



Architectural Review Board

Staff Report (ID # 14085)

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

Summary Title: Minutes of February 3, 2022

Title: Draft Architectural Review Board Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2022

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

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

Background

Draft minutes from the February 3, 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 3, 2022 (DOCX)



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
 MINUTES: February 3, 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, Boardmember Peter Baltay, Boardmember David Hirsch

Absent: None.

Oral Communications

None.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

None.

City Official Reports

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

Jodie Gerhardt, Manager of Current Planning, shared her screen with the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and displayed the 2022 Meeting Schedule and Assignments. February meetings will be virtual and future meetings may be in person or hybrid. 525 East Charleston will be discussed on February 17, 2022. It will have one hearing to determine if the project meets the zoning code.

Action Items

2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 300 Pasteur [21PLN-00235]: Recommendation on Applicant's Request for Approval of a Major Architectural Review to Allow an Addition of Approximately 37,000 sf to an Existing Stanford Hospital Building to Meet Seismic Standards and Enable Renovation of Existing Patient Rooms, and Associated Landscape Changes. Zoning District: HD. Environmental Assessment: Certified EIR for the Stanford University Medical Center Facilities Renewal and Replacement Project (Council Resolution No 9168). For More Information Contact Project Planner Emily Foley at Emily.foley@cityofpaloalto.org

Chair Thompson introduced the item and called for disclosures.

Boardmember Baltay disclosed he visited the site.

Boardmember Hirsch disclosed that he visited the site and the boards at City Hall.

Chair Thompson disclosed that she visited the site at nighttime and the material boards at City Hall. She called for the staff report.

Emily Foley, Project Planner, shared her screen and presented a PowerPoint on the first formal review for the Stanford University Medical Center (SUMC) Nursing Pod project at 300 Pasteur. The application is for a 37,116 square foot (sf) addition. The staff report incorrectly lists the square footage used for a preliminary application which was reviewed by the ARB on April 15, 2021. The project allows hospital uses to be moved to a seismically stable building. The extension will have a capacity of 72 beds and overall, the facility will decrease by 15 beds. The extension will be four stories and match the existing height of the building. The project includes landscaping upgrades to the below grade courtyards and promenade. The guidance documents include the Conditional Use Permit (CUP), the Development Agreement, and the SUMC Design Guidelines. The relevant design guidelines are listed in the staff report. She showed slides contrasting the elevation presented at the preliminary review with the current proposed elevation. They added windows and changed the exterior panels and several materials. The next slide illustrated the landscaping plan and layout of the gardens. There are several benches which will line the promenade. Staff recommends that the ARB recommend approval of the proposed project, but they may also send items to subcommittee or continue to a date uncertain.

Chair Thompson asked Ms. Foley to put up the slide of the existing site versus the proposal.

Ms. Foley brought the slide up and explained that it did not represent the existing condition. The slide compares the initial proposal the ARB previously heard to the current proposal.

Chair Thompson stated that both had the same suffix.

Ms. Foley explained that the top picture was from the preliminary hearing and the bottom picture represented the current proposal.

Chair Thompson stated she understood.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if there were a difference between the top and bottom pictures.

Ms. Foley said that there were no differences in terms of window location, but the windows were slightly different.

Ms. Gerhardt noted that the first slide demonstrated more differences.

Chair Thompson stated she had just wanted to clarify there were no errors. She called for the applicant's presentation.

Molly Swenson, Stanford Medicine Planning, Designing, Construction Department, thanked the ARB for hearing the proposed addition to Stanford Hospital's nursing pods. The project was first presented to the ARB in April 2021 for preliminary review. It is part of the overarching renewal project at Stanford Medicine and brings them closer to compliance with State seismic safety requirements. The project fronts the pedestrian throughfare known as the Promenade. The ARB provided its comments, and they took the feedback and refined the project. A primary focus was softening the building façade. She introduced Pam Kurz with Perkins Eastman.

Pam Kurz, Perkins Eastman, stated that she was the lead on the design effort. She showed the ARB the proposed plan including the campus context. She showed views from the southern end of the Promenade which included new seating and large garden spaces. The West Elevation follows the SUMC Design Guidelines, and the scale is in keeping with the existing hospital buildings. She showed the previous West Elevation as well as the current proposed design including close ups to show the materials used. Material selection has been taken from the SUMC Design Guidelines and are in a neutral beige color palette. Signage has been changed to a lighter color. Based on ARB feedback they have created a more engaging façade with a variety of textures and new fenestration. Patient rooms have garden views, and the stair windows create movement. She showed views from Wang Plaza. With the penthouse visibility they rendered pedestrian views along the Promenade and determined that the penthouse is either not visible or only partly visible for the majority of the walk. When it is visible it is in keeping with the existing penthouses on the pods and the new hospital. The focus is on the gardens and the pedestrian experience along the activated Promenade. She introduced Adit Pal to discuss the landscape design.

Adit Pal, BFS Landscape Architects, explained that the view down the Promenade illustrated that the architecture and landscaping are complimentary. It creates an urban street like dialogue between architectural façade and greenery to help visually activate the Promenade. The frontage of the courtyards is about twice as long as each façade. pedestrians walking along the Promenade get a sense of open space and vegetation framed by buildings. The steel fence which separates the sunken courtyards from the Promenade is slatted in a modern but random pattern and balances privacy with transparency. It varies in height and is taller near the patient room windows for privacy. Signage is still under development but will narrate the story of the hospital through text, graphics, and historical pictures across eight panels. The panels will be lit at night and integrated with other light sources. The plantings in the courtyards consist of a two layered approach, with the layer close to the windows featuring flowering and familiar garden plants and is balanced by a textured and seasonally flowering landscape behind it in the middle of the courtyard. The middle tier is lower water use. The flowering plants forward the habitat creation goals of the City Urban Forestry Master Plan. He showed a slide illustrating the side and center courtyard which are emergency and maintenance access only. Each is about 75 square feet (sf) in area and will contain small to medium sized flowering trees. The landscaping creates a buffer from the building to the Promenade. The F courtyard will serve psychiatric patients outdoors and is about 4,500 sf in area and will be surrounded by the fence with added wood paneling for acoustic privacy. He stated they welcomed comments and questions.

Chair Thompson called for the public comment, but there was none. She called for ARB questions of the staff or the applicant.

Boardmember Hirsch asked who would use the lower courtyard.

Mr. Pal showed a slide of the landscape and noted that those courtyards were for patient viewing only. Courtyard D has a lot of utilities underneath it which require access. The gate and steps are for maintenance access. Courtyard E has an emergency potable water tank underneath it and must also serve as a fire exit, which is the reason for the ramp. Courtyard F is a user programmed courtyard and a fire exit.

Chair Thompson inquired about the interface between the building and the public walk.

Ms. Kurz explained that area contained patient rooms, which is why the courtyards are private.

Chair Thompson confirmed that in the preliminary design there were no windows that looked onto the Promenade, but there were in the new design.

Ms. Kurz said that was correct. She noted that you could not see into patient rooms because of the treatment on the glass.

Chair Thompson asked about the material.

Ms. Kurz explained they referred to it as ribbed.

Chair Thompson questioned its relationship with the adjacent material. Specifically, she wondered if the ribs stuck out or if they were inset and aligned with the adjacent material.

Ms. Kurz said that the material faces would be flush. She asked Ms. Swenson to find the slide.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if the detail was in the plan set printed for the ARB.

Ms. Kurz confirmed it was. The material lays flush with the final panel.

Boardmember Baltay stated that it was on Detail #1 on Sheet A4.5.

Ms. Kurz said that on the other elevation the ribbing happens above the windows for continuity of materiality. She believed the ARB had a sample of the material.

Boardmember Baltay noted that he had viewed the materials but had not felt the need to disclose that as it was on public display.

Boardmember Hirsch asked for an explanation of the use of the middle window on the West Façade Cladding slide.

Ms. Kurz explained it was a window to a corridor between patient rooms. At the lower level you will not be able to see in due to glass treatments. People inside will be able to see out and get natural light.

Boardmember Hirsch noted that was hard to determine from the drawing.

Chair Thompson asked if the glass in the middle was inset.

Ms. Kurz stated it was.

Chair Thompson called for further ARB questions, but there were none. She thanked the applicant and returned to the ARB for comment.

Boardmember Baltay said he could support the project as presented.

Boardmember Hirsch said that generally speaking the project had improved since the last hearing. He thought it was like a mall and asked if Ms. Klicheva had his slides available to show.

Medina Klicheva, Administrative Assistant, indicated she had the slides and shared them with the ARB.

Boardmember Hirsch explained the first slide was of Chuck Close, a picture that looks like a man from far away but is made of a pattern close up.

Ms. Klicheva said that the next one was on a blog and displayed a picture of a hole in the road.

Boardmember Hirsch explained that the painting really changed the spaces.

Ms. Klicheva put up the next link.

Boardmember Hirsch explained it was a Peter Wagner with a constantly changing pattern that is quite exciting. He asked them to imagine it in the SUMC environment. Peter Wagner is doing several pieces throughout Palo Alto, but this piece really enlivens the space. He asked Ms. Klicheva to go to the next one.

Ms. Klicheva said that was all that she had received from him.

Boardmember Hirsch said that was fine, but that it was a work of art by Victor Vasarely. He asked to go back to the elevation of the building.

Ms. Swenson displayed the Extension West Façade – Proposed Change slide.

Boardmember Hirsch explained that the ARB thought the building needed work and the proposal is vastly improved, but there is a lost opportunity. The pod is an incredible improvement to the site planning and the sunken gardens are wonderful. The façade references the hospital building across the street, but he misses an element like he demonstrated in his examples. Right now, it is a piece of nicely designed architecture with some lit panels people may read once. He suggested making the panels part of the experience and more exciting. The building across the way has a bold cantilever and the whole of the Promenade goes to the Plaza where the Edward Durell Stone building lays. He asked why they could not put art in the bottom piece of the building to animate the public way. Having said that, he stated that he could accept the project, but it was not great. It is not out of scale and is detailed nicely but is not exciting. He suggested more glass elements from bottom to top. If they had a moving art piece from one side of the pod to the other and then picked up on the second pod it would provide continuity and a more exciting experience. If they use the framework they've already created it would reinforce the building as well. The mall is a great idea and a wonderful thing for hospital workers, and he wanted to see something there that is delightful and not ordinary.

Chair Thompson said that the project has improved. The canted panels provided special depth that she was concerned the updated design lacked, but the updated design contains a texture that the previous design lacked. When she visited the site she noticed the other building's cantilever and visual interest and remembered former Boardmember Lew's concern about how the provenance would be compressed. Based on that she wondered if the ground level could be inset a little bit. She did not want to sacrifice patient rooms but wanted to differentiate the ground level from the upper levels. The other elevations are fine and work in the overall context. So overall something more interesting on the ground level would be appreciated. she asked Boardmember Baltay for further comment.

Boardmember Baltay felt the two extensions came too close to the mall given how tall they are. The project is a fair compromise for the needs of the applicant. With respect to Boardmember Hirsch's comments he agreed it would be wonderful to animate the space, but it might not be an appropriate place

to do so given the wonderful landscaping. The area provides for a lot of life and activity and sometimes it is good for a building to step back and let life take place. The hospital building on the other side is very interesting and is full of people outside living. He thought that was the sculpture for this particular area. He was comfortable with the building being in the background as it's an extension of the main hospital. He wished the building could be further from the Promenade, but he did not want to slow the project down. If the ARB wanted to tweak the details around the lower level windows, they could discuss it, but the project is pretty good, and the landscaping is astonishing and should be supported.

Chair Thompson thought she was ready to support the project. They could ask the applicant to consider in setting the ground level or adding more visual interest as an item for subcommittee.

Boardmember Baltay said that he would support that if they put out a Motion.

Boardmember Hirsch thought it could be done less for its showiness and more for its appropriateness. It would require study and he agreed it might be nice to set it in more to emphasize the form of the building. That area needs some architectural work, the rest is delightful. The center piece could be uniform in character and not divided into floors with ribbed glass. Receding the bottom would be an improvement in the form. The graphics could be explored separately and everything else could move ahead. The base of the building could be reviewed as a sign or some other minimal change so as to not hold up construction. He agreed with Boardmember Baltay that there was a life to the Promenade. He would approve the formal architecture except for the ground floor with needs more dimensional change.

Ms. Swenson asked to respond to the comments.

Boardmember Hirsch said she could.

Ms. Gerhardt requested the Chair answer the question.

Chair Thompson said that was typically not allowed but asked if she had a lot of comments.

Ms. Swenson wanted to respond about stepping the building back. That would cause them to lose patient rooms and she wanted the ARB to be aware of that. Additionally, there is a robust exterior art program with pieces at the northern and southern ends of the Promenade. They tried to concentrate activity at the two ends of the promenade and under the cantilever in the middle. The stretch along the extensions was intended to be a more passive and contemplative space. The interpretative panels are to add interest.

Chair Thompson thanked Ms. Swenson.

MOTION: Chair Thompson moved, seconded by Boardmember Baltay, to approve the project subject to the findings and with a request that it return to subcommittee for the applicant to consider an alternate treatment to the base of the building as it interfaces with the Promenade to provide more visual interest.

Boardmember Baltay stated he seconded the Motion to move it along. He asked staff if going to subcommittee would prevent the applicant from moving the project forward.

Ms. Gerhardt said that the applicant could apply for building permits but would run the risk of some changes happening.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they already applied for the building permits.

Ms. Swenson explained the building permits were with OSHPD.

Boardmember Baltay did not want the ARB to cause more delays. He asked what would happen if it went to subcommittee.

Ms. Gerhardt said that subcommittee did not have the same noticing requirements so it could be at the next hearing if the applicant was ready with ideas.

Chair Thompson stated that the Motion was to consider a change.

Ms. Gerhardt stated they would need to draw up options and present them to subcommittee. At the earliest that would be the 17th.

Boardmember Hirsch said that he did not believe the changes they would like to see would change the interior program.

Boardmember Baltay agreed that Chair Thompson had made that clear.

Chair Thompson said she was clear that it would not. They are really looking for an architectural treatment.

Boardmember Baltay said he seconded the Motion.

Chair Thompson called for the vote.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0

Chair Thompson thanked the applicant team and went to move to the next item.

Boardmember Baltay asked if Chair Thompson wanted to appoint the subcommittee so that the applicant knew who they would work with.

Chair Thompson indicated that she would appoint herself and Boardmember Hirsch.

Boardmember Baltay agreed with that.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated she had the subcommittee noted.

3. ARB Awards: Consider the Eligible 11 Projects and Associated Photographs Taken by Board Members, and Decide on a List of Award Categories and Award Winners

Chair Thompson introduced the item.

Ms. Gerhardt shared the presentation with the ARB.

Chair Thompson noted that former Boardmember Lew was in attendance and that they would take public comment.

Boardmember Hirsch inquired if Ms. Gerhardt had filled in additional photographs.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that she tried to but had technical problems. The first slide was on 611 Cowper Street. The packet contains the list of eligible projects.

Chair Thompson said that there were 6 projects that each received four or more votes. Then the other 5 had less than four votes. The ARB has to decide if they want to do honorable mentions.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed with Boardmember Baltay's previous comments that they should highlight one project, the Fire Station, because it was the most incredible project of the bunch. Everything else should receive an honorable mention rather than awards of equal importance. The Fire Station is a step above.

Boardmember Baltay asked if there was a staff presentation or if Chair Thompson had a preference as to how to structure the conversation.

Chair Thompson said she wanted to go through the short list again.

Ms. Gerhardt explained the list and notes were in the staff report. The slides are out of order, but all 11 are in the presentation.

Chair Thompson asked to go through the 11 and view them again.

Ms. Gerhardt said that if former Boardmember Lew or other members of the public wanted to discuss the project they could be promoted to do so. The first slide was 611 Cowper. The ARB discussed materials and concept realized for that project. The Fire Station project at 799 Embarcadero was next. The main category discussed there was public building. 180 Hamilton is the Nobu restaurant and renovation of the face of the hotel. The ARB discussed materials and exterior renovation. For 3223 Hanover the ARB discussed the butterfly roofs. With Kol Emeth on 4175 Manuela has a religious assembly use and is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum. 1451 Middlefield Road is the Junior Museum and is a public project. 1400 Page Mill is a Research Park project and is Net Zero, so the ARB was talking about sustainability as a potential category. 1050 Page Mill was being discussed for design and concept. 355 University Avenue is a façade change and seismic upgrade. 701 Welch is the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, which the ARB was considering for its human scale despite it being a very large building.

Chair Thompson requested Ms. Gerhardt show the photos again so that she could take screenshots. She also noted that former Boardmember Lew was the only attendee remaining at the meeting and asked if the other ARB members would mind if she promoted him to panelist.

Boardmember Baltay thought she should do so.

Ms. Klicheva indicated she was promoting former Boardmember Lew to panelist.

Chair Thompson shared her screen with pictures of the projects and noted that the Cheesecake Factory was missing from the pictures. She welcomed former Boardmember Lew to the meeting.

Former Boardmember Lew indicated he was on the call.

Chair Thompson explained that she could mark the pictures on her screen with notes as they determined categories.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they had created final categories.

Chair Thompson said they had not and that was what they needed to do.

Boardmember Baltay suggested that they have a series of categories that are broken out by the use of the building. That is how the field of architecture is set up. So, they should have best public or institutional building, the best large commercial project, the best small scale commercial project, the best storefront, the best sustainable project, and the best overall project. He thought six was a reasonable number of categories.

Chair Thompson requested he repeat the categories.

Boardmember Baltay said sustainable, institutional, store front, large commercial, small scale commercial, and best overall.

Chair Thompson asked for Boardmember Hirsch's thoughts on the categories.

Boardmember Hirsch only had a problem when sustainability did not match up with design quality overall. It is essential that every project be sustainable, but use functions differ. Sustainability should be a part of every project.

Boardmember Baltay agreed and thought it was a nod to being politically correct. In other words, it's a logical inconsistency. He also thought it would be good to have another category for residential projects.

Chair Thompson said that was taken out already.

Boardmember Baltay suggested that they leave the residential award blank. That would make a strong statement that there has not been any good residential design.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Amy French, Chief Planning Official, suggested considering mixed-use projects as their own category.

Chair Thompson noted that there were no projects remaining that fit that category.

Ms. French said that 611 Cowper is mixed-use.

Chair Thompson asked if it had residential.

Boardmember Baltay thought it did not.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that it said it was mixed-use.

Chair Thompson said that it did not receive enough votes.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they could have a mixed-use/residential category.

Boardmember Baltay said that under SB35 mixed-use is more than $\frac{3}{4}$. He asked for the limitation.

Ms. Gerhardt explained it was two-thirds, but many projects do not reach that because of the zoning code.

Ms. French said that mixed-use refers to residential and something nonresidential in Palo Alto.

Chair Thompson asked if former Boardmember Lew had thoughts on the categories.

Former Boardmember Lew did not have many thoughts on the categories. 611 Cowper has one penthouse on the top floor. The other three floors are office. That's typical of Palo Alto mixed-use projects, but other projects that contained more residential were on the list and discarded for lack of votes. There was one on Page Mill and another on El Camino.

Ms. Gerhardt said that in the past they allowed one unit, but for the past several years they've defined multi-family as three units or more.

Former Boardmember Lew explained that the penthouse of 611 Cowper was condo mapped as a separate unit.

Boardmember Hirsch thought six categories were manageable. He asked if the Junior Museum and the Fire Station would be in the same category.

Boardmember Baltay indicated they were.

Chair Thompson pointed out that the pictures on the top half of her screen received four or more votes. The pictures on the bottom received three or less. She added categories that were alternatively described.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they all agreed that if they planned to pick six winners that they should be the six top vote getters.

Chair Thompson said that the six on top would receive the awards, but the ARB needed to assign them categories. The issue with having one institutional category is that four projects are institutional.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they agreed that those were the six projects.

Boardmember Baltay did not agree. He thought 611 Cowper was outstanding.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed and said that the hospital was the best substitute for that.

Chair Thompson asked why they should not honor the previous vote.

Boardmember Baltay said that the votes were not there now and that they had not previously finalized the projects.

Chair Thompson explained that the mandate per the staff report was to build off what they had before.

Boardmember Baltay said that it was up to Chair Thompson.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed with Boardmember Baltay and noted that he pushed for 701 Welch before, but he now thinks that Cowper is a stronger candidate.

Chair Thompson did not think it was right to discount the previous work. The only thing the ARB had left to do was pick the categories. She saw that as their only job at this meeting.

Boardmember Baltay indicated he would respect the Chair's decision.

Boardmember Hirsch did as well but thought a slight modification did not destroy anything.

Ms. French indicated that six was a good number of awards and that the ARB could also have honorable mentions. That has worked in the past.

Boardmember Hirsch suggested they give 701 an honorable mention because of its special concern and scale for children, but not as a piece of exceptional architecture. That was former Boardmember Lew's thoughts as well when he last commented.

Chair Thompson thought it was fine for the second five projects to receive honorable mentions, but the top six are being awarded.

Boardmember Hirsch indicated he would like to make a motion to switch Cowper with Welch.

Chair Thompson confirmed that was because he wanted Cowper to receive the award.

Boardmember Hirsch stated that he did and further suggested they could have seven awards.

Chair Thompson indicated that she was open to that and it was within his right to make a Motion.

Boardmember Baltay suggested letting former Boardmember Lew speak on the institutional history.

Chair Thompson said she would like to hear from former Boardmember Lew.

Former Boardmember Lew agreed with Boardmember Hirsch that the children's hospital could be bumped down because many of the great things are in the courtyard or inside the building and are not open to the public. Bumping 611 Cowper up is problematic as it received several parking exemptions and that may rub people the wrong way. Also, there are many people who are upset about overly large penthouses. As this has one penthouse it is not really the best mixed-use. It's three floors of office and one penthouse. It is very attractive and uses great materials, but the whole idea of a mixed-use building is to have a lively building that is occupied 24 hours a day and attracts people to the urban environment. In terms of uses this may not be the best mixed-use project.

Boardmember Baltay asked for former Boardmember Lew's opinion on the current three ARB members reworking some of the decisions made at past meetings.

Former Boardmember Lew said that since they were not finished he thought the ARB could rework it however they want.

Boardmember Baltay supported reworking the Awards.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated that there was an initial straw poll that yielded the 11 projects and a secondary straw poll that yielded the six. They were looking to move forward, but the item is not closed so it can be changed.

Chair Thompson asked how much reworking Boardmembers Baltay and Hirsch wanted to do since a considerable effort went into determining the six.

Boardmember Baltay indicated the hospital building was not worthy of an award and 611 Cowper should be considered as a commercial building. Former Boardmember Lew's comments on the Cowper project have colored his thinking. He disagreed with the straw poll, felt circumstances had changed, and wanted to push for what he thought was right.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Chair Thompson requested clarification.

Boardmember Baltay said he was asking to remove Welch from the list of Award winners and for the ARB to consider Cowper or any of the others in the bottom for a primary award. The results from the last meeting were a straw poll and not binding.

Chair Thompson asked how a new straw poll would be any different.

Boardmember Baltay explained he was trying to set the ground rules for the current discussion. The purpose of having a mixed-use or a mixed-use/residential award would be to point out that they did not have one. There is not an award worthy mixed use building in Palo Alto that was built in the last five year cycle. 611 Cowper is not an award winning mixed-use building.

Chair Thompson stated that they did not have those categories because they did not have projects to put in them. She felt it was a bit passive aggressive to create a category and not award a winner.

Boardmember Baltay said that he would use any tool he could to get things through to Palo Alto.

Boardmember Hirsch thought that they agreed that 701 did not merit an award. 611 is a wonderful piece of architecture, but they do not need more of that type of building in Palo Alto. It's hard to not award it based on the design. He understood the social reason not to award it and could support that as well. He thought former Boardmember Lew made very good points.

Chair Thompson indicated that she was confused about Boardmember Hirsch's position.

Ms. Gerhardt explained that 611 Cowper was not the best example of mixed-use.

Boardmember Hirsch said that was correct. He could not award it for mixed-use. It could be called a best piece of architecture, but it should not be best mixed-use.

Chair Thompson did not believe it made sense to have a category without a winner unless they were trying to make a point.

Ms. Gerhardt noted that with respect to the residential categories the discussion would be included in the meeting minutes.

Boardmember Hirsch suggested it be noted as a commercial building.

Chair Thompson called for a straw poll on swapping Cowper with Welch.

Boardmember Baltay did not want to swap it, he thought Welch did not deserve an award.

Chair Thompson confirmed that he wanted it to be an honorable mention.

Boardmember Baltay said that they had not agreed on honorable mentions either, but he wanted Welch removed from the awards list.

Boardmember Hirsch said that if they were going to make that decision he would agree with Boardmember Baltay. He suggested substituting 611.

Chair Thompson called for a straw poll on swapping Cowper with Welch.

Boardmember Baltay stated he did not want to do that.

Boardmember Hirsch said no.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if they could take a straw poll on moving 701 Welsch down.

Boardmember Baltay said that he wanted to do that.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that was two votes.

Chair Thompson disagreed.

Ms. Gerhardt asked about a straw poll for moving 611 up.

Boardmember Baltay wanted to discuss categories first.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if they wanted to start with the categories for the five remaining projects.

Boardmember Baltay said that there were two types of categories being discussed. Chair Thompson is putting up categories that are parts of an architectural design strategy.

Chair Thompson explained they were architectural characteristics that displayed excellence.

Boardmember Baltay felt that was too vague for the public to understand and not how architectural awards are typically done. Most people do not understand “best materiality.”

Chair Thompson said it was a good use of materiality. Part of the findings are for high quality materials.

Boardmember Baltay thought that these were architectural awards, and all good architecture should contain good materials.

Chair Thompson asked if the ARB wanted to state what the projects excelled at.

Boardmember Hirsch thought the categories they started with, like “institutional” would work.

Chair Thompson noted that many of the projects were institutional.

Boardmember Baltay thought that the Fire Station was the best building overall.

Boardmember Hirsch said it was the best building overall.

Boardmember Baltay noted that two of the three ARB members wanted that. He asked Chair Thompson how she wanted to move forward.

Ms. French indicated that they did not have to craft specific awards, they could just say that these five are the award winners. Honorable mentions can be given for specific items.

Chair Thompson confirmed that they did not need categories.

Ms. French said that they did not. It was a method in the past to give other projects honorable mentions for specific things.

Boardmember Baltay agreed with not naming the categories.

Boardmember Hirsch thought that was a great idea.

Chair Thompson said that they had their five winners.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they agreed that 611 Cowper would not move up.

Boardmember Baltay said that was a different discussion.

Ms. Gerhardt said that they would have a paragraph to explain the reasons projects won.

Ms. French agreed that there did not have to be only one reason for a project to win. They could state many reasons.

Chair Thompson thought that solved all the problems.

Boardmember Hirsch said that they could talk about materiality and the other elements that Chair Thompson was interested in. He noted that Kol Emeth might draw criticism for the underground parking and comparisons to Castilleja.

Ms. Gerhardt noted that parking may not be the reason for the award.

Ms. French stated they did not need to pontificate, but they could explain that they deserved an award as one of the best projects of the past five years. If they wanted to give more awards or honorable mentions then they could point out specific aspects to recognize.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they could limit the awards to five or six.

Chair Thompson pointed out that they currently had five.

Boardmember Baltay stated he meant the honorable mentions.

Boardmember Hirsch said no honorable mentions.

Chair Thompson asked if he did not want to have honorable mentions.

Boardmember Baltay thought that honorable mentions dilute the impact of the awards.

Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Chair Thompson reminded them that the list was narrowed down from 200 projects.

Boardmember Baltay said that he knew that and thought five or six projects was enough. He suggested one "best" award with the others being honorable mentions.

Chair Thompson disagreed. She stated there were five that were winners, and each could be acknowledged in its description with at least two or three honorable mentions.

Boardmember Hirsch thought that they should emphasize the police building [meaning Fire Station] as the best.

Chair Thompson disagreed.

Boardmember Baltay asked Chair Thompson how many she thought were deserving between awards and honorable mentions.

Chair Thompson thought it would make sense to have five winners with two or three honorable mentions.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that was a maximum of eight. He thought eight was fine and asked if Boardmember Hirsch agreed.

Boardmember Hirsch noted a preference for six awards total.

Boardmember Baltay said that Chair Thompson compromised at eight.

Chair Thompson said she could go to seven.

Boardmember Baltay moved to provide seven winners including honorable mentions for the ARB Awards.

Ms. Gerhardt said that they did not need an actual Motion.

Chair Thompson said that they could call it a straw poll.

Ms. Gerhardt indicated they needed to remove some honorable mentions.

Boardmember Baltay asked if they have a "best" and the rest are winners or if they have all seven equal or some honorable mentions.

Ms. Gerhardt suggested that they narrow the honorable mentions down.

Boardmember Baltay advised Ms. Gerhardt that the issue is if the ARB wanted to name a "best project" or not. He and Boardmember Hirsch prefer that, but Chair Thompson does not.

Ms. French stated it would be the first time in the history of the ARB Awards that there was one top winner. It would be odd.

Chair Thompson thought that would be a huge mistake.

Boardmember Baltay asked her to explain her thoughts.

Chair Thompson explained that she did not want to set that precedent and that she did not want there to be a hierarchy as the ARB worked some percentage on all the projects. Each project excels at different things. The Fire Station has shortcomings as well. The winners are the winners, there is no "best."

Ms. French added that she would be reluctant to call a City building the "winner." There are private sector projects being recognized as well and it would look odd for the City to call itself the best.

Boardmember Baltay asked for former Boardmember Lew's opinion.

Boardmember Hirsch thought that the private projects did not have all the restrictions that public projects had to face.

Chair Thompson said that she would like to hear from former Boardmember Lew as well.

Former Boardmember Lew suggested they pick the award winners and not assign a “best” for several reasons. One, former Vice Chair Lee was opposed to that. Second, the ARB Awards are only done every five years so winning one of only five awards is enough recognition. Additionally, saying something is the “best” may imply that the same standards have been applied to all the projects and that is not necessarily the case. The Cheesecake Factory storefront did not face the same issues as the other projects so its not fair to call one the “best” without criteria. It is too subjective to say one is better than the others.

Boardmember Baltay asked former Boardmember Lew how he felt about not having categories.

Former Boardmember Lew thought it was okay not to have categories so long as there was a description and narrative with each award.

Boardmember Baltay thanked former Boardmember Lew.

Boardmember Hirsch voiced agreement with former Boardmember Lew. He suggested that he and Boardmember Baltay were being seduced by the Fire Station, but the projects should be treated equally because they solve different problems. The Junior Museum has trees and things that needed to be preserved so the site planning was important. The storefront is simple, but beautiful. There are lots of good reasons to keep the projects equal.

Boardmember Baltay said that he “had been talked off the cliff.” He asked if they should have awards and honorable mentions or just awards.

Boardmember Hirsch said he just wanted award winners.

Chair Thompson confirmed that they wanted seven award winners versus five award winners and two honorable mentions.

Boardmember Hirsch indicated he wanted six award winners.

Boardmember Baltay reminded Boardmember Hirsch they had agreed to seven.

Boardmember Hirsch said that they agreed to seven, but not to the breakdown. He suggested recognizing the six and using sustainability for the seventh.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that Boardmember Hirsch wanted 611 Cowper to be a winner and 1400 Page Mill as sustainable.

Boardmember Hirsch said that was correct, but noted he was not particularly happy with the 1400 Page Mill design.

Boardmember Baltay did not feel it had much architectural merit in a classic sense. The project’s merit is that it is sustainable.

Chair Thompson said that was worth an honorable mention.

Boardmember Hirsch preferred they do it that way. The six projects above including Cowper would win awards.

Chair Thompson did not feel that strongly about Cowper and was happy with the five winners. She suggested Cowper as an honorable mention along with the Net Zero project and the concept design project.

Boardmember Hirsch was absolutely opposed to the concept design.

Boardmember Baltay did not think that building should receive an award. It looked like an applique on a box.

Chair Thompson said that they would take it out.

Boardmember Baltay thought the Nobu restaurant was great, but not in the same category as the rest. He recommended it be removed.

Chair Thompson agreed.

Boardmember Hirsch said that that they only needed one storefront.

Boardmember Baltay thought the Cheesecake Factory was the better storefront. He asked about Welch and stated that he did not believe it was worthy of an award.

Boardmember Hirsch appreciated the sensitivity toward children and found that quite amazing.

Ms. Gerhardt noted that with ARB Awards they are mostly dealing with the exterior.

Chair Thompson indicated that the building had really grown on her over time. The pictures do not do it justice.

Boardmember Baltay said that "not bad" was not convincing enough to him and he could not support 701 Welch.

Chair Thompson said that she liked it and asked for B Hirsch's opinion on removing it from consideration.

Boardmember Hirsch said that if they agreed to seven he was happy at six.

Boardmember Baltay noted they were still at eight.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they moved Cowper up.

Chair Thompson said that had not discussed that yet.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they could move it.

Chair Thompson asked Boardmember Hirsch if he thought 701 deserved an honorable mention.

Boardmember Hirsch preferred 701 Welch to 1400 Page Mill.

Chair Thompson agreed that 701 was a better building aesthetically.

Boardmember Baltay stated he could support that. He asked if they were doing honorable mentions or just seven awards.

Chair Thompson preferred honorable mentions.

Boardmember Baltay and Boardmember Hirsch agreed that 701 deserved an award.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that there was one honorable mention and six award winners.

Chair Thompson said that was acceptable.

Boardmember Hirsch indicated he was satisfied.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Boardmember Hirsch, to accept the six award winners and one honorable mention for this ARB Award cycle.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0

Chair Thompson asked former Boardmember Lew for comments.

Former Boardmember Lew stated the ARB did a good job.

Boardmember Hirsch thanked former Boardmember Lew.

Ms. French said that the ARB Awards were never an easy process and congratulated the ARB.

Boardmember Hirsch thanked Ms. French and Ms. Gerhardt.

Ms. Gerhardt requested confirmation that people liked the categories listed. She explained that the projects would be divided so that Boardmembers could speak with the architects and get additional detail and high quality photographs.

Chair Thompson asked if they needed to assign themselves to buildings.

Ms. Gerhardt stated that would be helpful.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they needed to write the text as well.

Chair Thompson asked if Boardmembers Baltay and Hirsch had buildings they wanted to take.

Boardmember Baltay said he would like Kol Emeth.

Chair Thompson said she had her name on Kol Emeth.

Boardmember Baltay told her that she could have it.

Chair Thompson said Boardmember Baltay could have Cowper and Boardmember Hirsch could have the Fire Station. Then they determined it should be flipped.

Boardmember Baltay asked if Chair Thompson remembered who did the Junior Museum.

Chair Thompson stated that she was not on the ARB at that time.

Ms. French said it was CSW and the architect is working on another Palo Alto project. She will provide the ARB the information.

Chair Thompson gave Boardmember Baltay Kol Emeth and she took Hanover.

Boardmember Baltay said he was suggesting she take the Junior Museum because he thought she would enjoy meeting those architects.

Chair Thompson asked if Boardmember Baltay would take the Cheesecake Factory.

Boardmember Baltay agreed.

Chair Thompson said Boardmember Baltay had Kol Emeth and the Cheesecake Factory, Boardmember Hirsch had Cowper and the Fire Station, and she had the rest.

Ms. Gerhardt confirmed that everyone is okay with the yellow labels as the main reason for each award.

Chair Thompson said that they were not doing categories.

Boardmember Baltay suggested they remove the yellow labels.

Ms. Gerhardt said that they were just part of the reason for the award.

Boardmember Baltay confirmed that they should write a paragraph about each building.

Ms. Gerhardt said that they should and that was why they needed to call the architects for help and photos.

Ms. French indicated that they needed professional photos for display.

Ms. Gerhardt said that ultimately the photos would go on the screens in the lobby of City Hall.

Ms. French reminded the ARB to get the names of the entire architect team that worked on the project.

Chair Thompson confirmed that they needed to contact the architects and get pictures.

Ms. French indicated that staff would supply the name and contact information of the applicant, which is usually the architect. The architect could then provide the names of the other members of the architect team.

Boardmember Hirsch asked if they needed to get the engineers or just the design people.

Ms. Gerhardt suggested they ask for the whole team.

Chair Thompson asked what the format should be for the architect's board.

Ms. Gerhardt asked if they needed physical boards or if they planned to use websites and TV screens.

Ms. French said that in the past they had used both. The question is when the Awards would happen and if there would be a reception with food. Currently the ARB is meeting via Zoom, but if the Awards are put off for a few months they might be in person. If the Awards are held virtually it would be silly to have physical boards.

Boardmember Baltay suggested that the Chair should send an email to the applicant winners and formally let them know they won. Staff should provide Boardmembers with clear instructions as to what they need from the winners so that the graphic format and other information is consistent.

Ms. French stated she would work with Ms. Gerhardt and get that done.

Boardmember Baltay suggested that staff provide Boardmembers with a deadline as well.

Ms. Gerhardt said that staff would create a template.

Chair Thompson thanked Boardmember Baltay for the suggestions.

Subcommittee Items

None.

Election of Vice Chair

Chair Thompson called for nominations.

Boardmember Baltay nominated Boardmember Hirsch for Vice Chair of the ARB.

Boardmember Hirsch accepted the nomination.

Chair Thompson asked if they needed a Motion.

MOTION: Boardmember Baltay moved, seconded by Chair Thompson, to appoint Boardmember Hirsch Vice Chair of the ARB.

VOTE: 3-0

Chair Thompson congratulated Vice Chair Hirsch.

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

Chair Thompson called for Boardmember questions, comments, and announcements.

Ms. Gerhardt announced that staff is currently working out of the office due to the Omicron surge. They plan to return to the office on February 28th and open the in-person counter. Things may change, but that is the current plan. With respect to ARB interviews Council will review the latest applications on February 14th and plan to do interviews on February 28th. There could potentially be new ARB members in March. The California Avenue discussion will be placed on a future agenda per Chair Thompson's request.

Chair Thompson stated that she would reach out to the Mayor for further direction about California Avenue. She called for further questions, comments, or announcements, but there were none.

Adjournment

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting.