

# Town of Los Altos Hills Planning Commission Regular Meeting May 6, 2021 Minutes

Council Chambers, 26379 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hills, California

## 1. ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Via teleconference according to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, Chair Patel called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Couperus, Commissioner Waschura, Vice-Chair Indaco, Chair Patel,

Staff: Planning Director Dahl, Assistant Planner Loh, Assistant Planner Yost, Management Analyst Einfalt, Planning Technician Brunner

## 2. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Persons wishing to address the Commission on any subject not on the agenda are invited to do so now. Please note, however, that the Commission is not able to undertake extended discussion or act tonight on non-agendized items. Such items will be referred to staff or placed on the agenda for a future meeting.

No presentations from the floor.

## 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 Approval of April 1, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

**MOTION MADE AND SECONDED:** Motion by **Vice-Chair Indaco** to approve the April 1, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by **Chair Patel**

**AYES:** Commissioner Couperus, Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Waschura, Vice-Chair Indaco, Chair Patel

**NOES:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**MOTION:** Carried 5-0

## 4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

### Planning Commission Ex Parte

**Vice-Chair Indaco** had communications with Carol Gottlieb of the Environmental Design & Protection Committee (EDPC) and Kit Gordan of the Open Space Committee (OSC) on Item 4.1; **Commissioner Couperus**, Carol Gottlieb of EDPC, and Kjell Karlsson on Item 4.3, and **Commissioner Couperus**, and neighbors Joanna Strober, and Bob Elson on Item 4.4.

**Commissioner Couperus** had communications with **Vice-Chair Indaco** and Kjell Karlsson on Item 4.3 and Vice-Chair Indaco, neighbors Joanna Strober, and Bob Elson on Item 4.4.

**Commissioner Smith** had no ex parte communications.

**Chair Patel** had communications with the neighbors Bob Elson and Joanna Strober on Item 4.4.

**Commissioner Waschura** had communications with the owner, Brandon Low, and his architect on Item 4.3; and Bob Elson, of the Pathways Committee, on Item 4.4.

**Commissioner Waschura** noted he was within 500 feet of the property for agenda Item 4.1 and excused himself from the portion of the meeting that discussed Item 4.1.

- 4.1 [12819 Viscaino Road – File #SD21-0006 and VAR21-0003 – Lands of Howarth Site Development Permit and Variance for a new 4,373 square-foot, two-story residence with a 1,320 square-foot basement that encroaches 30 feet into the required 36-foot side yard setback from an easement for vehicular access along the west property line, and an exception to the Town’s Grading Policy.](#)  
CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Sections 15303(a) and 15305(a)  
*Staff: Krista Yost*

**Chair Patel** opened the PUBLIC HEARING.

**Assistant Planner Yost** presented the staff report.

**Commissioner Couperus** asked staff about the easement granted to the neighbor.

**Scott (and Gina) Howarth**, the applicants, commented on the foundation issues of his home as it pertained to his decision to rebuild and his variance request.

**Dan Garber**, representing the applicant's design team, commented on the open space easement request and other design decisions presented to the Planning Commission.

Public Comment

**Carol Gottlieb**, representing the EDPC, commented on the Open Space conservation easement.

The applicant, **Scott Howarth**, provided a rebuttal to comments and addressed other design decisions.

**Peter Carlino**, representing Lea & Braze and the applicant, commented about the proposed cut and fill. He also commented that the dedicated easement could not be removed, except by the City Council.

**Chair Patel** closed the PUBLIC HEARING.

Commissioner Discussion

**Chair Patel** proposed the Commissioners offer a motion after Vice-Chair Indaco's presentation and then proceed with their discussion.

**Vice-Chair Indaco** shared a presentation and offered a preliminary motion.

**Commissioner Couperus** offered comments about the Open Space easement, modifying the easement granted to the neighbor, the hillside, and the density of oak trees as they pertain to fire danger.

**Commissioner Smith** offered comments about the Open Space easement and the property, replacement of the oak trees as they pertain to fire danger, screening, soil stabilization and the cut and fill proposal.

**Chair Patel** offered comments about the challenges of the property for development. He agreed with Commissioner Couperus' Open Space comments and suggested the applicant work with staff and the OSC to develop a solution for the Open Space easement. He suggested the trees remain during the construction phase and then review the removal request during the landscape screening phase of the project.

Commission discussion regarding the open space easement ensued.

**MOTION MADE AND SECONDED:** Motion by **Vice-Chair Indaco** to APPROVE the site development permit, variance, and exception to the Town's Grading Policy, subject to the listed findings and conditions of approval in Attachment 1, with the following added items:

1. Retain oak trees numbered 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Ensure they are properly protected during the construction process, utilizing a retaining wall barrier where needed.
2. Recommend transition to the southeast corner of the house with stepped retaining wall/planter terraces to soften the 32-foot-high appearance.
3. Amend the COA number 20, which grants an Open Space Easement (OSE) to define the extent of the OSE as mutually agreed by the applicant, OSC, and planning staff prior to building permit issuance.
4. Metal roof shall have a matte finish.
5. Landscape screening to be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Couperus**.

AYES: Commissioner Couperus, Commissioner Smith, Vice-Chair Indaco, Chair Patel

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Waschura

MOTION: Carried 4-0-0-1

- 4.2. 12131 Oak Park Court – File #SD21-0014 – Lands of Low and Ni  
Site Development Permit for a new 4,689 square-foot two-story residence, a new 719 square-foot Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), a new 640 square-foot pool and exceptions to the Town's Grading Policy.  
CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303(a)  
Staff: *Jeremy Loh*

**Chair Patel** opened the PUBLIC HEARING.

**Assistant Planner Loh** presented the staff report.

**Vice-Chair Indaco** asked staff about the lighting.

Staff responded with a presentation illustrating the proposed and revised lighting plan.

**Commissioner Waschura** asked staff questions regarding easements and maintenance of certain elements on the applicant's property within those easements.

**Commissioner Couperus** commented on the height of the sound wall.

Questions and answers between the Commissioners and staff ensued.

The applicant, **Brandon Lo**, introduced his wife, **Gina**, and spoke on behalf of his proposal.

**Nick Miller** and **Jeff Zimmerman**, the applicant's architects, shared a presentation and addressed their design decisions.

**Peter Carlino**, of Lea & Braze, commented on the geotechnical aspects of the property, the date of the sound wall, and shared a plan that was more current on the contour and fill on the property.

The Commissioners asked the design team questions regarding their design decisions, especially regarding sound buffering.

#### Public Comment

**Harjit Sabharwal**, the next-door neighbor to the applicant, commented on his concerns regarding future landscape screening issues adjacent to his property.

**Carol Gottlieb**, of the EDPC, offered comments regarding the proposed fence, oak trees, and noise mitigation efforts.

The applicant's design team offered a rebuttal to public comments.

The applicant, **Gina**, offered comments regarding the neighbor's concerns regarding landscape screening.

**Chair Patel** closed the PUBLIC HEARING.

#### Commission Discussion

**Commissioner Waschura** asked about noise mitigation.

**Vice-Chair Indaco** had the same concerns and shared a presentation on the issue.

Commission discussion ensued regarding recommendations to the applicant on reducing the sound from Highway 280 to the property to the level of 45dB.

**Commissioner Smith** commented on protecting the oak tree.

**MOTION MADE AND SECONDED:** Motion by **Vice-Chair Indaco** to APPROVE the Site Development Permit and exception to the Town's Grading Policy subject to the listed findings and conditions of approval in Attachment 1 with the following added items:

1. The applicant must submit building material details to the Planning staff prior to building permit issuance to address the noise attenuation from the close proximity of Highway 280 to the property. For example:
  - a. triple paned windows and strategic placement
  - b. insulation for walls and ceilings and/or acoustical drywall with sound ratings for all
  - c. exterior wall material with sound rating
2. No hardscape under the 42" oak except for a walkway less than or equal to 4' next to house to exit doorway on west side. Specifically, remove the square patio with retaining wall under the oak.

The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Waschura**.

AYES: Commissioner Couperus, Commissioner Waschura, Commissioner Smith, Vice-Chair Indaco, Chair Patel  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
MOTION: Carried 5-0

- 4.3. [12355 Stonebrook Drive – File #PM21-0004 and SD21-0014 – Lands of Mattela Atluri Revocable Trust](#)  
Permit Modification to an approved Site Development Permit (SD19-0016) and a Site Development Permit for a new 1,630 square-foot bunker and 785 square-foot basement beneath an expanded cabana totaling 785 square feet, an expanded Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) totaling 1,103 square feet, a new 2,579 square-foot roof deck with an attached 304 square-foot balcony, and reduction in garage floor area totaling 400 square feet (four garage spaces retained).  
CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303  
*Staff: Jeremy Loh*

**Chair Patel** opened the PUBLIC HEARING.

**Assistant Planner Loh** presented the staff report.

Questions and answers between the Commissioners and staff ensued regarding lighting.

**Venkat Mattela**, the applicant, introduced himself and his wife and offered comments on his project.

The applicant's architect, **Scott Stotler**, offered comments regarding the bunker, roof deck, and large light well.

The Commissioners asked the applicant and his architect questions regarding elements of the proposed design.

Public Comment

**Carol Gottlieb**, representing the EDPC and the History Committee, offered comments regarding the bunker, parking, railings, and lighting. She also made a request on behalf of the History Committee.

**Na Na (Augustin)**, a neighbor to the applicant, offered comments regarding the roof deck, tree screening, and privacy concerns.

The applicant responded to concerns provided during public comment.

**Scott Stotler**, the applicant's architect, requested the Commissioners consider approval conditions tonight so the project can move forward. He stated construction timing concerns.

**Commissioner Waschura** asked staff a question regarding parking.

Commission Discussion

**Vice-Chair Indaco** shared a presentation and offered comments and ideas for a motion.

Commissioner discussion ensued regarding the proposed bunker design, oak tree #39, and the converted patio.

The Commissioners shared their concerns regarding protecting tree #39. They invited the applicant to address these concerns.

The applicant, **Venkat Mattela**, and his architect, **Scott Stotler** offered alternate design suggestions.

**MOTION MADE AND SECONDED:** Motion by **Commissioner Waschura** to ADOPT the Resolution (Attachment 1) to APPROVE the Permit Modification and Site Development Permit, subject to the listed findings and conditions of approval with the following added items:

1. Relocate the cabana stairwell adjacent to the lightwell to the left, away from tree 39.
2. Remove the lightwell near tree #39 and reduce the 50 ft lightwell to 10 ft x 6 ft with lighting, evacuation, and ventilation.
3. Water dissipaters to be placed away from the 40' perimeter of oak tree #39.
4. Reduce the number of lights on the roof deck to 6 and the cabana loggia to 7.
5. Patios that are converted from garage space must be modified to prohibit vehicular access. Remove paved driveway access to the patios.

The motion was seconded by **Chair Patel**.

AYES: Commissioner Couperus, Commissioner Waschura, Chair Patel  
NOES: Commissioner Smith, Vice-Chair Indaco  
ABSENT: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
MOTION: Carried 3-2

The PUBLIC HEARING adjourned for a 4-minute break at 10:48pm.

The PUBLIC HEARING resumed at 10:52pm.

- 4.4. [14381 Miranda Way – File #APL21-0002 – Lands of West Valley Ventures LLC](#)  
Appeal of an approved Site Development Permit for a new 4,999 square-foot, two-story residence with an 1,827 square-foot basement and a detached 800 square-foot accessory dwelling unit.  
CEQA Review: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303(a)  
Staff: *Jeremy Loh*

**Chair Patel** opened the PUBLIC HEARING.

**Commissioner Smith** recused himself from this portion of the meeting since he lives within 500 feet of this property.

**Assistant Planner Loh** presented the staff report.

Questions and answers between the **Chair Patel** and staff ensued regarding privacy and identifying the property line.

One of the appellants, **Commissioner Couperus**, shared a presentation and offered comments.

**Vice-Chair Indaco**, the other appellant, shared a presentation and offered comments.

**Commissioner Waschura** asked if the house were dropped down 3 ft, would the pool also be lowered?

**Assistant Planner Loh** commented that the lower floor is already at the maximum for cut.

The applicant was not in attendance to offer comments.

Commission discussion ensued.

Public Comment

**Joanna Strober**, a neighbor to the applicant, offered comments regarding privacy and identifying the property line.

**Vijay Chawla**, from the EDPC, offered comments regarding the exterior lighting, large glass patio doors as they relate to light leakage, and other items.

**Robert Elson**, a neighbor to the applicant, offered comments regarding parking.

**Chair Patel** closed the PUBLIC HEARING.

Commission Discussion

Commission discussion resumed.

**MOTION MADE AND SECONDED:** Motion by **Vice-Chair Indaco** to CONTINUE the Site Development Permit and Conditions of Approval appeal with the following considerations:

1. Sound, light, glare, and privacy are the top concerns on the second story roof deck. Come back with a revised plan.
2. Parking requirement of 4 parking spots must be unobstructed and easily accessible out of setbacks, as well as planning for visitor parking and vehicle turnaround.
3. Landscape screening evergreen trees to be planted prior to building permit issuance for 14335 Miranda Way neighbor. The trees are to be irrigated during construction and counted as existing for Landscape Screening Review. The neighbor has agreed to five 60" boxed redwoods at 20' tall plus eight smaller 24" boxed redwoods at 12' tall to be planted along the southern property line by the applicant.
4. Exterior recessed lighting in the western facing roof eaves to be reduced to 2 close to the living room and 3 close to the master bedroom. No recessed light in high roof eave near dining room. Exterior recessed lighting in the northern facing roof eaves to be reduced to 2 close to the living room. No pendant light and no light in fan fixture. Follow lumens/Kelvins chart.
5. Roof eaves of all structures shall not encroach into the require side and rear yards. The roof eaves shall be shown on the site plans in the set of the construction drawings.
6. Concerns about 3-story façade due to basement daylighting.
7. Preliminary landscape proposal along with a revised building plan to come back to Planning Commission. We recommend mature evergreen trees (40' in maturation) to be placed between the house and ADU to screen Miranda Road neighbors across the street. Additionally, continue screening trees and hedge of lower area below ADU to the southern property line. The applicant will work with neighbor at 14370 Miranda Road for agreement. Screening hedges that should be considered are English laurels Toyons, Photinias and not Carolina laurels.
8. Heat pumps and pool equipment shall be enclosed in a noise attenuation enclosure.

The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Waschura**.

AYES: Commissioner Couperus, Commissioner Waschura, Vice-Chair Indaco, Chair Patel  
 NOES: None  
 ABSENT: None  
 ABSTAIN: Commissioner Smith  
 MOTION: Carried 4-0-0-1

5. REPORTS FROM THE CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

5.1 Upcoming Meeting Assignments

- May 20, 2021 – Chair Patel
- June 17, 2021 – Commissioner Couperus
- July 15, 2021 – Commissioner Waschura
- August 19, 2021 – Vice-Chair Indaco



**Chair Patel** confirmed upcoming meeting assignments with the Commissioners.

5.2 Past Meetings Reviews

- April 15, 2021 – Commissioner Smith

**Commissioner Smith** shared highlights of the past City Council meeting.

6. REPORTS FROM FAST TRACK / SITE DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS

6.1 April 13, 2021

- 26724 Palo Hills Drive – File #SD20-0097 – Lands of Wen  
Site Development Permit for a new 5,917 square-foot, two-story residence with an attached 706 square-foot accessory dwelling unit, a 1,000 square-foot swimming pool, and a 400 square-foot pool cabana. APPROVED

6.2 April 20, 2021

- 14146 Amherst Court – File #SD20-0089 – Lands of Shakir  
Site Development Permit for a new 512 square-foot swimming pool and associated hardscape improvements. APPROVED
- 14221 Miranda Road – File #SD20-0047 – Lands of Irani  
Site Development Permit for a new 4,199 square-foot, two-story residence with a 658 square-foot detached garage and a 1,093 square-foot swimming pool. APPROVED
- 13920 Fremont Pines Lane – File #VAR21-0002 – Lands of Corrigan  
Minor Variance to allow a new 856 square-foot ground-mounted solar panel system to exceed MDA by 238 square-feet. APPROVED

6.3 April 27, 2021

- 24840 Summerhill Avenue – File #SD21-0007 – Lands of Ali and Varadarajan  
Site Development Permit for landscape screening and new fencing for an approved two-story residence. APPROVED
- 26616 Westwind Way – File #SD20-0096 – Lands of Chakravarthy  
Site Development Permit for a new 4,935 square-foot, two-story residence with a 2,100 square-foot basement and two-car garage, a detached 655 square-foot accessory dwelling unit, a 500 square-foot swimming pool, and related hardscape. APPROVED

6.4. May 4, 2021

- 27644 Natoma Road – File #SD21-0031 – Lands of Sharma  
Site Development Permit for a new 1,000 square-foot swimming pool and associated hardscape improvements.
- 27474 Sunrise Farm Road – File #SD20-0098 – Lands of Zeigler  
Site Development Permit for a new 4,492 square-foot two-story residence with a 334 square-foot attached ADU.

**Planning Director Dahl** noted all eight Site Development/Fast Track projects were approved.

7. PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

**Planning Director Dahl** had no new items to report.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:47 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Keren Brunner  
Planning Technician