

DRAFT, not yet adopted by KMAC

KMAC Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2007

1. Roll call.

Chairman Barraza called the meeting to order and introduced the KMAC members. In attendance were Gordon Becker, Pam Brown, Rich Karlsson, Kay Reed, and Patrick Tahara.

2. Approval of minutes.

The chair submitted the minutes for the meeting of January 30th for approval. The minutes were approved five to zero without amendment.

3. Public comment.

Mr. Jose Lujan said he sought information regarding setback requirements and trees blocking views. Chair Barraza indicated where to find the ordinance applying to the topic. Ms. Kay Reed noted that a list of recommended supplies in case of earthquake was available to interested parties.

The Chair explained KMAC procedures and announced that he would abstain from voting on one agenda item and relinquish the chair during consideration of another. Mr. Becker will vote in place of the Chair on these items.

4. Consent items.

a) 263 Arlington

This item was carried over from last meeting as a consent item. Members of the KMAC inquired of the architect why an inoperable bathroom window was included in the design, and he responded that the window was requested by the client. Mr. Karlsson asked about the reason for the requested variance and was informed that existing non-conforming conditions made the variance necessary.

A motion was made to approve the item with plans dated February 13, 2007 with a condition of approval that the second floor window on north side of the house be made operable. The motion was approved five to zero.

5. Colusa Circle

The applicants presented the project using drawings and a model. They noted that a larger project was approved by Contra Costa County in 1983 which they now seek to amend. Since that time KMAC has discussed the proposed amendment to the approved Planned Unit Development (PUD) on three occasions (2003, 2004 and 2005).

The project architect noted previous concerns regarding the mass of the northern building and described efforts to respond to these concerns. The third floor area was reduced,

while the first floor area increased in size. The project includes retail space on the first floor and professional office space above. A partial pitched roof was added to the original design above the second floor to reduce the impact of the structure viewed from Colusa Avenue. A pitched roof also was added to the third floor.

The project also involves a new building on the southern portion of the property. This triangular “infill” building is proposed between the two existing buildings facing along the west side of Colusa.

The architect noted that earlier concerns regarding handicapped access have been addressed through re-design. Such access would be from the courtyard to the west of the structures.

Chair Barraza reviewed the components of earlier proposals for developing Colusa Circle.

It was noted that plans for the parcel across the street from the Colusa Market changed over time. It was phase II of the approved PUD and contained a multilevel parking garage. This area now consists of a single family home and an undeveloped area under separate ownerships. The developer indicated that parking would be provided as part of the currently proposed application to modify phases III and IV rather than included in broader plans for developing multiple lots on Colusa Circle.

The Chair reviewed minutes from a 2005 meeting where concerns were expressed regarding the bulk of the building, about parking, and about traffic and safety. A motion passed at that meeting requesting a traffic and parking study to be funded with contributions from the owners of the developable land around the Circle. The developer responded that the study had not been carried out due to non-cooperation of the other land owners.

The plans were found to be incorrect in terms of the direction of traffic flow on Oak View. The current proposal is for one-way traffic heading west. Ms. Reed suggested eliminating parking space eight on Oak View due to safety concerns.

Discussions centered on how to interpret the impact of the project on parking in the neighborhood, and several KMAC members as well as the developer offered interpretations of the impact. Several parties indicated their belief that the impact would be best measured through a parking study. Ms. Reed cited recent development in the thinking of the urban planning community that lower ratios of required parking area to developed area might be desirable to encourage public transit and walking although she acknowledged that they had not necessarily been successful in changing travel modes.

Ms. Brown asked why the developer had not removed the proposed third floor from the design to respond to concerns about bulkiness. The developer and the architect noted that the additional space provided by the third floor made the project more financially attractive.

Public comment was heard on the proposal. Janet Hittle stated the project would harm views from Santa Fe houses by placing parking spaces on the east side of the street. She indicated her preference for a two story development and noted that no provision was made for on-site treatment of stormwater.

Adrienne Fox added her concern regarding the height of the northern building. She expressed doubt that landscaping proposed for the west side of Colusa would fit on the sidewalk while allowing pedestrian movement.

Viviane Vidal asked that the western approach to the Circle be designed so as not to decrease the level of service at this intersection.

Ron Wizelman was concerned that the assumptions made in approving the project in 1983 were no longer valid in 2007. He noted that employee parking associated with the development could lead to overcrowding.

Joan Gallegos echoed concerns about traffic and parking. She suggested approaching Narsai David about possible plans to re-develop the east side of Colusa in order to better understand the future conditions at Colusa Circle.

George Becker said that he believed the project was improved greatly from the previous proposal. He expressed concern about traffic flow due to the conversion of Oak View to one-way traffic, particularly during the evening commute.

Gordon Becker asked that the project include provisions such as signage to keep additional traffic off Valley and Coventry roads.

Kevin Cadogan expressed support for the project.

The KMAC generally supported the changes to the project and were virtually unanimous in recommending that a parking study be conducted so that the council could properly assess possible parking impacts. It was agreed that the study only address impacts and parking availability associated with the proposed development rather than include possible future developments by other landowners.

The developer requested a continuance in order to complete a parking study and to prepare new drawings. A motion for continuance passed five to zero.

6. 257 Arlington Avenue

The developer explained that the house was reduced from 4,100 square feet to 2,668 square feet in response to neighborhood concerns. Excavation would occur to lower the building elevation. The floor plan was re-configured to respond to privacy issues. A flat roof with a parapet wall was added to lower the height of the structure to be no higher than the house to the south. The developer also noted that the front of the house was moved back into the lot to maintain appropriate setbacks. Finally, a privacy-oriented wall

was added to the plans on the south side, and he was considering a view easement requested by the Barrazas.

Kevin and Angela Cadogan indicated that they would like to extend the privacy-oriented wall to a greater height for four feet to decrease light spill over. They also requested that there be no wall lighting on the south side of house. The Cadogans supported including the planting of two trees as conditions of approval.

Ray Barraza said that the revised plans were much better. His concern is the character of roof. Mr. Barraza requested that a detailed drawing of the roof including penetrations and roof construction be prepared prior to project approval and the roof not include sky lights. He asked that a tar and gravel roof be used, that minimal rooftop venting be used, and that penetrations be painted to blend with the roof. He requested changes be incorporated into the drawings prior to KMAC consideration and a view easement be prepared to prevent future installation of satellite dishes or other view obstructions.

Betty Barraza stated that her request to the applicant was for nothing to extend above the Cadogan house ridgeline (El. 551.5). She also expressed concern that new vegetation could block views from her house and requested trees not extend above the house. She too requested to see a roof drawing detail.

Joan Gallegos asked questions and indicated that her concerns appeared to have been addressed.

Ms. Reed inquired about lowering the entire house 2' further below grade. The developer responded that he would lose significant views by doing this.

Mr. Karlsson asked why a two car garage wasn't included in the project. The developer responded that to do so would involve a variance. The KMAC members generally indicated their support for providing a variance in order to accommodate additional on-site parking.

After being assured that remaining issues likely could be resolved with his neighbors and with the KMAC in a timely fashion, the developer requested a continuance to prepare new drawings. The continuance was approved five to zero.

7. 85 Richardson

The home owner relayed conversations with his neighbors wherein he offered to remove a proposed bay window, to pay for work on redwood trees to the north to improve views, to use a hip roof, and to change the deck configuration.

In public comment, Ruth Roots stated her opinion that the house would be out of scale with the neighborhood. She asked that her views be protected by using a flat roof and removing the bay windows should the project be approved.

Chris Foskett stated that the project would constitute a major obstruction of his view of Mt. Tamalpais. He said he was open to having the project break, rather than completely obstruct, the skyline in that direction should a flat roof accomplish this goal .

A motion to approve the plans was made with several amendments. The deck setback would be changed to 6.5 feet (or eight feet if agreed to be the homeowner and neighbors). The bay window on the south side would be eliminated or moved to the east side of the house. The total elevation was to be no greater than 22' 10" as shown on the west elevation on sheet 3 of the drawings. The roof over the master bedroom would be hipped.

Gordon Becker gave his opinion that the terms "diagonal views" and "filtered views" were not appropriate to the consideration of impacts.

In discussion regarding the accuracy of the story poles on the project site, the architect vouched for their accuracy to within 1.5 inches.

The KMAC voted four to one to approve the motion.

8. Members were reminded to submit forms for FPPC 700.

9. Chair Barraza noted that the development at 31 Kenilworth differs from the approved drawings. He referred the matter to Supervisor Gioia.

10. The KMAC adjourned.

Gordon Becker
Acting Secretary