

Linda Barrera

From: K Braun <svinterlude@mindspring.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 14, 2015 2:23 PM
To: Linda Barrera
Subject: FW: PLN15-0522

Zoning Administrator
Planning Division, City of Alameda
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190
Alameda CA 94501
510 747 6805
Attn: Linda Barrera, Planner

To Whom It May Concern,

On November 11, 2015 we received a mailed notice of a public hearing regarding an Administrative Use Permit application by Mark Pelzner to allow a woodworking home occupation at 3273 Thompson Avenue.

We hereby submit the following comments for your consideration: While we generally do not favor government regulation, zoning laws do have their usefulness in an urban situation. In our opinion, the close proximity of residences preclude industrial uses of residential properties especially when power tools and VOCs are involved. Occasional, limited and infrequent hobbyist uses of industrial processes in residential areas during prescribed noise time limits can be acceptable. However, a business where equipment capable of repetitive and sustained noises and smells is required does not belong in a residential neighborhood. Even if a dedicated space is created on the property with sufficient soundproofing and filtered ventilation to mitigate impact, we still feel this would be an inappropriate improvement for R-1 zoning.

Although we would not likely be directly impacted much by allowing this particular use we feel it important to not set a precedent which could allow increased uses of this type in residential neighborhoods.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice our opinion.

Sincerely,

Kurt & Katie Braun
Homeowners
Fernside Blvd.
Alameda CA 94501

11/16/15

Dear Zoning Administrator,
RE: PLN15-0522 - -3273 Thompson Ave.
Administrative Use Permit- Applicant: Mark Pelzner

We, being close neighbors in proximity to the applicant, have objections and concerns about the Administrative Use Permit application for a woodworking business at the address of 3273 Thompson Ave, Alameda. We feel it should remain as a hobby; the escalation to a commercial business presents problems. Here is why:

* Noise -- a commercial enterprise presents a different scale of noise. Can be potentially tolerated if regulated. The existing hobby generates a significant level of noise already. We all want a safe and quiet neighborhood. A commercial woodworking business in the middle of compact housing would be a constant noise generator with little control, and would be better suited to the many options available in Alameda like the former naval base, artist space, or commercial rental space. Current work from this location can already be heard throughout the day- expansion will only increase noise and activity.

* Materials and fire safety -- sawdust, finishes, solvents. How are they procured, stored and disposed of? Dust control system? Again the sheer volume of commerce vs hobby.

* Traffic -- is additional in-bound and out-bound shipment activity suited for Thompson Avenue? Also, potentially creating less parking for neighbors.

* Some concern the above materials issues also related to proximity to sewer main and easement.

* Potential effect on property values -- a commercial venture is almost certainly an item that would require a disclosure at point of sale

* Potential for the presence of an "employee" --- whether legitimate or under the guise of a "friend", this adds a variety of risks

* Transfer-ability -- Would the commercial license be transferable to a subsequent owner if the applicant decides to sell his property/home?

* Hours of operation -- assuming all of the above can be satisfactorily addressed, strict limits on time (9-4 M-F only)? In a commercial setting, is work after those hours deemed to be commercial? We shouldn't have to tolerate both hobby and commercial activity.

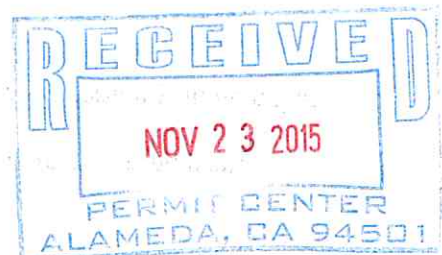
We live in an ever-increasing busy, noisy world. As Alameda residents for almost 40 years, we want to preserve the peaceful quality of life that we have come to cherish here, and hope to maintain.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lorraine & Mike Simon

Lorraine & Mike Simon
3274 Fairview Ave.
Alameda, CA 94501



November 19, 2015



Zoning Administrator
Planning Division, City of Alameda
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190
Alameda, CA 94501

RE: PLN15-0522
3273 Thompson Avenue, Administrative User Permit

To the Zoning Administrator:

I am writing about the Use Permit for 3273 Thompson Avenue. There is no indication in your letter dated November 10th regarding the implications of an approval of this permit and I am very concerned. Since we have been hearing power tools for months, if not years, will this User Permit allow an escalation of noise?

Currently we often hear the bothersome noise of power tools coming over the fence as we are trying to enjoy a quiet evening on our back deck, or a moment on the weekend. We haven't complained because we assumed this was the intermittent activity of a hobbyist. Much like the loud voices of kids playing, neighbor's music, backyard parties, or lawn mowers, this is part of living in a residential area. I'll also admit that woodworking is a hobby I aspire to take up. However, if approval of a Use Permit results in an unrestricted ability to run power tools in the evening and anytime on weekends, I would strongly object. If this is a business, then the hours of operation should be restricted to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays.

Second, when we had our garage remodeled recently, we added insulation to the walls for sound proofing for if and when I in fact take up woodworking as a hobby. The November 10th letter implies the work will take place in a 77 square foot ancillary space of the garage. I do not believe such a business could be conducted in a space this size. I suspect that is why we hear so much noise. Either the doors are wide open, or the power tools have been moved outside. If this is a commercial venture using power tools, the woodworking shop should be insulated to meet whatever applicable commercial code and the work, to the fullest extent possible (at least for the power tools), should be required to take place indoors (with the doors closed).

Third, I think it is normal for a household to have some flammable goods like paint. If Mr. Pelzner is operating a commercial business to create artistic handcrafted items and furniture I suspect he will have substantially more stains, oils, resins, and paints than a normal household. Coupled with an occupation that involves stockpiling wood and generates sawdust, the City of Alameda should require that the garage have some type of commercial fire extinguishing system. In addition, the fire department should make random, unannounced visits to ensure the fire system is adequate for the flammable material on-site.

Fourth, I'm concerned that this Use Permit is not specific to Mr. Pelzner but could be transferable to the next occupant at 3273 Thompson. I would object to any Permit that is attached to the property and not Mr. Pelzner.

In summary, I would object to a Use Permit that did not restrict or require:

- Hours of operation be limited to 9 to 5 on weekdays
- The garage to be properly insulated to minimize the noise
- The installation and maintenance of a fire suppression system that is regularly inspected by the fire department
- The Use Permit is non-transferable and limited to Mr. Pelzner.

If a Use Permit is granted, I want to be instructed on the parameters under which this is conditionally granted and the steps I would need to take to register a complaint if Mr. Pelzner does not comply with those conditions. I would also want to understand how many justified complaints would result in the revocation of the Use Permit.

Sincerely,



Mark Schoenrock
3266 Fairview Avenue
Alameda, CA

Dear Zoning Administrator,
RE: PLN15-0522 - -3273 Thompson Ave.
Administrative Use Permit- Applicant: Mark Pelzner

As a hobby woodworking is a common and legitimate pass time. However, once its direction is changed to being that of a commercial business then this activity presents problems, particularly in an area designated as a *Single Family Residential Zone*.

The Administrative Use Permit would create *both* less and more restrictions.

Main Areas of Concern:

Noise - Level and duration of noise - as a business, could easily and legally become more present and onerous.

Byproducts - Similarly, dust, sawdust, wood scraps, fabric - increased volume, venting, collection, disposition and fire safety.

Finishes, solvents, sealers, stains, paints - Again, similarly, increased volume, venting, collection, disposition, fire safety, toxicity and proximity to easement, main sewer line and neighbors.

Size of Product - From small household items up to household furniture - depending upon where the future business increase would go, would that have negative impact if it were mainly for furniture size?

Use Code - Does the current designated location and setup meet with the legal requirements associated with such a business, particularly where health and safety are concerned.

Fire Department - Considering the above-mentioned issues, and the none business location, would it not become necessary for the Fire Department to be become more involved?

Traffic - Increased pickups, deliveries could potentially create health, safety and parking issues for Thompson Avenue, particularly during the holidays, when more children are present and also when this particular street is significantly impacted.

Hired Help, Personnel - A Business Use Permit would allow for a legal business to engage additional 'employees' when work increases and during busy holiday periods, bringing along all the potential issues that would incur.

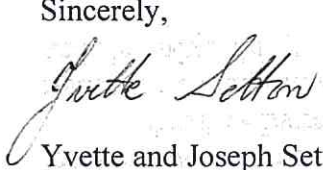
Hours of Operation - Can they or should they be monitored? In our fairly free society businesses can potentially operate nonstop, but would we then have to accept both business and hobby activity?

Property Values - Potentially, would this Use Permit have any effect on existing neighboring property values? Would it potentially require disclosure at point of sale?

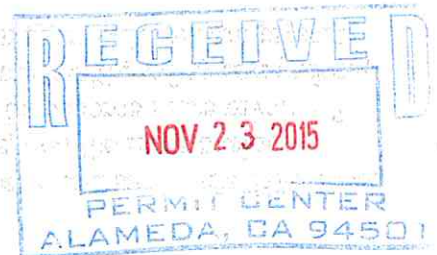
Transferability - Would this Use Permit be transferable to a subsequent owner if the applicant decides to sell his property/home, therefore forever prolonging its duration, or would it automatically expire when the applicant ends the business?

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

 
Yvette and Joseph Setton

11/19/2015



November 20, 2015

Zoning Administrator
Planning Division, City of Alameda, City Hall
2263 Santa Clara Ave., Room 190
Alameda, CA 94501

Dear Zoning Administrator,

I am in receipt of your November 10 Notice for PLN15-0522 for 3273 Thompson Ave. application by Mark Pelzner for a an Administrative Use Permit.

I would like to file the following concerns for the conversion of this property to commercial use:

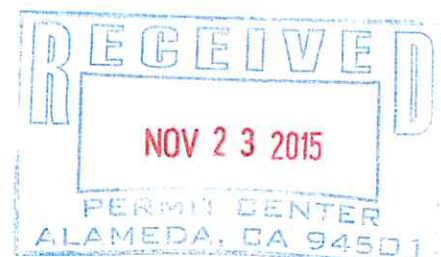
- Noise -- a commercial enterprise could potentially generate continual noise from power tools during business hours.
- Traffic -- a business with additional employees could potentially exacerbate an already impacted street parking situation on Thompson Ave. The additional employees coming and going will also add to the foot traffic back and forth on the property which is next to mine.
- Impact on property values -- my house is nextdoor to the property in question. Having a commercial business next door will most certainly impact our property values and would require prior disclosures even if the business is not full time.
- Transfer-ability -- Would the commercial license be transferable to a subsequent owner if the applicant decides to sell his property/home?
- Hours of operation -- the occasional noise due to a hobby or personal construction is acceptable and part of living in a neighborhood with productive and industrious individuals. My concern is when this becomes a business seeking returns on investment. I did not buy a house on Thompson Ave. to live nextdoor to a 9-5 woodshop.

For the reasons outlined above I would like to recommend against granting of this permit.

Respectfully,



Ian Kennedy & Izumi Kennedy
3271 Thompson Ave.



November 23, 2015

Zoning Administrator
Planning Division, City of Alameda, City Hall
2263 Santa Clara Ave., Room 190
Alameda, CA 94501

RE: Notice for PLN15-0522 for 3273 Thompson Ave.-- Application by Mark Pelzner for Administrative Use Permit.

Dear Sirs:

We urge you to deny this application. We think commercial activities with any external impacts will have a negative impact on our neighborhood. Note we appreciate the rights of residents to engage in their chosen hobbies – but commercial activity raises several important issues, some of which are not easily solved, if at all.

Our residence shares a rear boundary with 3273 Thompson. The proposed work structure appears to sit exactly on the lot line. The back wall of the structure that faces my property consists of panels of thin sheet metal bolted to uprights. Our greatest safety concern is – what if any sizeable work debris is launched airborne in that direction? Would that wall adequately resist puncture and/or collapse – and endanger others on the other side?

How is this proposed venture insured? At the very least, neighbors should be entitled to insurance indemnifying us from any physical damage and with business-appropriate limits for all-inclusive liability coverage. How will this be verified and administered – including the proper notification to interested neighbors?

Is the site properly equipped to store and safely manage materials? We are concerned about fire safety and air quality -- especially with sawdust and solvents in a 77 square feet area. Operating machinery and moving sizable materials in such a confined area is inherently hazardous. How would chemical spills be monitored or controlled? What about disposal? The volume of material handling activity related to a commercial business versus a hobby is significant by definition. Also, is that ongoing material handling appropriate for an already parking- and traffic-impacted Thompson Avenue? Note construction projects have finite time frames.

Speaking of increasing volume, a commercial business presents a different scale of noise than does a hobby. This can be potentially be tolerated if regulated closely – as the existing hobby activities already generate significant noise. Close regulation in our view means...work is permitted Monday through Friday, 9 am-4 pm. Period. And that then precludes “hobby” activities at other hours. We would need to have quiet times.

We believe the presence of this business will negatively affect property values on Thompson, Fernside and Fairview – our safe and quiet neighborhood is not zoned for commerce. The proposed business would require homeowners in the area to disclose its presence at their chosen time of sale. This cannot be helpful to property values. And we are all aware that rising property values do help the City's finances.

If the business succeeds, then it will likely need to add employees – which presents another range of concerns in a neighborhood with many families with young children and pets. This would not be a friend helping a hobbyist occasionally. Again more traffic, noise, additional risk, insurance requirements, etc.

To summarize, it is inappropriate to locate this proposed commercial enterprise in a clearly zoned residential area. The sheer volume of serious concerns noted above prove this. We again urge you to decline this application.

Please feel free to contact us at 510-816-7933 or dbrownlax@gmail.com if further input is desired.

David and Vibeke Brown
3264 Fairview Avenue, Alameda

Handwritten signatures of David and Vibeke Brown in black ink.