

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
Multipurpose Room, Civic Center Building, Basement Level
450 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond CA 94804
July 10, 2013
6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Ray Welter, Chair
Robin Welter
Mike Woldemar
Brant Fetter

Brenda Munoz, Vice Chair
Eileen Whitty
Don Woodrow

Chair Ray Welter called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Ray Welter, Vice Chair Brenda Munoz, Boardmembers Brant Fetter, Robin Welter, Michael Woldemar, and Don Woodrow

Absent: Boardmember Eileen Whitty

Staff Present: Kieron Slaughter, Hector Lopez, Hector Rojas, and Carlos Privat

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 8, 2013:

Boardmember Woldemar noted he was not in attendance and would abstain from voting on the May 8, 2013 minutes.

ACTION: It was M/S (Woodrow/Robin Welter) to approve the minutes of May 8, 2013; unanimously approved (Woldemar abstained; Whitty absent).

May 22, 2013:

ACTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Fetter) to approve the minutes of May 22, 2013; unanimously approved (Whitty absent).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ACTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Woodrow) to approve the Agenda; unanimously approved (Whitty absent).

Public Forum - Brown Act - None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Chair Ray Welter noted the agenda consists of four Consent Calendar items. He asked if any members of the Board, staff, or audience wished to remove an item.

Boardmember Woldemar requested removal of Items 2 and 3.

Chair Ray Welter announced that any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, July 22, 2013 by 5:00 p.m.

ACTION: It was M/S (Woodrow/Woldemar) to approve the Consent Calendar consisting of Items 1 and 4; unanimously approved (Munoz abstained on Item 4; Whitty absent).

Items Approved on the Consent Calendar:

CC 1. PLN13-113 MOORE RESIDENTIAL ADDITION

Description REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT A REAR ADDITION CONSISTING OF A ±400 SQUARE-FOOT DECK AND ±209 SQUARE-FOOT STORAGE AREA.

Location 126 CREST AVENUE

APN 558-051-006

Zoning SFR-2 (SINGLE-FAMILY VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT)

Owner MOORE MARK A & CLAIRE S

Applicant MOORE MARK A & CLAIRE S

Staff Contact HECTOR ROJAS Recommendation: **RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO PLANNING COMMISSION**

CC 4. PLN13-111 SMITH RESIDENTIAL DECK

Description REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT A ±280 SQUARE FOOT REAR DECK THAT EXCEEDS 4 FEET IN HEIGHT TO ALLOW ACCESS TO THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE DWELLING.

Location 3633 BLACK FEATHER DRIVE

APN 431-381-006

Zoning SFR-3 (SINGLE-FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL)

Owner GEORGE SMITH

Applicant JULIO SANCHEZ

Staff Contact JONELYN WHALES Recommendation: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

Items Removed from the Consent Calendar:

CC 2. PLN13-115 CABRERA NEW RESIDENCE

Description REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT A NEW ±1,823 SQUARE FOOT SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE.

Location 125 SOUTH 19TH STREET

APN 540-210-015

Zoning MFR-1 (MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL)

Owner ELADIO DIAZ CABRERA

Applicant ROBERT AVELLAR

Staff Contact KIERON SLAUGHTER Recommendation: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

Kieron Slaughter gave the staff report and a brief description of the request. He said staff evaluated the application and suggested changes to the design and layout of the project. Those changes were made and are reflected in the plans before the Board. As shown on Table A, the project conforms to the development standards and parking requirements in the MFR-1, Multi-family Residential District requirements and intent of the General Plan land use designation of Medium Density Residential, and LU-1.A; Infill Development Incentives.

Mr. Slaughter discussed revisions made, stating that the house originally had a two-car garage that had one single entry. Staff suggested they split them into two for a smaller impact on the frontage and to be more in keeping with the Ahwahnee principles. Originally, the entryway was narrower and the garage more dominant and the applicant widened the house and added the covered entryway. The applicant also added the railing, sconces, illuminated address number, a lower third belt-line with brick veneer. The style is minimal traditional with a pitched roof and a maximum height of 18'2" and the applicant is proposing 40% or 2,263 of interior yard space which includes the City's required 16%.

Lastly proposed is a 6' tall good neighbor fence around the backyard and has also completed the Build It Green Single Family Green Point Checklist. Mr. Slaughter indicated that the location is in the City Center Neighborhood Council which is inactive. He attended the RNCC on Monday night and no one was present to represent them, so staff provided the applicant with two adjacent neighborhood council contacts. Staff contacted the Coronado Neighborhood Council and Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council. One Iron Triangle member visited the planning department and signed the cover of the staff report indicating his support of the project.

In conclusion, the project will replace a vacant lot with a new residence that will aesthetically improve the property by creating a high quality residence. The sizing and massing of the residence will fit into the neighborhood, it complies with the setbacks and height regulations, and staff recommends approval with the 15 conditions of approval.

Boardmember Fetter asked if it is current practice for staff to review and have the Green Points Checklist items all say "to be determined." Mr. Slaughter said since it is voluntary process and applicants can choose to participate in the practice. CalGreen building codes regulate whether or not new construction is environmentally friendly. Boardmember Woldemar noted that there is no regulation for it to be submitted, as it is partially pre-empted by CalGreen and suggested not including it in staff reports in the future.

Boardmember Woldemar said he was prepared to ask where some of the changes were because he only received plans which were not revised. He was pleased to see the many changes made. Mr. Slaughter said the applicant can provide and discuss all changes made.

Chair Ray Welter referred to the square footage and Table A which states, "Existing: zero. Demolished: 1,823 s.f. Added: 2,750 s.f." On the drawings, note #2 on page A-00, this states that the total square footage of building is 1,823 square foot. Mr. Slaughter apologized and said the table should reflect 1,823 as the new square footage.

Chair Ray Welter referred to land usage which states, "new space covers" which is slightly over 1,823 s.f. He asked about the discrepancy and suggested the applicant respond to this.

Robert Avellar, designer, said the owner is present and will live at the property. He clarified that the discrepancy on the scope of work and land use totals 1,845 square feet. The owner's space on the south side is next to the home's backyard which faces it and originally he wanted a garden there with an opening. It is wider now to take advantage of making a good neighbor fence to replace the cyclone fence. We expanded the width of the house per staff's suggestions, but he feels it was better before. They now have a longer backyard which is better for the family who will use part of it for gardening.

Boardmember Woodrow said he would have the project go onto the Consent Calendar. This is a good plan and fulfills the infill development incentives and hopes there are plenty more like this one in the future.

Vice Chair Munoz questioned the elevation and asked to move the column a bit to the rail so there is no blockage of the windows. She suggested one be put at the top of the stairs and the other should be moved slightly to the left to avoid any obstruction. Boardmember Woldemar said it would also make sense to take the window and center it between the two columns.

Boardmember Woldemar said the railing added is great, but he might have done a white picket rail to make it more user-friendly in the sense it does not have to be a 42 inch high railing because he is not more than 30 inches off the ground. He made the same notes about moving the columns and the window, and he suggested the columns could be plaster, with top and bottom cornices around them, 16 inches square to support the roof element to make it stronger to detract from the blank wall of the garage doors. He likes the idea of adding in the brick wainscot but suggested the bottom of the porch be brick for a continuous line. The brick should return on the two sides back 4 feet and then put the fences so there is a corner to the plan. He also suggested that because floor joists are being done, there is a differential between the garage and the house so there is a tall plate line on the right side of the garage resulting in a more massive wall above the garage doors. An east coast trick that might help this is to put a header in right above the garage doors and a strip of windows above it 2 feet or 18 inches high with divided lights in it. The garage door track has to run a little higher so when it opens it does not block the windows. This would help break down the front scale. He also suggested some expansion joints to bust up the stucco. He thinks conditioning the project in this manner helps the scale of the front elevation. He would imagine the Board would hear about landscaping that will also help the scale.

Mr. Avellar clarified that the expansion joints could be vertical or horizontal, or both, and Boardmember Woldemar presented a sketch to Mr. Avellar.

Boardmember Fetter said depending on the direction of the style of the house, if it were leaning towards a Craftsman style, he would add a trellis over the garage which is a way to break up the massive wall above the garage. He likes the windows for this style of house. He referred to the detailing around the porch and suggested that a capital and base effect be put by the columns. He asked and confirmed that the porch is 4 feet, and said he is concerned about it being occupied and suggested something larger to sit outside and make it usable. Mr. Avellar said the setback is 20 feet and he agreed that the porch can go 6 feet into the setback.

Boardmember Fetter asked Mr. Avellar to describe specifics with the front elevation and Mr. Avellar noted that the entry door has the same type of arch. Boardmember Fetter said in looking at the front gables, he uses a trick to make the fascia larger or have a deeper fascia with a 1x4 applied to the top edge to deal with the size of the roof. It provides more personality and is not too expensive. He encouraged the applicant to continue to cross the front porch and run the water table back further. Another consideration is using a weathered stone instead of brick. He questioned the style to be achieved and said if the applicant is doing an applied stone or brick look, there are many choices. If a stone or top sill is applied to the top of the bricks it improves the look. Mr. Avellar said he was planning to address this detail.

Boardmember Robin Welter said she supported Vice Chair Munoz's idea of extending the pillar/post over and suggested centering the front door on the stairs. She likes the wide steps but asked to center the pathway and planting in between the stonework to break the width up a bit. She would also provide a connector so that if one parks in front of the garage, there is a connector to the stairs. She likes the idea of bringing the porch out and said people are surprised with how much they do sit outside. She suggested removing the lawn and replacing it with grasses that are very low maintenance, as well as removing the lawn in the backyard, a pergola to shade some of the windows which also helps with the sun coming in the rear yard, add a couple of trees to make it more shady, and remove the lawn on the north side of the house and install paving or decomposed granite. Regarding site drainage, she asked to install a

swale or valley gutter on the side of the house if it is sloped from the structure at least 5 feet. She presented a list of drought tolerant plants which are low maintenance and much easier to maintain than lawn. She also noted that the Italian Cypress is not identified on the plan and suggested adding more variety and color such as maple and/or dogwood trees.

Chair Ray Welter said one other suggestion for the front façade is proposing a hip roof instead of having a gable roof. He would still suggest adding a row of windows over the garage doors but if taking the fascia line of the gable porch roof and as it comes down to the garage, the fascia line would come across. In piggybacking on Boardmember Fetter’s discussion about the windows, another solution for the front would be to take the window pattern on the garages and have a solid panel garage. The decorative windows can be placed above the garage, but it would serve both purposes. His only other personal comment is that regarding the plastered textured trim around the windows, he tries to encourage people to use a different material there for the trim instead of plastering it over. There is a dimension attained with a different material and encouraged Mr. Avellar to look at more detail. He confirmed with Mr. Avellar that “Item 3008, stucco over 2x6 foam door trim” should be 3001 and foam. Boardmembers asked that some other material other than foam be used. Boardmember Woldemar said depending on the window, some window frames are beginning to be white where the traditional trim does not need to be there but it is nice to express just a sill done out of round foam with stucco just at the bottom like a bullnose solution. He said on Window C and Window M there are no sills identified and asked to update the plan.

Boardmember Ray Welter asked what the windows are and what are they made out of. Mr. Avellar said they are vinyl windows, and Boardmember Welter asked that they recess a bit to give a shadow line.

ACTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Fetter) to approve PLN13-115 with the staff’s recommended findings 1-4 and staff’s recommended conditions numbers 1-15, with the additional design related conditions: 1) that 8 foot wide windows be added above the garage doors; 2) that the wainscot be continued at the porch and at 48” around the corner to the fence/gate; 3) that the columns be adjusted to a 2/3 and 1/3 proportion and that the window and doors be centered on the spaces between the columns; 4) that the porch be adjusted to a 6 foot deep porch dimension; 5) that a shorter decorative porch rail be included on 3 sides; front and two edges and not using wrought iron; 6) that there be stucco expansion joints added to all four elevations; 7) that there potentially be a front-facing hip roof over the garage at the owner’s option; 8) that the opening trim be consistent but at the owner’s option (not pre-empting the foam); 9) that the windows be standard but using the recessed versions; and 10) to reduce the lawn area by a minimum of 25%; 11) plant two additional trees; one in the front and one in the back; 12) center the walkway to the front door; and 13) eliminate the sod on the south side which could be part of the 25%, which carried unanimously.

CC 3. PLN13-126 HILLTOP PLAZA MASTER SIGN PROGRAM AMENDMENT
 Description REQUEST FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL TO ALLOW AN AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING MASTER SIGN PROGRAM AT THE HILLTOP PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER.
 Location 3401 BLUME DRIVE
 APN 405-290-064, -062, -061, -034
 Zoning C-3 (REGIONAL COMMERCIAL)
 Owner DDRM HILLTOP PLAZA, LP
 Applicant ARROW SIGN COMPANY
 Staff Contact KIERON SLAUGHTER Recommendation: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

Boardmember Woldemar noted there are new directional signs along the Hilltop Shopping Center and he asked how those got built without coming to the Board, noting they had previously went through a master sign program. Mr. Slaughter said he was not sure and said he would follow-up.

Mr. Slaughter gave the staff report and description of the request for DRB approval to allow an amendment to an existing Master Sign Program at the Hilltop Plaza Shopping Center. He said one issue is that the current signage color gets washed out in the background of the sky and is not very visible as compared to the new signage which has been repainted a yellowish, gold color. He spoke to the design concept, stating the proposed monument sign is similar to the existing. The rooftop sign will allow for tenants to display their official color schemes, and the program is not in a neighborhood council area. In conclusion, the project will aesthetically improve the property by creating attractive signage to allow tenants at the center to increase their visibility and way finding for customers. It will also allow the center to remain competitive with other nearby centers. Staff recommends approval with 8 conditions.

Boardmember Woldemar referred to the site plan and questioned the location of a double faced sign installed perpendicular to the street. He said no staff is here tonight when the sign program for the center was originally approved. He referred to the sign that sits in the middle of the project on the building that is double faced to the parking lot and freeway and said at that time the Board held a discussion on freeway signage. This sign was specifically designed and approved because it was a freeway-oriented sign which is the reason for the freestanding letters. He felt that the proposal looks like cans hung on this framework. He asked how this affects the freeway sign ordinance now. He suggested review of the original drawings and minutes so the Board can refer back to it.

Mr. Slaughter said he could not locate the project file given the recent move of the department, but he found the original sign program. He noted that across the freeway there are multi-colored signs; however, they are in Pinole city limits. Boardmember Woldemar noted that in those days to do a new freeway-oriented sign was not legal in Richmond. Mr. Slaughter said this must have changed at some point because Target has a freeway-oriented sign and staff was considering another at Hilltop. He also said he did not see anything in the ordinance that would preclude it.

Boardmember Woldemar said he was not prepared to vote in favor given the lack of background. City Attorney Privat said he presumes that the ordinance was pre-empted by the subsequent changes. Boardmember Woldemar said Mary Renfro would probably remember what had occurred in the past.

Boardmember Woodrow referred to the views of the sign and asked staff to display it, stating this came to the DRB. The Chamber of Commerce attended the meeting and claimed that Hilltop had to have that sign built higher because people would not know what is in the mall. He thinks there is a lot of evidence to indicate that thru-way signs have never helped anybody sell anything. They are viewed in some areas as being blight. He suggested having the sign on Bloom Drive to be comparable to the one that is on top of the building. Mr. Slaughter indicated that staff routed the staff packet to the legal department who conducted a legal review of it without issue. He does not believe anything would restrict the DRB from moving forward with the application.

Chair Ray Welter referred to the staff report and said Item 2 refers to the "rooftop multi-tenant monument sign referred to as Monument Sign A" and nowhere in the drawing does he see anything labeled as Monument Sign A. Mr. Slaughter said it is how it is described in the Master Sign Program as "Monument Sign A" which is on the roof. Chair Ray Welter said in the signage drawings, the new sign is called a monument sign, so he believes there is some confusion. Mr. Slaughter clarified that in the master sign program it refers to the one on the roof as a

monument sign even though it is a rooftop sign. The applicant has named their signs and locations differently, and he apologized. Chair Ray Welter said he also had to hunt around to determine the location of the Bloom Drive sign.

Boardmember Woldemar referred to the old, original master sign program and questioned if there were no street facing signs or perpendicular street facing signs proposed or built, stating he was surprised there were none. Mr. Slaughter said he believes there is one further up by the auto area and he presented it via Google Maps. Boardmember Woldemar pointed to the tubed steel and rusty red color which was all part of the thematic aspect of the rooftop signs, as well.

Mark Gastineau, Arrow Sign Company, applicant, said the center has struggled over a period of time and is 40% unoccupied. The tenants signed leases with guaranteed attempts to get them more visibility and business, and the SBA shows that freeway signs can be up to 30% of retail. He agrees the large pylon Hilltop sign is useless the way it is done, and he was part of the program that came to the DRB before. He described the signage as light letters on an open background. They are registered trademark colors and designs and are protected by freedom of speech; however, the DRB can make some conditions on them, but most outlets will use a registered trademark to be successful in their business plan. He noted this is the only signage the tenant has along Blume Drive. He said they called the top structure a monument sign which is very confusing, but this was in the previously approved criteria so he left it, as all he is requesting is the registered trademark colors, the use, and a small monument sign to direct traffic.

Boardmember Robin Welter asked if more traffic is heading further up north past the sign or is it coming down toward Hilltop. Mr. Gastineau said it could support more than one monument. When they started doing the work, the tenant decided to do a minor criteria adjustment and not an entire sign package to get the colors. It could be more traffic in the future, as the center is not really making any money. Therefore, they decided not to go in with a major request for more signage. Boardmember Robin Welter said given the location, drivers are almost past the center by the time the sign is seen. Mr. Gastineau said many people go into that entrance and it is only 60-80 feet in, so the sign will be seen there and also from both directions from the opposite side. Boardmembers briefly discussed driving patterns and traffic, and Mr. Gastineau stated they are trying to address it so when coming up Blume Drive, drivers can make that turn and coming off the Parkway, make it close enough to the corner so they can see it and make the turn. Boardmember Robin Welter suggested highlighting the corner differently with more planting to pop it out such that people can turn there and come back in.

Boardmember Fetter asked if the Board suggested changing colors of the sign, and Mr. Gastineau clarified that when approved originally, the letters could only be white on the background and no registered trademark was allowed. They changed it to have color and contrast so it is visible from the freeway. Boardmember Fetter confirmed that the sign will be lit and that now it is only lit in white. They are LED illuminated can signs and no different than what one would mount on the side of a building.

Boardmember Woldemar pointed to the sign and asked what the back of the sign would look like, and he confirmed that the back of the signs would be seen. Boardmember Woldemar referred to sign B and asked if any attempt was made to pick back up on the rusty red grid that was established as a theme to this project. Mr. Gastineau said yes, though it was decided by the owners that they preferred this design as compared to the previous design, and he noted they do not have the budget to tear down and start over, or tear down the freeway sign. Boardmember Woldemar confirmed with staff that the original sign program was approved in 1996, and he said the DRB held more meetings on this project and its signage than any other project. The Board spent a lot of time with the architects, designers, and sign representatives on this to make it something more than a suburban retail center. The architecture was an attempt

to make it special and the whole idea of the nicely done Hilltop Plaza was a nice way to identify the center and the red grid served as another way to announce it, which was used as the freeway presence. To now see ordinary cans on the project seems like they are going backwards and making it an ordinary strip center, and he suggested being more creative by organizing the identification better. He suggested the backgrounds or typefaces of each of the signs need to be the same, asked to find a less expensive way to propose two signs at each intersection which would help the cars coming in and not simply put a sign on one corner. He also noted that the corner is significantly higher than the parking lot and he suggested doing something better with the landscaping. He also asked to see more about the site plan, where it is physically going to be located, the landscaping, how it is illuminated, construction details, whether the darkened area is plastic or stucco, does the can have a spray on stucco or whether it is real stucco, and things like this. Mr. Gastineau said they usually do not provide those details because they do not draw fabrication and structure until they have approval and square footages on the things they are doing. Boardmember Woldemar noted that the City's design review submittals require details and he thinks the center deserves something better.

Boardmember Woodrow said he thinks this sign means that the City is finally going to get tenants there which is very good news. The center has been empty far too long, the City needs a tax base and this will assist. Regarding the signage itself, he supported comments voiced, and he suggested a plan that would reflect the framing which is on the roof which would provide a sense of singular place and definitely not the Hilltop Mall.

Chair Ray Welter said he would like the applicant to determine what to do with the backside of the shopping center so signs cannot be seen. There is a solution but he was not sure what it was. He also echoed Boardmember Woldemar's comment regarding obtaining more detail on the request. He said he does not need to see construction details and commented that the legend is difficult to identify. He would like a site plan, the site on a Google Map and what is going on around it. He also supported taking some expense from the project and to develop two signs which echoes Boardmember Welter's comment when coming from the other direction. He also likes the idea of tying this into the signage on the project. The cage detail is all over the front of the building as well and is an existing design element, and he encouraged the applicant to take advantage of this because it will tie everything together.

Boardmember Fetter said he is new to the Board and is new to this area, and when he first saw this development his perception is that he is not a big fan of big scaffolding elements. If the applicant were to take this down and put something else up or modify it in a way to modernize it, put in elements that would break up the pattern, provide baffling between the front and the back and introduce those same elements to the same scaffolding around the building, this might be a way to modernize it while also providing a way for signage in the front and back without it being so ugly from a front-on view. While he is not trying to constrict the applicant's design options, he is offering alternate views while keeping in their budget. Mr. Gastineau said the owner with this type of occupancy does not have the means to go forward with major design changes. Boardmember Fetter recognized this, but the new sign looks like it is a sign for a different project. He noted one sign has design elements from one area and the new sign looks like it is for a new project. Mr. Martin, the owner, indicated they were amenable to adding some metal or structured design elements into the new monument sign.

Boardmember Woodrow asked what the timing on the signage is, and Mr. Gastineau said Dee Dee's Discount which is a Ross's other discount store, is under construction right now and they plan to open in October. They will not open without the sign criteria being approved. It is a short time window. They checked with staff who indicated it would be approximately two months, but it is going on three or more months. Boardmember Woodrow noted that one tenant has dropped out because of timing, and Mr. Gastineau said this is correct; the tenant was a grocery store and the owner can speak to this.

The public comment period was opened.

Public Comments:

Jeff Martin, DDR Corporation, 3300 Enterprise Parkway, Beachwood, Ohio, said they are trying to address a much larger issue with this project or lack of ability to get replacement tenants in there for Circuit City and Barnes and Noble. They are attempting to try to lure additional retailers to this project and give them a way to self-brand and get some exposure out to the highway. They do not have an issue with the position of the tower element and thinks it achieves the impact they want, as people can see it north and southbound. When they began the discussion with staff, they contemplated doing something brand new like a sign across the street moving away from the existing sign structure. They thought it is probably a consideration they should look into. DDR Corporation is a minority owner in this project. They have an equity partner in it who is 80% capital, so they were only 20%. Basically any monetary considerations must be put in front of the other partner, and they do not have the appetite to spend the significant expense of doing new signs. Therefore, they were looking at a way to rehabilitate the existing which led to the design they have today. He emphasized that this will help them attract and hopefully retain some great co-tenants. He appreciates the Board's comments, but they feel this is a step in the right direction and are open to some adjustments, given budgetary considerations.

Boardmember Woldemar said as a DRB, they try not to get into the economics of a project. He asked to put money aside and turn the sign representatives loose with coming up with an economic version of a new sign which left the existing graphics on the sign in place, used it for the secondary tenants and did new signs. He confirmed they lost 3 tenants and remaining is Ross Stores and 99 Cent Store. Boardmember Woldemar suggested a new, rooftop mounted sign perpendicular to the freeway, mounted to the back of the building that were done for each of the three anchor tenants. He asked to come up with a design compatible to the other stores that is less like a suburban shopping center, economic enough to be readable double-sided from the freeway. He pointed to the sign from the south and suggested a way to do economic, individual anchor tenant signs while still maintaining the character of the original center.

Boardmember Fetter endorsed this concept because of line of sight and visibility. The huge scaffolding at the front of the building disappears and it is not just how the signs are mounted on there, but the fact that they are parallel to the freeway it is not easy to look at.

Boardmember Ray Welter questioned and clarified that each anchor tenant would have its own sign on top of the rooftop perpendicular to the freeway and existing signage on the cage would be used for the secondary tenants. Mr. Martin said based on how retail operates, if they start allowing one to have an individual type of signage, they will all require it.

Boardmember Woldemar said in his mind, this is the building owner needing to take control to market their eager product while the individual tenants come in and want to market individually. He asked why the shopping center on the other side of the street is so successful and he did not feel it was because they have a large pylon sign. Mr. Martin said this helps, but it is the co-tenants that make them successful and Mr. Gastineau added that the stores at the south end have a hard time staying occupied. Mr. Slaughter noted also that the front of this building faces the freeway whereas this center's back faces the freeway which plays a major role. Mr. Martin said the reason they are proposing signage is a selling tool for perspective tenants but they are open to the Board's ideas.

Boardmember Woldemar referred to the back of the building from the freeway side and Mr. Slaughter displayed this. He said there are some strong parapets and as there are freestanding individual letters out on the front of the building that say "Hilltop Plaza", he suggested stacking a

series of freestanding letters "Ross Stores" on top of that parapet. Boardmember Feters suggested also adding "Hilltop Plaza" for added identity. Mr. Martin said part of the amendment does allow for secondary signage and a retailer would use this for the back of the building. Boardmember Woldemar asked and confirmed with Mr. Martin that there are changes to the 1996 master sign program and Boardmember Woldemar said the Board has not seen any of this. Mr. Gastineau said the City's code does not allow signs above roofline, so it would have to be on the back parapet and individual large lettering. Boardmember Woldemar noted this is part of what the Board is supposed to be considering tonight which is not before them. Mr. Gastineau said he worked on the master sign program and it calls out square footages. Maximum height and square footage is allowable per the type of tenant and this language was part of the master sign criteria when approved originally, and they are proposing to simply change those areas.

Boardmember Fetter asked if this would give existing tenants the right to do this but it is an option and not required to be done. He said he drove the southbound approach and he could see the former Circuit City building clearly, but after that he could only see the guardrail. Going northbound is different. Boardmember Fetter said the Board wants the center to succeed but want to do it in a way that looks good and makes sense and coordinates, yet make it work design-wise. He cannot see putting signs on the parapets and in his opinion it is a waste of money because they need visibility. He was curious about what the Board feels about a collective sign closer to the highway that has elevation and asked what the precedent is. Boardmember Woldemar said it has to do with the zoning ordinance. He does not quite understand what the law now has to do with freeway oriented signs. When Target was done, this sign was pre-existing and the Board allowed them to change it and make it better. When Pacific East Mall was done, that sign was a three-sided sign and the Board allowed them to do the reader board. There have not been any other Richmond freeway-oriented monument signs and he was not sure if these could be done.

Mr. Privat said he will review the City's sign ordinance in Section 15.06. When new versions are inconsistent with old specific plans, the newer version would control and that is the same situation here. Boardmember Woldemar asked if it would allow for a new freestanding slab near the top of the hill, perpendicular to the freeway with double-faced signs on it. Mr. Slaughter said it must be 660 feet from the edge of the right-of-way of the interstate primary highway, which he pointed to. Mr. Lopez noted this has to do with advertising signs or billboards and they are different. Mr. Slaughter said nothing he could see identifies "freeways".

Boardmember Woldemar said if the applicant wanted to put a new "Hilltop" sign on the back side of the parking lot standing 40 feet high, he asked if this would be legal. Mr. Slaughter said it appears to be legal if this is what they applied for, but this is not what the Board is considering. Boardmember Woldemar asked from a design standpoint, whether or not it is consistent with the project, which is a matter of design. He suggested doing this for at least the anchor tenants. Mr. Martin said this is something that could be added as an option in the future to this amendment or return to the Board for that. He thinks the current project is an immediate fix to try to get something to show the current tenant and accommodate a pending tenant. This is a short-term fix to get the center to a more stable position.

Boardmember Fetter referred to the strip mall in front of Emery Bay where Trader Joe's is located. He asked the Board what direction Richmond was trying to go in terms of cleaning up how signage works, because in this day and age, icons that draw someone into a place will attract patrons. For this project, it is a collective identity there and having a list of signs works only if they can be read to draw customers in. He suggested that icons are better looking and create a way finding methodology that really drives traffic instead of wasting money on signage that is ugly and cannot be seen at all.

Boardmember Woldemar said he thinks one of the best signs in the area is the big E at I-580 at the Maze. Signs were hung off of the big tower beneath it. The more important is the short term discussion and he does not like to approve things when he does not know what they look like. Mr. Martin noted that the "E" sign is a \$350,000 sign. Boardmember Woldemar thinks the sign company could have done some sort of rusty red tube steel grid to support the box and to use the Hilltop Plaza graphic so the theme carries through. He believes this could be done to fit quite well. He would then only ask for a site plan, landscaping, colors, materials, and details so the Board knows what it is approving. Mr. Martin said they can take the Board's ideas and revise the plan.

Chair Ray Welter echoed Boardmember Woldemar's comments and thinks it should tie more into the overall project. Mr. Gastineau questioned what the Board is trying to accomplish on the back and the tower sign. Boardmember Fetter said he was trying to open it up, determine what flexibility they have, and also consider precedence set. Mr. Privat said if the sign is in conformance with Section 1506, it is legal.

Chair Ray Welter said the Board recognizes there is a budget and this is the solution to that budget. The bigger issue for him is what this will look like from behind and there is a solution. Mr. Slaughter asked if it should be wider and more solid. Mr. Gastineau noted that in 1995 when this was engineered, the UBC has changed 3 different times since. They discussed this, and he said if he starts adding more wind load to the structure, the structure will engineer itself out to put the signage on. He cannot close it in because the wind will override the structure and it will be useless.

Chair Ray Welter referred to the view showing the backs of all signs. Boardmember Woldemar noted that in one of the original concepts, these were all freestanding letters with no solid panel behind them. Each letter was individually suspended on the frame. It ended up having a back to it so it is not transparent from this side. Mr. Gastineau said there will either need to be a raceway or something, and he cannot drill into the frame. Boardmember Woldemar said it appears that each can is 4 feet tall. It also appears that this is drawn so one fits the grid and he asked if each grid is 4 feet. He asked if the cans could be of a smaller scale. He asked if they could be the same height and different lengths, adjusted to each individual tenant. Mr. Gastineau said as long as the copy is the same size as other tenants, it would not make a difference making a shorter cabinet. However, when this is done and a new tenant comes in, it would not match any longer. Boardmember Woldemar said it is up to the applicant then to show the signs in various conditions. Mr. Gastineau said they kept it uniform because they felt it was the most optimum state, and Boardmember Woldemar disagreed.

Michael Raphael, Ross Stores, Vice President of Real Estate, Pleasanton, said they go coast to coast with the stores and they come in second generation facilities. They have been there for 12 years and have not had good stable neighbors. They see cities go through this process and it is not new. There is a lot of opining going on and it is a real battle. They see a trend where cities are trying to go back to the basics with signage and keep it consistent and temporary, while allowing the tenants to survive. Contrary to the Board's points, signage is very important. They are more of an impulse destination and they draw from about 15 miles away. For them, signage is very important and critical to their success. The monument sign on the roof has never worked and is too transparent. They would like to have neighbors, and are bringing in their sister company, Dee Dee's Discount, to fill up the center, and the way he looks at this is it is good to be creative and this is what happened first when the monument sign was put on the roof, but it did not work and is facing the wrong way. Ideally, they should have a triangular sign out on the freeway that can be seen from the north and south. He thinks comments about having additional signage on the street would be better and the more conventional the better so they can turn in. They are dependent on signage and they try to adapt it to the City's wishes as best they can, but at the same time they cannot get too far away from the basics. It is a conventional center. It

faces the freeway and is very friendly. When driving by it from the north, one does not see anything going on in the center, and the signs on the back of the building are at car level and would not do any good. When he drives into the center off of Blume Drive, he never looks up at the tower, as it is 60 feet up. As a pedestrian, he does not look up that high. He thinks the tower sign needs to be changed—it failed. Structurally there are some issues, but they are at the point where they are investing a lot of money in Richmond and they want to get some good signage. They will open up in October and want to add another business to the community and start to fill up that center.

Boardmember Fetter asked what Dee Dee's Discount store is, and Mr. Raphael said it is a lower priced store than Ross. Ross has national brand clothes and in Dee Dee's, one will not find the national brands but the next level down.

Boardmember Woldemar asked if the submittal is a true representation of the graphics, and Mr. Raphael said yes. They are consistent with that and go in and infill locations that have been abandoned and bring their employees and business, but they need the signage.

Chair Ray Welter said he is slightly nervous about approving something like this not knowing what was originally approved for this project even though it is legal. Boardmember Woldemar said he is nervous for the reason there are things in this modification from the original sign program that the Board knows nothing about and he is unwilling to approve something the Board has not yet seen.

Mr. Slaughter suggested that they move forward with the proposal in the staff report addressing just the two signs, let staff re-evaluate the proposal for additional signage on the back and let them adequately underline all the proposed changes in the master sign program. One of the two signs proposed is just adding color and the other is adding a new monument sign off of Blume. He thinks the Board would be able to sketch what is displayed on the front and back if the Board wants this duplicated to match the lower sign from the street corner. Board Ray Welter said he thinks ultimately it will be this with some metal, and it also brings some of the steel element. Mr. Slaughter said the global issues of what they want to see long-term can be re-evaluated so as to get more visibility to the Plaza.

Mr. Privat said for the third time the Board has the authority to approve the signs as long as they find it consistent with the sign ordinance. Boardmember Woldemar recognized this, but additionally it should be a proper design which is the DRB's function.

Boardmember Woodrow said the tenants do not sit across a place that serves food but they are across the site from two or three car sales lots that have big tower signs with cars parked everywhere. The other one on Fitzgerald has businesses where people come to eat. To him, he has heard so much tonight that is new that he is pretty close to approving the request for the sign on the roof because they cannot do anything that will improve the area, and he would like to see anything to get people into the center. He would approve having a sign similar to the one planned for Blume Drive and doing something with the one on top that people think has failed, but he was not sure what would be done.

Boardmember Fetter labeled Monument A sign down the street and Monument B sign is on the top of the building. If Monument A sign is improved right now, he asked if they would come back to put one in that has better visibility. Mr. Martin said only time will tell. Mr. Gastineau said it depends on the economy. The business is upside down and they want to give the tenant visibility to make them successful. If this works, they probably would request a freestanding sign. Mr. Martin said it almost must be seen by the public for it to work.

Boardmember Fetter said it is easy to separate out the two separate signs the Board has designs for. He asked what the modification was to the master sign plan, and Mr. Slaughter said the request is an amendment to a master sign program which allows for one additional sign which is what the Board is reviewing and the changing of colors of another one. No new signage can be put up without approval. They can swap out existing tenant signage and do not need to come before the Board. He noted that putting signs on the back of the building is not something under this provision. Mr. Martin noted it does not call out the backs of the building but it gives the option of doing a secondary tenant sign. Mr. Gastineau reiterated that there is no visibility in the back. Boardmember Fetter asked if the master plan modification allows a sign on the back of the building parapet. Mr. Gastineau said yes, but it would still need to go through a permit process. Mr. Privat said staff is recommending the Board not entertain the changes to the master sign program tonight, except for the two requested items.

Chair Ray Welter said this makes sense and this way, the Board can focus on the design. He voiced support for the smaller sign but thinks the monument sign needs more design work.

Boardmember Woldemar sketched out an example sign and confirmed with Mr. Gastineau his sketch was doable, but they could not be individual panels. They could be aluminum, 1/2" acrylic push through and opaque and still keep the registered trademarks. Each one is an individual panel with a divider so he can replace or swap them out with tenants. The sign builder commented that he would prefer to do a trim cap if an opaque background is proposed because it gives the illusion of an individual letter, with a reveal. Boardmember Woldemar commented that he would like the illusion to be two cabinets, and he said he is willing to support approval of two signs, have staff look at the detailing and the landscape plans. He would like the public to see the signs as they drive but, but is not willing to do anything with the rooftop sign because it is a more complicated design issue. He also suggested returning the rooftop frame and propose a new code conforming, well designed, new pylon pedestal sign and compete with the people across the street. Mr. Raphel said with Dee Dee's opening in a matter of months, they can do this and have this in place. He asked if they must do the condensed lettering because it is a significant investment that does not work. Boardmember Woldemar said this is under the current plan and he suggested re-designing something better and return to the Board with that. Mr. Raphel said this is the opening of a 22,000 square foot store, and Boardmember Woldemar suggested then putting something up on the grid for the moment and spend the money on that because that is what is approved.

Chair Ray Welter questioned if it must be the same font, and the applicant agreed this is what the standard states. Mr. Raphel said 99 Cent Store somehow got their log in there. He said if the Board entertained allowing them to do it in the Dee Dee's font, this would be superior. Chair Ray Welter said he thinks Ross loses its identity if it is done in a generic font as this is what people know. He said he is willing to approve the modification as proposed. He said his bigger issue was with Monument sign B and Boardmember Woldemar's sketch ties it more into the center. He is not a fan of the larger sign, but knows something should be there and why spend money replicating what will not work. Therefore, he is willing to approve the request with conditions.

Mr. Gastineau clarified that they can use Ross and Dee Dee's logos, but asked if the background panels can be in their registered trademark or did the Board want every panel to be the same color. Boardmember Woldemar said he preferred what staff displayed and said this is why he was discussing taking color around the letters on the face that could bring the blue into it. Mr. Gastineau said they will not allow changing their trademark and not be consistent with many signs across the country.

Boardmember Woldemar suggested a two part motion, noting that he would support one of the signs and allowing staff to work out details that the Board does not have before them. He asked how long can a temporary sign be put up, and Mr. Slaughter said 90 days.

Mr. Privat noted that the substitute motion be acted on first, and the Chair can allow a motion to go forward without a second to the motion. However, if someone seconds a substitute motion, this is brought to a vote. Boardmember Woodrow suggested not saying anything about Monument A sign, and Boardmember Woldemar said this is what his motion states.

ORIGINAL MOTION: It was moved by Chair Ray Welter to approve PLN13-126 with the 8 staff recommendations, removing staff's recommended condition 1, and approving up to two Monument sign B's on Blume Drive per sketch provided to staff dated 10 July 2013, and Monument sign A be approved as submitted, with staff to approve landscaping and details.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: It was M/S (Woldemar/Woodrow) to approve PLN13-126 with the 8 staff recommendations, removing staff recommended Condition number 1, and that the master sign program is amended by only the sketch provided labeled Monument B, dated 10 July 2013; that the submitted Monument sign A be denied at this time. Vote: Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Woldemar, and Woodrow. Noes: Robin Welter. Absent: Whitty.

ORIGINAL MOTION: It was M/S (Ray Welter/Robin Welter) to approve PLN13-126 with the 8 staff recommendations, removing staff's recommended condition 1, and approving up to two Monument sign B's on Blume Drive per sketch provided to staff dated 10 July 2013, and Monument sign A be approved as submitted, with staff to approve landscaping and details. Vote: Ayes: Ray Welter, Robin Welter. Noes: Fetter, Munoz, Woldemar and Woodrow. Absent: Whitty.

ACTION: (SUBSTITUTE MOTION): It was M/S (Ray Welter/Robin Welter) to approve PLN13-126 with the 8 staff recommendations, removing staff recommended Condition number 1, and that the master sign program is amended by only the sketch provided labeled Monument B, dated 10 July 2013; that the submitted Monument sign A be denied at this time. Vote: Ayes: Fetter, Munoz, Ray Welter, Woldemar, and Woodrow. Noes: Robin Welter. Absent: 'Whitty.

Chair Ray Welter announced that the decision may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, July 22, 2013 by 5:00 p.m.

Board Business A. Staff reports, requests, or announcements

Mr. Slaughter said a design charette will be held for Matthew Court Alley greening project on July 18th from 4-6pm. The City received a grant to green Matthew Court between Barrett and Ripley Avenue. Residents can come and see some of the early concepts of the proposed greening of the alley and refreshments will be available.

B. Board member reports, requests, or announcements

Boardmember Woldemar said there are a number of projects that are approved by the DRB and they never hear what their progress is and he used the example of the house on the hill at 5900 Tehama. They went to an appeal and it was denied by the City Council. He felt it would be useful for the Board to give staff direction to report on the status of projects and for the Board to be better informed about projects that are appealed to the Council or those that the Boardmembers can attend at the Planning Commission meetings. Boardmembers concurred.

Adjournment:

The Board adjourned at 8:30 p.m. to the next meeting on July 24, 2013.