

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
CIVIC CENTER MULTIPURPOSE ROOM, BASEMENT LEVEL
440 Civic Center Plazas, Richmond, CA
February 8, 2011
6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Don Woodrow, Chair
Andrew Butt
Eileen Whitty
Mike Woldemar

Raymond Welter, Vice Chair
Brenda Munoz
Robin Welter

Chair Woodrow called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Don Woodrow, Vice Chair Raymond Welter, Boardmembers Brenda Munoz, Robin Welter, Eileen Whitty (arrived late)

Absent: Boardmember Andrew Butt and Michael Woldemar

Staff Present: Kieron Slaughter and Carlos Privat

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 9, 2011:

ACTION: It was M/S (Ray Welter/Robin Welter) to approve the minutes of November 9, 2011; unanimously approved.

December 14, 2011:

ACTION: It was M/S (Ray Welter/Robin Welter) to approve the minutes of December 14, 2011; unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Woodrow stated the agenda consists of two items; one of which is a hold over item on the Consent Calendar. He asked for approval of the agenda or asked whether the Board or the public wished to remove either item. Vice Chair Welter suggested removing Item 1 to hear the presentation.

Chair Woodrow announced that any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, February 21, 2011 by 5:00 p.m.

ACTION: It was M/S (Welter/Munoz) to approve the Agenda, as amended, to remove Item 1 from the Consent Calendar; unanimously approved.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

ACTION: It was M/S (Welter/Munoz) to approve the Consent Calendar consisting of Item 2; unanimously carried.

Item Approved:

CC 2. PLN11-629 LEWIS RESIDENTIAL PATIO ENCLOSURE OVER GARAGE ON 37TH STREET

Description REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT A ±395 SQUARE FOOT PATIO ENCLOSURE OVER AN EXISTING GARAGE AND LIVING AREA.

Location 665 37TH ST
 APN 518-112-004
 Zoning SFR-3 (SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL)
 Owner BRIAN P & NANCY J LEWIS
 Applicant GLENN GARRY CONSTRUCTION
 Staff Contact JONELYN WHALES Recommendation: **HOLD OVER TO 2/22/2012**

Public Forum - Brown Act - No speakers

Noted Present: Boardmember Whitty arrived at 6:04 p.m.

Item Removed:

CC 1. PLN12-021 RYSE OUTSYDE YOUTH CENTER LANDSCAPE PROJECT ON 41ST STREET

Description REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL TO TRANSFORM THE CONCRETE LOT BEHIND THE RYSE OUTSYDE YOUTH CENTER BUILDING INTO AN OUTDOOR SPACE. THE PROJECT WILL IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PRACTICES AND ENHANCE THE IDEA AND FEELING OF NATURE IN AN URBAN CONTEXT.

Location 205 41ST STREET
 APN 517-320-029
 Zoning C-2 (GENERAL COMMERCIAL)
 Owner CCC PUBLIC FINANCING AUTHORITY
 Applicant RYSE YOUTH CENTER
 Staff Contact KIERON SLAUGHTER Recommendation: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

Kieron Slaughter gave an overview of the project, described the project site, location and features of the lot, stating the request is to repurpose the existing lot, install a vegetable garden, potting bench, storage shed, seating areas, a stage, a vegetative bio swale, a half-court basketball court, and parking. He stated the center was created in 2005 as a response from local organizations and community members to offer local kids an opportunity to participate in creative and positive programs. Approximately 50% of the existing asphalt paving will be removed and replaced with permeable paving surfaces and/or planting areas, and the existing asphalt will drain into a vegetative swale instead of the storm water system.

Mr. Slaughter reported that the project conforms to the requirements of the C-2 General Commercial zoning designation, accomplishes General Plan land use goal LU-A, which is within the East Neighborhood Councils district, staff has not yet heard from the President to date. He described improvements the project will have on the lot and said staff recommends approval with 11 conditions and 4 design review findings.

There were no questions of Boardmembers, and Chair Woodrow asked for a presentation by the applicant.

Marsha Vallier, Vallier Design Associates, introduced Nick Burke from her firm and welcomed representatives from the Ryse Center. She presented a video detailing the components of the center and its positive benefits.

Nick Burke, Vallier Design Associates, gave a PowerPoint presentation showing a colored rendering of the site plan, the four-quadrant design, a courtyard adjacent to the existing building, a vegetable garden situated in the northwest area, a basketball court and incorporation of other activities with incorporated parking for staff. The center has many activities and the goal is to spill them into a courtyard and recreation area next to the building. Seating and tables are movable and informal, with permeable paving surfaces, a performance stage and seat wall for additional seating, landscaping, introduction of a sculptural element, trees, the year-round vegetable garden using galvanized raised stock bed planters, and an existing parking lot that will be re-slurried and re-stripped. He described how they would like to re-grade in order to catch as much drainage on site, said they are installing a silo fence along Bissell Street with planting kept to a minimum, and matching what already exists on Bissell. Regarding plant materials, they want to screen the area; they will replace some of the mesh on the fence and materials proposed include bamboo, vines, and other drought tolerant species.

Ms. Vallier concluded the presentation and added that the design will be bay-friendly and comply with C3 regulations as well as with WELO (Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance).

Vice Chair Raymond Welter referred to the door in the center and confirmed this would be the sole access from the building. He suggested the wall have some doors out onto the site, and Mr. Burke said there was an alternate design during review of retrofitting the building wherein a garage door could roll up into the kitchen area, but due to costs were unable to move forward with this idea.

Vice Chair Raymond Welter questioned there was any material on the seat wall, and Ms. Vallier noted that they are pre-cast units. Mr. Burke said his preference for a smooth stucco finish and they could explore what is available. Vice Chair Welter clarified that the stage is flat and not raised.

Vice Chair Welter asked if the potting bench could be recessed into the planter behind it in order to achieve more room around the planter. Mr. Burke, of Vallier Design, noted they are at the minimum in terms of what they need for ground space to get a screen in which is a big priority, but they can explore placing it elsewhere to use the space.

Vice Chair Welter referred to the vehicular gate and asked if the applicant had looked at a sliding gate. Ms. Vallier agreed to consider the placement of this, and if implemented, they would need to move the fence to be closer to the courtyard. At this time, the gate will be open for people and vehicles to get in and then will be closed for security purposes. She noted it would not conflict with the basketball court.

Boardmember Whitty voiced concern with cars being parked on a basketball court and asked why there are parking spaces proposed in this area. Mr. Slaughter noted the applicant, while not required to provide added parking, wanted to provide some parking that was safe and protected from the public. They did not see a huge parking demand and therefore, did not see any conflict.

Boardmember Whitty asked that parking be removed, as kids will have also free reign in the area and may be dodging vehicles while playing basketball. She realized that if there is an event, vans could come in and park, empty their items, and then go back out.

Boardmember Whitty said she likes the fact that there will be nighttime events which will be great, and she questioned lighting. Mr. Slaughter responded that lighting specifications were included in the packet. Ms. Vallier clarified there is one pole light and there will be lights on the building, as well, lighting will be portable and set up for event times only. Lights can be plugged around the side as needed and they plan to have additional outdoor lights by the stage area as stub outs.

Boardmember Whitty felt it was important to have this lighting, that wiring supports not be taped off and that they are not damaged by weather. Ms. Vallier said the electrical engineer, Ron Zeigler, did not prepare an electrical plan but they will submit this to the building department as part of the project. Boardmember Whitty asked that this be added to conditions of approval.

Boardmember Whitty referred to the ground around the planting bins and confirmed with Mr. Burke that it costs more to remove the blacktop. And, once removed they would have to include base rock and decomposed granite, but they are still playing with the budget and would like to include this if possible. Boardmember Whitty hoped this could be done. Ms. Vallier clarified that the slope on the site is very shallow and they are concerned about the percolation rate in certain storm events.

Boardmember Robin Welter stated that if the asphalt cannot be picked up, she suggested building a curb around it and fill it in with decomposed granite or the gravel.

Boardmember Whitty felt the idea was great; she hoped for twinkling lights and performances, and confirmed everything was movable. She questioned if they anticipate any noise concerns. Ms. Vallier replied no; the location is by the Target Store and Mechanics Bank and far away from residential spaces.

Boardmember Brenda Munoz questioned if the applicant was planning to paint the chain link fence, and Mr. Burke noted they were planning on replacing it and putting screening in front of it. They explored painting it or completely replacing it, but they would like what money they have focused on the design.

Boardmember Robin Welter said she likes the idea of the roller gate versus the swing gate. Ms. Vallier said they will take this suggestion back and determine whether it can be accommodated.

Boardmember Robin Welter asked if the applicant would consider expanding the garden area and briefly described revisions, and Mr. Burke believed this was possible. She asked if the applicant needed more stage space, and Mr. Burke noted the stage is approximately 30 feet and looks small adjacent to the courtyard, but it is adequate for performances.

Kimberly Director of the Center, pointed out that there is an area near the stage which will be used for outdoor art and seating which is valuable to them. To address the question of size, they had their Art Director look at the stage who verified it was of sufficient size.

Chair Woodrow said he feels this is a wonderful concept and it will be great when it is done. He asked what was outside the front door. Kimberly responded there is a small street and then Mechanics Bank is across the street.

Chair Woodrow asked if they had thought about going to the bank or printing company and seeing if they might be able to use some of their spaces to park cars permanently, such that

they might consider it as an in-kind gift. He said cars will be damaged if parked nearby the basketball court and he agreed with the need to remove those parking spaces. The printing company is known for providing in-kind help to people in town.

Chair Woodrow asked for further expansion on details of the garden. He said the pots shown in the video look much bigger than the ones shown on the drawing. It would have been helpful if the Board could see closer to what is proposed for the garden, as it is important to many people. He urged the applicant to think about a larger garden. He also asked if the galvanized tanks drain. Ms. Vallier responded that holes are punched in the bottom for proper drainage.

Chair Woodrow referred to the question asked earlier about the doors coming out of the main entrance. He asked if the applicant thought about having the stage area up against the wall of the building. Then, if they had a couple of doors, people could come out onto the stage, be out of view, and dancers could 'escape' into the darkness during performances. He suggested making better use of the space by taking the four trees closest to the building, putting them in the stage area, and making that space a larger area. He thought it would also get rid of the grey wall which was not complimentary to the design.

Ms. Vallier noted they were thinking that this entire area could become audience space for the stage in this location. They were talking about roll-up doors off a small section of the kitchen which would be a service area. This would serve as the concession area to the side of the stage. Another thing they could do is create some curtaining along openings in the wall.

Chair Woodrow said they are also trying to do 5 different things with the space. Those playing basketball will also be nearby the growing garden. He questioned if screening could be done along the edge of the garden so it is better contained. Mr. Burke said there is a potential opportunity to use those planting spaces as a guard from the ball. One challenge is to ensure it gets enough sun. They could work with various plant materials, but ultimately, he would not think it would be a problem and he could further explore this.

Chair Woodrow suggested the applicant think of screening as something temporary. He asked if those things shown in green that serve to block the court off from the garden are permanent or fixed. Mr. Burke responded yes. Chair Woodrow suggested that when playing basketball, some sort of mesh barrier could block the garden and later stored away. He also supported the gate sliding and not swinging close.

Vice Chair Welter stated that for Boardmember Woldemar's sake, he asked that the fence be dark green or some other color instead of black.

Boardmember Munoz questioned the number of people the courtyard could hold, and Ms. Vallier said she has not yet calculated it, but would do so at the submittal stage.

Chair Woodrow questioned the schedule, and Ms. Vallier noted they hoped to receive approval from the Board. They will then forward their construction drawings to the Engineering Department within 2-3 weeks, they hope to break ground this spring in May and have it constructed so the space can be used after school lets out.

Mr. Slaughter indicated there were a number of speakers and he noted the applicant team did meet with Boardmember Welter prior to finalizing the design, which was helpful. They are also trying to take advantage of an opportunity from the UC Berkeley Field Station to re-use some existing concrete slabs they have in surplus for this project, which are 18 feet long, 14 feet wide, and they were once used for seismic testing.

Public Comments:

Jaquayla Chantay Mitchell said she works at the Ryse Center with education and careers, tutors and helps people with resumes and cover letters and finding jobs. She supported the center as an active, outdoor after-school program.

Aimme Rodriguez said she has been with Ryse for two years and she voiced support of the center which allows the opportunity for young people to hang out outside.

Dalia Ramos said she has been working with the Ryse Center since 2008. It is like her second home, with lots of activities, dance and performances.

Christina Letsinger said she has served on the Youth Advisory Board with Aimme Rodriguez where they helped mentor teams, educate them about Richmond and the art society. She hoped for approval of the center which provides her with the ability to stay active. She is a performing artist and not having to rent equipment will be fantastic for the center.

Denise Henry said she works on the Health and Wellness Team at Ryse as an Intern, believes the garden will be a fabulous education in learning how to grow food, grow flowers and they want members to feel like they are worth something and worth spending something on. She believes the center is definitely worth it for the youth in Richmond.

The Board thanked the speakers for their comments.

Mr. Slaughter gave staff summation, stating there were two specific conditions to be added: 1) add ground outlets and 2) install a roller gate instead of a swing gate. Staff recommends approval of the project with the 11 conditions and additional conditions as stated.

The public hearing was closed.

ACTION: It was M/S (Whitty/Welter) to approve PLN12-021, with the staff's 4 findings and the 11 conditions with the following additional conditions; 1) remove the parking lot inside and work with the neighbors to have them offer parking spaces for the facility; 2) provide larger pots than shown in the drawings for the growing of vegetables and fruits; 3) that the entrance gate slide open; 4) include (electrical) ground outlets; 5) consider some sort of barrier between the garden and basketball court, and 6) (as added by Boardmember Robin Welter); to remove the existing handicap ramp or install a curb; which carried unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS:

A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements

Mr. Slaughter reported that 8 members of the City participated in the New Partners for Smart Growth Conference in San Diego which was very successful. Lina Velasco did a presentation on the missing medium density in cities. Some attended via diversity scholarships and they learned a lot. He hoped to share the PowerPoints with the Board at a future session.

B. Board member reports, requests, or announcements

Boardmember Whitty reported that a couple of Boardmembers attended an interesting meeting to discuss the Macdonald Avenue/23rd Avenue form based code concept. It was stated the kick off would focus on the three streets, and one will focus on Macdonald from BART to the railroad

tracks, and there will be a one year process. It was also noted there will be open studio hours as well from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Trinity Plaza.

Chair Woodrow asked staff to have Richard Mitchell attend a meeting in the next month or so and provide a summary of what he thinks as the big upcoming projects. He stated Mr. Mitchell gave an overview to the RNCC regarding 7 or 8 projects about a month ago.

Chair Woodrow referred to Peter Minkwitz who was the head of the Pt. Richmond Council. He visited with him last Sunday and Mr. Mankwitz gave him a sign on an 8 foot long 2x6 engraved as "All America City". He came to learn that Richmond was an "All-America City" exactly 60 years ago in the coming year. Peter suggested Richmond apply for the designation again because the City now has many good things to celebrate, such as the laboratory, the Plunge, the Civic Center, the General Plan, and other things. He said the RNCC Board will hear this same story and he will ask them to begin the process; however, it will require the City to commit staff time and he is proposing to speak with the Mayor about it.

Boardmember Robin Welter noted that the American Society of Landscape Architects is starting something similar to LEED called SITES and it is sustainable landscaping and all volunteer. She felt this might be something for the Ryse Center or City projects.

Vice Chair Raymond Welter questioned whether there is a theater or performing arts center that Mark Cavagnero was designing in downtown Richmond. Chair Woodrow and Mr. Slaughter noted they believe it is the East Bay Art Center which is located down past the large BART garage, which they said the DRB had reviewed years ago.

Vice Chair Raymond Welter also asked if there has been further thought to getting additional funds to finish the Plunge, as they were going to have tennis courts, vegetable gardens and outdoor spaces, and the Board concurred more work was needed from the community.

Adjournment:

The Board adjourned at 7:25 p.m. to the next meeting on Wednesday, February 22, 2012.