



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 13528)

Report Type: Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 9/2/2021

Summary Title: Minutes of July 15, 2021

Title: Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for July 15, 2021

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

Background

Draft minutes from the July 15, 2021 Architectural Review Board (ARB) are available in Attachment A.

Draft and Approved Minutes are made available on the ARB webpage at bit.ly/paloaltoARB

Attachments:

- Attachment A: July 15, 2021 Draft Minutes (DOCX)



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
 DRAFT MINUTES: July 15, 2021
 Virtual Meeting
 8:30 AM

Call to Order / Roll Call

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in virtual teleconference at 8:30 a.m.

Participating Remotely: Chair Osma Thompson, Boardmember Peter Baltay, Boardmember David Hirsch, Boardmember Alex Lew

Absent: Vice Chair Grace Lee

Oral Communications

None.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, announced there were none. Vice Chair Lee will join the meeting later as she is recused from items related to Stanford.

City Official Reports

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

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, announced that the August 5, 2021, meeting was canceled. The August 19, 2021, meeting will focus on the ARB Awards. In person meetings are tentatively scheduled to resume in September. The ARB will meet in chambers by October.

Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 180 El Camino Real (21PLN-00122]: Recommendation on Façade Changes and New Signage for Peloton that Includes a Request for a Sign Exception for Signs that do not Comply with The Master Tenant Façade & Sign Program and the Municipal Code. Environmental Assessment: Exempt per Guideline Section 15301. Zoning District: CC (Community Commercial District). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Samuel Gutierrez at samuel.gutierrez@cityofpaloalto.org.

Chair Thompson called for disclosures.

Boardmember Baltay disclosed that he visited the site.

Boardmember Lew disclosed that he visited the site and reviewed the color board at City Hall. He also researched the façade materials and considered the Tesla Dealer at 4180 as a prior project.

Boardmember Hirsch disclosed that he visited the site and the board at City Hall. He did not read the previous ARB minutes regarding the adjacent building.

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, disclosed that she provided a 2011 staff report to the ARB about Urban Outfitters.

Chair Thompson explained that she was currently out of town but that she was familiar with the area in general. She called for the staff report.

Samuel Gutierrez, Project Planner, gave a presentation on the 180 El Camino Real – Stanford Shopping Center Peloton façade change and sign exception utilizing slides. The project is on the northeastern frontage of the Stanford Shopping Center facing El Camino Real with a large surface parking lot between the building and the street. The project seeks to change the existing façade to accommodate Peloton and includes a sign exception request. The shopping center has a Master Tenant Façade and Sign Program (MTFS Program) subject to City review. As the storefront is over 35 feet long it requires ARB review. The project does not seek to increase Floor Area Ratio (FAR), height, or lot coverage but does request cosmetic changes. The exterior façade has three design elements: stone cladding, a metal illuminated entry portal, and an open storefront glazing. The applicant will use high quality finishes reflective of its premium products. The façade design is consistent with the MTFS Program and the shopping center's character. Mr. Gutierrez showed a rendering of the façade including materials. The signage exception requested is to include a second wall sign that consists of the entry portal featuring the "P" logo. Because the logo is incorporated into the feature it makes the entire feature a wall sign. The process for the sign exception is set forth in the Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC), which allows for several wall signs within a certain square footage. The subject façade is approximately 936 square feet (sf) and would allow a maximum of 60 sf of sign area. The PAMC also allows for blade signs up to 3 sf in area. The project includes this allowed blade sign as seen on the rendering. In addition to the PAMC the project is subject to El Camino Real Design Guidelines. These guidelines reduce signage area maximums down by one half or two thirds of the maximum size allowed in the PAMC. For the project that would be 30 to 40 sf and both the wall sign and the portal entry sign would be included in the calculated wall sign area. The MTFS Program regulates signage and allows for one wall sign and one blade sign. The requested blade sign complies. The large Peloton wall sign is approximately 23 sf, and the portal entry sign is approximately 106 sf. Combined that exceeds the 30 to 40 sf limitation. In order to approve the project the ARB must make three findings. The first finding is that exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property do not apply generally to other nearby properties. The second is that granting the exception is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant. Neither finding can be made by staff. The third finding is that granting the exception would not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the area and would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, general welfare, or convenience. As the request is for a sign exemption finding three is not applicable. Based on this, the project façade design is consistent with the MTFS Program and the ARB findings for design, material quality, and enhancement of the shopping center. Staff has proposed draft conditions of approval requiring the "P" logos be removed from the portal entry which would make it a façade element instead of a sign and would

remove the need for a signage exception. Therefore, staff recommended that the ARB deny the signage exception and recommend approval of the proposed project façade changes and signage to the Director of Planning subject to staff's conditions of approval.

Chair Thompson called for the applicant's presentation.

Jason Smith, Land Shark Development, introduced Ryan Badger of Peloton and Blake Thompson from Lochte Architectural Group.

Ryan Badger, Construction Manager for Peloton, explained that the signage portal was developed to be a compelling architectural design element. The incorporation of the "P" logo adds interest. The tile on the upper portion was chosen to add texture and the entry portal adds interest with its varying dimension and the illumination of the "P" logos. They tried to be sensitive to the surrounding area and create a concept that would be an attractive addition to the shopping center.

Blake Thomas, Lochte Architectural Group, asked the ARB to see the portal as an architectural element as described by Mr. Gutierrez's findings. He suggested the ARB see the "P" logos as plaques or secondary signage of only 2 sf. The portal element acts as an attractor to pedestrians. Similarly, the "P" logos are a form of wayfinding since the large sign is predominately for car traffic in the parking lot or street.

Chair Thompson called for the public comment, but there was none. She then called for ARB questions of the applicant or staff.

Boardmember Baltay asked about the clearance from the façade to the curb and for the amount that is being reduced for the new façade.

Mr. Thomas explained that the addition is 18.5 inches and from that point it is 11 feet 8 inches to the curb. The existing Bath & Body store's entrance protrudes in a similar manner.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that the curb cut for ADA access was 3 foot 4 inches leaving 8 feet 4 inches of true sidewalk space.

Mr. Thomas stated the location of the curb cut to the façade is 9 foot 10 inches.

Boardmember Baltay requested confirmation that without the "P" logos the portal would be an architectural element and not a sign.

Mr. Gutierrez stated that was correct and noted that staff's recommendation was to remove the "P" logos. Illuminated entry features are allowed and there are other storefronts in the shopping center that have similar elements.

Boardmember Baltay inquired about moving the "P" logos away from the portal frame.

Mr. Gutierrez stated that as placed the "P" logos function as a cabinet sign, so that is why staff determined the entire portal was a sign.

Boardmember Baltay clarified that it was staff's determination that the portal frame combined with the logo is a sign.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that the City has held a conversation about signage like this project before, specifically regarding the Tesla property. There was a large Tesla sign with punch through letters and the City Council decided that the entire structure of the sign counted. Staff views this portal entry in the same manner.

Boardmember Baltay requested the Chair allow Boardmember Lew to discuss his findings related to the Tesla project.

Chair Thompson called for further questions, but there were none. She asked for further information on the Tesla project.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that the Sign Code defines sign area as the lettering and sign structure combined. The Director of Planning determined that the entire Tesla structure was a sign and granted an exception, which was appealed to City Council.

Chair Thompson asked about City Council's final determination on the Tesla project.

Ms. Gerhardt asked Boardmember Lew for his findings.

Boardmember Lew stated that he was on the ARB at the time of the Tesla project, but that he did not remember the Council decision. The sign is in place.

Ms. Gerhardt said the exception must have been approved.

Boardmember Lew said that as there are multiple signs on the property the project could have eliminated other signs in order to keep the one in question. Overall, it was an unwise use of City Council's time to look at the definition of sign area. Additionally, the current City Council is more conservative than it was in 2014. The general principle behind both discussions is the same; what is the definition of a sign versus an architectural element.

Mr. Gutierrez showed the street view of the Tesla project with the monument sign and the wall signs.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that the issue was whether the entire red structure was the sign or only the white logo portion.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that was correct.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that the portal frame would be considered the same as the red area in the Tesla sign.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that was also correct, and that with Tesla the entire red sign was the sign structure and therefore counted towards the sign square footage.

Boardmember Lew requested confirmation that the red metal area of the Tesla sign was not illuminated, only the white logo.

Mr. Gutierrez stated that was correct.

Boardmember Lew said that the Tesla sign was different than the portal entrance as the portal is illuminated.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that she was still looking at the Tesla project, and that the compromise with Tesla might have to do with the sign material being metal.

Boardmember Lew said that he thought the red area was always metal and never illuminated.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that the red area was not illuminated.

Boardmember Lew did not recall it ever being proposed as illuminated.

Chair Thompson called for any further questions of staff or the applicant, but there were none. She called for ARB comment.

Boardmember Lew thanked the applicant team and thought that the façade was well designed and detailed. The staff report stated that the material used was stone, but the drawings said porcelain tile. The MTFS Program does not allow porcelain tile. However, upon inspection the material is more of a ceramic slab and is high quality and acceptable. The glass also looked good. With respect to the sign exception, he agreed with staff. The MTFS Program encourages graphics on the glass, but he understood that the applicant did not want to do that. The Tesla project was brought up because it is painful for something like that to be elevated to City Council. He did not want this project to be appealed and to have to go through that process, especially if the applicant has other options for pedestrian level signage. He stated support for the staff recommendation and conditions of approval.

Boardmember Baltay saw no grounds for a sign exception and stated that the issue is whether the entire portal frame is a sign. When compared to the Tesla building a key difference is that the portal frame serves an architectural purpose with or without the “P” logos. The red element in the Tesla project was strictly signage without other overriding architectural function. The ARB may have to determine if the portal entry is more a sign or more an architectural feature. He saw it as an architectural feature that clearly framed and identified the entrance with the logos being secondary. If the lines were painted in white rather than illuminated the portal frame would be more of an architectural feature as signs tend to be illuminated while architectural details do not. He was inclined to call the “P” logos signs surrounded by the portal frame as an architectural element. If that determination were made it would eliminate the need for a sign exception, but the ARB must be careful about any precedent it sets. Boardmember Lew’s points about City Council’s time are valid so the applicant should be asked about how integral the “P” logos are to the design. If the applicant is okay with removing the logos then that would be helpful in avoiding further issues. The Urban Outfitters next door to the project has large elements that project into the sidewalk right of way. The Peloton entrance extends 18 inches into the public sidewalk at a point where its narrowest. The walkway is wide enough, but applicants should not be encouraged to push designs into the right of way. The portal entry could be done where it recesses into the store instead of pushing into the sidewalk. The ARB previously dealt with this issue several years prior with the fish restaurant and had to establish an 8-foot minimum width on the sidewalk. He requested staff speak further on that issue in the future. In summary, he supported classifying the “P” logos as signs and allowing the project to proceed without an exception.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed with Boardmember Baltay’s comments. With or without the lights he did not see the portal entry as a single signage element. The blade sign can only be seen from some distance away so having the logos symmetrically placed on either side of the entry is an appropriate design idea.

He believed City Council would be reasonable and if the ARB granted an exception and it was appealed to Council it would agree to the exception. With respect to the sidewalk the new entry will be similar in size to the old storefront which does not interfere with the sidewalk or handicapped accessibility. The neighboring Urban Outfitters makes use of aggressive materials and graphics. In contract this project is simple, direct, and pleasantly detailed. The current storefront is incredibly overdone, and the new project is a simplification of the area. He supported the design as presented and suggested ARB approval.

Chair Thompson agreed with staff and viewed the entry portal as a sign because it is integrated and presents as an illuminated cabinet. The sign is nice and does many things architecturally that other signs do not. She supported the sign as is and thought that removing the "P" logo would be a detriment. She disagreed with Boardmember Baltay about painting the entry portal white rather than illuminating it. There is grey area in this matter so she could either support staff's proposal or grant the sign exception.

Mr. Gutierrez explained that if they focused on the area around the logos as signs there would still need to be a sign exception. The MTFs Program only allows for one wall sign and if the portal were broken into the individual logos there would be three wall signs.

Chair Thompson asked the applicant for further comments.

Mr. Badger stated that the portal entry protrudes into the sidewalk because of a structural header that goes across the storefronts of the tenant spaces. The header pushes any storefront elements out further to maintain the height of the storefront and the glazing. Regarding the MTFs Program the design was presented to the landlord and approved.

Ms. Gerhardt clarified that the size of the sign from staff's perspective is the entire entrance portal. Staff is supported by the Tesla item which was a Consent Item and was ultimately approved for additional square footage with an exception.

Chair Thompson said there were two Boardmembers in support of the proposed design and two supporting the staff recommendation with mixed opinions on the sign exception. She called for additional ARB comment.

Boardmember Baltay stated the ARB should first decide whether the entire portal entry was a sign or not. He was concerned that his opinion was incorrect based on Ms. Gerhardt's explanation of the City Council determination on the Tesla sign. If the Tesla sign was determined to be a sign, then the portal entry is a sign. He could not accept a sign exemption of this magnitude as the project signage is much larger than allowed and is three wall signs instead of one. As he could not make the findings the only way he could support the project is if the entire portal frame were not considered a sign, but an architectural element.

Chair Thompson stated that the ARB received information and precedence from staff and must decide to follow staff's recommendation or support the sign exception.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed that the portal entry was a single element and suggested that the project remove the blade sign and retain the "P" logos. He noted that the shopping center already approved the sign. The ARB was playing with descriptive language and that was not exactly rational. The feature is

part of the architecture, and the “P” logos are useful and symmetrical. The symbol is not the name of the business and fits in as part of the composition of the face of the building. Therefore, he was willing to grant the sign exception.

Boardmember Baltay asked Boardmember Hirsch how he made the findings to justify the exception.

Boardmember Hirsch said that it was a good design.

Boardmember Baltay asked which finding involved it being a good design.

Ms. Gerhardt suggested that Mr. Gutierrez put up the slides regarding the necessary ARB findings. Staff’s concern was whether the ARB could make the findings. Trading the “P” logos for the blade sign as suggested by Boardmember Hirsch could be a possibility, but it would set a precedent for the entire shopping center and perhaps beyond because the project would still be out of compliance with the El Camino Real Design Guidelines and the PAMC.

Mr. Gutierrez showed the Signage Conditions slide.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that the blade sign was 2 sf in area, the main wall sign was 23 sf, and the portal entry was 106 sf. The total sign area as currently proposed was 131 sf and the allowed square footage under the PAMC and the El Camino Real Design Guidelines is between 30 and 40 sf. The MTFs Program limits tenants to one wall sign. Those are the three levels of regulation the project needed to adhere to.

Boardmember Hirsch said that the “P” logos should be considered signage, not the entire portal entry. The fact that the entry portal is illuminated serves different purposes, it illuminates the front of the building, draws in pedestrians, and is a part of the whole construction. If the ARB stated the project that way he thought the City Council would accept it.

Chair Thompson stated that earlier Boardmember Hirsch said that the whole portal was the sign because of the cabinet construction.

Boardmember Hirsch said that the entire portal was the sign. That was the issue.

Chair Thompson stated that was correct and that the portal was built like a cabinet.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed that the portal was part of one thing, the entire façade. The signage was separate and was simply the elements that have symbolic value.

Boardmember Baltay agreed with Boardmember Hirsch’s logic. If the “P” logos were removed the portal entry would no longer be a sign. He asked how simply adding the logo made the entry a sign when without the logo it would be considered an architectural element. The Tesla project differed in that it was only a sign, not an architectural element. The illuminated portal is an integral part of the design, so the logic does not hold. He suggested that if it were acceptable to Chair Thompson he would make a Motion that directs staff to interpret the sign as strictly the logo and then process it as an ordinary application. That would be a clear way to get the project through without the question of the sign exception and the possibility of going to City Council.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that a sign exception would still be required for the number of wall signs.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if the applicant would eliminate the blade sign in favor of the other signs.

Mr. Gutierrez showed the Required Signage Exception Findings slide.

Chair Thompson said that staff viewed the entire entry portal as a sign. Based on that she asked the ARB if they could make the findings for the signage exception.

Boardmember Baltay said that there was nothing special about the property or the sign. The findings are a high bar and staff was correct that an exception would be a bad precedent.

Chair Thompson advised Boardmember Baltay that he could make a Motion if he wished.

Boardmember Baltay stated that he wanted to work by Chair Thompson's direction.

Chair Thompson asked how the ARB felt about staff's recommendations.

Boardmember Baltay suggested that they check with the applicant.

Chair Thompson said she wanted to hear from the ARB if the removal of the "P" logos hurt the project.

Boardmember Baltay thought it hurt the applicant's business opportunity but did not affect the quality of the architecture. Most businesses have more than one sign in the form of names on the glass or other elements. He asked if the "P" logos were moved to the glass if they would be considered a sign.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that logos on the glass were allowed, and that Mr. Gutierrez had suggested that to the applicant.

Boardmember Baltay said that the "P" logos could be placed on the glass inside the frame for a similar effect.

Chair Thompson asked the applicant for their thoughts.

Mr. Badger said that they felt strongly that the "P" logos on the portal entry were an important element.

Boardmember Baltay requested permission to ask follow-up questions of the applicant.

Chair Thompson granted permission.

Boardmember Baltay asked if there were other Peloton stores that did not have the "P" logo on the portal entry.

Mr. Badger said that where they have executed the portal element the "P" logos have been included.

MOTION #1: Chair Thompson moved, seconded by Boardmember Lew to approve the project per the conditions of approval in the staff report.

Chair Thompson called for discussion on the Motion.

Boardmember Baltay stated he was unsure.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he disagreed with the determination, thought staff's determination was not logical and would vote against the Motion.

Boardmember Baltay agreed with Boardmember Hirsch and could not support the Motion.

Chair Thompson stated she wanted a determination that worked for everyone. Since the ARB appeared deadlocked, she withdrew her Motion.

MOTION #1: Withdrawn.

MOTION #2: Boardmember Hirsch moved that the signage on the façade was only the logo elements themselves and the square footage of the signage should be based only on the graphics and no other element of the façade.

Boardmember Baltay noted that did not address the question of three wall signs, not one. He asked if the ARB would not consider the logos as wall signs noting that otherwise they would still have to make the findings for a sign exception.

Boardmember Hirsch said that the applicant could remove the blade sign.

Chair Thompson explained that even without the blade sign the sign exception would be necessary. The existing project would need two sign exceptions: one for the square footage and a second for the number of wall signs.

Boardmember Hirsch confirmed that the two exceptions would be for the blade sign and one for the two logos.

Chair Thompson stated that the blade sign was not controversial. The issue was the number of wall signs and the area that they take.

Boardmember Baltay asked staff to define wall sign versus a logo. Many stores in the shopping center featured logos in addition to wall signs.

Ms. Gerhardt asked Mr. Gutierrez to show the slide on Signage Considerations. The blade sign was categorized differently in the program than the wall signs, but it might be a better precedent to remove one sign while adding two others. The ARB would still have to make the findings for a sign exception. The MTF Program allows a primary wall sign and, in some cases, a secondary wall sign.

Mr. Gutierrez explained that the secondary wall sign was allowed for corner stores with two façades.

Chair Thompson asked if Boardmember Hirsch's Motion had a second.

Boardmember Baltay asked if Boardmember Hirsch had finished making his Motion.

Boardmember Hirsch stated he left it open to the applicant if they could live with the idea of only the two logo signs versus the blade sign. As stated by Ms. Gerhardt that made a better precedent.

Chair Thompson clarified that Boardmember Hirsch's Motion was to have a sign exception for the area and the number of wall signs and to remove the blade sign.

Boardmember Hirsch said he did not want to make the Motion unless there was an agreement from the applicant.

Chair Thompson stated she did not want to engage the applicant as all the information was provided.

Boardmember Hirsch stepped away from the meeting for a moment.

Boardmember Baltay thought that Boardmember Hirsch's Motion was not to allow a sign exception for the area. It was to direct staff to interpret the portal frame as an architectural element with only the "P" logos as signage.

Chair Thompson agreed that was a different Motion.

Boardmember Hirsch returned to the meeting and stated Boardmember Baltay was correct.

Boardmember Baltay said that the Motion did not solve the problem because the ARB would still have to make the sign exception findings because of the number of signs.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Boardmember Baltay stated he could not support the Motion as he could not make the findings for a sign exception.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if he could accept the Motion if the applicant eliminated the blade sign.

Boardmember Baltay said that the blade sign is an allowed separate element and has nothing to do with the number of signs necessitating the sign exemption. The ARB cannot rewrite code and must follow the rules. He asked if the "P" logos could be considered a super graphic.

Ms. Gerhardt said super graphics are normally images, not words or lettering.

Mr. Gutierrez agreed with Ms. Gerhardt.

Boardmember Baltay requested the definition of super graphic.

Mr. Gutierrez said there was none, but he has seen illuminated cabinet signs for different tenants in the shopping center such as Macy's. Another super graphic could be an applied feature to a façade. For example, a graphic of a shoe on the Nike store that did not contain their logo would be a super graphic.

Boardmember Hirsch said the portal entry was not a sign. The signage was the elements within it. If the size of the "P" logos were appropriate then it should be acceptable.

Chair Thompson said that a sign exception would still have to be granted. Boardmember Hirsch's Motion did not receive a second, so it failed.

MOTION #2 FAILED: Lack of second.

MOTION #3: Chair Thompson moved, seconded by Boardmember Lew to approve the project per the conditions in the staff report.

Boardmember Baltay asked how the new Motion differed from Chair Thompson's first Motion.

Chair Thompson said it did not differ, it was the same Motion.

MOTION #3 FAILED: 2-2, Vice Chair Lee absent.

Boardmember Baltay recalled the North Face store project which had a large logo of a topographic map above the façade and stated he thought that was considered a super graphic.

Ms. Gerhardt agreed.

Boardmember Baltay suggested the portal frame be considered a super graphic, which would eliminate the counting of wall signs.

Ms. Gerhardt explained super graphics do not normally contain words or letters. She suggested changing the “P” logos to an image of a Peloton bike.

Mr. Gutierrez agreed and again provided the example of a large shoe graphic on a Nike store.

Boardmember Hirsch said that seemed like reasonable direction.

Boardmember Baltay asked if the Macy’s store allowed several wall signs because of its size.

Mr. Gutierrez explained that Macy’s was an anchor tenant and went through a sign exception process. An anchor tenant always appears before the ARB as a significant building. Macy’s has four sides, and one side of the façade was allowed two wall signs because of wayfinding with two sidewalks. The way the signs were placed align with lines of sight entering the shopping center. Additionally, Macy’s is a standalone building not involved with the shopping center massing. Peloton is an interior tenant space with only one façade, which makes multiple wall signs unusual.

Chair Thompson asked Boardmember Baltay and Boardmember Hirsch what the cutout in the façade did architecturally that a decal on the glass would not accomplish.

Boardmember Baltay said he saw Chair Thompson’s point.

Boardmember Hirsch said that there were many ways the glass could be etched that could be appropriate.

Boardmember Baltay explained he was torn as he could not justify any kind of sign exception for the project. Even if staff changed their determination on the sign it did not matter.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Boardmember Baltay said it might be best to approve the project but noted that Boardmember Lew was correct, and the applicant could try to appeal.

Boardmember Lew said he had nothing further to add about City Council and suggested looking to see if the sign could be considered a canopy sign since it was an entrance element.

Boardmember Baltay requested a definition.

Boardmember Lew said that the MTFs Program contained an element for canopy signs. He referred the ARB to Page 2F of the packet and read the definition.

Chair Thompson asked if the applicant would have to give up its large Peloton sign in exchange.

Boardmember Hirsch noted that Macy’s had both wall and canopy signs.

Ms. Gerhardt requested that Mr. Gutierrez show the slide of Signage Considerations. Canopy signs are an optional sign on a primary façade.

Chair Thompson requested clarification on whether the applicant would have to give up the large wall sign for a canopy.

Boardmember Lew read that “tenants may elect to use the canopy sign as their primary storefront sign.”

Boardmember Baltay said that it was in lieu of a wall sign.

Chair Thompson was not sure the applicant would be happy with that especially because there is not really a canopy element in the façade.

Mr. Gutierrez confirmed that the portal entry would have to be viewed as a canopy.

Chair Thompson said that she did not see that as viable.

Boardmember Baltay questioned whether only one sign was allowed as a canopy sign.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that he thought it was better to agree with Chair Thompson and Boardmember Lew.

Boardmember Baltay asked Chair Thompson to make her Motion again.

MOTION: Chair Thompson moved, seconded by Boardmember Lew to approve the project subject to the conditions of approval in the staff report.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0, Vice Chair Lee absent

Chair Thompson thanked staff and the applicants. She called for a five-minute break and asked staff to contact Vice Chair Lee.

ARB Break

Approval of Minutes

3. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for May 6, 2021

Vice Chair Lee joined the meeting.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Boardmember Lew to approve the Minutes for the ARB meeting of May 6, 2021.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0-1, Vice Chair Lee abstained

4. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for June 17, 2021

Boardmember Baltay noted that the June 17th meeting minutes were in a different format and asked Ms. Gerhardt how they were put together.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the City Council handbook requested summary minutes. She asked Vinh Nguyen for confirmation.

Vinh Nguyen, Administrative Associate III, explained that these minutes were done in summary format and that the transcriptionist was interested in the ARBs feedback.

Boardmember Baltay asked who summarized the meeting and how it was done.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that they were done by the transcriptionist and ARB feedback was requested.

Boardmember Baltay asked if City staff reviewed the minutes.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she and Mr. Nguyen review them briefly, but they do not have time to do more than that.

Boardmember Lew thought the summary minutes were done well. In the past summary minutes were done as a paragraph and were too short. The new summary could be shorter but was a good start.

Boardmember Baltay supported Boardmember Lew's comments and thought the minutes were well done.

Boardmember Hirsch was surprised by the new format and concerned about loss in detail. He suggested staff review them for detail as he has reservations on the process. The summary minutes are an improvement.

Vice Chair Lee supported the new format.

Chair Thompson thought the format was good but stated that the new minutes should be carefully reviewed by the ARB for possible misinterpretations. She stated support for the June 17th minutes.

Boardmember Hirsch clarified that when he mentioned detail he meant intent. It is up to Boardmembers to read the minutes and make sure they describe the ARBs intent.

Boardmember Baltay spoke to Boardmember Lew's question about further condensing the minutes. He was concerned that requesting shorter minutes would require the transcriptionist to make too many judgements on what is included. The new format is a good middle ground between verbatim transcript and summary paragraphs, and he supports it as presented.

Chair Thompson called for further comments on Boardmember Lew's question.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed that the summary minutes were properly done and that the length was appropriate. He stressed that the ARB would have to carefully review the minutes for intent.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Boardmember Hirsch to approve the Minutes for the ARB meeting of June 17, 2021.

Vice Chair Lee added that the ARB could always bring edits to the minutes from their review.

Chair Thompson stated that more brief minutes could be good as the benefit of summary minutes is that "dead wood" gets filtered out. The summary minutes still contain some "dead wood," but it is summarized.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

Ms. Gerhardt requested clarification that the ARB is pleased with the length and depth of the summary minutes.

Chair Thompson said that two Boardmembers felt the minutes could be shorter and three agreed with the current length.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the transcriptionist would be advised that the length is generally good but could be shortened if possible.

Boardmember Baltay said the transcriptionist could cut out “dead wood.”

Boardmember Hirsch explained that the transcriptionist could use terms like “all agreed” instead of listing out the agreement.

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

North of Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) Working Group Updates – Boardmember Lew

Boardmember Lew reported the Council was off in July so there was nothing new to report. There is another housing project composed of condominiums and low-income apartments proposed on Lambert which will be prescreened by the Council through the Planned Community (PC) process.

Boardmember Baltay said the May 6th minutes included a question from a member of the public about paint color on the Caltrain poles through Downtown and asked when the item would be agendized.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she may have missed that request and would follow the ARBs wishes. The City already held discussions with Caltrain but could revisit the issue.

Boardmember Baltay said the member of the public questioned if the poles were painted as approved.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed they were painted as approved.

Boardmember Baltay stated that the minutes indicated at least two Boardmembers requested the item be placed on the agenda. The public deserved to have its questions reviewed or be contacted and advised that the poles were painted as agreed. It was a mistake to ignore public comment.

Chair Thompson said she understood that a staff member, possibly Amy French, had contacted the member of the public and addressed their concerns. The ARB could take a straw poll to determine if the matter needed to be addressed further.

Boardmember Hirsch said that the question was about a colored pole standing out in the landscape. The pole was visually jarring. Research must be done to determine how the color of the pole was chosen and if it was only located in a station area or just Palo Alto in general.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that the item was not yet agendized, but tan poles were approved at the Caltrain Station and the rest of the City was to have green poles. From the vantage point of the station the pole blended in, but the resident had a different vantage point and the pole appeared to stand out. It is a pole at the station that matches the color of the station. If the ARB wanted further discussion on the matter it must be placed on an agenda. She promised to investigate if the resident had received a response.

Chair Thompson asked if the ARB wanted to place the item on an agenda for further discussion.

Boardmember Baltay did not think the item warranted further discussion but was concerned that the resident had composed two emails on the topic with no response. He advised the resident to come to an ARB meeting and present his issue. The ARB must be responsive to residents and public comment.

Chair Thompson understood that an answer was provided by staff.

Boardmember Baltay requested a staff update at a future meeting and stated the item did not have to be on an agenda.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed with Boardmember Baltay and stated he had another issue. He worried that the Objective Standards were slipping away. After the Objective Standards review he wrote a detailed letter and received no response. His letter addressed legal issues he researched which determined that it was not possible to write Objective Standards that are not completely known before an applicant submits a project. The Objective Standards include an item that states the Chair can make certain decisions but that may not be legal. He requested the item be agendized for August and the ARB review his summary letter and Chair Thompson's questions and comments.

MOTION: Boardmember Hirsch moved to keep the item open for discussion by the ARB to review its comments on the graphics and intent of the Objective Standards.

MOTION FAILED: Lack of second.

Chair Thompson stated that her intention with her email was not to reopen any items. She wanted to discuss her questions at the ARB retreat as they went beyond the Objective Standards.

Ms. Gerhardt explained the ARB made a Motion to approve the Objective Standards so it would move on to City Council. The subcommittee is working on graphics, which are forthcoming from the consultants and will be complete before the City Council meeting on August 16, 2021. If the Objective Standards do not carry through the City would have no standards and would get SB 35 projects that conform to the code with no design control. The conversations could continue but Phase 1 of Objective Standards needed to move forward as without them the City would have very few standards, possibly only height and setback.

Vice Chair Lee asked about the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) hearing and the procedural and structural plan for the Objective Standards.

Ms. Gerhardt said the PTC moved to approve the Objective Standards and send them to City Council. They discussed height transition at length. Height requirements are listed at least 11 times in the code so as part of the Objective Standards project staff is attempting to clean that up. There was a misunderstanding where residents thought the City was trying to change the code and that would be addressed at the community meeting on July 19, 2021. Invitations were sent to residents that attended the PTC meeting, architects, and Sheri Furman of Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN). The PTC appreciated the ARB work on the Objective Standards.

Boardmember Baltay asked if the ARB retreat was scheduled and stated Boardmember Hirsch's issues would be better addressed there than as an agenda item.

Chair Thompson said that at the August 19th meeting the ARB Awards would be addressed. She asked if there was interest in doing that in person as part of an ARB retreat.

Boardmember Hirsch thought that was a good retreat item.

Chair Thompson noted the ARB nodded in agreement. She stated the retreat would include discussion topics raised in her email and referenced by Boardmember Hirsch.

Vice Chair Lee confirmed the August 5th meeting was canceled and requested a summary of the July 19th community meeting.

Ms. Gerhardt stated she could provide the information in an email by July 23rd and would determine if it needed to be made public.

Vice Chair Lee asked how the community meeting was publicized and noted she did not receive an invitation.

Ms. Gerhardt stated it was email invite only and was focused on the members of the public and architects that came to the PTC. The ARB could attend but must be cognizant of quorum; if ARB members are listening then quorum is not an issue. Council will discuss Objective Standards on August 16th and Chair Thompson or another ARB member should attend.

Chair Thompson said she would attend.

Ms. Gerhardt stated staff would set a location for the retreat in a conference room or the Art Center.

Boardmember Hirsch suggested a room at the Rinconada Library.

Ms. Gerhardt said the last retreat was in the Art Center.

Boardmember Baltay preferred Downtown.

Chair Thompson said that the ARB was open to the location.

Ms. Gerhardt said staff would find a location. The agenda for the retreat would include information on the Caltrain pole, a review of the email summarizing the community meeting, Boardmember Hirsch's email, and Chair Thompson's email.

Chair Thompson said it was a good place to discuss the ARB Awards.

Ms. Gerhardt agreed.

Boardmember Hirsch requested a schedule of the ARB Awards.

Ms. Gerhardt explained the ARB Awards were past schedule due to the pandemic. She could not give a date for the Awards yet.

Chair Thompson said that a date could be discussed later.

Adjournment

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.