

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION OF
THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2022, BEGINNING AT 7:00
P.M. HELD VIA VIDEO/TELECONFERENCE PER EXECUTIVE ORDER N-29-20**

Please Note: Per California Executive Order N-29-20, the Commissions will meet via teleconference only. Members of the Public may call (650) 242-4929 to participate in the conference call (Meeting ID: 148 231 6767 or via the web at <https://tinyurl.com/mwm68n5h>). Members of the Public may only comment during times allotted for public comments. Public testimony will be taken at the direction of the Commission Chair and members of the public may only comment during times allotted for public comments. Members of the public are also encouraged to submit written testimony prior to the meeting at DRCPublicComment@losaltosca.gov. Emails received prior to the meeting will be included in the public record.

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Chair Blockhus, Vice-Chair Ma, Commissioners Bishop, Harding and Kirik

STAFF: Interim Planning Services Manager Golden, Senior Planner Gallegos and Associate Planner Liu

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Design Review Commission Minutes

Approve minutes of the regular meeting of April 6, 2022.

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Harding, seconded by Vice-Chair Ma, the Commission approved the minutes of the regular meeting of April 6, 2022 as amended by Chair Blockhus that Vice-Chair Ma closed the public comment periods and adjourned the meeting as he was not in attendance.

The motion was approved (5-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Blockhus, Bishop, Harding, Kirik, and Ma

NOES: None

DISCUSSION

Vice-Chair Ma recused himself due to financial involvement with the party related to project.

2. SC21-0035 – Eric Keng – 944 Aura Way

Design review application for a new 4,010 square-foot two-story single-family residence with 2,692 square feet on the first story and 1,317square feet on the second story. A 798 square-foot detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is also proposed, but not subject to design review. A categorical exemption under Section 15303 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines will be considered for this project. *Project Manager: Golden THIS ITEM WAS CONTINUED FROM THE APRIL 6, 2022 DRC MEETING DUE TO LACK OF QUORUM.*

STAFF PRESENTATION

Interim Planning Services Manager Golden presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application SC21-0035 subject to the listed findings and conditions.

DRC QUESTIONS TO STAFF

None.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Applicant and project architect Eric Keng provided a presentation.

The property owner introduced herself to the Commission and asked for their support.

DRC QUESTIONS TO APPLICANT

Commissioner Kirik asked the applicant about the window in bedroom No. 1 being so tall and asked if he would be willing to shorten it by increasing the sill height by six inches. He also suggested the same for the window in bedroom No. 2 and to get rid of the obscure glass.

The applicant said he was willing to make the suggested modifications.

Chair Blockhus asked to walk him through the community outreach. It looks weak and maybe missing something.

The applicant stated he originally contacted the adjacent neighbors. After meeting with the neighbors, he sent out letters by mail to three neighbors across the street and three neighbors to the rear. He received no input. When he put up the posting sign, none of the neighbors asked questions or set up meetings with him. The mail was delivered by regular mail and occurred April 6, 2022.

Interim Planning Services Manager Golden stated clarified that this project was submitted prior to new submittal requirement for neighborhood communication. There was no requirement at the time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Chair Blockhus closed the public comment period.

Commissioner discussion then proceeded.

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Kirik, seconded by Commissioner Harding, the Commission approved design review application SC21-0035 subject to the staff report findings and conditions, with the following additional conditions:

- Raise the sill height in bedroom No. 1 six inches; and
- Raise the sill height in bedroom no. 2 six inches, as long as it is code compliant and remove the obscured glass component.

The motion was approved (4-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Blockhus, Bishop, Harding and Kirik

NOES: None

RECUSED: Ma

Vice-Chair Ma rejoined the meeting for the remainder of the agenda items and took over as Chair for the

next item.

Chair Blockhus recused himself from item No. 3 due to a conflict of interest because he lives within 500 feet of the project site.

3. SC21-0046 – Yun Li – 628 Cuesta Drive

Design Review for a two-story addition to an existing two-story house. The includes a 26 square-foot addition at the first floor and a 542 square-foot addition at the second floor. This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act. *Project Manager: Liu THIS ITEM WAS CONTINUED FROM THE MARCH 2, 2022 DRC MEETING.*

STAFF PRESENTATION

Associate Planner Liu presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application SC21-0046 subject to the listed findings and conditions.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Bishop stated that this design is much better than their last proposal.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Applicant and owner, Yun Li provided a project presentation.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Harding thanked the owner for the helpful presentation slides showing the angles and mature landscaping.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Vice-Chair Ma closed the public comment period.

Commissioner discussion then proceeded.

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Harding, seconded by Commissioner Bishop, the Commission approved design review application SC21-0046 subject to the staff report findings and conditions.

The motion was approved (4-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Bishop, Harding, Kirik and Ma

NOES: None

RECUSED: Blockhus

Chair Blockhus rejoined the meeting for the remainder of the agenda items.

4. SC21-0043 - Anat Shmariahu – 301 Spagnoli Court

Design Review for a two-story addition to an existing one-story house. The development includes a 28.40 square-foot addition at the first floor and a 935.67 square-foot addition at the second floor.

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act. *Project Manager: Liu*

STAFF PRESENTATION

Associate Planner Liu presented the staff report recommending approval of design review application SC21-0043 subject to the listed findings and conditions.

DRC QUESTIONS TO STAFF

None.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Applicant and designer Anat Shmariahu provided a project presentation.

Property owners Suresh and Bindu Muthu provided a brief presentation, said that Los Altos is a beautiful city, and agreed to plant evergreen screening for the neighbors.

DRC QUESTIONS TO APPLICANT

Vice-Chair Ma asked questions regarding the materials and elevations. He noticed the material board shows metal fascia and the fascia on the ground floor elevation is shorter and other areas are wider. Can the designer clarify the materials and why the difference in width?

Project designer Anat Shmariahu said it will be the same width. The old windows are 2 feet by 4 feet, and the new windows will be 2 feet by 10 feet. However, the fascia will be the same on the old and new windows. She likes the metal fascia atop the wood to look cleaner and the metal fascia will be behind the galvanized gutter.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Chair Blockhus closed the public comment period.

Commissioner discussion then proceeded.

Action: Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Ma, seconded by Commissioner Harding, the Commission approved design review application SC21-0043 subject to the staff report findings and conditions.

The motion was approved (5-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Blockhus, Bishop, Harding, Kirik, and Ma

NOES: None

5. SB9 Joint Commission Subcommittee

Associate Planner Liu provided a brief presentation and overview.

DRC QUESTIONS TO STAFF

Commissioner Harding noted the different outlook the DRC members had from the Planning Commissioners on several areas, and he didn't feel comfortable accepting them. He thought there would be an equal number of commissioners on the joint commission from the DRC and PC or an option to have separate subcommittees.

Commissioner Kirk said he believes there is a philosophical difference of opinion between the PC members and the DRC members, and he felt strongly about the importance to protect the integrity of the residential neighborhoods of Los Altos. He and Vice-Chair Ma spent a few hours to provide guidance to the City Council and staff, and he doesn't want to participate in a subcommittee that is opposed to the DRC's purpose.

Interim Planning Services Manager Golden directed the commission to continue the discussion after public comment is taken and this is the time for questions of staff. This discussion is less about objectives and more about public policy efforts and the state looking for more housing. SB9 is a way to get more housing. The city has an opportunity to flex some local efforts in what they want to support in neighborhood designs that have been in place since the Design Review Guidelines were adopted in 1991. The DRC efforts can be a collaboration with the PC members, and through a subcommittee they could work collaboratively to support what the goal or purpose of the DRC commission is and the intent of SB9.

Chair Blockhus stated his confusion by the process and asked for clarification on if they could have two separate subcommittees to resolve their positions, and then meet, or do you want commissions to form a subcommittee to address it in a combined discussion.

Interim Planning Services Manager Golden provided clarification on the process, timeline, and how to move forward in the formation of the subcommittee.

Chair Blockhus asked for further clarification on meeting timelines, commissioner terms ending, and if the addition of new members being added has been taken into consideration.

Interim Planning Services Manager Golden provided more clarification on forming the subcommittee and the meeting timelines once those members are picked.

Chair Blockhus asked what is the process of the meeting? Is it up to the meeting members?

Chair Blockhus asked the other Commissioners if they had questions on the process or discussion.

Commissioner Harding said that it sounds like Vice-Chair Ma and Commissioner Kirik should be on the subcommittee since they have already worked on SB9 objective standards, and Kirik already has great experience.

Commissioner Kirik stated that he will term out in September, thinks everything is being compromised by SB9, said the PC members wanting more floor area ratio is problematic, and he doesn't want to face a battle even though they have to comply with State law.

Vice-Chair Ma said he understands Commissioner Kirik's frustration. In some cities SB9 rules are loose and you can double the FAR, and in others it is strict and the FAR is low and follows the daylight plane. He stated that he and Commissioner Kirik can give their input and help shape the new rules under SB9.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Chair Blockhus closed the public comment period.

Commission discussion then proceeded.

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Kirik, seconded by Commissioner Harding, the Commission moved to continue the item to a meeting with the City Council Liaison and City Attorney present.

The motion was approved (5-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Blockhus, Bishop, Harding, Kirik, and Ma

NOES: None

Action: Friendly amendment by Commissioner Harding and accepted by Commissioner Kirik to have a start time of 6:00 pm to 6:45 pm to have a discussion with the Council Liaison and City Attorney.

The motion was approved (5-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Blockhus, Bishop, Harding, Kirik, and Ma

NOES: None

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Kirik, seconded by Commissioner Harding, Commissioner Kirik rescinded his original motion.

The motion was approved (5-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Blockhus, Bishop, Harding, Kirik, and Ma

NOES: None

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Kirik, seconded by Commissioner Harding, the Commission continued the item for further discussion with next available meeting where Councilmember Meadows and City Attorney Houston can join to provide direction on SB9 as it relates to the Design Review Commission and the Residential Design Guidelines. All Commission members shall be available, including staff and the meeting discussion of the item shall start at 6:00 pm and go until 6:45 pm.

The motion was approved (5-0) by the following vote:

AYES: Blockhus, Bishop, Harding, Kirik, and Ma

NOES: None

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Harding asked about the return to in-person meetings.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Blockhus adjourned the meeting at 9:43 PM.

Sean Gallegos
Senior Planner