

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

DATE: September 12, 2017

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Consideration of a Minor Subdivision, pursuant to Section 7010 of the San Mateo County Subdivision Regulations, to subdivide a 23,641 sq. ft. parcel into three (3) lots and assign the name “Cardinal Court” to the new private street. The project is located at 2050 Santa Cruz Avenue, in the unincorporated West Menlo Park area of San Mateo County. This is an appeal of the Planning Commission’s denial of the project.

County File Number: PLN 2016-00226
(Silicon Valley Real Ventures, LLC / Bragg)

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to subdivide an existing legal 23,641 sq. ft. residential parcel into three (3) residential lots, with Lot 1 being 7,911 sq. ft., Lot 2 being 7,865 sq. ft., and Lot 3 being 7,865 sq. ft. All three lots would be accessed by a 160-ft. long private roadway off of Santa Cruz Avenue. The project includes the installation of a joint utility trench for water and power, stormwater drainage collection features, and sanitary sewer laterals. Four (4) significant sized trees (including two oak trees in the proposed roadway) are to be removed, as well as several other non-significant trees in poor health and located within the development footprints of Lots 1 and 3). The applicant is also proposing to name the new private road accessing the subdivision “Cardinal Court.”

RECOMMENDATION

Deny the Subdivision and Street Naming applications (County File No. PLN 2016-00226) by adopting the Finding of Denial included as Attachment A. An alternative action to approve the Subdivision and Street Naming application can be taken by adopting the findings and conditions of approval included as Attachment D.

SUMMARY

On June 28, 2017, the Planning Commission denied this project by a 3-1 vote. Previously, the Zoning Hearing Officer (ZHO) referred the item to the Planning Commission (PC) on December 1, 2016 due to concerns relating to tree preservation and tree removal associated with the private roadway's proposed location and that of drainage/sanitary lines. The ZHO's decision included several directives to both staff and applicant, which were implemented and reflected in the report to the PC, summarized as follows:

1. The County would hire a professional consulting arborist to peer review the applicant's arborist's findings and assess the project relative to all tree preservation and removal issues, including preservation feasibility for several trees impacted by the proposed private roadway, drainage, and sanitary sewer line.
2. Staff would confer with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District regarding the road width.
3. The applicant would revise a drainage feature to prevent stormwater from flowing onto the adjacent parcel.
4. The applicant would accurately show the sanitary sewer easement on proposed Lot 1.
5. The applicant would submit cross sections to show how the raised roadway will impact nearby oak trees while providing compliant connection to driveways leading to proposed lots.
6. Staff would assess use of a surety deposit to ensure that replacement trees are planted and preserved as needed.
7. Staff would confirm with the Department of Public Works that a traffic study is not required.
8. Staff would consult with the City of Menlo Park relative to the status of their annexation efforts for this area.

While the PC acknowledged all the project changes cited above, their denial focused on the project's proposed roadway location which would cause the removal of two oak trees and require ambitious preservation measures affecting several other oak trees which could not be guaranteed. However, both the project changes cited above, the applicant's efforts of researching alternative road design, together with the consultant arborist's support of the tree preservation measures, staff chose to include the alternative action to approve the project.

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