

**TOWN OF MORAGA  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES**

**January 11, 2016**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

A regular meeting of the Design Review Board (DRB) was called to order by Chair Helber at 7:02 P.M. in the Council Chambers & Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Boulevard, Moraga, California.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Present: Boardmembers Crews, Escano-Thompson, Glover, Chair Helber

Absent: None

Staff: Ellen Clark, Planning Director  
Brian Horn, Associate Planner

**B. Conflict of Interest**

There was no reported conflict of interest.

**C. Contact with Applicants**

Boardmember Glover reported that he had telephone contact with the applicant for Item 3B, 152 and 158 Willowbrook Lane.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no comments from the public.

**3. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. November 9, 2015 Minutes**

**B. 152 and 158 Willowbrook Lane**

**Applicant:** SummerHill Homes, 3000 Executive Parkway, Suite 450, San Ramon, CA 94583

Design Review (DRB 16-15) to approve a 10-foot tall 150 square-foot arbor in the rear yard setback of 152 Willowbrook Lane and approval of an 11-foot tall 121 square-foot shade sail structure within the rear yard of 158 Willowbrook Lane (3-DUA-PD), BH)

### **C. Adoption of Meeting Agenda**

On motion by Boardmember Glover, seconded by Boardmember Crews, to adopt the Consent Agenda, as shown. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes:	Crews, Escano-Thompson, Glover, Helber
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

## **4. ROUTINE AND OTHER MATTERS**

### **A. Draft Wayfinding Signage Alternatives**

Planning Director Ellen Clark introduced Sue Labouvie, President of Studio L'Image, the consultant to present the Draft Wayfinding Alternatives. She asked that the DRB receive the report and provide input to staff and the consultant on the four alternative design concepts for wayfinding signage, as outlined in the January 11, 2016 staff report.

Sue Labouvie, President Studio L'Image, presented examples of a wayfinding program that had been completed in the City of San Pablo and which contained some of the same types of wayfinding signage as the proposed program for the Town of Moraga, although the visual designs would be different. Specific wayfinding signage examples included gateway, vehicular and trail/pedestrian signage. An analysis would be completed to determine decision points and to identify where it would be appropriate to locate the signage to best help people reach their destination. The number of signs is to be determined but initial analysis suggested approximately 18 vehicular signs at decision points, five pedestrian signs, and possibly 20 pedestrian/bicycle, and two gateway signs.

Ms. Labouvie identified the wayfinding sign options that had been reviewed by the Town Department Heads, which had been prepared into the four options submitted for consideration, as contained in the staff report. The alternatives had also been reviewed by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Wayfinding Steering Committee for input and preferred options had been determined by an on-line survey of Moraga residents. Option 4 had been identified as the preferred option. Option 4 contained a blue sky, green hills, and a darker tree line but did not include the pear logo.

Ms. Labouvie clarified that only panel examples were being shown at this time. The design of the signs had not yet been prepared given the current effort on visual appearance, and appeal of the signs. She sought feedback from the DRB on the concepts and what would distinguish Moraga from surrounding communities.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson clarified with staff that the Town's only official logo is the Town seal as displayed on the front page of Attachment B to the staff report, which had been adopted and developed in 1974.

Responding to Boardmember Escano-Thompson Ms. Labouvie clarified that the intent was not to design a city logo but to draw from the current logo/seal and from the landscape, look and feel of the Town to develop imagery the residents determined best reflected the Town. That imagery could be brought into a logo format in the future if that was the desire of the Town.

Boardmember Crews noted that he had been drawn to Option 1 in terms of the visual graphics which had a pear icon with an abstraction of rolling hills. He also saw merit in Option 4, and liked the fact the Town had a lot of trees and open hillsides which had been captured nicely by Option 4. While he found the dark green used in Option 4 as the background for the white lettering to be appealing, he still leaned towards Option 1.

Boardmember Glover acknowledged the work to obtain a consensus on the wayfinding alternatives, agreed with the majority who had supported Option 4, sought signage for direction and for safety reasons, but wanted to avoid an excess of signage along the Town's major thoroughfare.

Chair Helber commented that historically, blue was a color that faded much quicker than other colors, which had been his initial response to the versions including a blue skyline.

Ms. Labouvie referred to the different technology now available, which was not necessarily paint but a digital print. Whatever option was chosen, the colors would be fine-tuned and the materials would include more options where concerns related to fading could be taken into consideration. If fading was an issue and the DRB wanted more information, she would collect the processes, materials, and durability in ratings. She affirmed the highest durability material with less fading would be porcelain, although it would be difficult to change the destination or location. There were painted materials on metal and vinyl wraps on metal that could also be considered and all alternatives would be evaluated.

Ms. Clark added that the budget for the project did not include the redesign of the four wooden monument signs currently at the Town's four entry points along Moraga Road, Moraga Way, in the Joaquin Moraga (JM) orchard, and at St. Mary's Road; however, since the start of the process, Moraga Movers had donated funds to the Town for the replacement of those signs. Town staff would review design options for those signs which were a distinctive sign type and which did not need to include the same elements as the directional signs, or the designs could be carried over in some fashion to the gateway signs.

Chair Helber commented that the flip side of the exhibit had a signage type overview for pedestrian, vehicular, and bicycle signage and he found the bicycle directional sign to be more readable with a white line between each of the directions provided. He suggested including some design element like that on the layout for the sign panel options to make the signs more readable with the understanding that more arrows may be needed.

Having initially been drawn to Option 1, Chair Helber liked the inclusion of the pear as part of the Town's history, which had been picked up more frequently in projects reviewed by the DRB. He asked staff whether the survey response had been a good representation of Moraga's citizens.

Ms. Clark described the survey responses as a good response albeit a self-selected group and so she was uncertain how representative it was of the community as a whole. She described the survey responses as positive.

Chair Helber supported the efforts to reach out to the citizens of Moraga.

Planning Commission Liaison D'Arcy found that the number of responses to the survey based on the Town's population was not sufficient to base a decision.

Ms. Clark acknowledged that concern, but commented that the majority who had responded had selected Option 4. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Wayfinding Steering Committee had been of the opinion that the blue sky was a bit distracting, a bright element in the design for a wayfinding sign, with the need for focus more on the message than the visual, and had suggested more palettes of green.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson personally liked Option 2, the green palette, agreed that the blue was distracting, and asked whether a temporary mock-up could be prepared for public review.

Ms. Labouvie advised of the plan to prepare mock-ups throughout the process, and suggested that a full-scale paper mock-up with color validity could also be considered as part of the review.

Ms. Clark noted that if there was no DRB consensus on a preference, she would like the DRB to narrow down a range of options. She asked whether the pear element should be included, as an example. The DRB's decision would be presented to the Town Council at a future meeting.

Ms. Labouvie explained this was a preliminary phase, with materials and colors to be refined, and with chip samples to be made available in the future to illustrate the actual materials and colors. She affirmed that mock-ups would be beneficial in the process.

Boardmember Crews preferred Option 1 as a first option, and Option 4 as a second choice. Graphically, he stated all the options had merit, and the more he looked at the alternatives he was not convinced of the pear logo.

Boardmember Glover recognized the history with the pear and while he liked the options with the pear logo, he preferred the thoughtful placement of signs to provide safety for travel without placing them unnecessarily throughout the Town. He preferred Option 3.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson preferred Option 2, liked the pear but suggested it may get lost and become unrecognizable as a street sign. Her second preference would be Option 1.

Chair Helber reiterated his preference for Option 1, with Option 4 as his second choice. He found it difficult to make a decision given all of the quality designs that would improve the wayfinding signage in the Town. He also noted that among the DRB's first and second choices, option 1 seemed to have most support.

**B. Consider Approval of Tentative Design Review Board Meeting Schedule for 2016 Calendar Year**

The DRB acknowledged receipt of the Tentative DRB Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2016. Staff clarified the meeting dates proposed to be held versus those that had been tentatively canceled, with the goal to avoid having meetings run late into the evening.

On motion by Boardmember Glover, seconded by Boardmember Escano-Thompson to approve the Tentative Design Review Board Meeting Schedule for 2016 Calendar Year, as shown. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes:	Crews, Escano-Thompson, Glover, Helber
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

Chair Helber identified the 10-day appeal process of a decision of the Design Review Board in writing to the Town Clerk.

**C. Discuss and Clarify Role of Planning Commission Liaison**

Ms. Clark explained that the item had been brought before the DRB to discuss the role of the Planning Commission Liaison at DRB meetings given that the Commission's role had morphed over a couple of years from one of listening and reporting to having a more active role in discussions. The Planning Commission had discussed the issue and the role of the Planning Commission Liaison to serve as a conduit of information back and forth between the DRB and the Planning Commission. She explained that having a more active discussion with a Planning Commission Liaison would run the risk where the Commission Liaison expressed an opinion about a project that could later be brought to the Planning Commission, coloring the discussion or leading a decision.

Ms. Clark reported that the Planning Commission had concurred with staff's summary, with some discussion as to where the Planning Commission Liaison should sit, either at the dais or in the audience. The consensus was that the Planning Commission Liaison should sit at the dais, listen, and provide that conduit rather than actively participate in discussions.

Planning Commission Liaison D'Arcy also affirmed the Planning Commission's discussions for the Planning Commission Liaison to serve as a conduit back and forth between the DRB and the Planning Commission, offering an information sharing ability between the two bodies which was valuable in terms of communication and understanding as to how the DRB worked, and being aware of the differences between the Planning Commission and the DRB.

Chair Helber suggested the role of the Planning Commission Liaison was important to bring back the DRB discussion to the Planning Commission level, particularly when an item was appealed. He appreciated the attendance of the Planning Commission Liaison at DRB meetings, and the importance of being seated on the dais.

Boardmember Glover commented that the DRB Chair had always welcomed comment from the Planning Commission Liaison as a representative of the Planning Commission, and a request to have an opinion on an application while not representing a vote on the DRB, was representing what was occurring elsewhere in the Town. He had no opinion on where the representative should sit either at the dais or in the audience.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson understood the concern that the Planning Commission Liaison not influence the vote of the DRB.

Ms. Clark reiterated the concerns with a more active discussion and the value of the Planning Commission Liaison to serve as a conduit of information between the two bodies. She explained that it was appropriate for the Planning Commission Liaison to report back to the Planning Commission on the DRB's decisions and what had been discussed.

Boardmember Escano-Thompson read into the record excerpts from the Planning Commission meeting held in December 2015 of comments by Planning Commissioner Kuckuk, who had raised concerns with the role of the Commission's Liaison.

Planning Commission Liaison D'Arcy reiterated the importance of communication between the two bodies.

Boardmember Crews characterized the role of the Planning Commission Liaison as valuable, and appreciated offering some awareness to that role to avoid unintended consequences.

Chair Helber clarified with Ms. Clark that no action was being asked of the DRB other than to bring the matter forward to the DRB as an informational item. The issue had been discussed by the Planning Commission. He suggested it would be beneficial to have a policy in place to formalize the role of the Planning Commission Liaison.

Ms. Clark stated an amendment to the DRB and Planning Commission Rules and Procedures would be the appropriate place to include such a policy.

## **5. REPORTS**

## A. Design Review Board

Chair Helber clarified in response to Boardmember Glover that the Consent Agenda had been approved, as submitted, and that Item 3B related to 152 and 158 Willowbrook Lane had not been removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Boardmember Glover explained that he had a comment on the project that had nothing to do with the items identified on the agenda. He reported that he had attempted to contact the applicant for Item 3B via telephone. He had found the packet of information to be absent a planned view for the cover of the patio, and would like to see staff require applicants to provide more detail than the description that had been provided for what he characterized as a “tent” for the shade sail.

Ms. Clark suggested the DRB could discuss the item in the context of future applications.

Boardmember Glover reiterated his request for more scaled details relative to surrounding properties, to be provided in the future consistent with the Town’s Design Guidelines.

Chair Helber commented that although not on the agenda for action, SummerHill Homes Harvest Court subdivision had proposed a sales structure on Lot 13, with two model homes on Lots 11 and 12, with a trap fence to ensure a potential homebuyer could travel between the sales office and the model homes. He asked that the public sidewalk not be blocked for the duration of that use.

Ms. Clark advised that the Planning Commission had considered a use permit for the model homes and sales office for the Harvest Court project, which had included a circulation plan. Other construction was occurring on other portions of the site, and as long as there was valid public access through the site, it should be maintained and not blocked. She added that the improvement plans for the project required the extension of the sidewalk all the way down to the gas station, although there was a culvert/storm drain requiring more work than anticipated and the securing of an easement from the property owner, which had been holding up that work.

## B. Planning Commission Liaison Report – D’Arcy

Planning Commission Liaison D’Arcy reported that the Planning Commission had met on December 7, 2015, and had considered an appeal of a new home at 68 Vista Encinos. The public hearing for that home had been continued and the applicant had been directed to provide revisions related to conditions of tree planting, tree screening, and a reduction of the massing of the second story at the rear of the home. The Planning Commission had also discussed the value of the Planning Commission Liaison. The Planning Commission meeting of January 6, 2016 had included a scoping meeting for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Saint Mary’s College (SMC)

Draft Campus Master Plan, and the approval of the Planning Commission Meeting Schedule for the 2016 Calendar Year.

Associate Planner Brian Horn affirmed the direction to the applicant for 68 Vista Encinos, and reported that the applicant was in the process of revising the design of the home.

Ms. Clark added that the Planning Commission had determined the appeal of 68 Vista Encinos should return to the Planning Commission as opposed to being referred back to the DRB. An application for the home at 70 Vista Encinos would come back to the DRB once revised plans had been submitted to the Town.

### C. Staff

Ms. Clark reported that a joint Planning Commission and DRB meeting had been scheduled for January 25, 2016 to receive a presentation from the consultants on the recommendations from the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) Implementation Steering Committee, with a regular DRB meeting to be held immediately afterwards to consider the application for the property located at 278 Rheem Boulevard. The application had previously been postponed since the applicant had desired the presence of the full DRB.

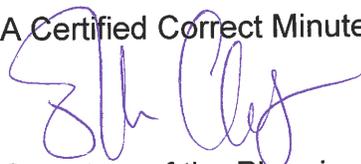
Additionally, the Livable Moraga Road Survey had been distributed to the community and the results would be tabulated with a report to the Town Council at a later date.

Ms. Clark reported that the Town Manager was leaving the Town of Moraga to become the City Manager for the City of Alameda, and Chief of Police Robert Priebe had been appointed to serve as the Interim Town Manager. In addition, the Planning Department had hired a new Senior Planner who had started work at the end of November 2015.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Boardmember Escano-Thompson, seconded by Boardmember Glover and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

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Secretary of the Planning Commission