



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES: July 16, 2020
City Hall/City Council Chambers
250 Hamilton Avenue
8:30 AM

Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Chair Peter Baltay, Vice Chair Osma Thompson, Board Members Alexander Lew, Grace Lee and David Hirsch.

Absent: None.

Chair Baltay: Good morning. I'm Peter Baltay, Chair of the Architectural Review Board. This is the July 16, 2020, meeting of the Palo Alto Architectural Review Board. Before starting, I'd like to read a statement. [Reading] Pursuant to the provisions of California Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, this meeting will be held by virtual teleconference only, with no physical location. Spoken comments via a computer will be accepted through the Zoom teleconference meeting. To address the Board, go to zoom.us/join. Meeting ID is 970 9873 4671. When you wish to speak on an agenda item, click on "Raise Hand." The moderator will activate and unmute speakers in turn. When called, please limit your remarks to the time limit allotted. Spoken public comments using a Smartphone will also be accepted through the Zoom meeting application. To offer comments using a regular phone, call 1-669-900-6833, and enter Meeting ID 970 9873 4671. When you wish to speak on an agenda item hit *9 on your phone so we know that you wish to speak.

[Roll Call]

Oral Communications

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much. Next item on our agenda is Oral Communications. Do we have any members of the public wishing to address any item not on our agenda? Do we have any speakers, Vinh?

Vinh Nguyen, Administrative Associate: Chair Baltay, we do not have any speakers this morning.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you very much. We'll go on to the next item Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions. Staff, can we have a report on that, please?

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning: No changes at this time.

City Official Reports

1. Transmittal of 1) the ARB Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record, and 2) Tentative Future Agenda items and 3) Recent Project Decisions

Chair Baltay: Very well. Let's move on to City Official Reports. Again, we have an upcoming ARB schedule and attendance record. Anything coming for us, Jodie?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning. Thank you for bringing up this screen. You do see that the August 6th meeting is going to be canceled. If you go to the next page you will see that August 20th we do have some hefty items, though. We will have 788 San Antonio and we will also have 1310 Bryant, which is the Castilleja School. The first one is an important housing project. Both of those projects have EIRs and those will be out soon for the public to review and then those projects will come to you on August 20th. The objective standards we will delay given the size of this agenda. Objective Standards will go on the early September agenda.

Chair Baltay: All right, board members not able to make this meeting? It seems like an important one for everybody. Okay. Is that it, Jodie?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, thank you.

Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 656 Lytton Avenue [19PLN-00040]: Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Minor Board Level Architectural Review to Allow for Revisions to the Facade of Existing Multi-Family Affordable Senior Housing Facilities and Other Minor Site Revisions. Environmental Assessment: Exempt From the Provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in Accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15301. Zoning District: PC-2649 for Lytton Gardens I and PC-2698 for Lytton Gardens II (Planned Community). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Emily Foley at emily.foley@cityofpaloalto.org

Chair Baltay: All Right. We're going to move on to our first action item. Item number two is a public hearing/quasi-judicial for 656 Lytton Avenue. Recommendation on applicant's request for approval of a minor board-level architectural review to allow for revisions to the facade of existing multi-family affordable senior housing facilities and other minor site revisions. Before we get started, do we have any disclosures to make? Anybody want to do something? Alex, any disclosures?

Board Member Lew: Yes, I visited the site and I looked at the color board at City Hall.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. David, any disclosures?

Board Member Hirsch: The same visited the site and City Hall.

Chair Baltay: Thank you. Grace, any disclosures?

Board Member Lee: The same ob my side. Visited the site and say the samples.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much. Osma?

Vice Chair Thompson: I have no disclosures. I did not have access to anything.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much. I will disclose that I also visited the site and looked at the color board in City Hall. Thank you. With that, can we have a staff report, please?

Emily Foley, Project Planner: Good morning. I will pull up the presentation in a second. I also received an email from the applicant saying she was having trouble joining the meeting. Vinh, do you know if Edwina Jean-Louis is currently on the call?

Mr. Nguyen: I do not see them.

[Setting up presentation.]

Vice Chair Thompson: In the meantime, I know that we received an updated set of drawings. Is it possible that we could, kind of, let each other know the differences that we saw between the updated set of drawings?

Chair Baltay: Osma, I'd rather just follow the normal process here.

Vice Chair Thompson: Okay.

Chair Baltay: It's important to do that.

Ms. Foley: Yeah, the drawings that I received were intended to be presented by the applicant.

Chair Baltay: Let's give them maybe another minute, Jodie, and then we get started.

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay, I was just able to send off the email a second ago.

Chair Baltay: Emily, I think you should get started. They'll sign in as they do.

Ms. Foley: Okay. This is the application for 656 Lytton Avenue. It is a façade change and updates and improvements to Lytton Gardens I. The project location takes up most of the block with frontages on Lytton Avenue, Middlefield Road, and University Avenue. What is outlined shows Lytton Gardens I, however, Lytton Gardens II is this area below it. That has been removed from this application with the expectation that it would be improved similarly to Lytton Gardens I at a later date. In terms of the context, Lytton Gardens is similar to the surrounding residential three to five-story -- many other senior home -- type of buildings. Also in the area, there are one to two-story medical offices. Lytton Gardens is a significantly larger building in terms of massing than the surrounding buildings. For background, this project went to preliminary review in front of the Architectural Review Board on August 16, 2018. Some notes from that meeting includes that the Board preferred the existing shingle to the proposed smooth hardie board and additional details were needed for how that material would be joined at the corners. There was concern that the colors were too bright and that the existing shingles had a warmer tone than the proposed board colors. It was noted that the entrance should be emphasized as the design entrance, kind of, blended in with the rest of the building. It was preferred that mini-split units for A/C and heating were used instead of the previously proposed wall-mounted exterior condensers to reduce visual impact. The project overview includes the façade change from the existing siding to fiber cement board siding, new rooftop condensing units with in-unit mini-split, replacement of the existing transformer, lighting and landscape improvements, reconfiguration of the drop-off zone, which includes a minor loss of parking, ADA improvements to parking and to interior residential units. This also leads to a loss of two parking spaces and addition of flood gates to the parking garage and ground floor entryways. This shows the elevations including the emphasis added to the entrance in the brick red color. The top is the Lytton Avenue facade. Elevation two is along Middlefield. Elevation three is along University Avenue. It is partially blocked by Lytton Gardens II. The fourth elevation is the interior side elevation. Some key considerations are the colors and materials. The proposed siding is Allura wood-textured board siding. The colors are mainly brown and neutral. The siding will be paint grade and painted with the colors that are on the materials board and are posted on the board at City Hall. Brick Red flat siding is used to emphasize the entrance and the Ebony Slate color is used for the window and door trim. Compared to the existing façade, the three colors break up the façade more than the existing shingles, which are just the one natural shingle color. The trim color is similar to the existing which is a dark green. This is a dark bluish-gray. As I stated earlier, the brick red is used to emphasize the entrance on Lytton Avenue. Another key consideration is the air conditioning units. They will be rooftop mounted and they will be screened from the street by the existing four-foot parapet wall. The image in the upper right corner shows what the units will look like inside of the building and one of the changes that the applicant is expected to talk about during her presentation is that the vents are not needed for this type of unit. The vents that are shown in the plans as being in the exterior upper corners of the windows and as shown in this detail are actually not required. The recommended motion for this project is to recommend appeal based on the findings and subject to conditions of approval. That concludes my brief presentation.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Emily.

Ms. Gerhardt: Jodie, do we have the applicant online yet?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes, if Vinh can bring them over. Edwina for sure and, Emily, I don't know who else. Maybe Edwina can let us know.

Ms. Foley: Yeah, I think we were expecting the landscape architect but I don't know their name, actually.

Chair Baltay: To my colleagues on the Board, typically we go through a round of questions and I could see quite a few here; however, I'd like to push this along quickly so Osma has a chance to comment after the applicant's presentation. With everybody's consent let's move directly to the applicant presentation if they're...

[Setting up presentation.]

Edwina Jean-Louis, Architect: I will not be giving a presentation. Stuart Lyle will be giving a presentation. He is the President of SGPA. I think he is on the call

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay, is there anyone else?

Ms. Lewis: I think Karim, the owner, is on the call and I think that's about it.

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay. Stuart, the floor is yours.

Ms. Lewis: I'm sorry; Sarah Denig is on the call also. She's our landscape architect.

Stuart Lyle: Thank you, everyone. My name's Stuart Lyle. I'm the President for SGPA and I wanted to thank Emily for her presentation and for all of her help in pulling this meeting together and getting us to this point. Thanks to all the members of the Board for their time today. A quick overview of the project, not to be too repetitive but on the next slide, there is an overview site plan with some data on the project. This project was originally built in 1974. It contains 219 affordable apartments for low-income seniors plus the accessory spaces and staff offices on the first floor. The scope of the building renovation on the next page talks about the siding replacement throughout the building exterior, new landscaping around the reconfigured drop-off zone as well as in the courtyards. We're also doing a complete interior refurbishment with new casework in the units, new flooring, paint, new plumbing fixtures, and new energy-efficient lighting. In addition, five percent of the units are going to be converted to fully accessible. The mechanical scope for the project includes those new mini-split heating and cooling systems in all the apartments and new corridor ventilation. Electrically we're also replacing the undersized emergency generator, new electrical panels that are up to code, new switchgear, upgraded electrical service to the building, and new energy-efficient lighting throughout. On the next slide, are some pictures. The building's located in a residential neighborhood, I think you're all familiar with it, fronting on Lytton Avenue, Middlefield Road, and University Avenue. Currently, the main entrance is on Lytton with the entrance to the garage for the residents and staff is also on Lytton along with the drop-off area which allows for direct access for residents and visitors to the main office space as well as the lobby. The next slide shows some pictures of the current wood shingle siding which has a limited useful life of approximately five to seven years, which necessitates frequent replacement. Additionally, the siding has ongoing issues with water infiltration resulting in some dry rot in the walls and some active leaks and it is prone to warping and rotting. In addition, the existing balconies have some dry rot issues and those are being retrofitted to provide some additional structural support. On the next slide, it will show some examples of the premium fiber cement siding that we're proposing, the Allura Timber Series, in the three colors Taupe, Pony Brown, and Wheatfield. These have a useful life of 30 years allowing for significantly less ongoing maintenance and reducing moisture infiltration and help stabilize the temperature inside the walls to stop the dry rot and reducing heat loss from the interior. At the main entry, we're planning on using a smooth fiber cement siding. You can see in the lower right-hand corner

that's the brick red color to emphasize the entry and to help provide visual clues for the residents and others that this is the main entrance to the building and break up some of that façade. The ebony slate color, color four up in the top right corner, is used for the metal coping for window frames and for the balcony railings and balcony posts. The next slide includes some pictures of homes in the neighborhood that we used to help select those colors. We tried to find colors that had some basis in the neighborhood and that would fit in. I think the next slide is just the color board one more time with all of those. Emily presented those as well showing the three types of wood-grain lap siding, the trim color Ebony Slate, and then the Brick Red that would be used for the smooth fiber cement panels at the entry. Next slide. Emily described the elevations and it is, you know, a relatively long linear building. We're trying to emphasize some of the different planes. If you see the building footprint down in the lower right-hand corner there are a lot of ins and outs on the building. We're trying to emphasize those different planes with different colors as we go around. I think the next slide is just the interior courtyard elevations. Trying to break up the mass and make it a little more visually interesting and less monochromatic than it is now. I guess one more to get to the entry. This shows the exception to that where we are proposing to use the smooth fiber cement siding in a larger size panel in four-foot modules that would help to draw attention to the entry; distinguish it from the remainder of the building. We're also conscious to how seniors react to color and how they see color and we want this to be a visual wayfinding clue for everyone that this is the main entrance to the building. The next page shows some of the details. There were questions about how the corners were going to be detailed. All of those ins and outs on this building resulted in a lot of interior and exterior corners. The exterior corners are going to be detailed with a laced prairie-style corner. Instead of a corner trimmed board that those die into they're going to be overlapped alternatively on alternate courses and then trimmed to fit. We've included details for the interior corners as well, as well as how the trim works around the windows up at the coping and for the guard rails on the balconies. All right. The next slide shows some before and after perspectives of the existing entry showing how the red color and the different types of siding helps to accentuate that. It shows the reconfigured drop-off and we're trying to be a little more conscious of separating the pedestrian and the vehicular traffic. The next slide shows another view of that drop-off and how we're using different paving as well as striping to help designate the difference between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Then we start to show some of the courtyard interior photos and how we're trying to designate -- let's go to the next couple to show those interior courtyards. Sarah, our landscape architect, is here and she'll be able to talk a little bit more about the landscaping and so on in the courtyard but we're trying to create, you know, a design that's appealing to seniors that provides stimulation for the senses, supports memory, areas for walking, contemplation, gathering and other recreational opportunities that are appropriate for seniors. The next slide. I think there's maybe one more of the courtyard aerial views.

Chair Baltay: Excuse me, Stuart, could I interrupt you for a second, please? This is Peter, the Chair. You have ten minutes to speak. You've been at it for nine. I think we'll have more questions so you could finish your presentation that way but I'd like you to wrap it up within a minute so Osma Thompson can have a chance to offer her opinion.

Mr. Lyle: Absolutely. Okay. Then the last piece that I will talk about is -- we just have some pictures of the light fixtures but I think on slide 25 talks to about some flood barriers. These are some temporary barriers that are required by Public Works because we are within 12 inches of the base flood elevation at certain locations: the entrance to the parking garage and the main entrance and potentially a few more along Lytton. These will be temporary modular units that are put in place by building support personnel during or before a flood event and then they'll be removed. They won't be visible or part of the design. The brackets and support for those will be just along the doorframes and/or the edges of the entrance of the parking garage. Those will be painted out and detailed to minimize their appearance.

Chair Baltay: Stuart, if we could with that, you're at your ten-minute limit. I would like to move this quickly to fit in comments from other Board Members who may have to leave. Before we do that, however, I want to be sure we're not skipping any public testimony. Vinh, do we have anyone from the public who wishes to address us on this issue.

Mr. Nguyen: Chair Peter, we only have one attendee but it looks like it's the architect. We don't have any public comments for this item.

Chair Baltay: Okay. We are opening and closing the meeting to public comments. Then I'd like the Board to chime in on this. Osma, if you're with me here are you really leaving in five minutes?

Vice Chair Thompson: I do need to, yes, but I do think it's important if the Board has questions to ask them.

Chair Baltay: I think there are a lot of questions to ask. If we do that you won't be able to comment then. Are you okay with that?

Vice Chair Thompson: Is it okay if I comment really quickly and then the Board can...

Chair Baltay: What I would like for you to do is comment right now.

Vice Chair Thompson: Okay.

Chair Baltay: We will take your comment into account and then we will go back. I would like to hear from the landscape architect and I'm sure my colleagues have questions. Osma, the floor is yours for a moment, please.

Vice Chair Thompson: Okay, thank you. Thank you for accommodating my need to leave soon. In general, I think the project is much improved from what we saw last time. I think the textural panels and siding do add a lot more visual interest than what was proposed previously and I think that is really great. I think it will be a really good looking project. I did have questions. I didn't quite notice what the changes were in the drop-off. I was going to leave that to my Board Members to maybe ask and sort of investigate that a little bit more. It seemed a little unclear. I'm not quite sure what's happening with the drop-off because I thought this was mainly just a façade change. That's a question. These flood barriers; I understand that they will be detailed to be minimal. I had a question on if this extra channel that's getting added. Does that happen on the inside of the door or the outside of the door in terms of visibility? Otherwise, I do think that the color palette seems like a really nice choice and, in general, I think the design update will work really nicely in this area. I will leave it at that for now.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Osma, for your comments. We have no public comment. Stuart the applicant, can you tell me what else were you hoping to present or cover here? Did you have a landscape architect with you to speak?

Mr. Lyle: We do, Sarah Denig is here.

Sarah Denig, Landscape Architect: Hi.

Mr. Lyle: She's able to speak to landscaping. I had covered the flood panels. That was the last piece of my presentation.

Chair Baltay: Okay. With my colleague's acknowledgment, what I'd like to do is open questions from the Board. My question first will be to the landscape architect. Could you please present to us your design?

Ms. Denig: Sure.

Chair Baltay: I'll give you, say, a three-minute time limit. Is that reasonable?

Ms. Denig: Sure. Yeah.

Chair Baltay: Go ahead.

Ms. Denig: Okay. The whole project is relatively shady and we need to have shade tolerant and native planting. It is mostly that but we kept the rose garden in the center. We're just updating the steps to the rose garden to make them compliant. In the courtyard, we have a large circular bench with a fountain for gathering and then benches along the paths. We are removing a few trees and the trees that we're removing are high water and not native and we're replacing them with native trees throughout the project but there's not a whole lot of space for more trees anyway because there are so many trees. Yeah. This courtyard, the corner courtyard we call it, there is only one plant in this courtyard that is not native. It's called Lomandra but it's on the property next door. It's a zero maintenance grass-like plant that can tolerate shade or sun or a lot of water or no water. It's just a good bullet-proof plant. A sitting area at the entry and lots of bike parking for staff or the seniors that live there. Any questions?

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Sarah. To the other colleagues, do we have any questions for the applicant or the staff on this? We've rushed very fast I think. I have a bunch of questions but whom else?

Board Member Lee: I do have a question.

Chair Baltay: Great. Go ahead, please.

Board Member Lee: I'm wondering about signage, particularly at the front entry, and if that is going to be part of the application that would be submitted and reviewed through **plannica** [phonetic] and would the Board be seeing that signage proposal.

Chair Baltay: Grace, that's to staff or to the applicant?

Board Member Lee: I'm happy to hear from both. I just didn't see a signage. I saw in the rendering it said drop-off and then the existing conflicts. I'm just not sure if that hasn't been designed yet or how that will come to the Board.

Ms. Jean-Louis: I think we're just going to keep the existing signage. If you're looking at the landscape plan right now on the corner bottom left corner you see that little rectangle that's existing signage that we're moving. Then the building has a couple pin signs on them that say Lytton Gardens and we're basically keeping that and adding it on to the new siding. It's stainless steel pin-mounted signs that are throughout the front entrance. There's one basically a little bit further to the right that you can't see right now because the plan is cut off but it's basically above an entryway to the door.

Chair Baltay: Emily, is that stuff shown on the plans? The changes to the signage?

Ms. Foley: Signage was not included as part of the project scope.

Chair Baltay: And changes...

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah, so I think at this point the signage would need to come back as a separate application.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Jodie. Grace, is that a satisfactory answer? Grace, does that answer your question?

Board Member Lee: Sorry, I was nodding yes. That's the question that I had for them. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: I was looking at the mute button too closely. I didn't see you.

Ms. Gerhardt: The only other option is that if the applicant wanted to add in signage it sounds like it might be minor in nature we could make that a subcommittee item if they so choose.

Ms. Jean-Louis: If we're using a signage do we have to resubmit because basically it's the same signs that we have right now and we're just moving the location or we're keeping in at the same location that it is?

Ms. Gerhardt: If you're moving locations in needs a permit.

Ms. Jean-Louis: Okay. If we're keeping then we don't need a permit and we don't have to go through the process of having planning?

Ms. Gerhardt: Correct.

Ms. Jean-Louis: I think the option is just to keep the existing signage and that's what we're showing currently in our construction plans.

Chair Baltay: That's right. That's why Grace is asking the question because frequently applicants like to change the signage.

Ms. Jean-Louis: No, we're not changing it. The bottom left-hand corner is existing and that's basically where it is now and we have a signage in front at the drop-off area. We'll be keeping the same sign. Taking it off and reinstalling it.

Chair Baltay: Okay. I don't think you're looking at a big deal if you want to change it, speaking for myself. I don't see anything objectionable or an issue but you do need to follow the process.

Ms. Jean-Louis: Okay.

Chair Baltay: Any other questions from the Board?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes.

Chair Baltay: David, go ahead.

Board Member Hirsch: Yeah, on the University side there are presently, I think, two paths to the gate at the entry. One of them is removed, I believe. It's the one that goes downtown going towards the center. Is that a plan here? I realize that one of them is likely to be handicap accessible. The other one may not be. Am I making a mistake in what I recall being the pathways to that gateway entry on University?

Ms. Denig: I believe that, yeah. I took over the project after this layout was made and I would have to look at the original **topopin** [phonetic] but I can't remember why that was removed, maybe because it required steps, so it was too steep and maybe just a cost issue. Let me look and see. Let's see here.

Ms. Gerhardt: Peter, do we want to come back to the question in a minute?

Chair Baltay: Sure.

Ms. Denig: Yeah, you can come back to me.

Chair Baltay: That's fine to come back to that if you'd like. David, any other questions?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, as Osma brought up the issue, the Lytton parking is significant here. I happen to be a neighbor pretty close by and was even sent a card to note that this hearing was going to take place. I have a lot of familiarity with the Lytton entry and I would ask Lyle to talk about that a bit because there's a conflict there between the Lytton Avenue traffic and entry and egress and sidewalk access on that side. It's very severe. Could you talk about what mitigating methods are going to be used to prevent a conflict at that corner?

Chair Baltay: David, let me interrupt you for one second. I'm concerned. You mentioned that you live very close to this project.

Board Member Hirsch: Yeah.

Chair Baltay: Are you sure you're not within the range where you should be recusing yourself? Jodie, have we checked that out?

Ms. Gerhardt: That's what I'm double-checking right this second. I just need a few minutes. I mean, I think we can continue. The main thing would be can David vote and I will find that out soon.

Chair Baltay: I think it's important that he also just -- David, it's just so important that we don't get ourselves in trouble here.

Board Member Hirsch: I'm aware.

Chair Baltay: Have you checked for yourself because you're the one who makes the decision on these things? How close you are to this property.

Board Member Hirsch: I'm within the announcing distance. What is it? Six hundred feet or something like that or 800 feet? I'm within that dimension. I'm across Middlefield and a couple blocks away.

Chair Baltay: A couple of blocks you should be fine.

Board Member Hirsch: I got an announcement in the mail.

Chair Baltay: That's because the staff is doing their job and that's not the legal determination. I think its 500 feet or something. Jodie, is that right?

Board Member Hirsch: I'm not an immediate neighbor.

Chair Baltay: Look, it's your determination, David. I'm okay with you continuing your line of questions.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay, thank you. Thanks a lot, Peter.

Chair Baltay: Jodie, please let us know if you determine that he is an issue. Okay, go ahead, David. Finish the question, please.

Board Member Hirsch: I think I pretty much stated it. Since there have been changes to Middlefield traffic just so that you know this intersection has become significantly more busy traffic both going into town, you know, and coming from town going to Willow, Willow Market where they turn onto Willow Street down to 101 and continue to Redwood City or to, you know, neighboring areas. This corner is...

Chair Baltay: Questions, David, questions.

Board Member Hirsch: ...constantly busy during busy hours. Traffic in and out of Lytton Gardens comes only to this location. I'm concerned that there's a conflict with Lytton Avenue.

Chair Baltay: David, with respect, what is your question to the applicant?

Board Member Hirsch: I asked it before. What mitigating measures are being used to make this workable at that Lytton Street corner?

Chair Baltay: Okay. To the applicant, can you answer that, please?

Mr. Lyle: We haven't been able to change the location of the drop-off or the location of the curb cuts, which are in their existing location. We're trying to more clearly delineate areas for drop-off and pedestrian. I think right now it's a singular plain of pavement and that sometimes there is an overlap between the pedestrian sidewalk and the parking area as well as the loading zone. We're trying to delineate those more clearly to eliminate those conflicts. We can't address the volume of traffic and drop-off. What we do know is that typically the staff changes and resident traffic is not coinciding with rush hour traffic and the management has worked to try and schedule deliveries and those types of added traffic to off-hours, again, to avoid the rush hour traffic. But that's the extent of the mitigation that we can accomplish with this design.

Chair Baltay: Can you be clearer please when you say you're going to change the markings on the pavement. Are you planning to do something to delineate the sidewalk from the roadway in a more specific fashion?

Mr. Lyle: Yes, the sidewalk is clearly scored and done with a separate type of paving versus the paving for the vehicles. Then we do have the striped area for loading and unloading so that the cars are not pulling up too close to the curb and avoiding conflicts with residents. There's more room for people to wait and/or load along the entire length of the loading area as opposed to just in front of the main entrance to the building. We're extending that to allow more efficient loading.

Chair Baltay: The change is to increase the striping where the loading takes place. Is that right?

Mr. Lyle: Correct. That's correct.

Chair Baltay: But there's no change to the demarcation between the sidewalk and the pavement of the roadway of the drive alley?

Mr. Lyle: Just the change in the scoring. It's just a material or a visual change that delineates different sidewalk pattern versus the driving pattern. That's correct.

Chair Baltay: Isn't that the way it is now?

Mr. Lyle: If that's the case then we're just going to work to try and emphasize that. We're going to try and, you know, use color or use some type of other material or visual cue to separate the sidewalk from the vehicles.

Chair Baltay: Is there anything in this application though that's stating what you're going to do?

Mr. Lyle: I don't believe that there is other than what's shown in the renderings.

Chair Baltay: Then to the staff, the striped area shown in the rendering on the screen now that's what's going to be new? The painting of the striped area?

Mr. Lyle: That's correct.

Ms. Foley: Yes. Currently what is shown as the striped area is currently, I believe, is non-conforming handicap parking spaces. Those parking spaces are being removed in favor of making it a more functional loading zone. I believe there may also be some street parking, kind of, on the sidewalk that kind of takes place in practice now and that would hopefully be decreased with this plan.

Chair Baltay: Okay, but I'm just trying -- this is a question. The change in this application is to provide the striping and remove the ADA parking spaces on either side of the front door.

Ms. Foley: Yes.

Mr. Lyle: The walkway that extends around the tree that goes down to the lower part of the screen is also new. Again, just to expand that ability for people to spread out along the loading and not all congregate at the entry trellis.

Chair Baltay: Okay, it sounds like you've answered that question. Any other questions, David?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, I mean the reality of the use of the space from my experience is that, of course, residents coming here are dropped off so that you can really have a place... for the striped area would likely take a resident who is getting out of a car who is potentially a handicapped person getting onto a wheelchair or chair or whatever moving whatever they need. Then entering, that's an improvement to put that entry where it is but the reality is that the cars will be parked outside of the striped zone so that a person could access that area from the passenger seat of a car. You know, I think you need...

Chair Baltay: David, excuse me. I'm trying to go through a round of questions. We'll come back to this as an issue. I think you're bringing up some very valid points but...

Board Member Hirsch: (Crosstalk)

Chair Baltay: ...the application right now. Are there any other questions about this loading and changes imposed?

Board Member Hirsch: Is that the intention of the way the roadway and the striped area is intending to work? Then I have one other question on this and that is has the Traffic Department ever seen how this is being presented? It's a significant traffic issue. Jodie, is there any response on traffic on this application?

Ms. Gerhardt: I think, Emily, I'm sure we routed this to Transportation but given that it is an existing configuration generally that would be allowed to continue. There isn't a significant, I mean, there isn't enough of a change to this project to require them to change the driveways.

Chair Baltay: Regardless, Jodie, his question was has the Transportation Department taken a look at this, and do you know for sure that you've sent these drawings to them?

Ms. Gerhardt: Emily?

Ms. Foley: I mean, I would have to stop sharing the screen to completely confirm that but projects of this type generally are routed to transportation.

Ms. Gerhardt: Okay, I will go look because, yeah, when you're sharing your screen you have limited ability to do other things. Back to the conflict of interest, luckily I had noticed this issue about a week ago. I had talked to the attorneys at that time. I also confirmed with them this morning that David is far enough away and also the impact of this project is so limited that our attorney does not believe there is a conflict but, of course, David has the ultimate decision that.

Chair Baltay: Okay, well thank you for checking. David, I'll assume you want to stay in with this review then?

Board Member Hirsch: I'd like to stay in it.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Then, Jodie, David's question stands. If you could check and see if you guys submitted this to Transportation for any comments that may have. Let's move along. Are there any other questions? Alex, you've been very quiet today so far.

Board Member Lew: I don't have any questions.

Chair Baltay: Okay. I have a couple of questions then. I'd like to understand how these mini-split HVAC systems are connected together. I understand the units in the apartments are only visible from the interior. I understand that you don't need that ventilation grill that you showed on the drawings and I understand that you're having the condensing units up on the roof. How are they connected? Is that connection piping visible?

Mr. Lyle: The piping is not visible. It comes down through a piping chase in the wall to the units as well as the condensate drains from the roof also are routed through the walls and they drain either into landscape planters, drywells or connected directly to the storm sewer. All of the piping is concealed within the walls of the building and the units. There should be no visible effects.

Chair Baltay: You guys have checked that that really can be done without being ridiculously difficult?

Mr. Lyle: We have done renovations of this type before and that can be done.

Chair Baltay: Okay, because I think that's very important that you do not have exterior pipes. I want to be clear about that.

Mr. Lyle: I agree.

Chair Baltay: I then have a question about how you're proposing to miter the corners of the siding on the exterior. If this is a textured fiber cement board and you saw cut a beveled edge on it to lap over the other one how do you treat the edge of that saw cut edge? You'd then be left with a rough cut edge of fiber cut butting against this textured pattern.

Mr. Lyle: As opposed to being butted together they do overlap. There will be a smooth edge, you're correct, that will be exposed at that end. The feedback that we've received before was that the corner boards were not an appealing measure so this is the direction that we took in order to make it more appealing. If it were rough sun timber or lumber siding it would be a similar condition. I'm not sure how we can mitigate that. I'd be happy to study it...

Chair Baltay: Fair enough. Fair enough.

Mr. Lyle: ...but I don't have the answer.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Another question to the landscape architect, do you have any particular screening in mind for the new transformer which is being put above ground.

Ms. Denig: I can plant some native easy shrubs that will go around that. I just found out about this yesterday. Let's see. It's up there.

Chair Baltay: Yeah, right there.

Ms. Denig: Actually, the shrubs that are next to it will work perfectly for screening. They grow about four feet tall.

Chair Baltay: They probably won't survive the relocation of the vault of the transformer though and so you'll need to put something around them.

Ms. Denig: Okay. Okay.

Chair Baltay: I'm just wondering if you've already thought about that or if it's something still coming.

Ms. Denig: I thought about this yesterday.

Chair Baltay: Okay, well...

Ms. Denig: I will add them to the plan.

Ms. Jean-Louis: Just a quick answer to that. I think there is a required three feet clearance around the whole transformer.

Ms. Denig: There is, yeah.

Ms. Jean-Louis: I don't think we can basically have overgrown shrubs that are overlapping to that clearance. We have to be careful about exactly what we propose and so the idea of planning around it may not be feasible.

Chair Baltay: To the applicant, do we have a rendering of what that transformer will look like and how close it will really will be to the drive alley?

Ms. Jean-Louis: We do not.

Mr. Lyle: We do not.

Ms. Jean-Louis: But it has been cleared by Public Work and it has been approved.

Chair Baltay: Yeah, well I could easily see that Public Works is happy if you just raise it above the ground. You fill in the vault and you bring the wires up and put it all above ground but those are pretty big things; a transformer of that size and it's close to the entry I think.

Mr. Lyle: I believe PG&E will allow you to screen it from several sides. You need clear space in front of it in one direction. We can look at the orientation and see if we can maybe put that service area to where it faces, perhaps, the drop-off zone and then the transformer can still be screened from the street. Those are the things we can look at when we get a little more detail from PG&E and our electrical engineer about the location and so on. I think we'll be allowed to screen at least two sides of it and still give them the required clearance in front.

Ms. Gerhardt: The City of Palo Alto does not use PG&E. We have our own utility.

Mr. Lyle: Okay.

Ms. Gerhardt: You'll want to work with them but I think probably the same answer, though.

Mr. Lyle: Okay. All right.

Ms. Gerhardt: Just regarding the circulation question that David had, this project did not get routed to Transportation. It did get routed to Public Works engineering though and they do have some, you know, overlapping responsibilities. If there was a safety concern Public Works would have brought that to our attention.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, Jodie. I have one last question of sorts and then we'll go on to some Board comments but it's regarding the flood gates and the basic contention that you're below the floodplain. Can you say what is the floor elevation of the building itself, the main floor plate relative to the floodplain? Do you know what that is offhand because walking around it seems that it's about a foot or two higher than the sidewalk? Do you guys have your -- what's called BFE -- the base flood elevation of the project established?

Ms. Jean-Louis: If you go to the elevations we have it noted on there. Emily, if you could scroll back to the elevations.

Mr. Lyle: This was an extensive review with Public Works which accounted for much of the delay between the last hearing and this one.

Chair Baltay: I'm very sympathetic to you folks. Public Works can be really difficult and they are on the gun to enforce this thing.

Mr. Lyle: (Crosstalk) but if we're within 12 inches we have to provide these flood gates. We're working with our civil engineer and the survey to limit those. The parking garage entrance is definitely one that we have to have those gates at. Probably the main entrance and then we're working to identify any other entrances on the ground floor but it appears we're going to be able to avoid flood gates at most of those because of the concrete stoop that's there and the fact that that will (crosstalk).

Chair Baltay: As I'm looking at your drawing it says your base flood elevation is 48.9 feet. It seems like its somewhere around the sidewalk of the property. Maybe the elevations not correct but...

Mr. Lyle: I wouldn't be surprised of the sidewalk elevation varies around site but yeah, the base flood elevation is 48.9 and the finished floor is 49.24.

Chair Baltay: I see, okay.

Mr. Lyle: It's within approximately four to five inches in certain locations.

Chair Baltay: You're saying that the Public Works Department is requiring flood gates on doors when you're five inches above the base flood elevation?

Mr. Lyle: That's correct. It's a FEMA requirement if you're within 12 inches of the base flood elevation.

Chair Baltay: I see. Okay. Can you describe more thoroughly the flood panel gates, whatever, that you're thinking of using and how they work, please?

Mr. Lyle: Sure. Again, we've looked at a number of products and we haven't settled on one just yet but typically it involves a channel section that's mounted at the door jamb. Then these panels that are typically 12 inches will slide in there. We'll need two 12 inch panels to slide in to keep it more than 12 inches above the flood elevation. The parking garage entrance will probably have an intermediate member that will be like a removable bollard. We put in the intermediate member and then slide those in. It's something that the building maintenance staff should be able to accomplish within, you know, a couple of eight-hour days when they know that a flood event may be coming.

Chair Baltay: The part that's visible on an ongoing daily basis is just the channels on the outside of the doors? The panels themselves are stored someplace else?

Mr. Lyle: That's correct. They'll be stored in a storage area probably in the parking garage.

Chair Baltay: The drawing indicates that the channel is three-quarters of an inch wide and attached to the door jamb.

Mr. Lyle: Yes, that's the approximate width based on that product there, yes.

Chair Baltay: And you've checked that on some of those six-foot side sliding doors this product will work for that situation?

Mr. Lyle: Yes.

Chair Baltay: It seems like an awfully thin panel for that much water pressure. Is this product you're showing in the drawing manufactured for this purpose? This Presray Company?

Mr. Lyle: Yeah, and there are multiple products that we have looked at. The one that we've shown is -- but that's precisely what they are manufactured for. They have neoprene gaskets and seals and then you can see they insert the screws to tighten them down. They are engineered for this purpose.

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you very much for answering that question. All right. Do we have any other questions from anybody on the Board for staff or the applicant? Okay, then I think we're ready to move into comments and discussion from the Board. David, you want to start us out?

Board Member Hirsch: You get me first all the time. Try someone else.

Chair Baltay: Who else wants to begin this then? I'll go first. I'll tell you guys what I think. I'm very concerned about this project for a variety of reasons but primarily I think that there's something to those cedar shingles which really resonate well with the trees and the landscaping and the whole nature of the building, which is a big broken up box. It's fairly large and I think this fiber cement siding is just not a great choice aesthetically. I also think that the cedar shingles on there are fairly new and I really honestly think that they've just not been maintained. You have to put a finish on those things and that's not been done. I think the waterproofing problems are mostly from poor installation and detailing around corners, trim, windows, and stuff. I walked around the whole thing very carefully and I just don't see it too much. I say all of that because the fiber cement boards you're putting on are very thin and look fairly inexpensive and not attractive, I don't think. I don't think this is a change for the better. I can't make the finding that this is a high-quality material. I could be persuaded if you were using a higher, thicker level of fiber cement board that's more carefully designed and detailed to give a slightly higher quality, more textured, more shadowed relief but what you're putting on, in my, opinion is a fairly inexpensive product. I just don't think that's suitable for a building of this prominence and of the current level of beauty and, sort of, the textured siding that I see. I really think it's just a change for the worse and I have a hard time supporting it. I also find that it's problematic to propose the corners the way you're doing it. I don't think that will work. I have a lot of experience using this material and the moment you cut that fiber cement siding it sort of frays and it doesn't really refinish to a smooth surface ever. When we've tried to do those mitered corners we end up using auto body filler and sanding it all very smooth and it's an extremely labor-intensive process. I just can't imagine you doing that on a building of this size. It's awfully expensive and even then it's very maintenance intensive. I think you're going to have to use vertical corner boards to pull off this fiber cement detail. I also think that having the textured siding with the corner lap the way you're showing will just look really bad at the end. It will look like a mistake. I just don't think that that's a realistic detail. I acknowledge that that detail comes from the manufacturer but my experience speaks otherwise that that won't work. I suggest that you push back with Public Works a little bit about these flood gates. I know how challenging it can be to work in Palo Alto with all these competing agencies trying to tell you what to do but I'm not sure that what you're showing will be very practical. I doubt that it really will keep the water out and it seems to me it'd be quite a pain for you to do. I would suggest instead just focus on getting a good gate at the parking garage, which is clearly below the BFE and try to get them to back off of this requirement on every door. That will be a pain and expensive to put in and it seems to be more of a bureaucratic thing that anything practical. Obviously, that's not related to our ARB findings but that's something I suggest that you think about. I find the colors you're prosing are fairly bright and almost cartoon-like to me, especially the yellow. I just think that's too bright. It may well be that other houses in the neighborhood have that but I think this building is a better part of a whole block and to me the strongest thing I see is these beautiful redwood trees very close to the cedar shingles. The green trim, all of that just seems to hold together pretty well. I'm just not really in favor of the changes in color as well. I just find that bothersome to see how that goes. I'm afraid I cannot support this project at this time. Anybody else? Let's go to Alex then.

Board Member Lew: Okay. I can actually recommend approval of the project today. I do have some concerns and I'm not sure the best way to address them will be but we'll see how that goes. I think the first one is I think I agree with Peter with the yellow color. It did pop out at me when I looked at the color samples at City Hall. I think that the drawings look fine to me. It's just the color sample I think is too bright. My second concern is also the corners. I think my recommendation is to probably do a metal corner. I've seen architects do custom metal corners, too. I don't want to get into all the details of that but sometimes they'll use those instead of the standard metal corners. I think my third and last comment is on the landscape. To the landscape architect, I think you did a great job with the native plant selection and I think my only concern is on the Middlefield frontage. You've got like a 400-foot long block and you've got the same two plants going all the way down. I like the combinations that you've

done with the plants and the foliage colors but I think I would recommend some more variation. You can keep it minimal but I would encourage you to try to make a little more pedestrian-friendly with having some variation or alternate planting types. Then one last comment on the staff report on packet page 13, I think the staff report mentions that the density of the project is 14.85 units per acre but as I calculated it should be somewhere around like 98 units per acre. Like 219 units on 2.2 acres. And then on the cement board siding, you know, I think it's an environmentally preferable material. It's pretty typical for housing projects. It doesn't always look good, I do acknowledge that. We have it on, like, a \$4 million house right next to me and I am hard-pressed to say that it can't be acceptable on a multi-family project if we have it on so many houses. Then it just really gets down to, like, how it's detailed and designed. Everything that I've seen, with the exception of the mitered corners, I think looks good. That's where I am. Let's see where the rest of the Board is on this one. Thank you.

Chair Baltay: Thanks, Alex. That's very clear. Grace, would you like to go next, please?

Board Member Lee: Absolutely, happy to speak next. I just want to thank the applicant and planning staff for this proposal. I did look through the preliminary and saw some changes there. I also wanted to thank our Board for their comments from that August 2018 meeting. I agree with many of them that came forward. My comments will be brief. I agree with the three who have spoken so far. I'm happy to support this project for approval, particularly to come back, though, with a subcommittee on a couple items. To kind of look at the big picture, it's something that Chair Baltay mentioned that this corner at University and Middlefield and Middlefield and Lytton really is the gateway to downtown and I've always thought of it as a quiet corner, partially because -- well, there's a couple things. It's a very large building; however, there's this wonderful mature landscape that comes around it. It recedes even though it's a very large building due to that the beautiful shingles. Now having said that, I do also want to note that this is affordable senior housing with -- thank you, Alex -- of a density and I just want to say it's in the corner. Webster House is right there. These are two projects that are so important to our City in terms of for us to be stewards and the applicant to be stewards and staff to be stewards of this important city block. Having said that, I just wanted to think about that material. I feel that given just what kind of project this is and its importance to the city, you know, my feeling is it's too bad the shingles don't have that life span. It's important that we actually have a material that would last. It's also a wonderful situation with the material landscape around it that we really think about how that new proposed siding might recede and really think of the context as a whole and be this quiet corner gateway and just this wonderful presence for us downtown. Given, that, I mean, I support the new material. I understand that, you know, we want a material that's going to last for 30 years. We want to make sure that it's maintained properly if it is going to be that hardie board. Just in terms of the corners, I do think it's important for that detail to come back to a subcommittee, just a partial representation of our Board, two members. I don't think we need the five members for that. However, if it is a detail for siding to come together at a corner perhaps you can also bring precedence or some case studies to show or photos just to convince and illustrate to the subcommittee members. Regarding the colors, I absolutely agree. The Wheatfield... when I went and saw the samples and I saw the renderings I see them on screen, it's just too bright still. I remember from the preliminary that was a comment. The colors are still too bright. It was a bronze-beige in the preliminary. I'm not sure if you say a sample up close but maybe you want that Wheatfield to return to the bronze-beige but something that is not quite so yellow. Since it is a very large building, even though you're using it only in pieces, I am worried about it when you squint that's all you will see is that bright yellow color. I am fine with the Taupe and the Pony Brown. My feeling also is the Brick Red at the entry is definitely calling out the entry in a positive way. I wonder if there's an opportunity -- and think you to the applicant for talking about seniors and how they respond to the color and wayfinding both outside and inside the building. I wonder if you can find a place for some kind of an accent color for the residence. That's just, you know, a recommendation, that we have something like the Brick Red since it's an opportunity to enhance the experience in the courtyard. The other piece that I wanted to mention is this lack of signage that's in the application. You know, this is a minor and the scope seems rather limited but it's a very large building and the wayfinding for seniors and their families and the community to be able to have signage that you feel strongly works well with the rest of your palette and what you're proposing, I mean, it's a missed opportunity that's not here and it's not in the renderings, it's not in the elevations and it's an afterthought. I do, Jodie, hope that that suggestion that maybe the signage application... or maybe it comes back with revised elevations

to a subcommittee is what I want to propose to the Board to discuss. Let's see. Then landscape, the only thing that I wanted to touch on with the landscape is, you know, the bench looks great. Seating in a comfortable climate with lots of shade and really thinking about where those benches are placed based on -- this building's been here since 1974 -- some feedback from the staff and from really understanding our client and the use of where those comfortable areas are. I just hope that you take that time as you move forward with this application to think about comfortable places to sit. That might occur also at the entry since it is a rather large housing development and there's often waiting that occurs for folks who need to sit and maybe then you think about how the signage and the landscape and the seating occur together. I'll leave it there. Thank you and I'll pass the baton.

Chair Baltay: To David.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay. It was worth waiting until the end because, of course, everybody else's comments were significant and I would like to agree with Grace on so many of the items she discussed and the way she discussed them. Signage, yes, I think it's lacking in the project and although probably people who come here are coming on a timeframe that they determine when they will be there and will be appropriately greeted with their relatives, if that's the case. The entry is an issue here for visitors and unfortunately I don't think that was really studied in great depth relative to other opportunities. I frankly thought that. Perhaps, there could be an entry off of Middlefield that would've been better placed because it would work better with the lights. This is a big transportation issue and frankly, I've watched that intersection. I've watched the visitors to the site and people who are coming with their relatives and getting out of cars and deliveries. Unless there's a signage that indicates when deliveries could be made and that parking should be offsite when it can't be and where will that occur... has not really been addressed. I would go back to the issue of transportation and looking at this project and ask them to not put it aside but to look at this very carefully. They did such a good job on the Middlefield issues. Now they should really look at this as a part of that as well. Speaking as someone who in is in the neighborhood and sees the conflicts happening at that site, it should be taken back to Transportation and they should have a look at it. I also feel strongly -- watching just the other day -- that people do use the entry that is on the University side that those goes towards downtown quite significantly. Even if it's a bit steeper than the one that goes to the intersection of Middlefield and University, I find its going to be a problem for people who want to get from the center of this project to town to have to go either around a written entry all the way around the block that way or all the way down to the University and Middlefield corner. I would like the landscape people to explore why that was removed and see if it couldn't be put back because I'm sure it's going to turn out to be a more useful path for many of the people going out of that exit or entry. In terms of, you know, the bigger conflict here, yes this building is an introduction to Palo Alto and it is in a style that Peter noted. The old shingles really are representative of that era and there's a really wonderful project, [H Zotchy Housing](#), across the street and people look at that and say, gee whiz is that really a part of Lytton Gardens or Lytton came as a result of that and used shingles because... It's a real issue to change this project to a very different kind of aesthetic where the planes are now introduced as colors and introduction of the red at the entry point versus the whole building having a single shingle look. For me, that was the first question and I went back to look at shingles and yes, you know, they last about 50 years and then they need to be replaced. In this case, you see if you look at the shingles at the inside in particular, you see how worn they are but I would have liked to have seen a study made of well this is why we had to change from shingles to a siding like that because it's such a significant change of the exterior of the building. I'm not convinced so I come down more strongly on the side of Peter in retaining the shingles because it is very much the look of this building. It should not be discarded unless you absolutely prove that financially you could not possibly continue with shingles. I think the shingles last quite a few years if you really look back to the years that the shingles have been on this building and they're still functioning. There are leaks? Where are the leaks and where is the real problem? I'm bothered by that as well. As to the colors, I guess the one color is a bit bright and I accept Grace's comment about that. If everything is going to be according to what the first comments were, which I was not around for, where the colors were asked to be muted as shown in neighboring projects then that one is really brighter than what you would normally see in that neighborhood. I like the red. Again, if the choice is no shingles and changed to cement board then, of course, the red and other colors are wood colors. I would say that if the idea were to go back to the original design, and to define the planes differently the way your newer design does, then the other colors are adequate. In

terms of the corners and the treatment of the corner, it's a very difficult problem. I definitely wouldn't want to see another material used at a corner. I would want to see the material that is natural to the corner return being treated appropriately. I have used this material. It certainly can be cut straight at the corner so that if you had a butting corner where one material met the other you could make that corner work. When it's in kind of a shingle format I don't think it's ever going to, kind of, make it there. I think that's a question that should come back to a committee. It definitely needs to be studied in detail. You know, it's kind of a compromise when you sue the material that is really, basically, a flat material like that and try to semi-pretend that it's going to match up with the texture of a shingle but doesn't quite make it, especially when it comes to corners like that. It's a questionable use of that material. As I say, I've used it and I think it looks good but it's a completely different panel system when it's rectangularly attached to a building than it is when it's used attached in a form of overlapping shingle look like this. Again, my emphases would be to solve the problem of the entryway, which is partially solved by putting the new access from the other side of the tree but isn't completely solved as far as the corner's concerned and to put back the other path. And, of course, Alex's comments, whatever they are; I always value whatever he says about the planting. He's usually right on target. I like the landscape. I think the landscape is effective but I do think there's a problem in the end here with the use of this material and I can't support the project for that purpose.

Chair Baltay: Thank you, David. Okay, to my colleagues, we have a bit of an issue then. I think I heard Osma supporting the project, although she's not here to vote on it. Then we have Grace and Alex in support, I'm assuming, from what you've said. I am afraid I cannot support it the way it's presented. David, I heard a little more flexibility in your voice. I would like to offer to my colleagues that this is the kind of project we want to get a clean answer to as soon as possible. They've been, it seems like, dragged through the Public Works business more than is fair and we owe it to them to make it a straight answer. It seems to me like the majority of the Board is in favor of the material that's been presented. I would be pushing to have them explore a fiber cement type shingle that such a project does exist and it has more of the texture and refinement of what's there now with the durability of the fiber cement. I suspect that's a big go around on the design right now. David, how strongly do you feel whether you can support this or not?

Board Member Hirsch: It's hard for me. This is a totally additional comment to whatever has been said. If it's going to be a panel like that I'd like to see it be pure to the idea of the panels rather than a textured panel.

Chair Baltay: I'm sorry. What kind of a panel?

Board Member Hirsch: I'm conflicting with myself a bit about it but I don't like the imitation on the quality of it.

Chair Baltay: For what it's worth, I've used this product on very similar type projects. We've done other things like this and our experience was that to use the fiber cement we wanted to use the thicker product. James Hardie Company makes one called Artisan. It's three-quarters of an inch thick and has a very sharp shadow line. It's also very smooth and it does, like Alex mentioned, have nice fittings you can use at the corners. It has a very contemporary look in the end and I think our initial feedback to them was to keep the sort of subdued -- how does Grace put it so great and so nicely -- receding quality to the building. That product probably wouldn't do that. It's a more dramatic kind of think. The textured siding really forces you to have corner boards. I don't believe there's any way to do it without that. Maybe the metal fittings Alex is talking about but they tend to be of a different texture again. I think inherently there are just some problems there. The corner boards may be okay but we would want to see that drawn up and stuff. The shingle fiber cement is very expensive to apply. It's one shingle at a time and fiber cement is a hard material to work with. I can understand where the owners of a building like this just are reluctant to go there. Grace, you put together nice thought process on this whole thing. Do you want to try to make a motion and see if we can get three votes for it?

MOTION

Board Member Lee: Yeah, I'd be happy to.

Chair Baltay: We owe it to them to get this through.

Board Member Lee: I did want to propose in our discussion that perhaps Chair Baltay you might assign the subcommittee members for this particular application to be yourself and David. Given the two of you and hearing the discussion, I move that we approve the project with the conditions of the following to come back to a subcommittee and I can start that list if we're comfortable.

Chair Baltay: I'm just hoping that you can basically persuade David to vote with you.

Board Member Lee: Okay.

Board Member Hirsch: Peter, that's not fair.

Chair Baltay: Look, I'm playing politics here but this is a project that needs to be approved or denied now.

Board Member Lee: Yes, and actually if I can step back before I state the motion. I mean, if we are still in discussion, if we think about the typology of this building, the users and the budgets that are associated with this kind of project, which many of us have worked on in the past, I do not think we should delay. I think that this is a project that has waited for two years and has worked with the City closely. I just want to make sure that we all know that this is a project that we don't always see come along and that our Board doesn't have the privilege to review. I think that the set was of high quality with some improvement at a subcommittee level would be a positive improvement to that corner at Middlefield and University and Middlefield and Lytton. I do want to also make sure that we know the context. That there is mature landscape, that there is a setback there and there's a pledge for maintenance by this user group to make sure that this is a project that is a positive presence for the City of a long time to come. You know, given that I'll just move that we approve the project with the following conditions and that the project return to a subcommittee with the following revisited: propose another option for the Wheatfield color. I don't want to prescribe I just want to say that at this time it's too bright. That a corner detail or a few drawings that illustrate how the corner materials will come together with a detail drawing as well as, if possible, some kind of a photo or other projects where this product has come together at a corner in that way. I believe -- feel free to jump in others -- there was something about looking at the transformer screening in terms of how to screen that as well as signage. A proposal for signage. I think subcommittee would benefit from elevations with some context around the signage showing the entry, as well as, you know, every situation where there is signage on the exterior to be presented to the subcommittee. That's all I had, however, perhaps others want to add a couple of other bullet points for the subcommittee to review.

Ms. Gerhardt: I think Alex had a comment about the planting on Middlefield.

Board Member Lew: Why don't I second the motion and then talk about amendments?

Chair Baltay: Okay. The motion has been made and seconded. I had heard David had a request that this be sent to transportation for review. I'm just saying that that's what David said.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT TO MOTION

Board Member Hirsch: I would offer a friendly amendment that Transportation has a close look at the access and egress from the Lytton side in order to determine if there are conflicts, if they need to be responded to by a timeframe that that driveway will be used and the access to the building provided from that location and that we get a report back from Transportation on those issues of Lytton access. Also, protection of the sidewalk itself from crossing traffic.

Chair Baltay: Okay. That's a suggestion of an amendment, Grace.

Board Member Lee: I can accept the amendment I just want to be clear for the applicant and for the City. I think that there was discussion of pavement markings that were missing in a drawing and I'm wondering if that's what we're referring to specifically.

Board Member Hirsch: The pavement marking issues relative to those (inaudible).

Board Member Lee: Okay.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT TO MOTION

Board Member Hirsch: I would like to add one other friendly amendment and that is that the present landscape person explores the possibility of retaining and/or revising in some way the pathway that leads from the University side towards the downtown. It's a more convenient access for people who use this access quite frequently and if they choose to go on a non-handicapped accessible route that's certainly their choice. The friendly amendment would be to explore the reuse of that path to downtown.

Chair Baltay: We have two friendly amendments proposed by David. Before we check them over in a second, Jodie, is sending this back to Transportation for review realistic?

Ms. Gerhardt: There's nothing wrong with that. I mean, we're just talking about that drop-off area and ensuring that it's safe for pedestrians, correct?

Chair Baltay: David, is that correct?

Board Member Hirsch: Yes, and also that there's some way in which that the traffic that uses it can be monitored not to conflict with the transportation on Lytton and the pedestrian transportation as well.

Chair Baltay: What you're asking for, though, is just to have Transportation review the project. There's no stipulation on doing anything about it, right?

Board Member Hirsch: To report back to us.

Chair Baltay: Report back to the ARB or the planning department?

Ms. Gerhardt: Are you worried about cars backing up onto the street. Is that part of the concern?

Board Member Hirsch: Well it's not backing up actually, Jodie, it's a passageway that moves all the way through and then cars come back out closer to the corner into traffic.

Chair Baltay: I think, David, the existing situation is not ideal but the operative word there is existing.

Board Member Hirsch: Understood.

Chair Baltay: The applicant's not proposing any change or improvement to that. I think having the Transportation Department look at it is fine. They'll probably have nothing to say, though. I just want to be sure you're okay with that.

Board Member Hirsch: Not 100 percent.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Look, I think this is all just to try to get your vote for Grace. Grace, are you okay with these two proposed amendments?

Board Member Lee: I just want it to be clear in terms of how we write it and I think what we are asking for -- given this is a minor application with the scope that's described in the application -- another department in the City to review the application as is and provide comments to planning staff that may be in a staff report for the future subcommittee meeting. Is that what I'm understanding?

Board Member Hirsch: Okay.

Board Member Lee: I would be fine with that.

Chair Baltay: Alex?

Board Member Lee: (inaudible) we're just asking a part of City staff to review the application and provide comments to planning staff.

Chair Baltay: And you're okay with the request about the pathway towards University Avenue?

Board Member Lee: I think, again, it's just to explore the landscape consultant will explore and just take a closer look at that path. I don't think it's prescriptive in any way.

Chair Baltay: You accept that friendly amendment?

Board Member Lee: I would accept that.

Chair Baltay: Alex, you've seconded this. Do you accept those amendments?

Board Member Lew: Yes, I will accept the amendments.

Chair Baltay: Okay. Any other discussions to this motion? With that let's have a vote then. Vinh, can we do a roll call vote, please?

Aye: Hirsch, Lee, Lew, (3)

No: Baltay (1)

Absent: Thompson (1)

MOTION TO APPROVE PASSES 3-1-1.

Chair Baltay: Thank you very much, Vinh. Okay, the motion carries. I'd like to right now then assign the subcommittee to be Grace and David for this issue.

Board Member Hirsch: Okay.

Chair Baltay: Just so that's clear with staff. With that, we're done with this action item. Let's move along to pull up my agenda.

Board Members Questions, Comments or Announcements

Chair Baltay: Just so that's clear with staff. With that, we're done with this action item. Let's move along to pull up my agenda. Next agenda item is Board Members Questions, Comments and Announcements. Alex, we have you down to bring us up to date with the North of Ventura Coordinated Area Plan. Can you do that please? Alex, you're muted.

[Adjusting Audio.]

Chair Baltay: Jodie, do we have anything coming back to us about the prescriptive zoning standard committee work?

Ms. Gerhardt: The objective standards you're asking about?

Chair Baltay: Yes, David and Osma are working on that committee, right?

Ms. Gerhardt: Yes. I had some conversations with the consultant just the other day. I'm going to talk to her again on Friday. I know that David had some conversations with her and so that's good. We're moving that project forward. The committee is giving comments to the consultants and staff will help the consultants work through comments and see how to incorporate those into the draft that we ultimately bring to the ARB. As I said, that would come to the full Board in early September. I should have that date. Let me see. September 3rd would be our hearing when we would talk about objective standards. Then I was just asking for the main Board if you take a look at the design criteria that we have now that would give you a good basis for the conversation. When you get that packet for early September then you would already have a very good background. I know you were using that on a regular basis but it's good to just, kind of, read through it and think about it in this way of, you know, we're changing it from the standards that are currently there to this more objective standard that have numbers or, you know, we could have a menu. I mean, there's a bunch of different ways we could tackle it because we do want to make sure that we're not getting cookie-cutter projects. Unlike other cities, we also have this out that if you can't meet our objective standards that you do have an out and you can go to the ARB and just be meeting the intent of the standards and go through an ARB process, you know, very similar to today. The other cities don't necessarily have that option, we will. Of course, that's a little cumbersome. We do want to make the standards able to fit as many projects as possible but if somebody wants to be unique they can certainly come to the Board and do that.

Chair Baltay: David, do you have anything to add on that? You're on that committee. This is just a moment to report back to the Board if you feel you need to. There's nothing on the agenda.

[Adjusting Audio.]

Board Member Hirsch: Thank you. It's a big task, to begin with. It's looking over the entire building department issues, you know, the whole of the building code here. I'm kind of wading through it. It's a varied task because of the response is a varied response and in some cases it's extremely specific. I guess in some way that answers issues that might come up if it's not so specific, which some of the language clearly is in the previous building code. It is a rewriting of the code in so many ways that I will tell you it takes a lot of time and thinking in order to go back and weigh into it and try to think about comments that are appropriate. Before it's brought back to us as a Board, I recommend that everybody go back and have an opportunity to see what is being changed and take a quick look at some aspects of that and see what they think as well because for us to come back and report on this and then for the rest of you to react is not going to be a simple matter. My concern, for one, is that the whole of the ARB process might in some future date be questioned, you know, because of the fact that part of this aspect is to create a method for state housing funds to be used now without the process of ARB review. That's for SB 35. That's how it is explained to me. Jodie, if I'm stating it wrong please come back and correct me at this moment.

Ms. Gerhardt: I think the State has definitely, you know, put in place new regulations that are meant to make it easier for housing projects to get through the process. Whether we like that or not, that's now a State requirement. What we do have control over, though, are these objective standards. Do we want to be conservative with the standards? Do we want to be looser with them? That's where we can think through how we want the process to work. We can have either fit in this tiny little box and all other projects have to go the ARB or you can make the box medium-sized or you can make the box large-sized. I think the consensus of this group was to try to make the box somewhat medium to at least fit a fair number of projects and maybe have a menu of options so things are so cookie-cutter but they can still fit in that sort of medium-sized box. I think, you know, that's the direction that we're trying to go but, of course, you know, lots of conversations to be had because we've got to dig into the details and really see what that means.

Board Member Hirsch: My comments, you know, in general, there are some areas where I think the study is way too specific and there are some other areas where it is expanded by the study with a new language. I think there are some other areas where one has to go back and look at the old language, which comes from years of people thinking about the City of Palo Alto and commenting about it in a casual way that maybe needs to be a bit more specific but may also require recognizing the history of it.

It gets extremely complex in this manner and I'm concerned about those areas where it's almost autocratic, you know. It's almost dictatorial that you will have X number of feet of this and Y number of feet of that. Those areas worry me and I'm making comments about it. I really request that our Board take a close look. I recognize that some of you are even perhaps better intellectually in thinking about these things. I'd like to see you not be divorced from this in some way because of the requirement that only two of us can look at this. On the side, I suggest you must take a look at them what is being proposed.

Chair Baltay: Where do we see what's being proposed?

Ms. Gerhardt: You have the previous agendas where we had the attachment of what was being proposed. I can make sure and send you an email that, you know, pulls these links back together. We had previous agendas and then we have, you know, the existing criteria that's in, kind of, each chapter of the code. It's in multi-family, commercial, that sort of thing. I can pull together some links that show you those different chapters. David's right though, as you're reading through the existing criteria maybe one of the things you can do is, you know, make some notes for yourself. Like does this criteria lend itself to one answer or do we think we need multiple answers, you know, for a given criteria. There are just some sidewalk widths, you know. I mean, El Camino has to have a 12-foot sidewalk. That's a single answer. But of course, massing and the ins and outs of the building, you know, you might need more of a menu for that.

Chair Baltay: If you could send us, Jodie, like you said, that link with that information I think that would be helpful so that whoever would like can read ahead on this.

Ms. Gerhardt: Yeah, and I think given that we're not found to have that early August meeting hopefully you have that time you already set aside where you could devote to that.

Chair Baltay: Sure. Of course. Of course. Alex, did you get your microphone to work?

[Adjusting Audio.]

Chair Baltay: Jodie, do you know if there's any action going on with the North Ventura Committee?

Ms. Gerhardt: I want to say that there had been a committee meeting and I'm sorry I don't keep up on it enough because there's too much else.

Chair Baltay: Vinh, can you give Alex a call on the phone, please, and see if he's okay and if he has something to say? We want to adjourn the meeting but we certainly don't want to cut Alex off.

Mr. Nguyen: Sure. One second. Let me also try to move Alex from attendee back to panelist. That sometimes helps issues that they're having.

Ms. Gerhardt: Or if we just need him to call back in. Everything was working fine a minute ago.

[Adjusting Audio.]

Ms. Gerhardt: The only thing I see on the webpage for NVCAP was a June 25th meeting. That's been some time ago.

Chair Baltay: Any luck there, Vinh. Did he answer the phone?

Mr. Nguyen: Yeah, I'm on the phone.

Board Member Lew: My computer froze.

Ms. Gerhardt: We can hear him there.

Board Member Lew: I couldn't do anything.

Mr. Nguyen: Okay, well I have you on speakerphone and they can actually hear you through the speakerphone. If you want to give a quick MVCap update.

Chair Baltay: That'd be great if you could do that, Alex.

Board Member Lew: Sure. There were two subcommittees meetings at the end of June and we have two more coming up. There's nothing new happening. It is basically we are trying to come up with two alternatives that will be studied as part of the Tika [phonetic] review. We're trying to determine what the two alternates are.

Chair Baltay: Is there any way the rest of the community members can see the alternates. Vinh, maybe ask that question to him.

Board Member Lew: Yeah. There's nothing to see yet. We're trying to actually determine what is in each alternate.

Chair Baltay: I see.

Board Member Lew: It is looking like one alternate will be to retain the existing Fry's building and the other will be to either remove it entirely or just to keep a portion of the existing Fry's building.

Chair Baltay: Okay. As soon as you have something it would be good to see it, Alex.

Board Member Lew: My understanding is that the last two meetings were very well attended by community members. They are paying attention.

Chair Baltay: Okay, good. I think the Board would like to see something concrete when the committee has something to present. So, we'll just leave it. Any other comments from this Board? Alex, are we set then?

Board Member Lew: Yup.

Chair Baltay: Okay, thank you very much. Thanks for, Alex, getting back on... Vinh. With that, we are adjourned. Have a great day everybody and a good weekend. Thank you.

Adjournment