

COMMISSION MEMBERS
Dianne Whitaker, Chair
Eric Rodriguez, Vice Chair
Charlie Drechsler
John Ebnetter
Pamela O'Leary

CITY OF SAN MATEO

Regular Meeting Minutes - Final

City Hall
330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403
www.cityofsanmateo.org

Planning Commission

Tuesday, August 8, 2017
Council Chambers 7:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present 5 - Commissioner John Ebnetter, Commissioner Pamela O'Leary, Chairperson Dianne Whitaker, Vice Chair Eric Rodriguez, and Commissioner Charlie Drechsler

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. [Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes for July 25, 2017](#)

Commissioner Drechsler moved to approve the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Ebnetter and approved by unanimously by a voice vote.

Approved

PUBLIC COMMENT

Arnold Rodman, San Mateo: Considers San Mateo suburbia, downtown was described an "urban downtown area" at recent planning meeting, one report tonight refers to an "urban environment". When did San Mateo go from "suburban" to an "urban"?; asked if this is way we want to be classified and if this is density we want. Believes an explanation is needed. There were no other speakers. The Chair closed the Public Comment period.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. [4 West Santa Inez Condos - 4 West Santa Inez / 1 Engle Road \(PA15-104\)](#)

Lily Lim, Associate Planner, reviewed the application with a PowerPoint presentation. Commission had no questions of staff at this point. Applicant Jack Matthews, addressed the Commission with a presentation.

The Chair opened the comment period for this item. Speakers: Mary Diepenbrock, San Mateo, Michael Harrigan, San Mateo, Yolanda Crosby, San Mateo, Mary Cravalho, San Mateo, James Cravalho, San Mateo, Eileen McKague, San Mateo, Brian McKague, San Mateo, Jodie Penner, San Mateo, Mark Penner, San Mateo, Arnold Rodman, San Mateo, Patricia Bordin, San Mateo, Christopher Angelo, San Mateo, San Mateo, Virginia McLissac, San Mateo, Clara Weissmiller, San Mateo, Thomas Weissmiller, San Mateo, Gerry Wentworth, San Mateo, Peter Douglas, San Mateo, Craig Jory, San Mateo, Tom Thompson, San Mateo, Adam Loraine, San Mateo, Richard Hedges, San Mateo. Comments: A majority of speakers expressed opposition to the project. A petition was submitted on behalf of Meg Horrigan (Nextdoor) showing 85 residents oppose and 3 support this project. Speakers commented about: Mass, density, existing and expected street parking and traffic conditions, ingress and egress, driveway location/intersection, visibility, pedestrian and automobile safety; public safety (vehicle break-ins and fire trucks), CityLift automated parking system, tree removal, plans for construction site parking and storage, history of owner violations, history of rejected project proposals, concerns of adjacent neighbors, and other

broader issues.

Questions: Why doesn't the owner want to preserve some of these trees? I understand there are live streams running underneath. What is the depth of the water table? Will tree removal affect the stability of the ground, especially for the adjacent neighbors? How difficult will it be to maneuver in those restricted spaces (such as tandem, i.e., placing children in car seats)? What does that do for other people waiting to get into and out of the garage? What happens when there is a power failure? Is the lift still available and does it have a back-up system? Is it controlled by computers? Computers often have glitches. Since no management on site, how will people access/retrieve their vehicles? Who will respond to make the repairs? Are there technicians to respond? Will parts be available for maintenance or repair? How about a traffic signal at W. Santa Inez and El Camino Real? What if permission for tie-backs is not given? Where is the exhaust system for the lift structure? Where is the exhaust going to go? This is lot line to lot line development. Where is construction equipment going to be stored? How are the construction logistics going to effect our community? Both homes are old. Has there been discussion about the demolition of structures, including the abatement of asbestos and lead paint? What are the details?

Comments: Too massive for the neighborhood, traditional non-automated parking would only allow five units, many of us wouldn't be here if five units were proposed, 24" buckets of trees won't help with mass, out of scale with the homes from on Santa Inez and Engle, where there are smaller homes from the 1920's, reduce to 4-6 units max, seems to be what the neighborhood can absorb. Parking: Parking and traffic are already bad and a densely populated development will make it worse. San Mateo Park: (1) homes have single-car or no garages, on-street parking is needed for these residents and their guests, (2) is bordered by ECR, which has many R4 buildings along this transportation corridor. There is significant spillover parking from these R4 buildings, parking creeps up 1-2 blocks from every one of the R4 buildings; on-street parking also consumed by those going to work nearby or those leaving cars on street to fly out to the airport through rideshare applications, planning codes and guidelines do not take the reality of behaviors into consideration, those who choose not to use the lift system will park on W. Santa Inez and Engle Road, because there is no parking on ECR. Ingress, egress: Driveway location exacerbates existing difficult traffic conditions at intersection of West Santa Inez & ECR, will be absolute havoc, consider relocation of driveway to the less busy Engle Road. Traffic: Disagree with traffic report findings, for this reason asks Commission to reject the categorical exemption, traffic reports do not include accidents at West Santa Inez and ECR, significant delays for left turns onto ECR, traffic affects fire truck route, main route to ECR is down Santa Inez, check with the firefighters at the station and ask them if a fire truck will be able to get through.

CityLift automated parking system: We were not told of puzzle parking at original meetings at King Center earlier this year, city code states parking shall be "easily made without undue maneuvering to, into or out of a stall. All stalls shall be equally and independently accessible.", however considerable maneuvering is made by this automated machine, and therefore parking does not meet code and is a reason for denial; parking system needs on-going maintenance, repair and eventual replacement, approval with this of parking system should require the HOA to take responsibility for lift for the life of the building, no confidence in two year maintenance agreement with the owner's history of maintenance, unfair to put that onto the tenants, CityLift is better suited for high-density urban areas, not residential suburbs, SUVs don't fit, SUV sales increasing, not realistic that everyone is going to use the lift.

Tree removal: Cutting down 23 trees (staff note: 22 are being removed), six are heritage trees, heritage tree language on the city website does not seem to apply to this project, though new trees will be planted, 24" box trees will take many years to reach maturity to provide ample screening, trees proposed on ECR may be a safety issue due to visibility, tree selection under any mandate should be made by City Arborist; trees serve a variety of ecological functions-input from trained biologists and ecologist necessary to document particular ecological value that may not be obvious to the general public and/or the City Arborist.

Other comments: Concerned about street closures, cranes, construction trucks and equipment on the street; development is lot line to lot line, so trucks will be on the street during construction, neighbor's permission is needed for proposed tiebacks, not going to happen, CalTrans doesn't allow tiebacks on ECR; owner and architect ignored the density, traffic and planning concerns of the people expressed at the King Center meetings earlier this year, this is housing, but these are not affordable units; past decisions are part of the problem for Commission, obligation to residents and homeowners to first address the problems that we have now; once that is done, can consider larger developments/more units, other developments are coming, cumulative impact of approved and under-review projects, push to build high density residential without considering implications, larger concern for/should focus on infrastructure first, concern for the community; need to balance development and growth and grasp the impact on the people of San Mateo, loss of suburban environment. A number of concerns were raised by the adjacent neighbor, including size, privacy (window size), privacy barriers during construction, construction hours, excavation 20' deep 7' from their home, and concern that the project will cause unreasonable and irreparable damage to the structure.

Closing comments from speakers: Opposition is well founded, please preserve this neighborhood, consider the community, respectfully request you deny this project, asked to reduce size to the number of units that would be allowed with traditional underground parking and not the proposed mechanized process in a completely residential area; would like Planning Commission to look at some balance between R1 and R4--there is no buffer.

Three speakers spoke in favor of the project. Comments: Need for housing in the area, jobs outpacing housing, this is a creative solution to density and parking, walkable to downtown, this project, and more like it, are needed; proposed structure is not totally out of character with ECR, it is smaller than others.

The Chair closed the public comment for this item. Staff responded to some of the questions raised by the speakers. After some discussion, Commissioner Rodriguez moved to continue the public hearing on this item to a date uncertain, and that future public comment be limited to the conditions of approval. Second by Commissioner Drechsler. Motion approved 5-0 on a voice vote.

Continued to a Date Uncertain

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Ebnetter, Commissioner O'Leary, Chairperson Whitaker, Vice Chair Rodriguez, and Commissioner Drechsler

STUDY SESSION

3. [San Mateo Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade and Expansion Pre-Application - 2050 Detroit Drive \(PA17-034\)](#)

Brad Underwood, Public Works Director, addressed the Commission. David Hogan, Contract Planner, reviewed the item with a PowerPoint presentation. Deryk Daquigan, Deputy Program Manager, San Mateo Clean Water Program, had a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed the project in relationship with the Clean Water Program.

Staff clarified Planning Commission's role pertaining to this item. Public Works and the Clean Water Program staff are on working within a timeline; this project will return for a vote when a formal application is made. A site-specific CEQA will be a part of the formal application.

The Chair opened the public comment period for this item. Speakers: Kelly Moran, San Mateo, Esther Conrad, San Mateo, Renjit Mathew, San Mateo, Joshua Hugg, San Mateo, Adam Loraine, San Mateo, Richard Hedges, San Mateo. Speaker questions and comments:

Questions: The focus has been on meeting requirements to upgrade our facilities in time for permit renewal in 2020. What's the long term design for the plant? Where are we headed in the long term? Will we be able to free up space at the site and, for example, move the corporation yard or other facilities to this location? Instead of building for a combined system, why don't we design for a fix of the sanitary system? If the City did have a lateral ordinance, would blending be allowed? If that is true, would a smaller plant be allowed? If so, how much money would that save? Why is this important? 1) Would like tax dollars to be spent well, and 2) don't want sewage leaking into the ground. Critically important to understand the link--if we have a lateral line ordinance, will it save us millions of dollars?

Comments - general: All speakers commented about: Plant design and size, sewer lateral repair ordinance, and cost. Additional comments about permit timing and building for climate change resilience. Detailed comments: Not clear how big the plant needs to be, largest capital expenditure undertaken, plant is oversized by designing it to deal with high levels of flow, if designed for less flow, it will be physically smaller, costing less and making way for other land uses, the design before you is fundamentally challenged, everything is in place except a sewer lateral repair ordinance for inflow reduction, don't understand why we don't, it's known that water is seeping in from sewer laterals and that the lagoon is polluted with bacteria. Some of that is coming from the sewer laterals; the EPA, state water board and other environmental organizations are seeking sewer lateral improvements because the leaks from laterals are a public health threat, cannot size holding tanks if we do not know inflow from sewer laterals, need to look at the big picture, this is a very costly program, taxpayers will be bearing the cost, extra time could be afforded to look into the matter of a sewer lateral ordinance, sewer lateral infiltration has an influence on the necessity to have a plant of a certain size and has implications for groundwater infiltration, if we address the sewer lateral inspection issue, it buys us time with the RWQCB permit, this time allows us to (1) look at an appropriately sized, less expensive alternative and (2) provide a much more comprehensive solution; the phasing flexibility allowed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is not specified in the materials before the Planning Commission tonight (speaker asked City to follow up with RWQCB). Climate change resilience comments: Important to build beyond the minimum to protect this very critical piece of infrastructure. For public health and the functioning of the community, it is important to consider elevations, structures and design that protect the facility beyond 30 years, include designs elements such as horizontal levees. Speakers urged Commission to: ask these questions, encourage staff to support the matters articulated, and ask City Council to reconsider how to move forward on this; the design and future use of the site are affected.

Discussion was held between commissioners and staff about the formal application process and Commission's charge this evening. Commission comments and questions: Speakers have made significant comments, concerned about how FEMA flood protection ties in with this, concerned about sustainability of this project, saltwater intrusion into the wastewater process. When was the last time Council weighed in on the project before us tonight? Concerned that circumstances may have changed since then. Will the RWQCB allow us to slow our process down so that we can look at alternatives? Staff responded. Commission's comments followed.

Planning Commission Comments:

Want City Council and Public Works staff to consider information/benefit from advice from both Commission and citizenry, important information provided tonight is of concern, concerned things have changed since project was approved by Council, need cohesive information, facility is too large and should be scaled down to reduce cost, need to make sure taxpayers money is not needlessly spent, urges City Council and Public Works to consider/have conversation about sewer lateral repairs/ordinance, assume Public Works/City staff are looking into the 100 year flood and climate change aspect, we have a duty from a public safety standpoint, there are areas we can improve, there is pressure from a regulatory board, but for a project of this magnitude, if we know we can do better, consider options before moving forward.

Comments about project design: Most commissioners favored the building design, including screening and the pedestrian bridge. One stated the west elevation is the most interesting and would rather see it face Joinville instead of the parking lot. One commissioner did not find administration building and headworks aesthetically pleasing. Other comments: Concerned about the elevation of new and existing buildings; some of the existing facility is below sea level, reality of sea level rise is a consideration, the basement below the administration building will be rendered useless in time of flood, use highest quality materials to make the project last as long as possible, include reflection of the natural environment in design. Landscaping: No negative comments about landscaping. Consider horizontal wetlands; one commissioner preferred mixing plant materials for a less manicured look, another expressed concern about tree selection due to quality of the soil. Raised walkway is high maintenance, one commented that it did not need to be elevated. Educational component: All favorable comments; added that it should be interactive, use technology, and should be as engaging as possible. The idea of incorporating a public art piece as part of the education element/part of the design was stated.

REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reports and announcements were not made due to the late hour.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 9th.