



City of Sebastopol
Incorporated 1902
Planning Department
7120 Bodega Avenue
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APPROVED MINUTES

TREE/DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF January 18, 2023
4:00 P.M.

The notice of the meeting was posted on January 12, 2023.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD:

1. CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chair Langberg called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. and read a procedural statement.

2. ROLL CALL: **Present:** Lars Langberg, Vice Chair
 Marshall Balfe, Board Member
 Melissa Hanley, Board Member
 Christine Level, Board Member
 Cary Bush, Board Member
 Absent: Ted Luthin, Chair
 Staff: John Jay, Associate Planner

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

August 17, 2022

Board Member Bush moved to approve the minutes as presented.

Board Member Hanley seconded the motion.

AYES: Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Members Bush, Level, and Hanley
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Board Member Balfe
ABSENT: Chair Luthin

4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Associate Planner Jay reported that:

- The City Council met January 17th and reviewed subcommittee assignments, which does not affect the DRB. The Council hopes for a new Council Member or member of the public with design experience on the Design Standards Committee.

- The Design Review Board vacancy meeting is scheduled for February 7th. Board Members Balfe and Bush have reapplied to be Board Members. Current Chair Ted Luthin has not reapplied.
- The Planning Department is still working with its consultant for the objective design standards and met last week.
- The Planning Commission conducted a preliminary review of the Healdsburg Avenue project in December 2022 and was in favor of the 100% housing option to go through the use permit procedure required because of the site's split zoning. The Commission discussed site constraints, parking, excess pavement, design features, ingress and egress, and potential redesign.
- Status of the Livery project, Woodmark project, and Hotel Sebastopol project.

The Board asked questions of Associate Planner Jay.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: None.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

Vice Chair Langberg indicated he had had a small advisory role to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's amphitheater project several years ago.

7. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Vote on Chair and Vice Chair

A vote will be held to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair and finding this item is not a "Project" pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5) – Not defined as a project.

Board Member Level nominated Board Member Hanley as Design Review Board Chair.

Board Member Bush nominated Vice Chair Langberg as Design Review Board Chair.

Board Member Bush nominated Board Member Level as Design Review Board Vice Chair.

Board Member Level declined the nomination as Design Review Board Vice Chair.

Board Member Hanley declined the nomination as Design Review Board Chair.

Vice Chair Langberg nominated Board Member Bush as Design Review Board Chair.

Board Member Bush seconded the motion to nominate Vice Chair Langberg as Design Review Board Chair.

AYES: Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Members Balfe, Bush, Hanley

NOES: Board Member Level

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Chair Luthin

Board Member Level nominated Board Member Hanley as Design Review Board Vice Chair.

Chair Langberg seconded the motion to nominate Board Member Hanley as Design Review Board Vice Chair.

AYES: Chair Langberg, and Board Members Balfe, Bush, Hanley, and Level
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Board Member Luthin

B. 2021-035 – 500 Robinson Road – Christy Laborda Harris – St. Stephens Episcopal Church

The St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is proposing a café and "beer garden" for church members called, "The Playground." This café will be onsite near a large children's playground area that was recently installed on the northeast area of the site that provides children with a place to play. The café will serve coffee, food, beer, and wine to members of the church. The provision of food and beverages to members will be within the church's new model of "doing church." The project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, which includes construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

Associate Planner Jay presented the staff report and was available for questions.

The applicant gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Chair Langberg asked for Board questions of staff.

Cary Bush, Board Member

On the actual landscaping that's involved in the project, is there any type of policy that the City saw as a guideline for the project, or does that fall as an exempt type of category?

John Jay, Associate Planner

That's a good question. I don't know what category it would fall into. I would lean probably toward an exemption, because the site is already mostly developed and it's just adding a couple of structures. They are providing some planting on the site, but I don't think it's to a point where it would trigger any standards or anything like that.

Chair Langberg asked for DRB questions of the applicant.

Christine Level, Board Member

Christy, when you order shipping containers is there a specific color palette that they offer you, or can you get any color that you want? How does that work?

Christy Laborda Harris, Applicant

I honestly have not done recent research on them and have been pretty much focused on getting through the Planning Commission and the other things that have needed to happen. I think that there is probably a pretty broad palette. I wouldn't be surprised if there are not price levels for the different types of finish, and we will be trying to minimize cost where possible. If there were suggestions around palettes or tones or whatever, we would take that into account for sure. I have seen them in many different places with many different appearances and I'm sure you can do anything, so it's a question of what are you willing to pay for?

Christine Level, Board Member

My recommendation would be some kind of an earth tone type of a color if your color is limited in your selection, as opposed to some brilliant color like red or a lime green, but something that's going to blend in. You're building is sort of a unique color, so you may not be able to match that, but some kind of an earth tone type color.

Christy Laborda Harris, Applicant

I think that makes sense. We want it to not clash with the building, which is kind of the salmon and terracotta colors, but definitely my imagining is a more earth tone building. We're not in a downtown urban location.

Marshall Balfe, Board Member

I'm a bit confused. On the drawings there is what's called an optional structure, and I'm assuming that that's where the beverages would be sold from, but I want to be clear in my mind about that. Is there one structure, or are there going to be two?

Christy Laborda Harris, Applicant

You're correct, there would be two. The 40-foot would be a full kitchen that we'd be leasing to a chef so that they would have complete access and we would not be stepping on their toes, and then the church would be selling beverages out of the 20-foot container.

Marshall Balfe, Board Member

And whatever color scheme you develop for the food structure, I would think you'd want to do the same color on the other structure.

Christy Laborda Harris, Applicant

That is what I would imagine as well, unless somebody who is far more artistic minded than I am had something where they complemented each other or were slightly different or something, then I would imagine the same color.

Marshall Balfe, Board Member

Perhaps the awnings could be different, more exciting.

Lars Langberg, Chair

It was not entirely clear to me about who can patronize this site; it's a little confusing. In the staff report it sounds like it's for members of the church, and then in your narrative about the project it talks about neighbors coming to the place as well. So is there ABC or City or church restrictions on who can come?

Christy Laborda Harris, Applicant

The Type-51 licenses are called membership, which is available to nonprofits that have over 100 members, have been in existence for over a year, and do outreach into their community, all of which we meet, and they allow the nonprofit to set the membership guidelines, and so much like our traditional church community, which this is growing out of, we are open to all, but there are expectations. Our plan is we don't want a threshold to make it a limitation, we want to welcome neighbors into this community who are not part of the Sunday morning worshipping part of the church, but they would see themselves as part of this broader church community, so we will set membership guidelines such as a \$20 a year membership fee. They'd have to sign up and give us their contact information, and we would set an expectation of regular presence and participation. We already treat everyone who is on our property as part of this community, so we have other groups that meet here regularly. We have choirs who while they're not in our church on Sundays, they very much

feel that this is their church, and neighbors who have been walking this property with their dogs forever, and so this is their church. They would have to sign up so that we formally had a membership roll that included them.

Lars Langberg, Chair

So a neighbor couldn't just wander over and have a cup of coffee without signing up and paying a yearly fee?

Christy Laborda Harris, Applicant

Correct, and as a church we would also have an exception should the financial piece be a barrier to anyone; we don't turn folks away for that. But yes, folks can't show up and not be signed up as members unless they're the guests of a member; that is part of ABC's rules that you can have guests.

Chair Langberg asked for further Board questions to the applicant. Seeing none, he opened public comment. Seeing no public comments, he asked for Board deliberation.

The Board discussed the application as follows:

Melissa Hanley, Vice Chair

I would just echo my fellow Board Member's comments about keeping it more neutral and perhaps darker in color. I had the benefit of going onsite today. They've done an absolutely stunning job with the landscaping. Twenty-five years ago it was a field, and now there's this incredible outdoor structure that's very modern and Board Member Bush would love the landscaping they've done. All of the moves they've made this far give me a lot of confidence that they're going to do this really well.

Cary Bush, Board Member

I'm not afraid of color, and I think it's fun to see the program presented here in this package. I'm in support of the program. I've had experience with outdoor containers like these put in landscapes, and they work and they function really well, but they can get hot, so I think a dark color would definitely make it a little hotbox. I think it would require epoxy paint, which is pretty heavy duty. Some of the colors are limited in the realm unless there's something blended or such, but again, I think it's kind of a fun punctual element to landscape and it could be fun to see it a more primary color, so I'm not here to say that it needs to blend in with nature. I think it's not nature, it's different than nature, so let it be what it wants to be. Let it be fun, let it be colorful, and let it be part of your community. I think it's great.

Melissa Hanley, Vice Chair

Christy mentioned they might engage with an artist to do a wrap or something in the future, make it a canvas, which sounds like an awesome idea.

Christy Laborda Harris, Applicant

We definitely haven't looked into that, and it could be expensive, and I would be concerned about the longevity of something like that in terms of the sun beating on it, but there have been thoughts of ways that they could be used as a canvas, but I think we'd probably start with something more long-term.

Lars Langberg, Chair

Factory finished, which very much limits what you can choose.

Marshall Balfe, Board Member

I went over there today also and looked at it. When I started my career I got mad all the time about community's saying the houses and so forth had to be earth tones; it drove me nuts. So now I'm interested in more exciting presentations of buildings and more creative things, and I love bright colors, but in this case though I don't see it as a place for exciting colors. It just doesn't feel right to me.

Cary Bush, Board Member

I'm looking at the color for the little food pantry, and that is without a doubt not an earth tone and/or a color that blends into nature, so I wanted to throw that out there as an existing color from a structure that exists on the site that, in my professional opinion, doesn't have a particular earth tone or color that blends into nature.

Christine Level, Board Member

St. Stephens has created a wonderful, soothing, non-urban, natural environment around their church, and that is why I'm suggesting a rather vague concept of an earth tone color. In my personal opinion it's the sort of environment that's very good for children and I would like to see whatever they add in there to continue to create the vibe of nature, the calmness of nature, and the escape from the urban environment, so that's why I'm thinking of colors that kind of blend the buildings into the background and let the nature really pop up and take control of the environment.

Lars Langberg, Chair

It's a big site with a lot of earth tones already, big trees and mulch and landscape, so I actually appreciate what Board Member Bush said, that it's such a ridged, boxy container that it's clearly not natural or nature-based. To me it's an opportunity to do something more whimsical, and if you talk about an environment for kids, wouldn't that be fun to have just a big yellow box there or something that is the food place? I also agree with Board Member Bush in the sense of it's the church that has to come up with what works for them. You've already done a great job over the years of creating your own environment, so do you want more pop or do you want something that is more background; it's up to you guys to find the right balance.

Melissa Hanley, Vice Chair

I have to say; you can't see it from the public way.

Lars Langberg, Chair

That's a good point; it's pretty set back there. Or you catch like a little glimpse and bright color might draw you in. So that's color. Then we were asked to talk about lighting and fencing. I'll start with lighting. I'm curious, there must be landscape lighting onsite already, which is typically low-level, dark sky-friendly kind of lighting, so in some way I could see that coming into this site perhaps as well. Then you showed a picture of it with gooseneck barn-type lights; something like that could work. I think in the program streetlights were mentioned, so I don't know if those would meet the dark sky initiative or there are downcast versions of those.

Cary Bush, Board Member

That's a good question for the applicant, but if they did have string lights in mind, then generally they're shielded to be effective from a Night Sky Ordinance perspective, so if there were landscape lights and those sort of things, I'm sure there is some type of astronomic timer that turns them on and off. I think the hours of operation were from 7am to 10pm, so if you're turning things off by 10pm it seems pretty reasonable to me. If you have a

beautiful landscape, maybe you're really showcasing that as well and it's more of an ambiance addition or adjunct to your garden.

Christy Laborda Harris, Applicant

I think we will be adding a little bit more light to the path that leads from the parking lot; it's something we've needed to do for a while to run some underground lines and make that a safer walk. Then there are lights on the building that have been here a very long time that do face down and give light under the outdoor walkways, and they are on a timer so they do go off; they go on at dark I think by 10pm. Then we have one or two motion sensors on the property and a couple of parking lot lights that we've responded to if neighbors have asked for them to be darkened; we figured out ways to do that. So yes, I was imagining sort of a localized light on the structures themselves, like the goosenecks. I was imagining the café lighting for the evening, but not to stay on after we close, just to provide some low, soft lighting as darkness falls. One other thing that I would think about that are some sort of lighting as you enter into the space. I'm a little concerned that as we build it up it becomes a more attractive place for folks, and when it closes down in the evenings I wouldn't want it to be pitch black, so I would maybe try to look at how there could be enough lighting to deter folks from causing trouble without bothering any neighbors who might have a line of sight to that area.

Christine Level, Board Member

There have been some great ideas presented here. I don't think we have anything specific to pass judgment on and I feel like there's really nothing to say, because my job is not to design the lighting but to comment on the lighting. We've had some really good ideas and they could put those into some more specific plans and then just present it to staff for approval. I don't think we need to see it again, but I think there should be something specific that they present rather than just a blanket approval of ideas.

Lars Langberg, Chair

That makes sense, and Associate Planner Jay has already asked in the Staff Report that a lighting plan would come back for staff approval.

Marshall Balfe, Board Member

I like what she said.

Lars Langberg, Chair

Fencing I guess is similar in that Associate Planner Jay has also asked for that to come back to staff. Are there any fencing recommendations or comments?

Melissa Hanley, Vice Chair

I would just ask that it be in keeping with the other fencing that they've done onsite, more of a naturalistic approach.

Lars Langberg, Chair

It's a similar recommendation of lighting and fencing in keeping with the character of what's onsite already.

Cary Bush, Board Member

I have a question regarding signage that I read about in the report as well, that it would come back to the DRB, but would it go to staff if signage met all the minimum requirements or does it have to come back to the DRB?

John Jay, Associate Planner

No, that’s correct. There was no signage proposed. I did talk to Christy about potential signage in the future. If it meets the minimum requirements for our Sign Ordinance that staff can approve at that level, then we would do that. But if it needs some sort of exception or it’s over the allowed amount that we can do as staff, then it would come back at a later point in time. Christy didn’t have any full ideas for signage as of yet, and she mentioned potentially looking at doing full signage for the whole church and maybe we wrap that into a sign program for the church and knock it all out at once.

Lars Langberg, Chair

The color doesn’t have come back to even staff for approval, is that correct?

John Jay, Associate Planner

I didn’t specify any color recommendations and left it open, because I don’t know what is available for Christy. The building permit itself will come back to staff for review, so we can review that in the nature of making sure it fits within the site and that it also respects the Board’s recommendations as far as the colors that you guys spoke of, and if there is something where I don’t feel comfortable, I can elevate it to the Board again to look at the colors that are actually going to be proposed.

Lars Langberg, Chair

But it seemed like our discussion was open ended enough with color and all these things to leave it up to Christy to come up with what they want to do, and I guess all of it will go back to staff for approval with the building permit.

John Jay, Associate Planner

And if there’s anything outside of what staff feels comfortable approving, then we can always bring it back to the Board for full recommendation.

Board Member Level moved to approve the application as submitted, with the fence and lighting returning to staff for approval based on the Board’s recommendations.

Board Member Bush seconded the motion.

AYES: Chair Langberg, Vice Chair Hanley, and Board Members Balfe, Bush, and Level

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Board Member Luthin

8. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Christine Level, Board Member

Objective Design Standards Subcommittee. The purpose of the subcommittee is a mandate from the State to cover the SB 35, SB 330, and SB 9. The consultant is laying out the zones that the objective design standards will be applied to. The subcommittee has discussed increasing density and other types of uses that could be put into certain zones, in particular along Healdsburg Avenue North. At the next meeting the consultant will present the subcommittee with the design standards, which the subcommittee has not yet discussed. The packet the consultant will present will not be available for public review until it is adopted.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Langberg adjourned the meeting at 5:33 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Tree/Design Review Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 4:00 P.M.