribution of units the way it is in terms of loft units versus non loft units. But yes, it would be interesting to see if they could step it down to Bodega Avenue because they do have a 7' plus retaining wall out there.

Cary Bush, Board Member

I would like to thank the applicant. This is a really well represented project. It is tricky. They are threading the needle. It has been graphically accessible for the Board to really look at. I know there was a lot of work involved. Thank you, it is good to see this level of work put before us as a Board, it is helpful. I would also like to thank the public for their comments. I tried to itemize my comments. The big issues were the trees in some way, we said we would look at those. I do think that the impacts will be significant. It will be hard to mitigate, even with permeable paving, or pier and grade beams, the impacts that they will have. Those are my common thoughts there. Some of the utilities, at the entry off Bodega Avenue, I saw all the water meters stacked up at the very entry. It is all preliminary, but you will have backflow preventers and those sorts of things. I do not know how that quite plays into the whole utilities package. That a pretty big entry feature. The retaining walls have a graphicness to them, and I think that is just their modernity, and that is nice. I think it is honest and it is what it will be. It would be nice to see that sort of split, but I know you really cannot do much other than play off those utilities and call it what it is. The parking is really a tight one. I am usually always looking for a 45' minimum back out distance, and without that it is hard. Even with my little Tacoma pickup truck it is almost hard to turn that thing around in a parking lot that has less than a 45' from nose end to back out so that is going to be tricky. Again, I know you are threading the needle there. EVA was kind of picked up. In general terms on the landscape plans, they look good, but they do not really quite reflect your visual imagery all that well. I am seeing a real soft quality to your visual imagery and I do not necessarily think that that represents the nature of the planting plan

so you might look at that. It should relate to the proposed conditions. The bioretention area should probably look at a little bit more of a plant material that would take both wet and dry. Those are real detailed comments. That was sort of the micro, but the macro really that we all need to understand is, again, we are looking at density row here in that the area is zoned for high-density and the public needs to understand that this is zoned for that use. Therefore, the Design Review Board is looking at the comments that fit the character context, and those natures and properties, but overall, the zoning is allowing this use. Again, the neighbors have that use. The neighbors on the other side have that use and so on, up, and down the street and so, this property also has that use. I think that the applicant is trying to determine how to best fit a project, which I find is quite attractive and aesthetically appealing, to make that use fit. How they do that is what the Board is here to review, but when we really start talking about the larger scale, the use as it is still allowed, high-density, it will go to an R7, but again, that is the biggest question here that really does not even fall within the Design Review Board's purview, in my opinion. We are trying to look at design review guidelines and standards, but the use is what the applicant has given us and that is what we are here to follow. At least I am, and we are here to see a good project, something that is unique, that fits the character, and work. To really see it work, your city will definitely protect, as a member of the public spoke on the safety concerns, safety concerns are a huge issue in any city, municipality. I think that the Building Department, the Fire Department, and everyone here will be here to protect your best interests as the public. Again, I think the applicant still needs to thread a needle. I think they will take these comments that were hopefully giving them and put them to use.

Ron Hari, Board Member

I am not a big fan of high-density housing. I know I am in the minority on this. I am very sympathetic to the neighbors there, as well as where the Woodmark project is being proposed. Unfortunately, I think the town is going at a very slow pace towards San Jose or San Francisco, we will never get there. I am not going to vote against this because of that, it is just my personal feeling. I think the problem here was in 1993 when they put an easement through there and did not develop the back lot first. I would really hate to live there during this construction. It was just poor planning while none of use were around. That is my two cents.

Lars Langberg, Vice Chair

I would like to echo what Board Member Bush was saying in thanking the applicant for their presentation. From that perspective, it is very detailed and thought through in many ways, I appreciate that level. The intent, certainly of green building and net zero energy is spot-on. There is no other way to build right now, in my opinion. The more we can do that, the better off we are all going to be. The impact of a construction site on neighbors, let us call it a year and a half like one of the commenters said, yes, but the impact on the climate is a much bigger picture and this building is really working hard to do that, and I really, really appreciate that. In terms of the architectural expression and style, I think it is a really nice attempt to have varied scale and actually play off of some stuff in the neighborhood. There is a property across Golden Ridge which I took a picture of today, that has bay windows with some wood siding detail which was done 20-30 years ago and now, this is today's version of that in a sense. The pop out of the shower is like the bay window across the street. I think it is a modern take in a similar context that we have around Sebastopol, so I appreciate that as well. Staff asked us to specifically talk about some of the changes to the development standards. To me, those are very minimal. The applicant has worked hard to offset this for that. The setback changes are very minor. Other than the zero lot line setback for townhomes, but that makes perfect sense to me. The orientation of the units, creating the courtyard space, a neighbor on the corner has a really nice courtyard feel too. I walked up the shared driveway and looked in there, it looks like a nice space on the interior. They

are creating their own version of that. Our standards talk about facing the street, but in this case, it is a very busy street, so it is better to reflect or mimic what the neighbor has and focus inward, I think, rather than go and focus to the street and where people enter their units and hang out, I think that makes a lot of sense. The retaining wall, that whole piece, is a big item. It was when we were looking at Woodmark, and it is a difficult site. If you could step every unit up by 6" or 1', going up from Bodega Avenue and back, or in this case, I guess dropping them all compared to what is proposed, you are not going to get an ADA accessible site and it would cost a lot more money to do that, grading wise, and everything else, but if you could create little terraces and have each unit terraced down by a step or something, we would have a lower retaining wall on the front, but that has other implications and other challenges. At least the way it is rendered to me, the wall, the buffer of the planting, and the fence above, it is not going to be a 32' wall on the sidewalk, it is going to step back some. It is clearly not way back, but it is an urban property. It is a challenge. It is what we came up against with the Woodmark project as well. This is part of the city, it is not part of the county, it is the edge, so it is challenging, it is at the border between rural and urban. How do you mitigate that? People who have been living in that in between zone for 30 years appreciate their rural quality, and yet, you can walk to downtown, it is in the city. It is hard to balance that, but we need housing, we need density. There are not a lot of parcels in the city that this is available. I see this as a really good effort to balance a lot of different concerns and come up with a pretty compelling proposal. I will not talk about the trees because I know it is a big issue and it is always well represented.

Ted Luthin, Chair

I feel very similar to other board members. I do also want to say that I completely understand the concern of the neighbors. To build on what Vice Chair Langberg was saying, the neighbors have lived next door to a piece of property that, as Board Member Bush said, is zoned for high-density residential, but they have enjoyed it as a sort of rural neighbor, it has a couple of old apple trees and it is a very nice antique piece of property, but it has always had this built-in development potential and it is finally getting to be developed. I understand that that means losing something in terms of character for the neighbors and I feel for that. At the same time, this site has potential, and the owner of this property is entitled to realize that potential. The same goes with construction, and I have lived next door to construction sites, and it is not necessarily fun. It is unfortunate, I think Board Member Hari mentioned it, it is unfortunate that the back lot was not developed first, that it was not phased out that way and were built as one piece at one time. I know that it is an inconvenience. I know that construction is messy, dirty, and loud. At the same time, that sort of comes with the territory of living in town, we are not living in the country on five-acre parcels. I think that safety concerns will be addressed by the City, both in terms of emergency vehicles, and parking and turnaround standards, those sorts of things. The City has all those things so I am not concerned that those items will be addressed. In terms of the use and development standards, I do not have a problem with the minor exceptions, I view them as minor exceptions to the development standards that they are asking for. Especially when you look at things like setback, the setbacks for these units are larger than a lot of the setbacks that the neighbors have. Neighbors are closer to property lines than some of these units are going to be. Addressing Bodega Avenue, I think this design makes sense. I think there are a lot of things to like about this. I agree. I like the architecture. I like the way it is working. I think Vice Chair Langberg mentioned it, I like the shower pop out, I think it is cool. I like the contemporary design. I like the pedestrian connection to Bodega Avenue. I think that addresses the design review guideline about developments needing to address the street. I like the green building aspects about it. I like the approach to energy consumption. I have some concerns. Trees, we talked about, we are going to revisit them. The retaining wall. I think it is an interesting idea to step down the buildings to

minimize that retaining wall. I would like to see some detail on the retaining wall, is it board form concrete? What is it? Can we do something so that it is, like Board Member Bush said, an honest wall? I do not think that I am opposed to the wall. I think if we can minimize it, let us minimize it. I like that there is a landscape buffer to it. Can we grade up to it in that landscape buffer? I do not know. I do think that the trash enclosure and the parking area, it feels really tight right there. Again, I think that City standards are going to kick in and tell us that that works, or if it does not work, etc. It does feel very tight. I think Board Member Level's idea of flip flopping a lower unit to the Bodega Avenue side might help break down that mass on the Bodega side, because we are starting with a 7' retaining wall, so maybe a low unit on both ends and three stacked larger units in the middle, I do not know. Or Vice Chair Langberg's thought of cascading it down or stair stepping it down could make sense as well. Those are the comments I have. Does anybody have any additions?

Cary Bush, Board Member

I think all the finished floors are sitting at 242 and that is right at the top of that ridge, so it is pretty much right at grade. A question for Director Svanstrom, it said that nothing is to be allowed within the public utility easement and that is the back of sidewalk, nothing vertical from there to pick up that grade, soften the wall?

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Plantings and things like that are fine. What we do not want in an easement is any sort of structure, or for anything to be built on top of it that may get destroyed if we need to access that area. Not that plants will not get destroyed, but something like that could certainly be done. What were you thinking?

Cary Bush, Board Member

I was thinking if the back of sidewalk had a 1' curb to then slip that grade up to the wall to give a terracing effect, bringing the grade down below sidewalk is always a tricky one, it makes more recess than it does advanced and taller. I am only asking; I do not know what the City will allow there.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

I can talk to the City Engineer and Superintendent of Public Works. They are the people who would generally be accessing utility easements, in general. A small curb may not be an issue for them, but they would not want anything that was a structural retaining wall.

Cary Bush, Board Member.

Right. Thank you.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Are there further comments from the Board? To our applicant, Ms. Farley, was our feedback fairly clear?

Beth Farley, Applicant

Yes, very much. Thank you very much. We appreciate all your comments and help. It will help us to get the project to be a better project.

Ted Luthin, Chair

I will echo what other members have said. This is a great, great package. It was clear, really well put together, and easy to understand. Really appreciate the submittal.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Since this is a formal recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding the Planned Community zoning, I heard at least three of you make comments about it. If you would entertain a motion just to make sure that everyone is on board with the PC request, that would be great. The property is currently zoned R7, and they are requesting Planned Community (PC) zoning which is in the small changes outlined in the staff report.

The Board asked questions of Director Svanstrom.

Board Member Bush made a motion recommending that the Planning Commission approve the request to change from R7 to Planned Community (PC) zoning as outlined in the staff report.

Vice Chair Langberg seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Luthin, Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Members Bush and Level

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Board Members Balfe and Hari

Chair Luthin asked Director Svanstrom if anything else was needed from the Board on this at this time.

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

We will provide the Planning Commission with the minutes from this meeting and your concerns will be outlined in the staff report as well. We will also work with the Fire Department, and other City departments to address some of the technical issues that were raised today.

Ted Luthin, Chair

Thanked the applicant and the members of the public who spoke on this item.

8. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Luthin adjourned the meeting at 6:02 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Tree/Design Review Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 05, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.