



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 01/19/2021

ITEM NO: 7

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**DATE:** January 14, 2021  
**TO:** Mayor and Town Council  
**FROM:** Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Consider a Request for an Exception to the Story Pole Policy to Allow an Alternative to Standard Story Pole Installation to Illustrate and Provide Notice of the Proposed Project on Property Zoned R:PD. Located at 110 Wood Road. APN 510-47-038. Applicant: Frank Rockwood. Property Owner: Covia Communities. Project Planner: Jocelyn Shoopman

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Consider a request for an exception to the Story Pole Policy to allow an alternative to standard story pole installation to illustrate and provide notice of the proposed project on property zoned R:PD located at 110 Wood Road.

**BACKGROUND:**

Historically, story poles have been used for two purposes. The primary purpose is to help illustrate proposed building locations and heights for pending development applications. Additionally, the story poles help alert the community of development applications that are scheduled for consideration at a public hearing.

The existing Story Pole Policy was approved by the Town Council on August 5, 2013 (Attachment 1). The existing Policy specifies the conditions and process for a possible story pole exception. Specifically, the Policy identifies that the applicant must clearly demonstrate to the Town that the installation of story poles would: (a) cause a threat to public health and safety; or (b) impair the use of existing structures or the site to the extent it would not be able to be occupied and the business or residential use would be infeasible. A Planned Development (PD) application with multiple detached commercial structures and/or residential units may request to erect story poles on the locations where the key structures will be placed. The deciding body will take into account the density of the development when considering an exception request.

**PREPARED BY:** Jocelyn Shoopman  
Associate Planner

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Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

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BACKGROUND (continued):

The Policy requires the story poles to be installed on all corner structures and the structures with the greatest height and mass.

The Policy requires the Town Manager to determine if at least one of two criteria is met before the Council can consider requests for exceptions to the story pole installation requirements. The Council is the deciding body for story pole exceptions.

DISCUSSION:

The subject site is an approximately 10.84-acre parcel at the intersection of Wood Road and South Santa Cruz Avenue. The site has been occupied by the Los Gatos Meadows, a senior living development since 1971. In February 2019, the Los Gatos Meadows facility initiated a month's long closure and transition process to relocate all residents. By September 2019, the facility was vacant. While the property owner, Covia Communities, has completed the closure process, the property continues to be staffed to provide on-going maintenance and to ensure security of the property.

An application has been filed by Frank Rockwood requesting a new Planned Development zoning for the property for the purpose of rebuilding a new senior living development. The existing zoning is Residential, Planned Development (R:PD) and the General Plan land use designation is Medium Density Residential.

The applicant, Frank Rockwood, has submitted a request for the following exceptions from the Story Pole Policy requirements to minimize nuisance to the neighbors and damage to the existing structures:

1. To install story poles only at the corners of perimeter buildings for five of the proposed eight buildings that are visible from public views (Attachment 2).
2. To install rope flags connecting the story poles, in lieu of netting (Attachment 2).
3. To provide additional scale visualizations utilizing photo simulations of the proposed project from the following three locations: Broadway and Farwell Lane (secondary access road to the site off of Broadway), Wood Road and South Santa Cruz Avenue, and East Main Street and Church Street (Exhibit B, Attachment 2).
4. To install the story poles for a maximum of 20 days from the completion of installation and circulation of additional scale visualizations (Attachment 2).

Exhibits A-1 through A-3 of Attachment 2 contain the proposed site plan and story pole plan for the new senior living buildings. The applicant has proposed to install the story poles for 20 days once the application has been scheduled for a Planning Commission hearing to overlap with the

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DISCUSSION (continued):

public notice period (Attachment 2). A Planning Commission hearing has not been scheduled given technical analysis that needs to be completed for environmental review.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Pursuant to the Policy, notice of the Town Council hearing was sent to property owners and tenants within 300 feet of the subject property. Notice was also published in the Los Gatos Weekly, posted under "What's New" on the Town's website, and posted on the Town's social media platforms. Public comments received by 11:00 a.m., January 14, 2021 are included in Attachment 3.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed exception to install the story poles with rope flags in lieu of netting for a maximum of 20 days once the application has been scheduled for a Planning Commission hearing to overlap with the public notice period to minimize the potential nuisance to the neighbors and damage to the existing structures.

If the Town Council determines that the story pole exception request is appropriate, staff recommends that the Town Council limit the approval to the proposed story pole exception request and plan in Attachment 2. A request to modify the proposed story pole plan would be required to return to the Town Council for consideration of a new story pole exception.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Continue the request to a date certain with specific direction; or
2. Approve the request with modified requirements; or
3. Deny the request.

COORDINATION:

The Community Development Department coordinated with the Town Manager's Office in the review of the application.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Action on the requested exception does not constitute a "project" as defined by section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines because it is not an action which has a potential for resulting in either a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

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Attachments:

1. Story Pole Policy
2. Exception Request and Proposed Story Pole Plan from the Applicant, received November 13, 2020
3. Public Comments received by 11:00 a.m., Thursday, January 14, 2021