



# City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

October 9, 2014

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Schwartz called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

### **I. ROLL CALL**

Chair Deborah L. Schwartz, Vice Chair Addison Thompson, Commissioners Mike Jordan, and Sheila Lodge.

**Absent: Commissioners Bartlett, Campanella, and Pujo.**

### **II. STAFF PRESENT:**

Renee Brooke, Senior Planner  
N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney  
Dan Gullett, Project Planner  
Cameron Benson, Creeks Division Manager  
Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

### **III. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:**

A. Requests for continuances, withdrawals, postponements, or addition of ex-agenda items.

None.

B. Announcements and appeals.

None.

C. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda.

Chair Schwartz opened the public hearing at 1:01 P.M. and, with no one wishing to speak, closed the hearing.

### **IV. CONCEPT REVIEW:**

**ACTUAL TIME: 1:01 P.M.**

**RECUSALS:** To avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest, the following Commissioners recused themselves from hearing this item:

- Commissioner Bartlett recused himself due to his architectural firm working on another project with the Applicant.
- Commissioner Campanella recused himself due to serving on the Garden Court Board of Directors.

**APPLICATION OF PEIKERT+RRM DESIGN GROUP, ARCHITECT FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA AND GARDEN COURT INC., 251 S. HOPE AVE., APN 051-240-008, ZONING DESIGNATIONS: E-3 (SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL)/P-D (PLANNED DEVELOPMENT)/SD-2 (UPPER STATE AREA OVERLAY)/SP-4 (RANCHO ARROYO SPECIFIC PLAN), GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL/MEDIUM HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (15-27 UNITS PER ACRE) (MST2014-00142)**

The City received a request from the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara and Garden Court Inc. to conceptually review a proposed affordable senior housing development consisting of a new 45,400 square foot, three-story building with 91 units on a vacant, 1.76 acre lot at 251 S. Hope Avenue. Ninety studio units would be provided for very low-, and low-income frail, elderly seniors and one two-bedroom unit would be provided as a manager's unit. The project includes a common dining area, commercial kitchen, and common indoor and outdoor area. The property is within the Rancho Arroyo Specific Plan area and includes a section of Arroyo Burro Creek.

The purpose of the concept review is to allow the Planning Commission and the public an opportunity to review the proposed project at a conceptual level and provide the applicant and staff with feedback and direction regarding the proposed land use and design. The opinions of the Planning Commission may change or there may be ordinance or policy changes that could affect the project that would result in requests for future project design changes.

**No formal action on the development proposal will be taken at the concept review meeting, nor will any determination be made regarding environmental review of the proposed project.**

Case Planner: Dan Gullett, Project Planner  
Email: DGullett@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Phone: (805) 564-5470, ext. 4550

Dan Gullett, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation. Cameron Benson, Creeks Manager, was present to answer any of the Commission's questions.

Rob Pearson, Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara, gave the Applicant presentation joined by Detty Peikert, Peikert+RRM Design Group, and Lisa Plowman, Planning Manager, Peikert+RRM Design Group.

Chair Schwartz opened the public hearing at 1:46 P.M.

The following people commented on the project:

1. Debbie McQuade, Director of Sarah House, supports Garden Court 2 to provide needed senior housing.
2. Emily Allen, Legal Aid and Common Ground Santa Barbara County (CGSBC), advocated housing support for homeless seniors.
3. Jon Peterson, CEO for Habitat for Humanity, spoke about the need for additional senior affordable housing.
4. Suzanne Elledge supports the project and spoke to the community benefit provided.
5. Marjorie Shore, Garden Court resident, spoke to the sense of community and assistance provided by Garden Court.
6. Garry Erickson, Garden Court resident, gave testimony to how Garden Court has changed his life and the value that Garden Court 2 could bring to others.
7. Elizabeth Wright, Garden Court resident, supports the Garden Court 2 project.
8. Vera Pommier, Garden Court resident, spoke to the independence that Garden Court has given her and supports the same experience for other seniors in the Garden Court 2 project.
9. Jimmy Joto, Garden Court resident, urged support for Garden Court 2.
10. Mickey Flacks, Housing Authority of Santa Barbara County, supports this project and the need for this project to be developed for the unmet needs of the senior community.
11. Courtney Seepie, retired developer, supports this project and the need it meets for area seniors.
12. Petra Lowen, Community Living Advocate, Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC), spoke to the need for this project to address the growing number of area seniors.
13. Eddie Harris, President, Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council, submitted written comments and asked the Commission to provide space for proper creek restoration using City Creek Division recommendations. Suggested increasing the project to four stories could alleviate the recommended setback encroachment.
14. Daniel McCarter, neighbor, asked that creek restoration be considered before adding development to the undeveloped parcel.
15. Morgan Benevedo, People's Self-Help Housing, supports this project and the need it fills for the growing senior population, especially those not financially prepared for retirement.
16. Dr. Kiumarss Nasserri acknowledged the need for senior housing, but opposes the project's lack of parking, surrounding traffic, parcel limitations, and the amount of modifications needed for the project to be developed.
17. Phil Willis-Conger supports the project and asked that the proposed density be considered.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 2:18 P.M.

Chair Schwartz called for a recess at 2:34 P.M. and reconvened the meeting at 2:45 P.M.

Commissioner's Comments:

Specific Plan Amendment & Zone Changes:

The Commissioners agreed that given the site constraints, affordable housing was the best use of the parcel and could support both the Specific Plan Amendment and the Zone Change to allow it. Commissioners Jordan and Thompson added that they would favor whichever zone would facilitate the project best, either R-3 with a front setback modification or C-2, which has a less restrictive front setback

Lot Area Modification and Front Setback Modification:

The majority of the Commission could support the requested Modifications to allow for additional density and to encroach into the third story front setback (if the zone is changed to R-3 rather than C-2). Commissioner Jordan asked for additional information on the financial implications of having less units on this property to provide additional creek setback area.

Minimum Creek Setback:

The majority of the Commission could support the setback shown on the conceptual plans, pending the outcome of the Questa Engineering Corporation analysis on the feasibility of removing the concrete creek channel on the property and restoring the creek. Commissioner Schwartz stated that policy balancing between housing and restoration was the key. Commissioner Thompson added that in an urban environment, preservation of creeks is desired, but people need to be a priority.

Parking Modification:

The majority of the Commission could support a Parking Modification, pending the outcome of a Parking Demand Study. Commissioner Schwartz stated that, given the target population and the parking track record of Garden Court I, she did not see the need for a study. Commissioner Jordan would like to see more statistical and operational information to support the modification request, rather than just hearing that reduced parking has worked in similar projects.

Public Improvements:

The majority of the Commission could support reduction from the recommended eight-foot-wide sidewalk and four-foot-wide parkway width if it allowed for a greater creek setback. Commissioner Jordan asked that the City not put a greater burden on this project with respect to the trail easement and the construction of the trail than it did on the property to the south, and asked for clarity on who will maintain the trail.

V. **ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**

**ACTUAL TIME: 3:38 P.M.**

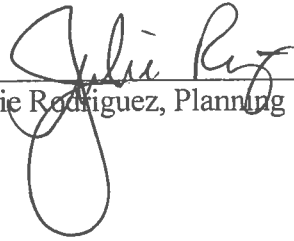
D. Committee and Liaison Reports

1. Staff Hearing Officer Liaison Report
  - a. Commissioner Jordan concluded his report on the Staff Hearing Officer meeting of October 1, 2014.
2. Other Committee and Liaison Reports
  - a. Commissioner Thompson reported on the Single Family Design Board meeting of October 6, 2014.
  - b. Commissioner Lodge reported on Historic Landmarks Commission meeting of October 8, 2014.
3. Report from the Chair
  - a. Chair Schwartz reported that the next Planning Commission hearing will be October 16, 2014.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 3:42 P.M.

Submitted by,

  
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Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

