

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR JULY 29, 1996**

A special meeting of the San Anselmo Planning Commission was convened at 7:30 p.m. by Chair Israel. Staff present was Ann Chaney, Planning Director.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioners present: Israel, Sargent, Duys, Mihaly, Wittenkeller
Commissioners absent: Harle

B. OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION - None.

C. CONSENT AGENDA

Israel, Duys, and Wittenkeller asked that some changes be made to the minutes of July 15, 1996. Staff made note of these. M/s, Wittenkeller/Mihaly to approve the July 15, 1996 minutes as amended. Ayes: All.

D. PUBLIC HEARING - CONTINUED

Israel read the public hearings that were continued to upcoming meetings.

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Ordinance Amendment Discussion on Alternatives to the 8' Side Yard Set Back

Chaney presented two basic alternative concepts: Floor Area Ratio concept and the Design Review approach for development located between 5' and 8' from the side property line. A survey of other communities was presented and five of the 11 towns in Marin County apply FAR standards to development (flatland, hillside, or both).

Therefore, using a 5,000 sq. ft. lot (50' x 100') staff presented a "Current Policy" sketch showing current setback and lot cover standards; a .33 FAR and 35% lot coverage sketch; a .50 FAR and 35% lot coverage sketch; and a Design Review approach sketch showing an existing house built with 5' setbacks and being added onto both vertically and horizontally. This latter sketch showed areas in the 5' to 8' range that would be subject to Design Review.

Mihaly asked how large a typical master bedroom/bath addition might be. Other commissioners said about 300 sq. ft. (15' x 20') of 750 sq. ft. for a two bedroom.

Israel commented that he believes 35% lot coverage is too much and asked what the commissioners thought about a 5,250 sq. ft. house on a 7,500 sq. ft. lot (35% x 7,500 x 2 stories).

Sargent said it was too large. Israel also thought it was too large.

Wittenkeller said many bungalows were built at 1,000 to 1,200 sq. ft. (single story).

Israel said to get to 2,500 sq. ft. would require a .50 FAR. People would be doubling the size. How do you make the findings to exceed an FAR?

Sargent said that FARs can restrict the design. He wants people to design for the lot and building. FARs do not provide flexibility.

Duys said she would like to see second floor setbacks which reflect the intent of the 8' setback.

Israel said a well designed large house is better than a smaller poorly designed house.

Sargent said that if we are trying to protect space around a house, then the lot coverage approach provides that protection.

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Israel said that FARs control space around the perimeter.

Mihaly said that .50 FAR doesn't accomplish much.

Wittenkeller stated that .40 FAR should be looked at.

Sargent said we need to look at a holistic design of the house. Design Review for all of the improvements.

Mihaly - FARs alone cannot be tuned to address the problem. But FAR and Design Review could apply.

Israel - FAR should include garages because of bulk. He agreed that he like the DR approach.

Wittenkeller stated he would support administrative design review and it would help staff time and Planning Commission time.

Israel believed it would save time because the findings will be easier.

Wittenkeller agreed that going to the Planning Commission was okay because the ease in making findings.

Duys said we would gage how much time is saved in part by how many go on the consent agenda the first year.

Public Input

Louise Mathews - 72 Foothill Road - She asked whether the FAR in other cities applies to hillsides. Chaney said the survey was made for standard R-1 zoning and yes the FAR may also apply to hillsides.

Mathews asked whether garages (detached structures) would go through the process. She asked whether the Town would require a garage to move from 5' to 8'?

Israel said that FARs don't impact setbacks or dimensions.

Mihaly said that garages could be added to if it is located 5' from the side yard.

Mathews said she is concerned that 0' to 5' situations be considered which are "grandfathered". The application should be reasonable. She also asked about decks.

Mihaly said there has been some reluctance to open the door for 0' to 5' situations (e.g., accessory structures). One can currently replace such a structure "in kind" under the current Ordinance.

Larry Sanducci - 69 Foothill Road - He has a situation where his deck goes to 0' to the property line and he wants to replace it.

Chaney stated that replacements "in kind" within the setbacks can currently be approved through the administrative variance process.

Mihaly attempted to summarize the Planning Commission's comments:

- 1) Proceed with the Design Review approach, not because the FAR approach is not worthy but there is less support for it at present.
- 2) Address what happens if the 5' setback got there via a Variance rather than per 8' setback standards.
- 3) How would garages be handled? The Commission says they should be included in the DR consideration.
- 4) What about other intrusions: chimneys? decks? bay windows?
- 5) How can we simplify the Code? Example: Projections into setbacks not to exceed X.
- 6) Can we dovetail into hillside standards?
How is one project treated in the hillside vs. flatland. Are we creating a bizarre situation?
- 7) Findings - those proposed by staff look okay. What matters is how the PC applies them.

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Israel suggested that garage should be part of hillside FAR (currently the first 500 sq. ft. are not).

Sargent said he doesn't want to create a disincentive for not building a garage. He is not in favor of the FAR approach. He also would not include garages.

Israel stated that he is persuaded and changed his position on garages. He agrees with Tom.

Wittenkeller asked whether notices are part of Administrative Design Review. Staff responded affirmatively. He also asked what kicks an Admin. Design Review up to the Commission?

Chaney stated that legitimate concern over loss of light, air, privacy by neighbor might result in the PC seeing a project, as would staff's concern that the project would be detrimental to neighboring property both now and in the future (even if the neighbor did not necessarily object).

Israel said that deck should be allowed within 5' of the setback and exempt garage if using FAR (as in hillside max. dwelling unit size). We need a better feel for what is "reasonable" when dealing with FAR and size of the house.

Staff said they will return with a response to these concerns and with draft Ordinance language during the first meeting in September.

Wittenkeller said we need more discussion on FAR later. That for now we should deal with DR alternative of 5' to 8'.

Mihaly suggested we schedule a workshop later for FARs; that the two should be separated in that the FAR approach is more controversial.

2. Downtown Revitalization - Streetscape Concept Design Plan

Chaney presented an overview of the proposed plan including the elements of trees, street lights, medians, the area in front of Town Hall, etc.

Street Trees

Sargent said he wants to use a stronger statement of tree types (e.g., Palo Alto - Sycamores; Santa Monica - Jacaranda). NO LIQUID AMBERS.

Wittenkeller suggested that we could have clusters of variety of tree types throughout. Israel said he would use the same tree type at the entry elements.

Mihaly said he had no opinion about the trees.

Sargent suggested natural zones along the street (e.g., use flowering trees along curved areas).

Wittenkeller stated that trees don't have to be all the same variety. Evergreen trees, depending on type, can be overbearing and creak dark, damp areas. Such as evergreen Oak, any conifer. Open branches of deciduous trees are good in the summer and the winter. Magnolia trees may become too large but are a lovely tree. We don't need a tree everywhere.

Planning Commission Comment/Recommendation on Trees

1. A variety of trees is good;
2. Trees should be "zoned" by species; that is don't plant three trees in a row, all of different species;
3. consideration should be given to impacts on merchants and parking;
4. trees should frame a building;

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5. high use area may need the grates rather than groundcover;
6. tree species should be decided in part based on sun and micro climate created by trees;
7. yes for irrigation;
8. spacing - 30' to 40' is reasonable for heat and appearance; and
9. don't want trees that are too heavy.

Public Input

John Walters - 110 Santa Cruz Ave. (former nurseman) - He believes there is a smaller (20') Magnolia (Saint Mary's) which is good. He prefers flowering trees with an ultimate height so it stops where you want it to. (flowering crabapple or cherry). He believes ground cover would be a high maintenance problem. He advised that trees not interfere with traffic, signs, etc.

Louise Mathews - 69 Foothill Road - She advised that trees not deplete light from the street lights. Issues for her include avoiding treeing which sap and cause car damage, attract birds, and are susceptible to viruses. How would we control pests? Shape is important - round, oval, vase shape is best. Don't want shadow patterns that create safety problems (e.g., at ATMs). Her favorite evergreen is a Quijara. She advises that we use grate with narrow openings to avoid debris collections.

Judy Howell - 20 Rancho Drive stated that Magnolias are dirty trees; she doesn't favor Magnolias. Larkspur has a nice feel.

Street Lights

John Walters said he likes the idea of dual headed lights at Tunstead. Flower baskets are high maintenance however. He does not want an archway and please no longer an issue. Different type of paving such as brick is good.

Louise Mathews is concerned with brick and sand with liability and possible unevenness of sidewalk. Does not like median idea in front of Fire Station. Favors non-Town funding source.

Planning Commission Comments/Recommendations on Remainder of Plan:

- 1) Agrees with old fashioned street light. What will the color be? These details are important.
- 2) The Planning Commission would like to review the plan specifics (working drawings): type of trees, specs, color of lights, type of illumination, etc.
- 3) Agree with the tighter grate to avoid a debris collector.
- 4) Need to look at Town in elevation, not in site plan.
- 5) Look at lighting at Town Hall. Need good, safe lighting.
- 6) New sign at entry to San Anselmo to replace wooden "welcome to San Anselmo" sign.
- 7) Like the idea of a median at Bridge subject to safety concerns.
- 8) Don't use sodium vapor lights. Use metal halide.
- 9) Modify sign at HUB, but don't open part to the HUB for view purposes unless further studied.
- 10) Would spend \$\$ at HUB to replace old wood sign before spending \$\$ at Tunstead.
- 11) Think about using double headed lights on medians on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and Tunstead and at HUB.
- 12) Special paving across Sir Francis Drake Blvd. at intersection and signage.
- 13) Hanging baskets are good, but concerned about how to irrigate.
- 14) Avoid trees which produce sap.
- 15) Brick strip may not be appropriate. Brick may be too cute; too overdone. Alternatives: concrete pavers, custom made blocks.
- 16) Like idea of seating in front of Town Hall.
- 17) All connectors to Town need to be enhanced (e.g., passageways, Bridge to San Anselmo Avenue)
- 18) Better signage needed to Creek Park parking.

General direction is that the plan is exciting and the Commission is pleased to see it moving along. Staff indicated that these comments will be forwarded to George Girvin, landscape architect, and the Town Council.

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Sargent and Mihaly said they would not be able to attend August 5, 1996, meeting.

ADJOURNMENT TO Monday, August 5, 1996.

M/s Wittenkeller/Sargent to adjourn at 11:00 p.m.

Ann Chaney