



## CITY OF PALM DESERT

### ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

May 23 2017

---

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m.

#### II. ROLL CALL

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Current Meeting</u>		<u>Year to Date</u>	
	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chris Van Vliet, Chair	X		9	
Karel Lambell, Vice Chair	X		6	3 (E)
Doug Brewer (2-14-17)	X		6	1
Allan Levin	X		8	1
Michael McAuliffe	X		8	1
Jim McIntosh	X		7	2
John Vuksic	X		7	1

#### Also Present

Ryan Stendell, Director, Community Development

Eric Ceja, Principal Planner

Kevin Swartz, Associate Planner

Janine Judy, Recording Secretary

Cancelled meeting: 4/11/17,

#### III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

#### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 9, 2017

#### Action:

Chair Van Vliet moved to approve the May 9, 2017 meeting minutes with minor changes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Levin and carried by a 7-0 vote, with Brewer, Lambell, Levin, McAuliffe, McIntosh, Van Vliet, and Vuksic voting YES.

V. CASES:

A. Final Drawings:

1. CASE NO: SA 17-11

APPLICANT (AND ADDRESS): TIM HOLMES, 1282 W. Lambert Road, Brea, CA 92871

NATURE OF PROJECT/APPROVAL SOUGHT: Consideration to approve a monument sign: **Tower Market.**

LOCATION: 73801 Highway 111

ZONE: Downtown/Downtown Core Overlay D/D-O

Mr. Eric Ceja, Principal Planner, reminded the Commission this item was continued from a previous meeting. The overall design and height of the sign conforms to the sign code and the applicant has made the changes as recommended by the Commission. Staff is recommending approval of the monument signs.

MR. DAN GARLOW, Tower Market, said they are proposing two signs because of the volume of traffic on Highway 111, as well as on the property.

Commissioner Vuksic discussed the design of the sign and said the legs on either side of the sign are a little thin and suggested they increase the base of the monument by 50% to make it look a little more substantial.

Chair Van Vliet asked why they need the second monument sign and felt it would be too cluttered. MR. GARLOW said they want signs in both locations for the visual. Commissioner McIntosh thought it was originally proposed on the corner and MR. GARLOW said that was correct, but then it was converted to a single-faced sign instead of a double-faced sign. Mr. Ceja said due to line-of-site issues, the original sign on the corner was pushed back. However, it was still within the line-of-sight triangle so staff proposed two double-faced monument signs.

Commissioner McIntosh felt this was too much for the corner and said it would look better with one monument sign as opposed to having two double-faced monuments in two locations. He suggested having only one monument sign as originally proposed

and agreed that the width of the monument sign should be increased. He thought the corner could carry the double-faced sign unless there is some issue at staff level. Mr. Ryan Stendell, Director Community Development said there is a section of the ordinance that currently prohibits a bladed sign in that location because of the sight triangle for traffic purposes. He said the only alternative on the corner is a single-sided sign that is facing the intersection. Commissioner McIntosh recommended choosing only one sign location.

**ACTION:**

Commissioner Lambell moved to continue Case No. SA 17-11 subject to increasing the base of the monument sign by 50% and choosing only one sign location. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Levin and carried by a 7-0 vote, with Brewer, Lambell, Levin, McAuliffe, McIntosh, Vuksic, and Van Vliet voting YES.

**B. Preliminary Plans:**

**1. CASE NO: PP/CUP/CZ/EA 16-280 & TTM 33195**

**APPLICANT (AND ADDRESS): CHRISTOPHER MCFADDEN ARCHITECTS, 75145 St. Charles Place, Suite 4, Palm Desert, CA 92211**

**NATURE OF PROJECT/APPROVAL SOUGHT:** Consideration of preliminarily approving architectural and landscaping plans for 69-condominium units and open space amenities; **Palm Desert Country Club** (formerly Palm Desert Executive Golf Course.)

**LOCATION: 77200 California Drive**

**ZONE: O.S.**

Mr. Eric Ceja, Principal Planner, stated this proposal to develop the Executive Course at Palm Desert Country Club (PDCC) was reviewed at two separate meetings; February 28, 2017 and March 14, 2017. He reminded the Commission that the PDCC is proposing 69 condominium units with both active and passive recreational space, standard floor plans and perimeter landscape throughout the project area. Since the first meeting, the applicant has changed the side elevations on some of the units depending on whether it had a side entry garage or beefed up sides that were not attached. In reference to landscape, they have added additional details on the side elevations. They relocated the pedestrian path

and also added detailed landscape around the pool areas. To protect surrounding properties from vehicular headlights the applicant has placed a series of small walls around the perimeter of the project. There were changes to the grading and several of the units have been lowered by as much as 18". Since the community pools are in relatively close proximity to some of the residences, some of the wrought iron fencing has been changed to solid masonry walls. They also looked at the two roadways through Sites A and B and made those more curvilinear to create additional separation for some of the surrounding homes in that area. Since this is a non-gated community, the gates shown on the plans have been removed and the property owners near those entrances will have a choice of fence type; a 6' high masonry wall, wrought iron, or a combination of the two. Mr. Ceja said the applicant also made changes to the new drawings that are part of today's submittal. Staff is recommending approval subject to any modifications from the Commissioners.

MR. CHRISTOPHER MCFADDEN, Christopher McFadden Architects, said in response to the comments made at the last meeting they went through the three sites and made quite a few modifications in order to alleviate some of the concerns of the residents and believe they have come up with some good solutions. The changes to all three sites are as follows:

Site A: Relocated Unit A21 in its entirety off of Kentucky Avenue, revised the entry component at Kentucky Avenue, relocated the pickle ball courts, re-modified the curve along the roadway, pushed the roadway back 20-25' for additional landscaping, added 30" high segmented walls to screen vehicular headlights, revised the retaining walls for overflow, replaced the wrought iron fencing on Pool A visible from Lots 166 to 169 with a solid block wall and landscaping, the straight section on Alaska Drive was made more serpentine and curvaceous away from the residences, Units A22 to A28 were dropped one foot vertically in elevation, and addressed adjustments to grading.

Commissioner McIntosh referred to the elevation of the main entrance off Kentucky Avenue for Site A and was concerned with vehicular visibility and how this project will impact the existing residences. He had concerns with the entry of these units and noted that the entries were originally intended for golf course access and now will be used to access new homes. He was also concerned with the backyards facing this entry, and feels these units will be impacted the most. MR. MCFADDEN responded that

there will be a 6' to 8' high wall with pilasters in this location and all the road improvements will be below the wall and the sight line will be such that you won't see those homes. The Commission and the applicant continued to discuss the height of the wall. Commissioner McIntosh asked the applicant to restudy this.

Commissioner Brewer and MR. MCFADDEN discussed the main drive at Lots 16 and 17. Commissioner Brewer asked to see a cross section for those lots and MR. MCFADDEN said he will submit it at the next meeting. He also pointed out that there will be 30" high segmented walls to screen headlights as vehicles move along the street.

Site B: The architect made Oregon Drive more serpentine and curvaceous, added segmented walls throughout the site (especially at the cul-de-sac) to screen vehicular headlights, added solid block walls for two to three of the units along the narrow entry, terraced the slope at the cul-de-sac to give it more interest, Pool B was dropped vertically 30" and solid walls were added on the back side to mitigate views, and reduced the heights on units B3 to B9 by 18" and units B10 to B14 by 12".

Site C: This site had the least amount of grade or site plan changes needed however, some modifications were made. More segmented walls were added to alleviate adjacent property concerns, replaced the wrought iron fence for Pool C that was visible from Lots 40 and 41 with a solid wall and landscaping, lowered the finished grade elevation by 14" at Pool C, Units C12 to C16 dropped 1' vertically and adjusted all the grades adjacent to Hawaii Drive.

Commissioner Vuksic said the homes look good but asked the applicant to refine some of the segmented wall heights because in some cases 30" won't be high enough if the adjacent lot is higher and looking down at the road. MR. MCFADDEN responded that with the segmented walls adjustments can easily be made. Commissioner Vuksic said some things need to be left opened and refined as they further develop the drawings.

Commissioner McAuliffe left at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioner Levin and MR. MCFADDEN reviewed and discussed the civil and architectural plans regarding the street sections.

MR. CHUCK SHEPHERDSON, Landscape Architect/HSA Design Group, said they are creating a very water efficient, desert friendly landscape with a lot of landscape movement to create some interest in the areas between the new homes and the existing homes. In the backyards, Mr. McFadden has designed retaining walls at the back patios so they can use that to berm against to get a lot of movement to make it look very natural in the transition area. They are using a lot of nice flowering trees, bougainvillea, and textural agaves, a lot of boulders and especially a variety of inert materials to give it a lot of texture as well. He likes the low density and the space between the existing homes and new homes that will provide a great buffer.

MR. SHEPHERDSON said they will concentrate on the trees around the property lines between the existing homes to preserve the mountain views. They will work with residents to help provide additional screening if they desire and there will be a list of trees to choose from. The Commission asked if he was also willing to shift trees in order to preserve the view corridors and MR. SHEPHERDSON said the residents can look at the initial design and if they have comments he will meet with them. Commissioner Vuksic said he likes how the trees are peppered around the property because it's appropriate for this site to have it more irregular and natural. Mr. Stendell said with the last infill development in PDCC, (DR Horton homes,) there were several conditions made regarding the height of walls, location of landscaping, and several others items. If the applicant needs to meet with every resident, that could be one of the conditions.

Commissioner Lambell stated there seems to be a disconnect between this project and the community's understanding of how it will affect their property. She said before this goes to Planning Commission and City Council, that disconnect should be addressed. She stated that by fixing the disconnect it will resolve some of the problems with approving this site plan. She reminded the public that the Architectural Review Commission is charged with projects that affect the City as a whole.

Chair Van Vliet declared the public comment open and invited comments. He asked the public to keep their comments specific to architecture, the height of the buildings, landscape, perimeter walls, and to limit their comments to three (3) minutes.

MR. JACK FORNEY, 76831 Kentucky Avenue, was concerned with the distance of the curvilinear roadway from his back property line, height of the new units, non-compatible landscape, and loss of views. He asked that the plan be returned to the applicant to correct the obvious flaws that do not conform to the precise application plan development standards. In closing, he said this project is in the wrong location.

MS. BARBARA POWERS, 76918 Kentucky Avenue, was concerned with the landscape plan, flowering trees, loss of views, height of the 30" segmented walls, and continued reduction of her property line. She presented photos showing the loss of her backyard due to grading done in 2005 to raise all the T-box areas and cement pathways for the golf carts. Now with this current project her property line will be closer to the new road and her view will only be the top of the trees. She said if this is no longer a golf course then it should be returned to what was there in 1960.

MR. RON CRISP, 77053 California Drive, informed the Commission that he was the current PDCC Homeowner Association President and was speaking today on behalf of the HOA. He read a prepared statement informing the Commission that they have retained a law firm to discuss the proposed development. The HOA believes the proposed development is not compatible for the Executive Golf Course and feels it should be a planned unit development comprised of no more than 69 single family homes with a street running down the middle of the development. In addition, the HOA believes that a portion of Lot C has restrictions prohibiting any development other than a golf course related structure. The HOA is requesting a continuance of this meeting so the HOA can continue discussions with the general manager of PDCC.

MS. PATIRICA GEMPSON, 76960 Kentucky Avenue, was concerned with the loss of her views and the height of the new buildings in front of her.

MR. CONRAD MARASCALE, 76804 California Drive, said this project is not conducive to the parcels that exist today and was concerned with the 22' proposed structure only 30' away from his property line. He said this is an imposing and invasive condition.

MR. GEORGE BOAL, 76739 Oklahoma Avenue, was concerned with his property line compared to the new units and said he currently has very little room in his backyard since his pool is in the front yard and now he will lose his accessibility to the golf course.

MS. JANIS SLAGGET, 76731 Oklahoma Avenue, was concerned with how close the pickle ball parking lot will be to her property line.

MR. TIM OLLOM, 76764 Kentucky Avenue, said he was one of the rare few who is tired of looking at what is existing at PDCC. He said he was in favor of the development and the layout is more than they can ask for. Someone else may come in and we'd have house after house after house. He said if the 18-hole course closes, they would have an executive course and an 18-hole course looking just like this.

MS. MOLLY MCNEICE-GRAHAM, 76907 Oklahoma Avenue, was concerned with the loss of her views, the proposed pad next to her, how dense the project is, not enough space in between the units which will block views, height of the roof lines, A/C units that add another 4 to 5' to the 18' building height, and the noise generated by the pickle ball courts.

MR. ROBERT BRENNAN, 76947 Oklahoma Avenue, was concerned with the board allowing more construction when they were promised there would be no more construction, loss of views, and putting condo units in the middle of single family homes.

MS. CATHLEEN BISHOP, 76986 California Drive, was concerned with loss of views, walls, traffic, noise, lights, headlights, loss of privacy, project too big for the land area, and heat caused by the addition of more cement. She suggested holding these meetings in the fall when seasonal residents are here.

MR. FORNEY, said since the beginning of this project, the property owners surrounding the area have been encouraged to compromise. However, every attempt to compromise with the owners has been met with, "the golf course is closed", with no further discussion or compromise on the owners part. Maybe a compromise could be made if the owners are willing to do so.



With no further comments, the public comment was closed.

Commissioner Levin asked how many single family homes could go on this property under the current zoning. Mr. Ceja said it is currently zoned for open space but it would have to go through a change of zone. In the current General Plan, as well as the previous General Plan, it is identified as single family for up to 4 to 5 units per acre at the 5,000 square foot parcel size. With a change of zone, the zoning would be compatible with the rest of the neighborhood allowing up to 140 units. He pointed out that this proposal is for 69 units and is half the density of the rest of PDCC.

Commissioner Brewer referred to the air conditioning units and asked MR. MCFADDEN to address why they will be placed on the roof. MR. MCFADDEN said the units are part of the architecture and a tower structure will encapsulate them. He pointed out that this is within the 18' height limit and is a very small component in the center of the unit and fits with the terracing of the unit design.

Commissioner Vuksic and Commissioner McIntosh discussed the entrances to Sites A and B and how the walls function with the adjacent properties. Commissioner McIntosh said this is an area that he identified as a critical area that needs some study. He said the properties on the side of the entrances off Tennessee Avenue, which go into Sites A and B, are not at the same level. Site C is fairly level and is the widest entry out of the three and is a well presented entry. He feels it is going to be a bit of a challenge to make it successful.

Commissioner McIntosh pointed out to the residents that this is an architectural review committee that looks at building specifics, site issues, landscape, and how it interfaces with existing development. Whether this project overall is appropriate or not is not for this Commission to decide. He told the residents that they have to come back and discuss this when it goes to the Planning Commission, which is a land use forum. This Commission is looking at what they can do specifically and put on the record to make this project as successful as possible. He stated that the architect has come back with some interesting architectural solutions and is comfortable with the density they are proposing. However, he feels some of the proposed items need to be studied, such as entrances being placed between the existing residences and how they will handle the large grade transitions. He wants to make sure that the Planning Commission and City Council are aware of the challenges with this project.

Commissioner Vuksic thinks this is a good project even though everything hasn't been worked out yet, but he sees an effort to do that. He mentioned the walls that are screening headlights from the neighbors and wondered if they should be higher in some areas. Commissioner McIntosh asked if the Commission could make a provision that the applicant work on some of the above mentioned details or does the architect need to consider all of the comments before the project moves forward. Mr. Ceja said staff has had several conversations with the residents and would not hold public hearings with the Planning Commission or City Council until after the summer season. Given the comments the Commission has made, staff understands that the items discussed can be worked out prior to moving forward to the Planning Commission or City Council for review.

Chair Van Vliet said there is a lot of confusion about what the residents will see from their backyards. He suggested more details and bigger sections through every backyard that sits below the elevations so they can see what it looks like. Then the residents can truly understand where the street is and how far it is from their property. He understands this is a lot of work from the developer's standpoint but he thinks this will be required in the end anyway. Commissioner McIntosh said there are some unique situations and it's worth the exercise. Commissioner Lambell told the residents that it is incumbent upon the homeowner to make their concerns known to staff prior to the next meeting so this can be reviewed thoroughly by the Commission. Commissioner Levin told the residents to do their homework by meeting with staff to find answers to their questions prior to the next meeting.

Commissioner Vuksic reiterated that this project is being reasonably proposed and was happy to see they considered the density, which is half the density of the properties around it. He referred to items that needed more review, such as double fencing, perimeter walls, and maybe walls being done in groups of three for consistency and asked the applicant to provide samples of what that could look like. He noticed that the road on Utah Drive was unnecessarily tight to an adjacent property and felt there was room for a little more curvature to that road and further away from the adjacent properties. He said he appreciated MR. SHEPHERSON'S comment to meet with homeowners to look at the final tree placement. This shows a willingness to work with the neighbors.

Commissioner Brewer suggested that the applicant submit cross sections of the proposed roadways as it relates to the existing homes and lots, especially on the west end of the project on Sites A and Site B where the elevations are much more variable to help identify where the walls need to be in relation to the homes and the other proposed improvements. MR. MCFADDEN said he would provide those additional details. He talked about these new changes and how the grading plans would have to be resubmitted, which is a monumental task. The massive amounts of submittals they're doing to meet the concerns has been overwhelming. Commissioner McIntosh said this is a sensitive project and is going to require that. MR. MCFADDEN said some of the changes being asked are very consuming. Commissioner McIntosh pointed out that this commission is learning more and more as to how sensitive the project is and the Commission wants to make the right decisions. MR. MCFADDEN said the information is there but needs to be delineated and extracted. Commissioner McIntosh said they are trying to address some very critical relationships between this new development and the existing homes.

**ACTION:**

Commissioner Lambell moved to continued Case No. PP/CUP/CZ/EA 16-280 & TTM 33195 subject to: 1) study the height of block walls and retaining walls for existing residents; 2) submit a cross-section study of the main drive at lot 16 & 17 at the transition; 3) refine the segmented wall heights to screen headlights to existing residents; 4) meet with existing residents to discuss tree choices and placement; 5) address visibility of A/C units on all condo roofs; 6) provide perspectives and cross-section study of critical areas such as entrances between homes and large grade transitions; 7) provide larger sections of all backyards sitting below the elevations and street; 8) review the details in the areas where double fencing will be located; 9) provide examples of perimeter fencing to show finish and consistency; 10) provide more curvature to the road away from adjacent properties to soften the curve at the end of Utah Circle; 11) provide cross sections of proposed roadways as it relates to the existing homes and lots especially on the west end of the project; site A & B. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Levin and carried by a 6-0-1 vote, with Brewer, Lambell, Levin, McIntosh, Vuksic, and Van Vliet voting YES and McAuliffe absent.

**C. Miscellaneous Items:**

None

**VI. COMMENTS**

None

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Brewer moved to adjourn the Architectural Review Commission meeting at 2:40 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ERIC CEJA  
PRINCIPAL PLANNER  
SECRETARY

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JANINE JUDY  
RECORDING SECRETARY