

Minutes of Meeting
Marriott Hotel Community Working Group
February 16, 2019, 9:00-11:30 am
Leydecker Park

Attendees:

Planning Board: Sandy Sullivan, president, resident of Bay Isle Point
Asheshh Saheba, member, professional architect (Costa Brava)

City: Andrew Thomas, Planning Director

Community Members:

Presidents of Bay Colony and Freeport
Donna and Peter Fletcher
Chad Otten
Irving Gonzales, architect
Ed Sing, engineer
Kerwin Allen, environmental engineer
Patricia Lamborn, resident, main island
Dana Sack, attorney representing Reyla Graber
George Humphreys, engineer, resident, Clipper Cover
Steve Gortler, resident
Residents of Bay Colony and Freeport

Developer:

Robert Leach and wife
Young Kim, architect, design principal, HRGA Architects

Sandy Sullivan:

1. How should the setbacks look?
2. Skin of the building
3. Landscaping particularly as it affects Bay Colony and Freeport
4. She stated that the hotel should be a landmark (iconic) feature, citing as an example the Hotel Del Coronado in San Diego, a building that has stood the test of time

Andrew Thomas:

He was concerned with “process.” There is a sign-in sheet. There will be a status report that he’ll write for the March 11 Planning Board meeting. It will be available online about March 1st. The project has been approved by the Planning Board and the City Council. We’re not here to talk about a 2 or 3-story building.

He wants working group to look at:

1. Exterior appearance

2. Landscaping
3. Should we push the building back 10-15 feet?

Presentations:

Ed Sing, engineer:

Mr. Sing presented a handout of design principles from statutes, policy, and resolutions:

1. Alameda Planning Ordinance 30-37.75
2. Planning Board Resolution 1203
3. Bay Conservation & Development Commission Design Guidelines

Mr. Thomas said that items 1 and 2 (above) were taken care of by the City Council's approval. He said item 3 is covered by BCDC's approval of the project.

Mr. Sing said, you can't talk about three things (exterior appearance, landscaping, and setbacks) independently. They are inter-related. He said 35, 40, or 50 ft. setbacks won't fly. One row of parking spaces takes up 20 ft. with a 24' backout. (Mr. Saheba said parking spaces can be as small as 18 feet deep.)

A question from the audience asked what the distance is from the top of the rocks to the building. Andrew Thomas said it is 75-80 ft. from the top of the rocks. Once you get beyond an added 15 ft. you're taking out a huge amount of parking.

Another question from the audience was, what was the setback for Stacy and Witbeck? Mr. Thomas said it was the same as for the Marriott Hotel, but Stacy and Witbeck landscaping keep the public away.

Another statement from the audience expressed concern about the single-lane access road.

Patricia Lamborn:

Presented pictures of the Bayside Trail near McGuire and Hester and Stacy and Witbeck. She also presented pictures of various empty parking lots around the Business Park showing expanses of asphalt. She suggested that the area of parking could be less, i.e. 0.7 per room (120 spaces for hotel), and 60 spaces for the restaurant, totaling 180 parking spaces.

Mr. Thomas said the goal was to make 100 spaces for ferry riders. Mr. Thomas said the hotel proposed parking is "parked" for the code, but that he agreed with everything Pat Lamborn said about the lesser parking being adequate. If you move it back 15 ft you have 25 spaces. If there is extra space, you can landscape with more trees.

Donna Fletcher:

Showed slide examples of building design to blend into the neighborhood. One example was a pet hospital at Central and Everett, showing siding, material, paint colors, roof lines, landscaping picking up features of adjacent properties

Irving Gonzales:

Showed slides of building facades, horizontal reinforcement at lower stories to align with neighboring McGuire-Hester and Stacy Witbeck buildings with upper stories having larger openings (more glazing) to appear lighter and with less mass; balcony features, stepped elevations, rounded corner features, building with ornamental elements, “ins and outs,” varied materials such as brick veneer at the base and cementitious board siding to tie into residential and have nautical/coastal influences reflected; recesses, etc.

Mr. Gonzales also showed projects from HRGA’s website that incorporate quality design features. He made the point, “Previous designs show that the developer’s architect has the experience and the portfolio to design a quality building for Alameda.” Examples are the Livermore Hotel, the Pala Mesa Resort and Clubhouse, the Las Alcobas Marriott Hotel in St. Helena.

The Marriott architect said: Modular construction is not as feasible. The Planning Board architect, Mr. Saheba, said modular construction can be flexible. Main saving of modular is construction time and labor rates for assembly.

Audience comments and suggestions:

1. A better building is a lower building. A 3-story hotel is still a hotel. Concern about the height of the building. You can’t see the Bay from the residences. The developer’s example of a protecting view corridors with a single 5-story building is nonsense. The adjacent residents are trying to protest losing the “view of the sky.” A 3-story building is less disruptive. A 5-story building is nonsense (trees can’t screen it).
2. The City Council said to look at whether additional 50’ setback is feasible or a total of 85’ feet (50+35). Why aren’t you following the Council’s request? (George Humphreys)
3. Consider human scale design features at the ground level of the building. What is the experience of someone approaching the building at the entrance or from the shoreline path?
4. Consider use of natural materials such as stone, wood etc.
5. Utilize forms and scale that make the hotel appear residential. It is the “Residence Inn” but the current design appears industrial and monolithic.
6. Illumination of the building should be considered, i.e. light intrusion on neighbors, especially after hours.
7. Reorient the building to be not parallel to the Bay; adjust the aspect ratio to reduce the apparent mass of the building (Kerwin Allan).
8. Headlights from VF cars arriving in the morning penetrate adjacent homes.
9. What if the hotel is sold to a “seedy” operator?
10. Understands that Alameda is an urban forest and doesn’t have to be paved over.
11. Consider feng shui in building design. Very important. (Peter Fletcher)

12. Various building configurations were suggested.
 - * L-shaped building
 - * U-shaped building (recessed)
 - * Terraced building
 - * Pyramid shaped building
 - * Re-oriented (not parallel to shoreline)
 - * Combine restaurant into the hotel (another said the restaurant is the best feature of the design)
 - * Top of building more transparent. Use more glass at top, larger windows to reduce "mass."
 - * Features that change with the wind (art)
13. Public Art. Has to be approved by Arts Commission (Andrew Thomas)
14. A "Living Wall" like SFMOMA.
15. Does not like the light, hubbub, and noise of hotel.
16. Nearby residents would like to push building toward the Bay. The farther away the better, and the lower the profile.
17. Where are solar panels? VF Solar is reflective. (Answer: on the roof)
18. Shading devices on the windows (Mr. Saheba)

Summation:

1. Sandy Sullivan: Sign-ups for two working groups: Landscaping and Building Architecture, Setbacks and Configuration (meetings will be during working hours with staff)
2. Developer: They're locked into 5-stories.
3. Andrew Thomas: Neighbors are okay with a longer, 4-story building. Losing parking could add landscaping.

END