

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2014,
BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN
ANTONIO ROAD, LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA**

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Chair BLOCKHUS, Commissioners MEADOWS, and WHEELER
ABSENT: Vice-Chair KIRIK and Commissioner MOISON
STAFF: Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD and Assistant Planners GALLEGOS
and LIM

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. **Design Review Commission Minutes**
Approve minutes of the regular meeting of September 3, 2014.

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER, seconded by Commissioner MEADOWS, to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2014 regular meeting as-amended by Planning Services Manager KORNFIELD to clarify the names regarding the prior review of the 1145 Laureles Drive item. THE MOTION PASSED BY A 2/0/1 VOTE, WITH CHAIR BLOCKHUS ABSTAINED.

DISCUSSION

2. **14-SC-24 – Chapman Design Assoc. – 1145 Laureles Drive**
Design review for a new, two-story house. The project includes 2,458 square feet on the first floor and 1,446 square feet on the second floor. *Project Planner: Gallegos*

Assistant Planner GALLEGOS presented the staff report recommending consideration of design review application 14-SC-24 per the Design Review Commission's direction and subject to findings and conditions. He summarized two neighbor letters received after the report publication one in favor; one concerned about landscape needs; and read an additional letter from absent Vice-Chair KIRIK restating his concerns about the proposal.

Applicant and property owner Mr. Tenta stated that new homes use a nine-foot tall second story wall plate and noted a taller structure at 1183 Orilla Court and he opposed a lower eight-foot tall plate on his second story because it gives a "squashed" appearance, making the front porch more prominent. He also said that adding columns to the porch would make it more prominent or crowded, that he would consider additional trees as an alternative, and provided an additional letter of support from a nearby resident. Project designer Walter Chapman stated that property rights have been diminished over time by changes in the City's zoning regulations: overall height has gone from 30 feet to 27 feet, the daylight plane has no exceptions, and the design guidelines and

neighborhood compatibility worksheet are used to minimize towers and tall elements and provide a narrower context for considering a project's character.

Neighbors Richard Bartlett, Payne Freret, Mike George, and Lynn Freret spoke in support of the project. Mr. Bartlett stated that 29 percent of the houses in the neighborhood are two-story and that they reflect variety of styles, and the project meets the "defined" zoning rules. Mrs. Freret stated that the Design Review Commission's recommendation seems unreasonable and would need to lower both wall plates to keep the design proportions. Neighbor Mr. Rulison spoke in opposition to the project stating that the prior hearing did not consider their concerns as the most impacted property; that the review was imbalanced; and that he does not want a full hedge in order to preserve his views and wants the landscape put in at the beginning of the project.

Commission MEADOWS stated that she met ex parte with Walter Chapman to discuss design review process questions. The Commission discussion included that the second floor wall plate heights seem in range in the area; that the passive balcony and the landscape screening mitigates privacy impacts; the relative bulk and mass of the second story; the project appeared too large in relation to the immediate neighborhood context, being single-story in character; privacy seems maintained, but seems like a lot of landscape mitigation proposed as a hedge; that the relative support of the neighborhood is noted; that the orientation of the property to the street should be considered as a hardship and might justify allowing the bulkier appearance, and that the changes to the wall heights and window header would reduce the bulk.

MOTION by Commissioner WHEELER to continue design review application 14-SC-24 subject to the original staff report recommended direction and the following additional direction to:

- Reduce the appearance of bulk and mass on the second story in relation to neighboring structures.

THE MOTION FAILED DUE TO LACK OF A SECOND.

MOTION by Commissioner BLOCKHUS, seconded by Commissioner WHEELER, to approve design review application 14-SC-24 per the following conditions:

- Lower the second story wall plate height to eight feet;
- Lower the second story window header height to seven feet; and
- Lower the eave line of the element above the entry to the second story eave.

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 2/1 VOTE, WITH COMMISSIONER MEADOWS OPPOSED.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

None.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair BLOCKHUS adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.