



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Planning and Building



Date: March 17, 2014
Board Meeting Date: March 25, 2014
Special Notice / Hearing: 300 Feet
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Jim Eggemeyer, Community Development Director

Subject: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Public hearing to consider appeals of the Planning Commission's approval of a Use Permit Amendment to allow a change in use for the Stillheart Retreat Facility, at 16350 Skyline Boulevard, in the unincorporated Woodside area of San Mateo County, from an educational/meditation retreat facility to a non-medical residential treatment center.

RECOMMENDATION:

Deny the appeals and uphold the Planning Commission's approval of the Use Permit Amendment, County File Number PLN 2006-00181, by making the required findings and adopting the conditions of approval in Attachment A.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, Stillpath Recovery Center, requests a Use Permit Amendment to change the use of the Stillheart Institute retreat facility to a non-medical residential treatment center for individuals who suffer from substance abuse disorders. The applicant's model utilizes a holistic approach (yoga, massage, music therapy), as well as spiritual counseling and 12-step programs to address their clients' particular needs. The applicant proposes to operate within the existing buildings. No new buildings or structures are proposed.

There are several buildings (tree houses and meditation temple) that were previously approved in connection with a 2007 Use Permit Amendment but have not yet been completed. The exterior shells of the buildings have been completed, including all plumbing and electrical lines, but interior finishes have not been completed. The applicant is proposing to finish the interior construction of these buildings.

DISCUSSION:

The Planning Commission considered this item on three occasions. After hearing testimony by the applicant and concerned neighbors, as well as staff's presentation, the Commission voted 3-1 to approve the project as proposed by the applicant and conditioned by staff. Two different appeals of this decision were filed on January 30 and 31, 2014. The appellants argue that the proper level of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis for this project should be an initial study/mitigated negative declaration. The appellants also argue that this is an inappropriate land use for this location, which has a General Plan land use designation of "General Open Space." In conjunction with this argument, the appellants claim the proposed use will impact local water supplies, and increase fire and traffic hazards.

In summary, the Planning Commission considered the information contained in the staff report, information and statements from the applicant and opposing neighbors, as well as other members of the public, and based upon the evidence before them, made the required findings.

The approval of this Use Permit Amendment for a non-medical residential treatment center contributes to the 2025 Shared Vision outcome of a Livable Community through compliance with General Plan Land Use Policies that promote the adaptive reuse of existing non-residential structures in a way that protects surrounding resources.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.