

**FINAL MINUTES
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 23, 2010
CORTE MADERA TOWN HALL
CORTE MADERA**

COMMISSIONERS

PRESENT: Chair Bruce Mace
Commissioner Richard Esteb
Commissioner Patrick Pagnillo
Commissioner Peter Schwartz

**STAFF
PRESENT:** Dan Bell, Interim Planning Director
Nancy Salcedo, Minute Recorder

1. OPENING

- A. Call to Order**
- B. Pledge of Allegiance**
- C. Roll Call**

All commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Bailey.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

3. CONSENT CALENDAR:

A. None

4. CONTINUED HEARINGS:

A. None

5. NEW HEARINGS

- A. 504-506 TAMALPAIS DRIVE, DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. 10-001, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 10-001, SIGN PERMIT NO. 10-001, BANK OF MARIN (OWNER), DANIEL MACDONALD, AIA (ARCHITECT)-To allow a new bank and a major interior and exterior remodel of the existing commercial building and amend the Master Sign Program for Park Madera Center. (Zoning: C-1 Local Shopping District) (Planner: Dan Bell)**

Interim Planning Director Bell presented the staff report for which he used a slide presentation. He explained that the Bank of Marin is requesting Major Design Review, a Conditional Use Permit and Sign Permit approval for a major interior and exterior remodel of three existing commercial spaces at Park Madera Center. He provided an aerial view of the Center.

No additions to the building are proposed. A new exterior façade and extensive landscaping are proposed. The on-site parking immediately adjacent to the building will be reconfigured to provide a new Accessible Parking Space required by the California Building Code. The secondary driveway will be closed off because of reconfigured parking. The Bank of Marin is proposing three wall-mounted, illuminated signs for the Front, Side and Rear of the building. The freestanding Tamalpais Travel sign will be removed. An ATM machine is proposed in the front of the building with small sign above. The Corte Madera branch of the Bank is presently located at 50 Madera Boulevard, and will be relocating to this site.

The new facade is stylish in its simplicity. The facade will be slightly taller than the existing building, but the added height will not pose any negative view or shadow impacts. The proposed exterior building materials and painting scheme will use earth tones that are compatible with all surrounding buildings and the varied architecture in immediate area.

The bank building will have some subtle, down-lit accent lighting along the front and side of the building and more prominent security lighting at the rear. The security lighting at the rear will not spill out toward the residences across Tamalpais Drive.

The management of Park Madera Center recently proposed and was granted an updated Master Sign Program. The current Master Sign Program is somewhat proscriptive, allowing one sign per business with street frontage. Since the Bank is taking over three businesses, it is proposing three, internally illuminated, wall-mounted signs.

The Master Sign Program would have to be amended to allow the installation of the three signs. The signs are tastefully designed. The perforated faces of the individual letters appear green in daylight and white at night. A similar type sign is in place at Bank of Marin in Bon Air Shopping Center in Greenbrae.

The allowable area for Bank of Marin signage is determined by the width of the building frontage, which is 55', allowing for 55 sq. ft. of maximum total signage. The Sign Program proposed by Bank of Marin includes three 13 sq. ft. signs totaling 39 sq. ft. plus a 5 sq. ft. ATM sign, so the sign program clearly conforms to the sign area allowance. All illuminated business identification signs will be turned off at 9pm nightly. Security lighting and task lighting for the ATM will remain on all night. The light is limited

to downlighting. The sign above the ATM machine is 5 sq. ft. in area with a white background. Staff suggests this sign not be illuminated if it is shown that the security and task lighting can provide ample illumination.

The purpose of the Conditional Use Permit is to evaluate operational characteristics and ensure that the use would not be incompatible with or detrimental to adjacent uses. The proposed bank operation is small in scale with eight employees. The bank will likely generate more parking demand than the three uses it is replacing, but a Parking Survey has shown that the parking lot has never exceeded 60% occupancy. The Center will provide adequate parking with the condition that bank employees park in the rear.

The bank site is across the street from residences fronting Tamalpais Drive. The remodeled bank will be an improvement over what exists. The improved exterior facade, lighting and signage controls, landscaping, closure of the secondary driveway and removal of the freestanding sign will contribute to improving the site's visual impact on the neighborhood.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve Design Review Application No 10-001, Conditional Use Permit No 10-001, and Sign Permit No 10-001, noting a proposed change to Conditions of Approval. Standard Conditions of Approval provide that the applicant maintain sidewalks and sewers. Since the Town owns the property, the Town will take up these responsibilities.

Chair Mace asked for Commissioners' questions.

Commissioner Esteb asked for clarification on the request to amend to the Master Sign Program as each business is allowed one sign and the Bank is proposing three.

Interim Planning Director Bell confirmed, explaining that Bank of Marin would be replacing three businesses and is requesting three wall signs and an ATM sign.

Commissioner Schwartz asked about the Parking Survey with the lot at 60% occupancy. The number of spaces occupied dwarfs the site in comparison. He asked whether there would there be adequate parking with the added flow of the Bank's traffic.

Interim Planning Director Bell said that admittedly the Bank would draw more cars than the three businesses it is replacing, but that it would not amount to more than are available now. According to the architect, based on real demand at the current Bank of Marin site on Madera Boulevard, there are enough spaces.

Dan Macdonald, architect for Bank of Marin, said he also had in attendance Dan Reimer, Willy McDevit and David Saunders for additional questions. He thanked Interim Planning Director Bell for his assistance. He clarified that the second page of the

Parking Study shows actual spaces used at 50 Madera Boulevard location. There is plenty of parking at the Center for the Bank's customers and employees. He added that the Bank would need to vacate its current location and be in the proposed site by mid July. He said they are in agreement with all project Conditions of Approval. All lighting is to shine down. The entry on the back of the building will eventually be frequented by customers who have discovered the parking in back, so a sign will be needed there. The Bon Air branch employs the same sign design for comparison, but the signs there are larger.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that the roofline is not changing, but that there is less roof coverage and an overhang above the ATM.

Mr. Macdonald explained the proposed trellis and weather elements enable cutting back eaves for a more modern look.

Chair Mace asked for comments from the audience.

Pat Ravasio of 427 Oakdale Avenue, 20-year member of the Corte Madera Beautification Committee, and neighbor said she has been waiting for someone to take an interest in the Center. She said she is concerned whether the applicant will be making improvements that are good enough for this spot. She called for pedestrian scale friendliness, and asked how the Center could be modeled to resemble Carmel. She suggested vines, trellises, greenery, and less sound reverberation, and said it should feel like it has always been there. She asked what would the Town of Carmel require, and suggested they scale this back by 50%. She suggested it was time to create a Master Plan for Park Madera Center, and that she would volunteer to assist. She introduced Michael Harlock who is also volunteering for the Beautification Committee, and is currently working with a tenant regarding the place next door.

Michael Harlock of 533 Redwood Avenue said he is delighted to see the new use at the Center. He admired the site planning and massing, and said that closure of the secondary driveway is the right thing as it opens the area up for landscaping on the corner. The proposal looks better than the dated building there now. He referred to preliminary studies for the building to the left for a coffee shop/bookstore use on corner facing the recreation center, and for taking down the block building to create a solarium/people-type place that would be more pedestrian oriented. He said he would like to see textural elements in the Bank's proposal, and that they are moving in right direction. This area is not auto-dominated like the Pete's site, and could have more textural elements, more detail, and divided light windows, trellising, planting and variation in materials. He said this landscape feels a little suburban, and that the building could be more detailed and pedestrian-scaled. He is not suggesting major change, but more texture and color. He said the building next door is going to be sophisticated, cosmopolitan, urban and pedestrian-friendly. He referred to the texture of Carmel, and

said the Bank's proposed landscaping looks a little formal. He said this proposal is 90% there for improving the area.

Chair Mace brought the discussion back to the Commission.

Commissioner Esteb asked about street trees on drawing A-1.

Interim Planning Director Bell it was included in the Conditions of Approval that this tree well is filled.

Commissioner Esteb suggested the tree in front be taller to create differentiation between this building and the next. With ADA requirements, the elevation change of 2 or 3 steps could call for a change in landscaping to include a ramp, making it user-friendly from the street.

Commissioner Schwartz said the proposal presented an attractive approach. He said the curb along the planter and sidewalk as asking for skateboarders, which can be a safety nuisance. He referred to the metal clips used as a deterrent along the Embarcadero in San Francisco. He said it would be nice to have patio-size trees to help with visual concerns and reduction of heat islands on this people-friendly, busy corner. He said the area could be reconfigured for ADA and street traffic in front. He applauded the architect's smart lighting solutions. He agreed with Interim Planning Director Bell's comment regarding the ATM not having internal illumination. He added that the rear security lighting could be triggered by an occupancy sensor.

Commissioner Pagnillo said fellow commissioners had voiced his interests. He added that the proposal is a big improvement for the area, and agreed that the Town needs a long-term plan for the Center.

Chair Mace said he echoed the feelings of fellow commissioners. His biggest concern was signage, but he was pleasantly surprised by the proposal. He said he would like to look at the light intensity of signage later, and agreed that the sign above the ATM not be internally lit in this residential area. He said that the ADA comments, and those suggesting additional texture in planting and building to lessen the suburban mall look are good.

Commissioner Esteb said he could approve the building with the landscape plan coming back for review.

Chair Mace asked for an applicant rebuttal from Mr. Macdonald.

Mr. Macdonald said that the rear lighting sensor would be a challenge as this is a security measure for parked cars, too. He said it would be hard to get a tree into the

space existing at the building wall. The caliber of the tree would have to be small and planted up against the building. The curb in front is necessary to make up the grade difference, as the Bank is taking over an existing building, and there is a 12"-14" grade differential to make up. He explained that they took advantage of the existing path of travel, and that a ramp would take up valuable area for landscaping. He pointed out the bicycle stands.

Chair Mace suggested two-stage lighting in rear, adding safety lighting on a sensor.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that the lighting could be adjusted so that when triggered, it remains on for 20 minutes to account for car related security concerns. He pointed out the curb skateboard opportunities.

Commissioner Esteb proposed that the row of bollard lighting be extended for continuity, and that a green screen be added in front of the meeting room on far left.

Mr. Macdonald asked if it would be acceptable to leave the window and add a green screen around it.

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner Schwartz, seconded by Commissioner Esteb to approve Design Review Application No 10-001, Conditional use Permit No. 10-001, and Sign Permit No.10-001 with the following additional Conditions of Approval:

- 1.) No internal illumination of the ATM sign, but down lighting is acceptable.
- 2.) The landscaping plan is to be continued for review at the March 9, 2010 Planning Commission meeting.

Ayes: Mace, Pagnillo, Esteb and Schwartz
Noes:
Abstain:
Absent: Commissioner Bailey

6. ROUTINE AND OTHER MATTERS

A. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

i. Commissioners: Schwartz reported that the drinking fountain at the bus stop is not working. The Town Manager thanked the Commission for their work.

Chairman Mace asked about the video monitors installed at the Kwik gas station. Bell will look into it.

- ii. Interim Planning Director:** Interim Planning Director Bell said that the Town Council had asked for additional information on the Condo Conversion in-lieu fee and had continued the hearing to March 16, 2010. It was not required that the matter be brought back to the Commission.

B. MINUTES:

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2010.

MOTION: Moved by Commissioner Esteb, seconded Commissioner Schwartz to approve the minutes of February 9, 2010.

Ayes: Mace, Pagnillo, Esteb, and Schwartz

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent: Commissioner Bailey

7. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm. The next Planning Commission Regular Meeting is to be March 9, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Corte Madera Council Chambers, 300 Tamalpais Drive.