

REGULAR MEETING OF THE FOSTER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

At 7:00 p.m. by Chair Jagtiani

This meeting was held as a hybrid meeting.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Haddad, Pedro, Venkat, and Chair Jagtiani

Absent: Commissioners Bronitsky

Staff Present: Sofia Mangalam, Community Development Director; Helen Gannon, Associate Planner; and Denise Bazzano, Assistant City Attorney

3. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

1. None

4. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. MINUTES OF AUGUST 17, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Pedro, seconded by Commissioner Haddad to approve the Minutes of August 17, 2023 Regular Meeting, passed 4-0-0-1 (Absent: Bronitsky)

5. **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING**

1. None

6. **NEW PUBLIC HEARING**

1. CONSIDER APPLICATION FOR ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PERMIT TO RELOCATE AND CONSTRUCT AN ADDITIONAL DRIVEWAY ON A SITE WHICH CONTAINS A SHARED DRIVEWAY, ADD SIX NEW SKYLIGHTS, EXPAND AN EXISTING COVERED PATIO IN THE REAR, AND CONSTRUCT A TOTAL OF 770 SQUARE FOOT ADDITION TO THE FRONT AND REAR ELEVATION OF THE SINGLE-STORY SINGLE-FAMILY HOME LOCATED AT 106 CHALLENGE COURT IN NEIGHBORHOOD 1 – AR2023-0004

Planning Commission and Public Comments:

- Kirti Patel, the applicant for 106 Challenge Court, shared his family's needs, including separate office spaces to work from home and proposing single-story addition, keeping in mind privacy of the neighbors and characteristics of an Eichler home. The applicant noted that they have accommodated changes in their final

design per neighbor's requests and there is no record of a shared driveway. A driveway study was prepared by Kimley-Horn using the two largest minivans. He then shared examples from the surrounding neighborhood, including 103 and 104 Challenge Court, 650 Matsonia Drive.

- Mr. Bernal from Kimley Horn explained the driveway study is included as an attachment to the staff report and shared his recommendations.
- Commissioner Venkat asked if there were other rebuttals from any other neighbors besides 104 Challenge, to which staff replied that no other neighbors provided comments.
- Commissioner Haddad asked if there are any city requirements for on-street parking as the proposed driveway will result in loss of a parking space, to which staff replied that we do not have the requirements.
- Commissioner Pedro asked if the movement for 104 Challenge Court would be impacted, to which Mr. Bernal replied yes. Then the Commissioner asked about the best practice regarding single turn that Traffic Patterns included in the peer review. Mr. Bernal replied that in the current built environment, it is not uncommon for a garage to require a three-point turn movement.
- Chair Jagtiani asked if, in the future, the homeowner for 104 Challenge Court decides to sell the house, they would need to include a disclosure or recommendation regarding the reverse entry for a single movement entry. Mr. Bernal replied that he is not aware of such a requirement and that it would only apply if there was a second car parked already. Chair Jagtiani then asked if there would be any impact to emergency vehicles. Mr. Bernal noted that he was not aware of ambulances using driveways or requirements related to it. Lastly, Chair Jagtiani asked if the consultant would have a different conclusion to the report if he were to prepare it for the neighbor's property at 104 Challenge Court.
- Commissioner Pedro asked Mr. Rodriguez from Traffic Patterns about the impact on 104 Challenge Court if the best practices mentioned in the peer review are not followed. Mr. Rodriguez replied that he is not aware of any new construction that does not require a single movement and the review was done keeping in mind how would it impact the 104 Challenge Court as it operates today and believes there is a significant impact.
- Commissioner Haddad questioned whether widening of the driveway for 104 Challenge Court could resolve the issue of entering the garage. Mr. Rodriguez suggested that this specific scenario hasn't been analyzed, so it's unclear whether it would definitively solve the issue.
- Commissioner Haddad requested the applicant to consider exploring this option. The applicant expressed willingness to investigate widening the entrance as a potential solution. However, the Assistant City Attorney noted that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed project.
- Commissioner Venkat questioned the designer regarding the design choices, particularly the use of larger windows facing the street in an Eichler-style home, and whether there are any examples of similar Eichlers that have opened the front for additional windows and light. The designer responded by mentioning that they are not prepared to discuss other houses but notes that historically, Eichler homes have had more backyard-oriented glazing. However, she emphasized that the purpose of the rooms being added, which are meant to be offices, played a role in

the design decisions. The designer also mentioned that the neighbor's preference led to the relocation of the office entrance.

- Commissioner Pedro asked if widening the driveway of 106 Challenge Court would lessen the impact on 104 Challenge Court. Mr. Bernal answered that it would not make a difference.
- Commissioner Venkat questioned one of the written public comments regarding the depreciation of the property value for 104 Challenge Court.
- Nancy Harmon, a resident of 104 Challenge Court for over 37 years, shared that she has had the benefit of being able to pull-in and back out of both sides of the driveway and is happy that Traffic Patterns was called in for an opinion and concurred that this development would result in significant negative circulation. She mentioned the absence of consideration for recreational vehicles, which retirees like her may purchase and asked for consideration of the same. She referred to previously submitted comments from a realtor and Chris Eckert. She noted appreciation for the changes that the applicants made as per their request including the location of a door and a notch to the building to give them more room. She requested that story poles be erected to visualize the impact of the proposed changes on the area's accessibility. She then requested to put story poles with mesh and drawing a line with chalk was not sufficient. The applicant also proposed to extend the neighbor's driveway.
- Bill Borter is concerned about the lack of clarity regarding how the proposed house will impact the area. He mentioned a desire for visual representations, like netting seen in other Bay Area projects, to better understand the changes. Mr. Borter described his parking habits and how the proposed changes would affect them. He expressed concerns about the need to back out onto the street or driveway. He acknowledged the concessions made by the applicant but emphasized the importance of understanding the impact on his property's value, noting that there is already a negative impact.
- The majority of the Planning Commission noted that they would not be able to make at least one (1) of the findings out of three (3) and asked the applicant if they were willing to change the project design.
- The applicant noted that they had considered a lot of options, including building in the rear as they use their backyard a lot and adding a second story because of privacy concerns. The option to build in the front was to leverage the use of our property for work from home situation. Based on this, the applicant came up with a minimum viable area to fit two (2) bedrooms and a bathroom. The applicant did work with their neighbors and there is enough space. The applicant then provided comments on the peer review by Traffic Patterns. The applicant said that the project was submitted in January and a lot of work has gone into it. The driveway study was done using large cars.
- Chair Jagtiani asked if the applicant was willing to show the configuration and how it would impact the neighbor. The applicant agreed to show the boundary of the configuration and let the neighbors use it for a few days.
- Commissioner Venkat noted that nine months is already a long time and concessions have been made. It does not send a good message to other homeowners who wish to make changes to their property.

ACTION: Motion by Commissioner Pedro to continue item to a date uncertain, seconded by Commissioner Haddad, passed 3-1-0-1 (Noes: Venkat; Absent: Bronitsky)

7. OLD BUSINESS

1. None

8. NEW BUSINESS

1. None

9. STUDY SESSION

1. TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND DISCUSS PROPOSED SITE AND ARCHITECTURAL PLANS FOR THE PROPOSED ±190,000 SQUARE FOOT, FIVE-STORY, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BUILDING LOCATED AT 331 LAKESIDE DRIVE IN THE SOUTH CAMPUS OF THE GILEAD SCIENCES INTEGRATED CAMPUS MASTER PLAN – UP2023-0079

Planning Commission Comments:

- Commissioner Pedro requested to explore in more detail the specific LEED requirements that are being fulfilled and discuss California's landscaping practices and how they contribute positively to the environment through reduced water usage and related aspects.
 - Gilead landscape representative explained that the building's goal is to be prepared for a net-zero carbon future, achieved by transitioning to an all-electric system and replacing traditional gas boilers with electric heat pumps. This move reduces carbon emissions immediately and even more so over time. Currently, the building benefits from a lower-carbon PG&E grid as it uses electricity, which aligns with PG&E's commitment to reaching net zero between 2035 and 2040.
 - By adopting this all-electric system now, as the PG&E grid becomes greener, the building will eventually reach net-zero carbon emissions. This approach ensures that all the energy required for the laboratory building can be sourced from the California grid and this technology.
 - In addition to the energy aspect, Gilead is dedicated to sustainability goals, aiming for a 50% reduction in water use compared to the baseline, which is part of their ongoing design brief for the project.
 - In relation to the landscaping aspect, the emphasis is on plant materials, particularly those native to California. The selection of plant materials predominantly leans towards California natives, as indicated by the yellow dots on a slide. This choice aligns with the California coastal prairie and coastal scrub palette found in the Bay Area and the site's historical ecosystem.
 - The use of these native plants aims to support the local habitat ecology naturally. Drip irrigation will be employed, and most of the chosen plants are drought-tolerant, with a few exceptions, such as those used in bioretention

- basins for stormwater treatment. Overall, the landscaping plan focuses on sustainability and achieving a distinctly native appearance.
- Gilead representative also mentioned a project in Burlingame Point with similar plant materials, emphasizing how this approach fosters native wildlife, such as butterflies and insects, and enhances the connection with nature, which is expected to inspire scientific endeavors and provide a restorative environment for workers.
 - Commissioner Venkat inquired about the availability of any public spaces and amenities that could be enjoyed by members of the community.
 - Gilead design representative responded that the Vintage Park Community Association access and corridors around the project will be preserved, and there will be visual improvements for those walking through the campus.
 - Chair Jagtiani inquired if there would be more people working in the new building compared to the one being replaced and if this change might affect traffic to and from the city.
 - Kohar Kojayan, a representative from Gilead, stated that there will be a net increase of around 200 employees on campus due to the expansion, which is consistent with what was studied in the EIR. The total number of employees and traffic impacts remain within the approved limits from the CEQA document. Additionally, they have a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan in place, which is regularly monitored and shows compliance with allotted campus limits for employees and traffic.

The Commission had no further comments and did not recommend any modifications to the proposed building.

10. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORT

1. Director Mangalam discussed that staff is soliciting feedback on a Draft Ordinance for Objective Design and Development Standards from the community. She mentioned sending emails and conducting tabling events to gather input but expressed a need for more feedback. She requested the Commissioners' assistance in spreading the word about the Draft Ordinance. Director Mangalam mentioned plans for a future Study Session to discuss any feedback received and potential amendments to other Chapters in the Municipal Code.

11. STATEMENTS AND REQUESTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

1. Commissioner Venkat expressed gratitude to the staff and the applicant, as well as the neighbors and individuals who provided public comments. She mentioned a recent homicide in San Mateo County related to domestic violence, involving a woman named Grace Marie Kelly. She emphasized the ongoing issue of domestic violence and abuse and shared the hotline number for CORA, an organization that assists individuals affected by domestic violence in San Mateo County, which is 800-300-1080.
2. Commissioner Pedro commended a successful meeting and offered special recognition to project planner Helen for her extensive efforts on item 6.1. He expressed appreciation for the cooperation of the group of Commissioners and acknowledged the valuable contributions each member makes to the public process. He echoed the sentiment that public feedback and comments are refreshing and instrumental in the decision-making

process, encouraging continued participation from the public. He thanked the public for their involvement in the meeting.

3. Chair Jagtiani expressed gratitude to staff and specifically acknowledged Helen for her hard work on the project. He committed to spreading the word about ODDS, mentioned his efforts on social media and his intention to personally reach out to others to ensure they engage with it.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 7.48 pm on October 5, 2023, Regular Meeting.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of Foster City at a Regular Meeting thereof held on October 5, 2023 by the following vote:

AYES, COMMISSIONERS: Haddad, Pedro, and Chair Jagtiani

NOES, COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN, COMMISSIONERS: Bronitsky

ABSENT, COMMISSIONERS: Venkat

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RAVI JAGTIANI, CHAIR

ATTEST:

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SOFIA MANGALAM, SECRETARY