



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PLANNING COMMISSION
REPORT**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 2025**

The Planning Commission of the Town of Los Gatos conducted a Special Meeting on Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Emily Thomas, Vice Chair Kendra Burch, Commissioner Susan Burnett, Commissioner Steve Raspe, Commissioner Joseph Sordi

Absent: Commissioner Jeffrey Barnett (recused), Commissioner Rob Stump

Chair Thomas indicated that Commissioner Barnett was recused from participation in the public hearing regarding Item 1, 178 Twin Oak Drive, due to his residence's proximity to the subject site.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS

Anonymous

Touched on potential legal issues pertaining to projects on the hillside.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 178 Twin Oaks Drive

Architecture and Site Applications S-24-023 through -032, and S-24-059

Vesting Tentative Map Application M-24-013

Mitigated Negative Declaration Application ND-25-001

APN 532-16-006

Property Owner/Applicant: Larry Dodge

Project Planner: Erin Walters

Consider a request for approval for the subdivision of one lot into twelve lots with a Vesting Tentative Map, construction of a new single-family residence on each lot, site work requiring a Grading permit, and removal of large, protected trees under Senate Bill 330 (SB 330) on vacant property zoned RC. An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration have been prepared.

Chair Thomas disclosed that she is familiar with the area and has friends who live in the neighborhood, but it would not prevent her from making an impartial decision on the matter.

Erin Walters, Senior Planner, presented the staff report.

Gabrielle Whelen, Town Attorney, provided a presentation on the regulatory framework.

Opened Public Comment.

Jim Foley

- A similar project came before the Town Council in 2018 that was denied because the property was in the Williamson Act, but that expired in January 2025 and the project is now before the Planning Commission. This project would bring some of the first new affordable units for sale to Los Gatos since Bellaterra at North Forty, and every unit counts toward Los Gatos' Housing Element. We could have proposed a much denser project and abused the Builder's Remedy, but that is not the Dodge family's intent. We have strived to comply with as many of the various potentially applicable development standards that could have been in place for the project zoning. We also considered many public comments including road alignment, home orientation, headlight pollution, etc. There was tremendous additional study and updating of the technical reports and studies that added to the anticipated application preparation time.

Cindy Clark

- I live at 16326 West La Chiquita Avenue. I will make two points in opposition to the development plans: 1) Builder's Remedy and SB 330 are about building more housing, yet the developer is asking to use 17 acres of rare, wooded land to build three token below market homes, and nine giant homes. These are homes for the very rich to be used as second or third homes and an investment opportunity; and 2) If the development proceeds, the Town should deny permits to remove the 223 protected trees that are not at all replaceable, are considered keystone species, and are vital to a healthy ecosystem in Los Gatos.

Gus Who

- The public would want a road connected, because there is a lot of traffic, so it would be better to have a loop in the two roads instead of the one. Another thing was when I built, I designed a 3,500-square foot house and it was too small for the neighborhood and I had to double it. You can probably limit the size of the house. It's 14 acres, so you can probably up it a couple houses, but a loop around there for safety reasons would be the most important thing. Even if nobody builds there, you should have a road connecting that high up, to try to work a deal with the builders. A road between the two for safety issues is my biggest concern.

John Witkin

- I live at 188 Twin Oaks Drive, next door to the development. That hillside, with an oak forest and a Ross Creek feeder stream at the base, is not feasible for a subdivision for multiple home tracts. Similar developments in California have all had issues, because when we cut down 250 trees, move 200 loads of dirt, and pave over a riparian corridor, what can we anticipate? Last year the hillside was recategorized as a high fire danger zone, and eventually we will have a flood, earthquake, or fire and these altered landscapes will fail and we will experience landslides, massive property damage, and a major safety hazard. It is not safe to build these structures and it will not reduce any of the housing crisis in California. We need existing open space to remain in order to keep Los Gatos beautiful.

Bill Meleyco

- I live at 189 Longmeadow Drive, adjacent to the proposed project at the border with Hillbrook School. Our major concern is privacy, trees, noise, and the drainage. These new homes would look down into our backyard and windows. There is a discrepancy between the applicant's rendering that shows 35 new trees being installed, but the plans show them installing only seven trees. They are removing six protected trees along the property line with Hillbrook that do not interfere with the construction, or anything. From a privacy standpoint, we request the Planning Commission to require the developer to add these 35 trees. Hillbrook's noise studies, done for it to receive a CUP, stated the sound level at our home was at the threshold of unacceptable. The cumulative effect of Hillbrook and the proposed houses would put the sound above an unacceptable level. This hillside drains entirely towards our property, and the catch basin at the corner will overflow with the drainage created by the project.

Monica Herzi

- I live at 185 Longmeadow Drive, three houses from the proposed development and facing Twin Oaks Drive. Proposals like this one tend to keep people from retiring here. From my home I have seen owls, coyotes, deer, rabbits, foxes, turkeys, hawks, etc., and that will all go away with this project. California needs affordable housing, but I agree with the former speakers who asked if these houses will be second homes. Will they produce ADUs on each site, or will they be subdivided and sold as individual lots? I also worry about safety and the limited access to the site.

Jill Fordyce

- I live at 191 Longmeadow Drive. When we bought our property in 1999 the Town staff told us the subject site was resource conservation space that would not likely be developed in our lifetimes. Now we face a new reality, it is no long resource conservation space, there are Builder's Remedy laws, and loss of the Williamson Act protection. I request the project be denied, because it would result in adverse impacts such as wildfire and evacuation; erosion causing mudslides and landslides on the project site; and flooding, water quality degradation and pollution; and harms associated with the proposed bioretention plan.

These risks are acknowledged in the Negative Declaration, but the mitigation of each is vague, uncertain, deferred, and potentially unenforceable.

Craig Fordyce

- I also live at 191 Longmeadow Drive. In our opinion, an EIR is required, as we have not been given necessary information to understand the environmental impact of the proposed development. The Mitigated Negative Declaration approach suggests environmental review is secondary to entitlement, which is legally incorrect. The MND relies on an outdated, uncertified EIR from 2017. The proposal is not the same as the one considered in 2018, with a key difference being the 13 percent increase of the scope of development, as well as different lots, number of homes, home sites, and ingress and egress. An uncertified EIR cannot legally be relied upon for the adoption of an MND. The Sierra Club, the Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance, and the San Francisco Regional Bay Regional Water Control Board each site multiple issues not addressed by the MND that may have significant environmental impacts.

Chris Bayoric

- I live at 120 Clover Way near the proposed development. My main concern is the development exceeds the drainage capability of that land. The mitigating requests are to build at least three bioretention basins, basically wetlands, or ponds, to catch the effluence from that drainage of that property, and ponds are a health concern with the presence of West Nile Virus in our community and the fact that ponds breed mosquitos that transfer the virus. My second concern is the proposal is vague regarding who is going to be responsible for maintaining those wetlands, the Town or owner. The scope of this development must be downsized to avoid dependence on these wetlands.

Lee Quintana

- I am here not to speak on the project, but to speak on the environmental review, relying on 15 years of experience working for the City of San Jose doing environmental review. Two things paramount in project review: 1) Provide decision makers with information to make informed decisions as to significant impacts and mitigation to those impacts; and 2) Make documents bulletproof, meaning to achieve the first purpose and provide all the studies and information before a document is released. In this case, there is an incompleteness in those studies, deferred mitigation, and lack of consultation with agencies having jurisdiction over Los Gatos lands. Conducting studies and consultations after approving a project limits what can be done, and full mitigation may not be achieved, so it is important to have those studies up front, and for that reason I would not support approving the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Jan Schwartz

- I live at 15966 Cerro Vista Drive on the other side of the hill. We will have one or two houses on our side, more will be on the other side, and I am concerned for my neighbors regarding flooding, landslides, and mosquitoes, which are significant risks. My concern is

also for the abundant wildlife we have here that will disappear. I love Los Gatos, but I know progress moves on with the North Forty and other developments, but I hope we can maintain the wildlife and riparian corridor near the property that we have right now.

Anne Griffin

- I have had the back yard of my home flooded by Ross Creek twice, and I live up the road from the subject site. My concern is safety. Twin Oaks Drive, Clover Way, and Blueberry Hill Drive travel onto Longmeadow to exit. We would be adding two cars to every home, most of which will go through Longmeadow. During the day there are service trucks and cars parked on the street, as well kids riding bikes, and people walking dogs. I am concerned about safety because I would like an emergency vehicle to be able to come to my home if I should need it.

Jim Foley

- There is extensive language in the conditions of approval regarding best practices for safety, access during construction, etc. The bioretention areas are engineered and widely accepted, have all gone through the process. There are many requirements in the conditions of approval for who is going to manage CC&Rs, ongoing access review, and proactive reporting to the Town, so how we created that and the drainage for the neighborhood was well thought out. Regarding wildlife concerns, we still have the ephemeral swale through the site. It is the main feature where you will find wildlife and protected areas, and there is still a lot of that being preserved with this project. A lot of effort went into the EIR. Raney Planning Management took prior and new information, updated, and ensured all the technical studies were adequate.

Reopened Public Comment

Question to applicant followed.

Reclosed Public Comment.

Commissioners discussed the matter.

MOTION: **Motion by Vice Chair Burch** to continue the public hearing for 178 Twin Oaks Drive to a date uncertain. **Seconded by Commissioner Raspe.**

VOTE: **Motion passed unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:42 p.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the December 17, 2025 meeting as approved by the Planning Commission.

/s/ Vicki Blandin