

## Valley Center Design Review Board

**Approved Minutes: December 2, 2013**

**DRB Members Present:** Montgomery, Moore, Splane, Robertson

Presenter: Jerry Gaughan,

Visitors: Will Rogers, Christine Lewis

**Minutes were approved from November, 2013 meeting with the addition of Dennis Campbell's comments.**

**There were no speakers for Open Forum**

### **Projects**

#### **Hatfield Place Project:**

Tentative Map and Site Plan Revision (TM 2013-21202 and STP 2013-011)

Developer Jerry Gaughan began by saying that he had thought about the comments and suggestions that were discussed during last month's meeting on the Hatfield Place site; as has altered the site design as a result by re-vising the subdivision of the property from 4 parcels to 5 parcels, and by incorporating some of Will Rogers suggestions. The revised site plan shows the building on the southerly parcel turned to face north instead of east, and the 'fast food' building moved to the widest end of the parcel and turned which allows the wall height to be reduced some at the middle of the property.

DRB members agreed that the site design modifications are an improvement. Members said that turning the buildings so that they do not all line up facing the road has somewhat softened the "strip" linearity of the earlier designs. But, the cut required to accommodate this amount of development on this site still defies the community's most fundamental objectives – and requires at least 140 linear feet of retaining walls that are between 19 and 21 feet high. There was much discussion about ways to reduce the wall rise, to include locating fewer buildings on the north side of the site. There was also much discussion about methods to possibly terrace the rise, and to plant the terraces. The property is extremely narrow which makes it difficult to terrace in a way that allows desirable plant material to survive, let alone thrive; for instance, a 6-foot step-back is too narrow for anything but shrubbery. The discussion wandered through a variety of suggestions to include the use of structural soil to improve growing conditions for trees, and possibly trying to disguise the rise by placing the lowest rise closest to the parking lot, providing a wide-enough step-back to support substantial plant material and using a higher rise behind.

Our suggestions include lowering the height of the wall, and having more 'pieces' with additional planting areas between the pieces. With shorter pieces, it was suggested that the material be a 'fieldstone' or boulder wall, with planted terracing instead of a plantable wall. At the bottom of the wall, Moore suggested using 'structural soil', a medium used under the asphalt parking area to allow the roots of trees to grow, therefore allowing a taller, healthier tree to be planted in a smaller area. Moore's other concern is the installation and maintenance of a

'plantable wall'. Will Rogers agreed to email Jerry with fieldstone wall visual options. He concurred on the concerns of the plantable wall and the use of structural soil.

DRB members questioned how maintenance of the retaining wall, landscaping and other built features that would be shared by five separately owned parcels would be guaranteed? Jerry Gaughan said that there would be a Homeowner's Association. DRB members wondered if and HOA is sufficient to ensure safety of a retaining wall of this magnitude. Will Rogers stated a professional HOA is only enforceable when listed as a condition of the permit.

Our other major concern is building a drive-through fast food restaurant in this location. This is a poor site for encouraging excessive transient automobile traffic; there is virtually no stacking room at the entrance-egress. Our feeling is that the space lends itself to a relatively low traffic volume that would be generated by professional office space, not the high volume of a drive through restaurant.

The DRB asked Jerry to re-configure the wall, re-think the fast food restaurant. The next time that we reviewed the plan we would like to see a site plan and a landscape plan. Cross-sections would be more helpful than renderings. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.