



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 14152)

Report Type: Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 3/17/2022

Summary Title: Minutes of February 17, 2022

Title: Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for February 17, 2022

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Board (ARB) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

Background

Draft minutes from the February 17, 2022 Architectural Review Board (ARB) are available in Attachment A.

Draft and Approved Minutes are made available on the ARB webpage at bit.ly/paloaltoARB

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Minutes of February 17, 2022 (DOCX)



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES: February 17, 2022

Virtual Meeting
8:30 AM

Call to Order / Roll Call

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in virtual teleconference at 8:30 a.m.

Participating Remotely: Chair Osma Thompson, Vice Chair David Hirsch, Boardmember Peter Baltay

Absent: None.

Oral Communications

Lisa Van Dusen stated she wanted to speak to an item on the Agenda and did not know if Oral Communications was the appropriate time.

Chair Thompson explained that Oral Communications are for items not on the agenda.

Lisa Van Dusen indicated she would hold her comments.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

1. Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing Use of Teleconferencing for Architectural Review Board During COVID-19 State of Emergency

Chair Thompson stated that she missed the item authorizing the Architectural Review Board (ARB) to use teleconferencing during COVID-19.

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, explained the item is a resolution that allows the ARB to continue to use teleconferencing to meet 100% virtually. City Council has requested they move to hybrid meetings in March. The March 3, 2022 meeting will be hybrid with Ms. Gerhardt and any Board Member who wishes being in person. The public is welcome to attend, but virtual participation is still allowed.

Chair Thompson called for a Motion.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Vice Chair Hirsch, to approve the teleconferencing resolution.

VOTE: 3-0

City Official Reports

2. Transmittal of 1) the ARB Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record, 2) Tentative Future Agenda items and 3) Recent Project Decisions

Ms. Gerhardt shared her screen with the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and displayed the 2022 Meeting Schedule and the tentative March 3rd agenda. The agenda includes 901 South California Avenue, 250 Cambridge Avenue, a discussion on Objective Standards, and the ARB Workplan and Annual Report.

Study Session

3. 525 E. Charleston Road [21PLN-00329]: Study Session on a Proposed Mixed-Use Project That Includes 2,750 Square Feet of Ground Floor Office for Non-Profit Use and 50 Units of 100 Percent Affordable Rental Housing, 50 Percent of Which Will be for Residents with Special Needs, on a 0.78-Acre Site. Environmental Assessment: The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Guideline Section 15268. Zoning District: PF (Public Facilities). For More Information Contact the Project Planner, Stan Ketchum, at sketchum@m-group.us

Chair Thompson introduced the item and called for the staff report.

Ms. Gerhardt explained with all the State changes to the housing laws this is the first project that is going through the ministerial process. The project does not need to comply with ARB findings, only the Objective Standards in the Code. Those standards are listed in the staff report. No Motion is necessary, but they want to hear the ARBs thoughts on how the project conforms to the code and general improvements.

Chair Thompson asked if they needed to make disclosures.

Amy French, Chief Planning Official, stated they did.

Ms. Gerhardt agreed.

Ms. French reminded them to do Oral Communications.

Ms. Gerhardt stated they had.

Chair Thompson indicated that Vice Chair Hirsch had stepped out for a moment.

Stan Ketchum, Project Planner, indicated he would get the presentation ready.

Boardmember Baltay disclosed that he visited the site.

Vice Chair Hirsch disclosed that he had also visited the site and was familiar with the area.

Chair Thompson disclosed that she visited the site multiple times and the material board at City Hall.

Mr. Ketchum explained that they were interested in ARB comments and input on the ministerial project at 525 Charleston Road. He utilized a slideshow to show the project's location. There are multiple State laws that apply to the project including AB 2162, State Density Bonus Law, and AB 1763. Three concessions have been requested for building height, lot coverage, and Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The units must be 100% affordable, no California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review required, and zero residential parking is required. There will be 11 parking spaces for office use per code and 8 additional parking spaces. The property is owned by Santa Clara County and Eden Housing is the proposed developer. The building will

be four total stories in height with three stories facing East Charleston. There was extensive preapplication community engagement with the neighborhood and Eichler themes have been incorporated. The site plan was shown, and he noted that the electrical transformer and trash bin staging area had been moved and refined. He showed the elevations and noted that the project conformed to the Comprehensive Plan. The project is zoned Public Facilities (PF) which allows for multi-family housing. Concessions to the Zoning Code Requirements requested are for a 49 foot building which is within 150 feet of residential buildings, with lot coverage of 39%, and a FAR of 1.33:1. The Greenmeadow Community Association proposed a secondary access route through County property, but the traffic increase was not sufficient to require a secondary access. The conclusions are that the project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance and qualifies for State Housing Law provisions.

Chair Thompson called for the applicant presentation and gave them 10 minutes.

Kate Conley, Architects FORA, thanked the ARB for hearing the details of Mitchell Park Place. They hope to create a welcoming space that is inclusive of people with all abilities. The project qualifies under State Density Bonus Laws, AB 2162, and AB 1763. The site is zoned PF with a Major Institution Special Facilities (MISP) designation for use and is bordered on three sides by additional MISP use. Santa Clara has owned the land since 1957 and leased to the current occupant since 1979, but that lease terminates October 5, 2022, at which time the County can begin redevelopment. The Greenmeadow neighborhood and Charleston Shopping Center are further south and across Charleston Road. The site is accessible from public transport, there are dedicated and protected bike lanes. She showed a slide with a streetscape diagram with the building massing in context. The most comparable neighbor is the Stevenson House Senior Housing Development. They learned through community outreach that the Eichler aesthetic is very important to the neighbors, so those principles have been incorporated into the project. The color palette is sourced from the Palo Alto Eichler Design Guidelines. Angled saw tooth projections direct views away from the residential neighborhood and up Charleston. She displayed the materials palette and stated that for increased durability they are using metal panels in lieu of wood siding and noted how the materials fit with the Eichler scheme. She showed the floor plans including a ground floor office space for the building's current nonprofit tenant, Ability Path. There are three first floor apartments for residents with mobility impairment who would prefer a ground level unit. The second and third floor plans are nearly identical, and the fourth floor shows the stepped back volume from Charleston Road. The roof plans display the mechanics, mechanical screen, and photovoltaics. She pointed out the stepped back position along Charleston. She showed the existing site plan versus the most recent proposed site plan. The parking area is permeable paving as is the trash staging area. The courtyard supports all types of activities for residents including dining, garden space, and a quiet seating area. Both neighbors and advocates for future residents prefer that the private outdoor space be completely separate from the public realm, so the courtyard is shielded from the public way by the building. The circulation diagram shows the vehicular access, as well as bicycle and pedestrian pathways. Due to the popularity of the Nelson Drive crossing for bicyclists they located two extra wide gates through the perimeter fencing closest to the multiuse path. Vehicular circulation is separate from bicycle and pedestrian circulation as much as possible. She showed the landscape materials board and noted the stormwater friendly paving solutions. The selected trees do not lose their leaves in the climate so there will be year round privacy and screening. Smaller plants were selected for color, draught tolerance, and support of local habitat. She showed views from Charleston,

Nelson Drive, and the courtyard. Finally, she showed the path to the main entrance. She thanked the ARB and City staff.

Chair Thompson thanked her for the presentation and called for the public comment.

Madina Klicheva, Administrative Assistant, stated there were a number of raised hands starting with Robert Stromberg. She also confirmed that [Andrew Barnes] was promoted as a panelist.

Ms. Gerhardt noted there was someone called "Development Team 03" on the call. She asked if it was a member of the applicant team.

Kate Blessing-Kawamura stated that there were no more members of the applicant team who would join the meeting.

Robert Stromberg explained he worked with Destination Home, a nonprofit organization working to end and prevent homelessness in Santa Clara County. They are happy to see the development moving forward as there is a crisis of affordable housing in the community. Through their work they understand that those in the Extremely Low Income (ELI) category are most at risk of losing their homes. This development includes ELI affordable homes. He thanked the County, Eden, the architects, and the City of Palo Alto for moving the project forward and encouraged support for additional housing.

Bryan Neider, CEO of Ability Path, noted that they have used the Charleston facility for many years and are supportive of the project. They are grateful to the City and County for their support in moving the project forward. The housing need for those with developmental disabilities is significant and the project is game changing. Eden Housing has taken feedback on design input. Ability Path will occupy space on the ground flood to provide programs for their clients. They hope to have more inclusive offerings in the future. Their art program is already highly regarded, and they have computer and technical support programs they are excited to offer going forward. Ability Path is over 100 years old and has exclusive use of the space for almost 50 years, but this project will fill a need for the community at large and they support the vision for the property. He thanked Ms. Conley for her design work and Eden Housing as a whole.

Jan Stokley, Executive Director of Housing Choices, explained that Housing Choices is a nonprofit that focuses on supporting people with developmental disabilities to secure safe, stable, and affordable housing in their home communities. They have partnered with Eden Housing on a number of projects in the County for over 20 years. In Palo Alto there are more than 500 people with developmental disabilities living in the City, over half of which are adults. Of the adult population more than 80% are still living in the home of aging parents. That is primarily due to the lack of affordable housing. People with developmental disabilities have supportive services available to them to live independently, but the greatest barrier is their low incomes and the lack of affordable housing. Parents of adults with developmental disabilities are concerned about what happens when they pass and also would like their children to remain in their home communities. This project is a tremendous opportunity, and the property is ideally suited to people with developmental disabilities because it is transit oriented. She acknowledged the design work done by the team and how well it worked with the site and the neighborhood. The project site has already served people with developmental disabilities for almost 50 years and the project will continue to serve that community. She congratulated Eden and the project's other supporters.

Sara Erickson indicated that she was representing herself and that the Zoom name “Development Team 03” was from her work and should be disregarded. She indicated her support for the affordable housing development for people with developmental disabilities. The project is much needed and would benefit the community.

Patty Elson stated she lived in Greenmeadow and has been the primary point of contact for the neighborhood association regarding their request for using the fire lane road as a second egress. Today’s meeting is the first time she has seen the trash bin structure at the driveway ingress/egress. She asked if it was a structure and if it would obstruct site lines for exiting drivers, especially considering the school commute crossing to the right of the egress. She asked someone to address that issue following public comment. There have been people hit by cars at the intersection in the past, so that could be a serious problem. With that said she indicated there was no opposition to the project. The Greenmeadow Association has clearly stated its support for the project and recognized the need for affordable housing. They are concerned about traffic safety at the intersection so she reiterated that they would like reconsideration of the second egress. They read the County’s traffic study which ignores the other traffic the project will draw to the school commute route. The only thing they requested was the second egress, which would be beneficial to the project as well. The County has indicated that Ability Path is one of the organizations that makes use of the fire lane difficult, but it sounds like Ability Path would benefit from a more campus like connection to its facility. The secondary egress seems like a low cost solution to a problem that will not be evident until traffic returns to pre-COVID levels.

Linnea Wickstrom, Palo Alto resident, and parent of a young adult with intellectual and developmental disabilities, stated she had supported the project from its inception. Eden Architects have held numerous community focus groups and have been very thorough and inviting and gathered community input. They have implemented many suggestions from the community and accommodated the concerns of the residential neighborhood. She hoped the ARB would approve the project. She yielded time to her adult son, Per Maresca. Mr. Maresca stated that he was a young adult with autism who has lived in Palo Alto his entire life. He supported and advocated for the project, which is a great opportunity. He requested the ARB forward the project along and thanked them for their time. Ms. Wickstrom came back on the call and noted her son is also a client of Ability Path and would continue to use their services in their new building. She thanked the ARB.

John Kelly, Palo Alto resident, expressed his strong support for the project. He thought it was exactly what Palo Alto needed. City staff has done a great job outlining the project and the architect explained it well. The community should thank Supervisor Joe Simitian for bringing the project forward. He agreed with Mr. Stonnberg, Mr. Neider, and Ms. Stokley, Ms. Erickson, and Ms. Wickstrom. Given what the staff said about the ministerial nature of the proceedings and the objective standards which have been met, he encouraged the ARB to look to its 2021/2022 Workplan which included an element “to encourage the attainment of the most desirable use of land and improvements.” The ARB should ask itself what it could do to encourage the City Council to provide strong financial support for the project as the community needs the services. The project will move forward more quickly and will be a better project if the City provides financial support. As a cyclist who has been hit by a vehicle he commended the architect and Eden Housing for the design and thought the separation of the pedestrian and bicycle traffic from the

vehicular traffic was phenomenal. The community requested an Eichler inspired design and that has been provided. He asked the ARB to encourage the City Council to support the project financially.

David Grady, Regional Manager for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities in the Central Coast Region, offered his support of the project to address the housing needs of those with developmental disabilities. The housing is good for the community and relief for families with aging parents. Eden Housing has a strong record in Santa Clara County in housing development. Over 40 years ago he worked at the property, and he wanted to recognize its legacy and the services provided to people with developmental disabilities. The nearby school and amenities at Mitchell Park are unique in the County and should be honored. Ability Path can create a model to be repeated throughout the area. He thanked the ARB for its time.

Sarah Verity, representative of Ability Path, wished to echo many of the comments previously made in support of the project. According to the State Department of Developmental Disability Services (DDS) there are 10,753 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Santa Clara County. Additionally, 63% of those people are adults and many of them fall into the ELI category. of the 63% of adults only 7% live independently so the need for the housing is significant. She thanked the City Council, ARB, and Eden Housing for their support.

Soheila Mozayan, employee of Ability Path, echoed Mr. Grady and Mr. Kelly's comments about the necessity of the project in the community. She has served the community for over 20 years and living at the heart of Silicon Valley she believes that creating affordable housing units has long been overdue. She thanked Mr. Simitian for his support of the project. The project will make Palo Alto healthier, happier, and more dynamic. Ability Path was created to serve people and keep them in the community. She requested they support the project in honor of the founders of Ability Path. She thanked everyone who had made personal sacrifices and worked to forward the goals of Ability Path. In previous meetings she heard concerns about parking spaces but thought that would not be an issue and suggested people look to a similar building at 1585 W. El Camino Real in Mountainview for real numbers. She thanked everyone involved in the project.

Lisa Van Dusen, Executive Director of the Palo Alto Community Fund, stated that she was speaking as an individual. She has lived in Palo Alto for several decades as an engaged citizen and thought this was one of the most exciting projects she had seen. She appreciated the comments given at the meeting, especially from those involved in the developmental disability community. She attended the City Council meeting on the project and appreciated the ARB looking at the architecture and expressed overwhelming support for the project. The project is aligned with community goals, particularly related to housing. The project is also very collaborative in nature. She acknowledged Ms. Conley and Ms. Blessing-Kawamura for their work as well as City staff. The location of the project is transit rich and supports the community, especially with Ability Patch. The project is something the community can be proud of, and she wanted to see it move forward quickly. She thanked everyone for their time.

Chair Thompson stated that the next speaker was the last public speaker.

Jenn Wagstaff Hinton, Palo Alto native and Board Director on Ability Path, stated she has a 32 year old special needs daughter named Jane who has been well serviced by Ability Path and its predecessors. She attested to the extreme need for affordable housing for special needs adults in the community. Their

daughter lives at home as do 80% of special needs adults due to the lack of affordable housing in the Bay Area. Jane attends her Ability Path programming by Zoom. She is delighted that the proposed building accommodates Ability Path in its ongoing operations. She requested that the ARB give its full support to the project, which will put Palo Alto on the map for inclusive communities.

Ms. Klicheva stated that concluded the public comment.

Chair Thompson called for Boardmember questions of staff or the applicant.

Boardmember Baltay explained that he was looking at the building as any other ARB project. The project is wonderful, but the same questions and standards apply. With the proposed parking he asked if the applicant provided the proposed shading as he believed there was a rule that a percentage of the area be shaded.

Ms. Gerhardt stated there was a 50% shading requirement that is an Objective Standard. There are finger islands with trees, and she thought they were at the correct percentage, but the Director would double check that before signing off.

Boardmember Baltay noted he did not see the percentage listed and that was why he asked.

Ms. Conley interjected that there was a diagram on the drawing set that showed the 50% shading.

Ms. Gerhardt thanked Ms. Conley and noted that usually the Chair acknowledged the applicant.

Ms. Conley apologized for interrupting.

Boardmember Baltay said that his next question was about the percentage of native plantings in the landscape plan. Sheets PL 2.8 A and B have detailed planting schedules, but no native plant breakout, which is an ARB requirement. He asked the applicant if that was provided.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she had to look to be sure but thought the native plant requirement was an ARB Finding and not an Objective Standard.

Boardmember Baltay thought that was good to know.

Chair Thompson found a shading diagram on PL 1.2.

Boardmember Baltay asked if there was a calculation of the shading percentage on the shading diagram.

Chair Thompson said that it was in the legend that the total area represented 54% coverage.

Boardmember Baltay said that was fine.

Ms. Gerhardt said that they could ask Eden Housing to add additional native plants but could not require it.

Boardmember Baltay said that he was not necessarily making a request for action but was trying to be thorough and not treat the project differently. He asked where the solar shade detail on Sheet PA 10.1 occurred on the building.

Ms. Conley said it would be on the courtyard size and mechanically fastened to the sheeting behind.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that it was a thin metal piece that projected outward from the façade 8 to 14 inches.

Ms. Conley said that was correct.

Boardmember Baltay said that on the material board it says there are aluminum window frames, but the drawings are specified as vinyl. He requested clarification.

Ms. Conley said that they had not selected that product yet, but that whatever selected would be anodized bronze in color. They typically use vinyl for its better thermal performance.

Boardmember Baltay thanked the applicant and indicated those were his questions.

Chair Thompson recognized Vice Chair Hirsch.

Vice Chair Hirsch said the transformer ended up in the parking lot as a last resort. The actual building is 26 feet back from the street and the electrical room is on that end of the building. He asked if the transformer could be located in the building near the electrical room. He asked if that was considered.

Ms. Conley asked if she could answer the question.

Chair Thompson explained that they were in the question and answer portion of the hearing.

Ms. Conley said that the transformer was not allowed in the setback and setting it in front of the building would put it in the setback.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that the building was deeper at that point and asked if the electrical room could be recessed and then the transformer could go in the recess and be screened from the street. That way it would be eliminated from the parking lot.

Ms. Conley explained there was a special 24 foot setback along Charleston Road. The first floor is recessed only two feet. The sawtooth projections extend out to the setback line. The City of Palo Alto Electrical Utility has a 30 foot clear overhead space requirement above the transformer so it would eliminate an entire stack of dwelling units to locate the transformer there.

Vice Chair Hirsch confirmed that they could not locate it in a recess open to outside air as part of the building itself.

Ms. Conley said they could not due to the 30 foot clear overhead space requirement.

Ms. Gerhardt said that staff could confirm that requirement.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that killed the idea and thanked the applicant.

Chair Thompson confirmed that Vice Chair Hirsch had no further questions. She then asked about the nature of the electric transformer enclosure.

Ms. Conley explained they planned to use dense bushes in the planting finger in front of the transformer to screen it rather than a fence.

Chair Thompson asked for more information on the request to make the fire lane a second egress and why it was not accommodated.

Ms. Conley said that they were deferring those questions to representatives of the County of Santa Clara.

Chair Thompson asked if any representatives of Santa Clara were present.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that Consuelo Hernandez was on the line.

Consuelo Hernandez, Director Office of Supportive Housing, indicated she was available and asked Chair Thompson to repeat her question.

Chair Thompson explained that Ms. Eleson had brought up the request to consider a secondary egress using a fire lane. She asked for background on the request.

Ms. Hernandez stated they received a request to consider a second egress through the fire lane. The County oversees the housing parcel at 525 Charleston and the other parcels owned by the County are controlled by the Facilities and Fleet Department. They worked together to determine if the request was reasonable and necessary. There was concern about the number of vehicles that would exit the site in the future, but the traffic study revealed no impact. Additionally, the leaseholders have the right to the area and the County cannot impose the requirement on them. The leases run through 2059. They weighed the facts and the impact the project would have while being mindful of Fair Housing Laws and were very transparent with their information while maintaining the position that it is not a necessary request.

Chair Thompson thanked Ms. Hernandez for the clarification.

Ms. Gerhardt said that Ms. Eleson had a second question about the trash staging area. The staging area is not a structure, it's just pervious pavement on the ground for day of service when the bins are wheeled out.

Chair Thompson confirmed that was because trash vehicles could not get into the property.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that was correct. Trash service only goes 25 feet onto the property, so the location of the trash room is too deep into the property for service without an additional fee.

Chair Thompson asked if the windows without projection would be flush with the siding or punched into the façade.

Ms. Conley said that the paneling had a slight reveal to capture the gap. The window has about an inch projection.

Chair Thompson inquired about the grain to the wood paneling.

Ms. Conley said it was about 6 inches wide.

Chair Thompson noted that the materials board included a place for white plaster, but she could not find that on the elevations and asked where it was.

Ms. Conley explained that the plaster sample was just given for texture. It will be in the three paint colors surrounding it.

Chair Thompson noted a soffit that was the same material as the honey wood color. She asked for confirmation that the soffit is the honey wood paneling separated by the brown beams.

Ms. Conley said that was correct.

Chair Thompson confirmed that it was the same material as the wall.

Ms. Conley confirmed that it was.

Vice Chair Hirsch indicated he had an additional question.

Chair Thompson granted him a follow-up after her final question. On the elevation where the windows are on the Charleston side she asked what the glass would be.

Ms. Conley said it would be a Spandrel glass panel.

Chair Thompson indicated that she was talking about the darker (interrupted)

Ms. Conley apologized and stated that would be charcoal plaster painted to match the anodized bronze color.

Chair Thompson asked if there was Spandrel glass in the project.

Ms. Conley stated there was not.

Vice Chair Hirsch assumed there would be more changes to the landscape plan since the transformer was moved. He asked if they would landscape the area where the transformer had been initially proposed.

Ms. Conley indicated they had a landscape plan with the planting adjusted in the presentation. She offered to share her screen.

Vice Chair Hirsch suggested she do so.

Ms. Conley shared her screen and explained how the planting was expanded to recapture the space that had been dedicated to the transformer. They have added an extra tree as well.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that the corner had access to the bicycle path. He thought there was a light or signage on the path and confirmed there was not access to the path at that point.

Ms. Conley explained that it was open to the path. The fence cuts in at the building line. They have been working with the Transportation Department to make sure they leave the path entry open for cyclists.

Chair Thompson pointed out a typo on the plans.

Ms. Conley said that it was a note that needed to be deleted.

Chair Thompson clarified that there would be bushes around the transformer.

Ms. Conley stated that there would be bushes in the planting area in front of the transformer.

Chair Thompson confirmed that that there was no protection on the sides.

Ms. Conley said that they did not believe that would be necessary to shield it from public view but would do some studies to make sure of that. To the North is another parking space and there will be bollards to protect the transformer from vehicles.

Vice Chair Hirsch confirmed that the garbage bins would sit on the pad and then be collected in the street.

Ms. Conley explained the truck would pull up on Charleston Road and access the bins from there.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted that it was a tight street with a bicycle lane but that there was not an alternative possibility.

Ms. Conley said they worked with the Recycling and Waste Team to identify the desired location.

Vice Chair Hirsch confirmed that they pushed for the current location. Since the trash is collected early in the morning he hoped there would not be significant traffic at that point. It could become an issue relative to traffic at some point.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that the electrical transformers be located outside the setback is a zoning requirement.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that was correct.

Boardmember Baltay asked if that zoning requirement was eligible for a concession.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she would suppose they could.

Boardmember Baltay asked if his ARB colleagues remembered Lytton Gardens and its electrical transformer.

Chair Thompson asked how long ago the project was heard.

Boardmember Baltay thought it was two or three years ago.

Vice Chair Hirsch remembered the project.

Boardmember Baltay thought the transformer was inside the setback.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed. He asked if Boardmember Baltay was suggesting another concession and noted that there were already three.

Boardmember Baltay said that it was only a question.

Chair Thompson asked if moving the transformer saved Tree #6.

Ms. Conley said that they would explore that as the movement was a recent development.

Chair Thompson closed the question section and thanked the applicant. She explained that each Boardmember would have 10 minutes to speak to start the conversation.

Boardmember Baltay thanked the applicant and everyone who pushed the project forward. The project is fantastic, and he wholeheartedly endorsed it. He planned to review it as any other project and would therefore start with the site planning, which he found wonderful. The private outdoor garden is well

situated and a wonderful space. The front landscaping is also wonderful, especially given the pedestrian nature of the residents of the property. The landscaping is exceptionally well done with wonderful thought given to the entry. With parking he found that it would be the right amount. During the day the staff would use about half the lot providing spaces for other uses. The needs of a building like this are lower than what would be necessary for a typical multi-family building. There will not be overflow parking or a large impact on traffic patterns because this type of building does not have a huge traffic impact. Most residents in this facility do not drive. The building is beautiful, attractive, and interesting with a logical floorplan and massing. The biggest drawback is a lack of balconies for each unit, which is something they generally ask for out of all facilities. The ARB has agreed that low income housing should not have different standards for amenities like balconies. There is a missed opportunity for an outdoor roof deck on the third floor where the massing is stepped down. He encouraged the applicant to see if an outdoor roof garden was feasible. He was comfortable with the density, unit counts, and height of the building. The metal panels proposed require a lot of attention to detail and needs to be carefully thought out or the contractor may make mistakes. The materials are high quality and beautiful with strong attractive colors. He would like detailed specifications provided in the final package. That is a standard that all applicants are held to and this one should not be treated differently. The final resolution on the windows should also be included in the design package. The Yellowwood tree is an odd choice and not normally used as it's not native although he acknowledged that it would be good privacy screening for the neighbor. Staff should check the percentage of shading over the parking lot as he was not convinced by the calculations. If native plantings are not standard then he finds the landscaping otherwise quite nice. He noted that he had a series of more general comments not related to the project and asked Chair Thompson if they could revisit the conversation later. For example, he said there were things to be discussed on the height limit, the transformer location, and parking.

Chair Thompson said that those items were related to the project.

Boardmember Baltay said that they were indirectly related as they are not related to what the ARB would approve.

Chair Thompson said he still had 3 and a half minutes remaining. They could come around.

Boardmember Baltay said that concluded his comments on the building. He thought the project was great.

Chair Thompson recognized Vice Chair Hirsch.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted he agreed with Boardmember Baltay on many items. The project is very exciting. Not related to the project, but rather to the process he was concerned that they are asked to review projects based on State regulations. If the project comes for comments and they make reasonable comments that are ignored then they would realize the futility of making any comments. That could significantly diminish the quality of architecture in Palo Alto. The inside/outside and outside/inside relationship of the building is well done in many respects. He appreciated the L shaped plan and the community rooms but was concerned that the extended corridor for a single room did not work and was wasted space. He understood that it brought natural light to the middle of the building but thought that they could use it for a computer room or training room with a glass door. The ground floor lobby bothered him as it did not relate to the normal functions of a lobby which diminishes the whole entry. If the bathrooms could be moved then the entryway would be ample and functional. The front entry will be

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ceremonial as the corridor from the parking lot will be the main entrance. He asked if there could be an enclosure from the parking lot made of glass that would get one to the lobby and other functions on the first floor. The sawtooth bays are effective on the front of the building and wondered why that detail could not be applied to the east facing side. The two bedroom units do not work with a sawtooth and there are a fair number of them. He asked why they did not switch the efficiency unit with the two bedrooms and suggested they make the change. That is not normally part of the ARB review, but it stood out to him. The front and side elevations are wonderful, but the rear is mundane and harsh at least in the drawings. The garden is wonderful, and he suggested more windows to provide views. They could use strip windows for an up light at the ceiling to give the building more of an Eichler feel. He noted there would be van delivery and transport for the residents, which he hoped they considered. He asked a follow-up question on how vans would come in and access the site. Overall, this is super project, and he hoped the ARB would be advised as it went through the process. If the ARB will not be part of the process from here on then perhaps they should be involved sooner in ministerial proceedings.

Chair Thompson thanked the applicant, the members of the public, and stated that everyone shared a sense of excitement about the project. In general, they are very supportive of the project. Like Boardmember Baltay, her comments are the same as she would make on any other application. The stairway on the west elevation abutting the multi-use path to Mitchell Park is light colored and appears as a big blank wall. She suggested that it was a good opportunity for artwork on an active corner. If not art they could consider different colored tiles or something with more interest. The blue material on the façade is really great and there is a relationship to the Charleston Plaza's blue roofs, which she appreciated. The browner upper level soffits appear muddy in the renderings and could use additional consideration. The wood soffit will look nice from the ground. The materials board was tricky to follow and typically the ARB likes to view the shapes in the colors that will be used. She agreed with Boardmember Baltay that a roof deck would be nice, but understood it was difficult to do with a Type 5 building. She suggested additional glazing on the upper level. She disagreed with Vice Chair Hirsch on recapturing the corridor space. It's great that natural light is included in the circulation space and Eichler's have such a strong inside/outside relationship so she appreciated the applicant's use of light in the corridors and noted it would save energy. She was concerned that there may be too many materials used as Eichler's have two colors, perhaps with a third for an accent. Therefore, she suggested possibly simplifying the materials. She supported Boardmember Baltay's comment about the shading in the parking lot and Vice Chair Hirsch's comment about flipping the meeting spaces with the lobby for a better connection to the elevator. With the landscaping plan they should try to save Tree #6 and those by the courtyard, which are Trees #14 through 19. The transformer makes sense where it is, but a little more screening would be great. The cutsheets did not specify a color temperature for the lighting so she suggested 3,500K or lower. She asked if Boardmember Baltay had further comments.

Boardmember Baltay was not sure that the transformer was part of the ARB purview, but thought the staff, applicant, and the Utility Department should not use a parking space for a transformer. There is possibly a different Code interpretation that would allow for it to be within the setback. The applicant could request a concession to place the transformer within the setback or put the transformer to the back of the parking lot. It is a shame to lose a parking space in a potentially under parked project without making an exceptional effort to find a different solution. The building illustrates the difficulty with the 150 foot height limit setback from residential properties. This building is being impacted because of the

housing across the street, which is not really impacted by the building. Palo Alto has an extreme requirement that does not consider the large boulevard separating the neighborhoods and that does not make sense. The City should look at the issue at a high level. It is also worth looking at how traffic studies are done. This one was done based on national standards for the type of housing and posited that there would be 185 trips caused by onsite parking. That will not be the case and therefore the standards have to be in line with what is actually happening. When a building does not have a parking facility it is much less likely to generate trips. Finally, he asked if staff had analyzed the building under the Objective Design Standards. It would be good to know if it met the standards.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed with Boardmember Baltay that the transformer deserved more attention and would be nicer if the applicant requested a concession and not place it in the parking lot. He again requested that someone discuss van deliveries and how that traffic would flow. Ability Path uses vans to transport people and deserves consideration. In response to Chair Thompson's comments about the light in the corridor he reminded her that there could be a glass door added and the outside light would flow through. He encouraged the design team to look into moving the two bedroom unit to the corner of the building. That could change rooflines or unit counts but would improve the two bedroom units. The current interior planning for those units is not as successful as the efficiencies or one bedrooms. He agreed with Boardmember Baltay on the 150 foot distance requirement. He looked at Wilton Court in relation to its neighbors and felt sorry for the neighbors as Wilton Court is very close and has significant massing. Some of that must be accepted as housing is needed in Palo Alto, especially the 6,500+ units of new housing in the next eight years. With this building there is only one house within the 150 foot limit and the shopping center. It's perfectly located for the size. The 150 foot dimension must be looked at by the City as it is an impediment to density moving forward. He was looking forward to the new building and thought the applicant team did a terrific job.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that the applicant could answer the van question.

Ms. Conley said that they worked with their civil engineer on the turning radius for a typical paratransit van. The standard City driveway width is sufficient for a paratransit van to pull into and then back out and exit the driveway facing forward.

Vice Chair Hirsch thanked Ms. Conley for the information.

Chair Thompson added that with the transformer she was more in favor of Boardmember Baltay's note about placing it to the back of the site then moving it to the front. The Planning Department is trying to keep transformers out of the front. She asked for final thoughts before they ended the conversation.

Vice Chair Hirsch found that the drawings were hard to read and that the colors did not differentiate themselves. When one places shadows on a dark drawing it muddies the water. The rear elevation was hard to judge due to the drawings. He asked City Planning to discuss drawings with the applicants before they come to the ARB or at the least he and Chair Thompson could comment on it prior to hearings. It was very difficult to read the rear elevations in the places where the shadows were too strong.

Chair Thompson stated she struggled with the materials being a little hard to read. She asked the applicant how they felt about the brown on the upper levels and her comment about the overall amount of materials.

Vice Chair Hirsch felt there were too many materials and different colors.

Boardmember Baltay did not mind the colors but thought the stone by the door could be overkill.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed.

Boardmember Baltay said it was not typical of an Eichler. Overall, the building is well designed compared to many for profit residential buildings it is good and he encouraged them to move forward. There might be one or two extra materials or colors and the material board is not as clear as it should be. The building is great and needs to go forward.

Chair Thompson said that they did not disagree, the ARB was simply providing feedback that could be useful.

Ms. Gerhardt thanked the ARB and noted that staff heard their concerns about the 50% shading over the parking lot, would work with the applicant to get more native plantings if possible, the architect will look at the materials, the transformer will receive a second look and if the applicant chooses to use a concession the City would entertain it. The trash location is fairly well worked out but will be reviewed. The movement of the two bedroom units is not fully in the ARB's purview, but the applicant can consider it. The circulation needed for paratransit vans is available. The drawings were hard to read and part of that could be due to the virtual nature of the meeting. They also will look into saving some trees in the front and the garden area.

Chair Thompson explained that the flipping of the rooms involved the lobby on the ground level.

Ms. Gerhardt said that they were also instructed to look at the stairway by the trail to add visual interest. Those are the main items heard on the project. Boardmember Baltay had general comments that could be agendaized for later.

Chair Thompson asked if the applicant had questions or comments.

Ms. Conley explained that placing the transformer in the rear exceeded maximum conduit runs from the electrical vault on the street. So, Palo Alto Electrical wants the transformer near the street and the Planning Department wants it further from the street. The location shown fits both criteria.

Chair Thompson thanked the applicant and thanked Ms. Gerhardt for her summary.

Vice Chair Hirsch said that the idea of the exit path was not bad, and it was unfortunate that the County did not approve it as it would get the traffic off East Charleston. He has noticed bad traffic by the shopping center before and was concerned about vans turning left. The ARB should recommend that Planning and Transportation look at it and make comments that might be helpful.

Chair Thompson appreciated the input and thanked the applicant for the project and the City for supporting it.

The ARB took a break

Action Items

4. ARB Awards: Consider Seven (7) Additional Eligible Projects and Reaffirm/Decide on the Award Winners

Chair Thompson introduced the item and explained that due to a database issue there were seven projects that were left off the original ARB list for Award consideration. Staff will review the seven projects and then the ARB will open the item to public comment. Former Boardmember Lew is in attendance as well.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that former Boardmember Lew advised staff that at least one project was missing so they reviewed the database and found a handful of missing projects. At the last hearing out of the 91 eligible projects they chose 6 Award winners and 1 honorable mention. She assumed they would continue with the Award winners and see if any of the seven projects rose to the same level. She shared her screen and announced that former Boardmember Lew was the only public attendee, so she asked Ms. Klicheva to promote him to enable conversation. 380 Cambridge Street has not been constructed yet and is therefore ineligible. She announced a façade renovation at 4200 El Camino Real. The Magical Playground at 600 East Meadow Drive is rumored to have been previously considered, but that could not be confirmed. There is a residential project at 430 Forest Avenue with 13 units, underground parking, and public art. 3421 Hillview is on the VMware campus, which has received awards in the past. 3170 Porter Drive is a Research Park project, and the front elevation cannot be viewed from the street. The final project was the HanaHaus renovation at 456 University, which was mostly interior.

Chair Thompson requested Ms. Gerhardt keep the images up during the discussion. She called on member of the public, former Boardmember Lew, to give his thoughts on the projects.

Former Boardmember Alex Lew stated that he went through his notes from the 2015 ARB Awards and found that 456 University Avenue, HanaHaus, was eligible at that time as it was built in 2013. 3421 Hillview, VMware, was also on the 2015 list, but it appeared as 3431.

Ms. Gerhardt explained there were several different buildings at the location.

Former Boardmember Lew recalled that the garage and expansion project went to the ARB. The renovation of an existing building was also included. Those may have been built in 2014 and construction on some of the newer buildings may have been delayed. The previous Award given was for the older campus and not the expansion. The landscaping by Peter Walker is stunning and features a water staircase. 3170 Porter Drive was on his list to photograph for the 2021 Awards, but did not make the list somehow.

Boardmember Baltay asked if former Boardmember Lew had information on Dave Solnick at 4 (interrupted)

Boardmember Lew stated that he was a developer in town but did not develop that particular project. It was an interesting project that combined rental and ownership housing with a penthouse, two for sale townhomes, and 13 rental apartments on the first and second floor. The apartments are mostly two bedrooms with a couple one bedrooms. There is underground parking for the residents with an electrical car charger per unit. The project required a Design Enhancement Exception (DEE) to put the garage ramp in the side setback which was an issue with the Palo Alto Neighborhood group. As the project is adjacent

to a historic building it also went before the Historic Resources Board (HRB). The building was planned to be Net Zero, but he was unsure if it met the requirements. The roof is covered with photovoltaics.

Chair Thompson was unclear about if the Magical Playground had been previously awarded. The November staff report stated it was awarded in 2015 and she requested clarification.

Former Boardmember Lew explained it was built in 2014 and was awarded in 2015.

Chair Thompson stated that a previous award disqualified it from the 2021 Awards.

Ms. Gerhardt apologized and explained she had worked quickly to agenda the topic.

Chair Thompson stated that from the list of 7 there were 3 that were previously considered.

Ms. Gerhardt said she would delete the Magical Playground.

Chair Thompson instructed her to delete HanaHaus and 3421 Hillview.

Ms. Gerhardt thought that a different portion on the VMware campus was considered.

Former Boardmember Lew said that he considered it because he knew it was there but it did not appear on the list and it should.

Chair Thompson [unintelligible]. That left four remaining projects. She thanked former Boardmember Lew for his research. The ARB will not change the winners unless there was support to raise a project to an honorable mention or winner. She called for the ARB's thoughts.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought that the Porter Drive project was an elegant building with terrific proportions and a nice mixture of materials. The lighting is well thought out and the entry is beautiful and uses the courtyard effectively. He wished to elevate the project to an award level. The other projects are not of the quality to be included in the list. Seeing this project he wished to have seven awards.

Boardmember Baltay indicated he was open to adding one more award winning project but he disagreed that it should be Porter Drive and preferred the 430 Forest residential project. He found that to be a good design and an example of meeting complex criteria and still get higher density housing on a budget. The Porter Drive building is huge when you are there in person and does not "grab" him. He wished to elevate 430 Forest.

Chair Thompson agreed with Boardmember Baltay. Porter Drive is massive, and the photo was a nice picture of a crop of a monotonous building. She did not support elevating Porter Drive.

Vice Chair Hirsch noted his judgement was based on the one image.

Chair Thompson shared her screen with Google street views of the Porter Drive building.

Vice Chair Hirsch stated that the building worked from the courtyard side and agreed with his colleagues.

Chair Thompson then showed the Forest Drive property on Google Earth and noted that it was more successful. She could support elevating it to an honorable mention or possibly an award especially considering they had wanted a residential project on the list.

Vice Chair Hirsch stated that the residential project the ARB heard earlier could be awarded in the future. In comparison it is a lot better than 430 Forest. Based on that if they wanted to elevate it he thought an honorable mention would be appropriate.

Chair Thompson suggested an honorable mention.

Boardmember Baltay said that was fine. He knew the building and the architect and thought the interior spaces were nice.

Chair Thompson called for a Motion.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Chair Thompson, to grant 430 Forest Avenue an honorable mention in the ARB Awards.

VOTE: 3-0

Chair Thompson thanked former Boardmember Lew for bringing the issue to their attention.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she would work with Chair Thompson to send emails to the winners.

Chair Thompson stated that they assigned addresses to Boardmembers but needed to assign 430 Forest Avenue and asked if Boardmember Baltay would handle it.

Boardmember Baltay stated that he could handle 430 Forest Avenue.

Ms. Gerhardt stated they would send the list out.

Vice Chair Hirsch requested that she provide phone numbers as well.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she would look up details.

Vice Chair Hirsch asked if he had the Fire Station and was pleased to learn that he did. He also confirmed that he had 611 Cowper.

Chair Thompson said that the information would be emailed to the Boardmembers.

Approval of Minutes

5. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for December 2, 2021

Chair Thompson called for a Motion.

Boardmember Baltay stated that he would like to request a change to the minutes on Packet Page 139, Minutes Page 25. The phasing is incorrect and should state that the architect said that there was an inconsistent eve line. The phrase "he said that" or similar should be inserted as it is not a statement of fact but the opinion of the architect.

Chair Thompson pointed it out for Ms. Gerhardt.

Boardmember Baltay asked if the other Boardmembers shared his recollection.

Chair Thompson indicated that she was fine with adding "he said" to the minutes.

Boardmember Baltay stated that the architect was arguing that the façade line was sufficiently broken up. It was an argument, not a statement everyone agreed on.

Vice Chair Hirsch said that was ok.

Chair Thompson indicated that she was fine with the edit.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Vice Chair Hirsch, to approve the Meeting Minutes for December 2, 2021, with the change “he said that” to the second line of the second paragraph on Packet Page 139.

VOTE: 3-0

6. Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for January 20, 2022

Chair Thompson introduced the item.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Chair Thompson, to approve the Meeting Minutes for January 20, 2022.

VOTE: 3-0

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

7. California Avenue Street Improvements / Parklets

Chair Thompson explained that at a future meeting she wanted the topic agenda'd as a study session. The City Council made a Motion during COVID lockdown where they asked the City to look at design ideas for California Avenue if it were to stay closed off. When the Board Chairs met with the Mayor there was a question about what the ARB could do to help. So, she hoped the study session could focus on that and was interested in Boardmember thoughts as to what would make that study session successful. For example, having a site plan and some mapping of the current conditions would be helpful. The idea is to understand the area and how it is being developed on the ground. If they are going to consider a charrette then is that something the ARB would like to help organize.

Boardmember Baltay supported the study session and thought it was a good roll for the ARB to expand into.

Vice Chair Hirsch agreed and added that he would like to include representation from the merchants. The ground floor of the old World Trade Center in New York City held lots of restaurants and had a lot of floating elements in the planning. There could be merchants selling things in the public space as well. The Art Commission sometimes comes up with very inventive ideas and should be included in the conversation. Art can help activate the street. There are also entertainment possibilities. The committee should be broad enough to consider possibilities, but not so large as to impede progress. A charrette is a good way to approach the issue.

Chair Thompson was pleased they were onboard. When they have the study session they can come up with ways to approach the issue. In advance of the study session they would need a site plan and

precedents of pedestrian only spaces. The outcome of the study session could be involving the Arts Commission or setting up a task force or similar. If there is anything Boardmembers want in anticipation of the study session they should let her or Ms. Gerhardt know.

Ms. Gerhardt said that she would see what she could do about a site plan and would collect public spaces and put them into a PowerPoint if Commissioners provided examples.

Chair Thompson appreciated the site analysis of the last project they saw. She will do some mapping to get a better understanding of California Avenue.

Ms. Gerhardt asked when Chair Thompson wanted the study session agendaed.

Chair Thompson thought the next meeting might be too busy.

Boardmember Baltay suggested they agendaed it and move the item if necessary.

Chair Thompson agreed.

Ms. Gerhardt stated she would put it on the agenda, work with Chair Thompson, and compile information provided by Boardmembers.

8. Objective Standards Checklist and Update

Chair Thompson introduced the item.

Ms. Gerhardt stated she did not have the materials ready but wanted to update the ARB. They are moving forward and held one community meeting. A second community meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. There is an updated crosswalk document for the ARB which is being finalized. The City Council requested they review the menu items and determine if they needed to add requirements. There is a checklist in development to be used by staff, developers, and the ARB. Those items should be on the website shortly and the ARB will receive email confirmation when it goes up.

Vice Chair Hirsch asked if Ms. Gerhardt knew if the City Council wanted more alternatives than what was currently listed or if there was a different way of interpreting what they said.

Chair Thompson believed that they had interpreted it one way, but then decided to interpret it both ways. Initially they thought that the City Council wanted the ARB to require applicants to use a greater number than what was currently required in the standards, but at the last meeting Boardmember Baltay suggested adding more options as well.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the direct Motion was for the building massing/façade sections where there is a menu of choices to increase the number of required choices per category.

Chair Thompson explained that at the last meeting they discussed that they did not feel like adding more required options was the right things to do. To mitigate that they would add more menu items.

Vice Chair Hirsch thought more options were better for the designers and the buildings.

Chair Thompson asked if Vice Chair Hirsch was working on that.

Vice Chair Hirsch said he would do so and that he wanted clarity as to what it was they would look for.

Chair Thompson asked if there was anything further.

Boardmember Baltay asked if March 3rd was in person and stated that he planned to be there.

Ms. Gerhardt said that it was in person.

Chair Thompson indicated that she planned to attend in person.

Vice Chair Hirsch stated his intent to attend in person.

Chair Thompson inquired about how the meeting would work in person.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that staff has been in training and Midpen would be in attendance. Council has required vaccine card checks for attendance so that will be done at the door. She suggested that the Boardmembers come early to work out the details.

Adjournment

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting.