

TOWN OF WOODSIDE
Planning Commission Meeting

January 11, 2023
Minutes

The meeting of the Woodside Planning Commission was called to order on January 11, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. in Independence Hall and by Zoom. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Voelke, Commissioners Batchelder, Kutay, and London

Absent: Vice Chair Dare, Commissioners Bildner and Garr

Staff: Jean Savaree, Town Attorney
Sage Schaan, Interim Planning Director
Melanie Olson, Assistant Planner
Sarah Harper, Planning Technician

CALLS FOR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Interim Planning Director, Sage Schaan, stated that the Consent Calendar items will be moved to another hearing date. He also presented the December 2022 Director's Report as a Desk Item.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

No Public communication.

CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

2.	3154 Woodside Road	ASRB2022-0032; CUSE2018-0002
	Woodside Village Church	Planner: Sage Schaan, Interim Planning Director

Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of Design Review and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) amendment to create a Sign Program for the Village Church, including the nursery and Village Hub; and, to update the operational conditions of the CUP. The overall project also includes a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) to be used as living unit for the Church grounds caretaker (sexton).

The project is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301, which includes minor alterations to existing facilities; Section 15303(e), which includes accessory structures; and, Section 15311, which provides exemptions for the minor structures such as on-premises signs.

This project was continued from the December 14, 2022, Planning Commission meeting due to lack of a quorum.

DISCUSSION

Interim Planning Director, Sage Schaan presented the staff report.

Chair Voelke asked if the signs would mimic the aesthetics of the library signs?

Planner Schaan replied yes, that is correct.

Chair Voelke asked if sign “D” identifies Woodside Village Church and Hub?

Planner Schaan replied that sign “D” is just a handicap parking sign.

Chair Voelke asked what would sign “A” identify?

Planner Schaan replied that sign “A” would be the identification sign for the Church.

Chair Voelke asked what sign would identify the nursery school?

Planner Schaan replied that it would be part of sign “B.”

Chair Voelke asked if the two large signs are the same size?

Planner Schaan replied that the signs are the same size and height.

Chair Voelke asked if the proposed signs would be redone?

Planner Schaan replied yes, they would be smaller, and there would be no large gaps between the signs.

Commissioner Batchelder asked if there is any insight to why the ASRB recommended not allowing signs for identification for patrons to be able to purchase coffee at the Village Hub?

Planner Schaan replied that there is a Village Hub sign on the side of the building. Planner Schaan presented the current signs.

Commissioner Batchelder noted that there are signs on the property, but drivers on the road may not know about the coffee that is available for purchase.

Planner Schaan replied that inclusion of an A-frame sign was discussed with the ASRB. He noted that one A-frame sign is allowed under the current Sign Program proposal, but that the A-frame sign is not permitted in the right-of-way, or in any location that restricts parking or circulation.

Planner Schaan noted that the project also includes an ADU. The ADU is around 600 sq. ft and is 4 ft from the rear and side property line. He noted that there was an email from a neighbor that the fence is not on the property line and the ADU is not measured from the fence line, but from the property line, and that the ADU will be at least 4 feet from the property line.

Chair Voelke asked if there were any other records other than the 1970s’ Amendment allowing the use of a nursery school? There would have to be a discussion on the size of the school as there was an indication of a need for off-street parking.

Planner Schaan replied that no other records for the project were identified other than the minutes.

Chair Voelke replied that looking at 1976 documents identified the use of a proposed school and a nursery school, but only the nursery school currently exists. If another school is proposed, that is not a

nursery school, the Church would have to come back for review since the previously approved school is an abandoned use.

Planner Schaan replied that he is not aware of the difference between the two schools, and that he can complete further research.

Chair Voelke noted that the original 1959 Permitted Use for the Village Church and Social Hall and the parking agreement regarding the parking with Woodside Elementary School should be noted. She stated that the Conditional Uses such as the coffee shop and the hub are Church uses. She asked if the nursery school is a tenant of the Church?

Planner Schaan replied that he is not sure of the relationship between the Church and the nursery school.

Chair Voelke asked, what if nurseys doubles in size?

Planner Schaan replied, if that were to occur, the Town would research further to determine if it is permitted. It appears that the CUP did not limit the number of students for the nursery or school that was originally approved.

Chair Voelke replied that information is needed as there have been changes in the number of students over the years.

Commissioner Batcheler stated that the site is constrained to add additional parking. He indicated a reluctantly restrict the nursery size unless negative impacts to the surrounding area occur.

Chair Voelke stated that there is a coffee shop at the Church, would it need to follow the same regulations as other coffee shops.

Planner Schaan stated that review of activities at a Church differ from a typical commercial business. A Church provides a community space for a range of activities beyond standard Church services. When different uses at a Church site are proposed, such as the Village Hub, the Town may consider allowing such uses with the CUP review.

Chair Voelke stated that parking is an issue for the Village Hub as patrons park in the library parking lot.

Chair Voelke stated that Sean Rose, Town Engineer, completed a parking study for the library in 2020 before the pandemic and that the Commission should review that study as part of this CUP application.

Commissioner Batchelder asked if the Hub has limited hours?

Planner Schaan stated that the recommended Conditions of Approval limit the hours to Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Commissioner Batchelder stated that the Woodside Village Church is the only Church within the Town limits, correct?

Planner Schaan stated yes.

Commissioner Batchelder stated that the Woodside Community Theater used the Sanctuary to present a mock radio production of War of the Worlds. He stated that it is a community resource does not exist elsewhere in Town.

Chair Voelke stated that this review is not meant to diminish the importance of the Church as an institution in Town. She stated that it is just a question of what should be allowed at the Church under the CUP.

Chair Voelke invited the applicant to speak.

Mr. Steve Patrick, project architect, presented the details of the report.

Chair Voelke stated that nursery school drop off/pick up should not be at the same time as before or after school drop off/pick up as there is no capacity for it.

Mr. Patrick stated that children could go both before and after school across the street to the Church. He stated that it would be a community resource for before and after school programs.

Chair Voelke asked if the services would only be available for Woodside Elementary students. She stated that there are traffic and parking issues that could be intensified if before and after school services are provided for those that do not attend Woodside Elementary. She noted that there would be an increase in traffic if students that do not attend Woodside Elementary would attend the Church programs since the students would not be able to walk between the Church and the Elementary school across the street.

Mr. Patrick stated that they would want all children to be able to attend activities in the Hub. He mentioned that there have been children from East Palo Alto, Atherton, and Menlo Park that have attended programs at the Hub.

Chair Voelke stated that exclusion is not her intention, the concern relates to circulation and parking that could impact the overall area at certain times.

Mr. Patrick replied that children having that resource could actually cut back on traffic as the Woodside Elementary children could walk across the street to attend the Hub and not have an influx of parents arriving to pick them up at school. It is a community good and that a Condition of Approval restricting times for Hub classes during pick up and drop off times for the school, with the exception of activities for school-age children.

Commissioner Batchelder stated that if kids are going to the school and participate in after school programs provided by the Church, he could pick up his children at 5:30 instead of 3:30. He noted that this may help the traffic issue to spread out the times when school pickup occurs. He noted that he would be surprised if more than 10 percent of people attending the program were to be outside of the Woodside School District.

Pastor Ama Zenya spoke, stating that Operation Conditions of Approval b states: all community activity such as dance lessons or art lessons etc. shall occur between, before, or after Woodside Elementary hours and shall not occur during peak drop off hours, 30 minutes before and after school for elementary students. She suggested that the Condition should not restrict school age children activities/care, and as Commissioner Batchelder had earlier noted that it reduces traffic after school as there could be later pick up times for children attending the Church afterschool program. She asked if the 30-minute restriction could be removed as it is not beneficial to the community.

Public Comment opened at 7:18 p.m.

Karen Peterson, Woodside Recreation Committee and Musical Theater, stated that she supports the Conditional Use Permit request. She stated that the convenience of a safe place after school is necessary.

Vicki Coe, Emergency Preparedness Committee, replied that the Town should allow the changes to occur. She noted that the Emergency Preparedness Committee is currently in discussion to have the Church and Village Hub become the new command center in the event of an emergency as it is a central location to provide shelter and supplies. Ms. Coe noted that residents who come to the Hub either walk or bike to the Hub. She replied that she supports the Hub as a community asset.

Public Comment closed at 7:23 p.m.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION

Commissioner Kutay stated that she had no further comments.

Commissioner London stated that he had no additional comments.

Commissioner Batchelder stated that he had no further comments.

Chair Voelke replied that the increase in parking issues by certain activities such as the coffee shop and expansion of the nursery school would create unintended consequences. The parking study from the library needs to be provided for review. She noted that there was a posting at the library parking lot that parking spaces are only for library patrons. Impacts to parking in the area has to be considered and that wording for the Condition restricting Hub classes around pick up and drop off times at the school should be modified to meet the requests of Pastor Ama and Mr. Patrick with regards to afterschool programs. Chair Voelke noted that more information should be provided regarding the size of the nursery school expansion over the years. She also stated that there are pavers on the side of the Church chapels that look like it is an area anticipated for parking and must be reviewed for safety. In addition, outside storage at the side of the chapel that faces the library should be removed.

ACTION

The Planning Commission made a motion to continue the item with direction to staff and the applicant to provide the following:

1. The original and current number of students and employees at the nursery school, and the timing of any increases to the number of students and/or employees at the nursery school.
2. The parking study for the Woodside Library that was prepared by the Town.
3. Revised wording to recommended Condition of Approval Number V.b, allowing an exception to allow programs exclusively serving school aged children within peak drop off and pick up times for Woodside Elementary school (30 minutes before the start of school and 30 minutes after the end of school).
4. Clarify if the pavers on the east side of the chapel building are intended to be used to park cars. If so, does the Town deem the parking space(s) safe for car parking.

Motion: Chair Voelke/ Second: Commissioner Kutay

Yes: Chair Voelke, Commissioners Batchelder, Kutay, and London

No: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Vice Chair Dare, Commissioners Bildner, and Garr.

The Planning Commission passed the motion.

Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal, requiring Planning Commission Design Review (PCDR2022-0002) to construct a new attached 3-car garage to an existing single-family residence within the minimum required 50-foot side setbacks, which requires a setback exception (XSET2022-0002).

The project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to §15301(e), which includes additions to existing structures.

DISCUSSION

Assistant Planner, Melanie Olson, presented the staff report.

Kendra Rosenburg, project architect, presented the overall details of the project.

Public Comment opened at 7:55 p.m.

Jean Liang, property owner, 340 Jane Drive, indicated that she would like a garage next to the house for convenience, and the proposed location provides minimal disturbance to the site.

Public Comment closed at 7:56 p.m.

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION

Chair Voelke stated that the glazing on the proposed garage doors allow for light emission, which could impact neighboring properties. She stated the overall design is consistent with the Design Guidelines if the garage door is non-translucent.

Commissioner Batchelder stated that he can make the findings. He stated that if the garage was to be used as something other than parking, light emission would be a concern. He noted that he does not oppose solid garage doors.

Commissioner London stated that he can make the findings for the project. He stated that it is a compatible addition to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Kutay stated that she can make the findings, but suggests the glazed garage doors be modified to reduce light emission.

Planner Schaan stated that there are frosted glass panels that have a non-translucent backing, which provides the “glass” panels desired on the exterior, while the interior side blocks light emission to the exterior.

ACTION

After review of the item, public testimony, and discussion, the Planning Commission made a motion to approve the project with the following modification to Setback Exception Finding (1)(c), and with the addition of the following Condition of Approval I.h:

Finding (1)(c):

~~This the closely adjacent buildings follow 30 feet or less setbacks and about 70% of the SCP-5 Zone District follows the 30 feet or less setbacks. The buildings on adjacent lots are located within the required 50-foot setbacks, and approximately 70% of the lots within this SCP-5 Zoning District (Jane Drive) have buildings that are setback thirty feet from property lines.~~

Condition of Approval I.h:

- h. Revised plans that include a garage with translucent door panels on the top row, if desired, and with non-translucent door panels on all rows below the top row to minimize light emission impacts to the adjacent property.

Motion: Chair Voelke / Second: Commissioner Kutay
Ayes: Chair Voelke, Commissioners Batchelder, Kutay, and London
Noes: None
Absent: Vice Chair Dare, Commissioners Bildner, and Garr
Abstain: None

The Planning Commission approved the motion.

REPORTS:

- a. Staff Communications

Planner Schaan presented the December 2022, Director's Report.

- b. Planning Commissioners Communications

None.

Chair Voelke adjourned the meeting at 8:05 P.M.