



HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD

DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday, September 10, 2015, Meeting
8:30 A.M., Council Chambers

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Michael Makinen, Board Members Martin Bernstein, David Bower, Beth Bunnenberg, Patricia DiCicco (arrived late), Margaret Wimmer

Absent: Chair Roger Kohler

Staff: Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director; Jodie Gerhardt, Interim Current Planning Manager; Matthew Weintraub, Planner; Diana Tamale, Administrative Associate III; Christy Fong, Planner

Oral Communications: None.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions: None.

Minutes Approval: July 23, 2015

MOTION: Board Member Bower moved, seconded by Board Member Bunnenberg, to approve the Minutes of July 23, 2015.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0 Kohler, DiCicco absent

Public Hearings

1. **425-429 University Avenue [14PLN-00222]**: Request To Consider an Appeal of the Director of Planning and Community Environment's Architectural Review Approval of a 31,407 square-foot, Four Story, Mixed Use Building with Parking Facilities on Two Subterranean Levels on an 11,000 square-foot Site in the Downtown Commercial (CD-C (GF)(P)) Zone District located at 425-429 University Avenue; and the Approval of a Mitigated Negative Declaration. Environmental Assessment: A Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared.

Board Member Bernstein disclosed that in April 2015 he provided the applicant with information regarding the Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines. To avoid an appearance of conflict of interest, he recused himself from the item.

Matt Weintraub explained the purpose of the item. The HRB should comment on the Architectural Review finding required to be made for the application.

Board Member Bunnenberg inquired whether the City of Palo Alto had a height limit for buildings. Ms. Fong responded that the maximum height was 50 feet.

Jaime Wong, applicant, reviewed the procedural history of the application and relevant portions of the historical report.

Board Members questioned the ARB's determination that the project maintained the scale and character of its surroundings; equipment screening exceeding the 50-foot height limit; not allowing residential properties to meet the 30-foot height limit but allowing commercial properties to meet the 50-foot height limit; the Carey report not reviewing carefully Birge Clark as architect of nearby properties; and the height of the building including equipment.

Elizabeth Wong, applicant, shared a comment from Mr. Bernstein's letter to her.

Board Members inquired about the impact of the project on nearby historic buildings.

Board Members commented regarding possibly incorporating a historic reference in the project; expanding the historical study area; the screening and height; and the colors of the building.

Board Members and staff discussed at length expansion of the study area, the need for a historic district, and the mass and scale of the project in relation to historic impact and CEQA.

Ms. Wong remarked that existing Codes allowed her to build a modern building to the 50-foot height limit. The proposed building fit into University Avenue. Consultants chosen by the City indicated the project had insignificant impact.

Vice Chair Makinen advised that the HRB was responding to questions posed by the City Council.

With respect to Question 1, the HRB felt other factors should be considered, namely the effect of the project on other historic properties, even those not on a Register. Massing and volume would have a distinct impact on historic structures. HRB Members were concerned regarding buildings designed by Birge Clark. With respect to Questions 2 and 3, the HRB felt the number of buildings evaluated should be expanded and suggested an area for evaluation. With respect to Question 4, massing and scale of the proposed building dominated nearby historic properties. The HRB was concerned that the proposed building affected the setting and adjacent buildings.

MOTION: Board Member Bower moved, seconded by Board Member Wimmer, that staff summarize the HRB's conversation in regards to the five questions and forward the summary to the Council after review by Vice Chair Makinen and Board Member Bower.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0 Kohler absent, Bernstein not participating

Board Items

- 2. Public Art Master Planning:** Presentation by Public Art Program staff and their master plan consultants on the public art master planning process and request for comments and input from the Board.

Mr. Weintraub reported the consultant had to leave the meeting prior to the item being called. Staff requested the item be continued to a date uncertain.

Vice Chair Makinen announced the item was continued.

- 3. 51 Encina Avenue:** Request by Board Members Bernstein and Bunnenberg for discussion regarding the property located at 51 Encina Avenue, which is a designated Category 2 Historic Structure/Site in the Palo Alto Historic Inventory.

Mr. Weintraub reported several Board Members inquired about the physical status of the property, an accessory structure on a Category 2 site. Staff noted that there appeared to be some condition issues

and potentially an alteration performed without benefit of City review. Staff sent the property owner a letter requesting contact.

Board Member Bunnenberg recalled that the project had a long history. Traces of the house were located at 50 Encina. The condition of the barn, considered an historic structure, had worsened markedly. Board Member Bernstein commented on the state of the structure. Perhaps the HRB could request the property owner take action to prevent further damage to the structure.

Board Members inquired about attaching a condition of approval regarding the historic structure to another project by the same owner; actions a Code Enforcement Officer could impose on a property owner; and an incentive program to encourage rehabilitation projects.

Council Member DuBois remarked on the HRB's robust discussion of Item Number 1. He encouraged the HRB to continue to discuss qualitative aspects of projects.

Board Member Bernstein suggested continuing the item and inviting the owner to attend and comment.

Mr. Weintraub was not sure an existing incentive program would appeal to the property owner. Perhaps an appeal to the owner's sense of community would be productive.

MOTION: Board Member Bernstein moved, seconded by Board Member Bower, to continue the item to a date uncertain based on a response by the property owner or its representative.

MOTION PASSED: 6-0 Kohler absent

Board/Staff Announcements, Updates, Reports, and Comments

Vice Chair Makinen asked if the next meeting was scheduled for two weeks. Mr. Weintraub did not have any applications scheduled. If Items 2 and 3 were ready in two weeks, they would be placed on the agenda.

Board Member Bunnenberg noted Palo Alto had three recipients of California Preservation Design Awards.

Adjournment