

**SAN ANSELMO PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2001**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Commissioners Present:** Chair House, Commissioners Wittenkeller and Zwick  
**Commissioner(s) Absent:** Commissioner Jochum

**Staff Present:** Planning Director Feagans, Senior Planner Wight, Planning Technician Chambers, and Town Attorney Roth

**OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

No one spoke during this time.

**CONTINUED ITEMS**

1. **V-0111/DR-0114 – Ernest A. Giono, 1624 San Anselmo Avenue, APN 5-191-17, design review and variance request to: 1) build a new 1,243 square foot, two story house within 6' of the northerly side property line (8' required) and 9'10" of the southerly side property line (12' required); 2) a variance for 1 parking space (2: 9'x19' required), to be located within 2'6" of the side yard and 18' of the rear yard setback; located within the R-1 Zoning District. (Staff person: Feagans) **CONTINUED OFF CALENDAR****
2. **V-0108/DR-0113 – Pam and Matt Morton, 412 Greenfield Avenue, APN 6-213-04, third story variance to construct a 784 square foot unexcavated lower area, a 780 square foot main story addition, and a 615 square foot upper story addition; design review of a 784 square foot lower area; 780 square foot main story and 615 square foot upper story additions within 5' of the east side property line, located within the R-1 Zoning District. (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO APRIL 2, 2001****
3. **U-0104/V0109/DR-0111 - Fred and Elaine LeDrew, 45 Suffield Avenue, APN 5-121-11, use permit for a second living unit; design review of a 461 square foot second story addition (second unit); setback variance for uncovered stairs to be within 4' of the west side property line; parking variance for the third required parking space to be within 0' of the front and west side property lines, on property located within the R-1 Zoning District. (Staff person: Wight) **CONTINUED TO APRIL 19, 2001****
4. **DR-0116 – Wayne and Joan Stout, 63 Fernwood Drive, APN 7-131-26, Design Review to construct a new 3,429 square foot house and a 528 square foot garage, located within the R-1 Zoning District (above the 150' msl) (Staff person: Feagans) **CONTINUED TO APRIL 2, 2001****

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Minutes – March 5, 2001**

M/s Zwick/House, and passed (2-1 Abstain: Wittenkeller) to approve minutes with minor amendments.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. **Z-0002/ER-0002/DR-0049/UP-0012 - Pacific Bell for San Francisco Theological Seminary, 2 Kensington Road, AP 7-292-002, amendment to the Master Plan, environmental review, design review, and a use permit to allow the installation of six panel antennas within the bell tower of Geneva Hall at the San Francisco Theological Seminary, on property located within the SPD (Specific Plan Development). (Staff person: Feagans)**

Town Attorney Roth stated that the applicant's attorney has brought forth legal issues that he has not had time to research. He recommends the application be continued.

Chair House stated that members of the public are present tonight and may wish to speak. She asked Mr. Roth what his recommendation was regarding this.

Mr. Roth responded that it is really up to the Planning Commission however, he would recommend deferring testimony so people will not have to speak twice. However, if they want to speak to the issue, they should address the Commission on just that issue.

Commissioner Wittenkeller stated that people have shown up tonight and should be allowed to speak to the issue tonight.

Commissioner Zwick stated that he would not have a problem allowing people to speak, however, there may be new information that comes out of the research from the Town Attorney.

Chair House waived reading of the staff report and opened the public hearing.

Cindy Gaeft, 51 Austin Avenue, stated that she was responsible for a community meeting last week to get all the information available about the application and cell antennas in and around San Anselmo. This meeting included Mr. Shafer of the SF Theological Seminary. She would advise the people in the audience who are present to speak specifically on the Seminary antennas, to wait until the next meeting, and those who have issues with cell antennas in general, to speak tonight. She noted that she had a videotape that she wanted to present to the Commission that is very informative on this issue.

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Frank Kinsel, 20 Hawthorne, is not that informed about the cell sites and is interested in having scientific data on it.

Chair House explained that the Planning Commission is not here to discuss the scientific data.

Mr. Roth stated that Pacific Bell would have an expert available at the next meeting.

Pat Burton, 43 Alta Vista, stated she was one of the original citizens to speak in opposition of this issue several years ago and a resolution was put into place by the Town Council. She asked the Planning Commission to be very careful in making decisions about cell sites. We are a prime location because we are a hub. She is surprised that the President of the Seminary is supporting this proposal, especially in lieu of the families and children that live around the Seminary area.

Imagine Shelley, Austin Avenue, stated that she is an elder of the Church and is very disappointed in the Seminary for even proposing this.

Lisa Poehlmann, 71 Lincoln Park, is opposed to the antenna site and was surprised at how many there are in the area.

John Girton, 15 Avenue del Norte, stated that he is a former science teacher in Marin and has seen too many instances that the authorities are not correct. Low levels of radiation have proven to cause cancer. Many other countries are being cautious about these cell towers. He recommend that the Planning Commission take a wise and cautious course and say no to the cell tower at Geneva Hall

Harry Elefther, 45 Austin Avenue, stated that he is a subscriber of Pacific Bell and the service is getting better and better. There is no need to have any more cell sites in San Anselmo. If it is for other areas, they should go to other areas with the antennas. He stated that the signal is fine now. He wants the Commission to reconsider giving them a permit.

M/s Wittenkeller/Zwick, and unanimously passed (3-0), to continue the application to April 2, 2001.

2. **DR-0117/V-0112 – Michael and Cindy Goefft, 51 Austin Avenue, APN 7-266-13, Setback variances:** 1) Front yard setback variance to construct a 358 square foot second story studio (not a separate living unit) above an existing garage within 2'8" of the front property line (Code setback: 20'); 2) Rear yard setback variance to construct a 72 square foot second story addition to the dwelling within 3'3" of the rear property line (Code setback: 20'); 3) West side yard setback variance to construct a portion of a new deck and stairs within 1' of the west side property line (Code setback: 6'); Flatland Setback Design Review: 1) To construct a 55 square foot garage extension and a 358 square foot second story addition above the garage to be within 6'2" of the west side property line; 2) To construct a 724 square foot third story addition within 5' of the east side property line (Code setback: 8'); and Flatland Story Design Review for a 358 square foot second story addition above the garage, a 200 square foot second story addition to the dwelling, and a 724 square foot third story addition to the dwelling, located within the R-1 Zoning District. (Staff person: Wight)

Ms. Wight presented the staff report.

Cindy Goefft, applicant, stated that this is a relatively small house for a family of four. The ground floor is dirt and concrete and water runs through it during the winter. They are the third owners of the house. The house is falling apart and they have tried to Band-Aid the problems. It is built in a u-shape and they want to square it up and make it functional. The house has a much larger appearance than it really is and was built in 1907 prior to any setbacks. She has taken the plan to her neighbors across the street and up the street, and she has modified the plan so as not to impact those neighbors. Unfortunately, she does not know the people on Vineyard. They have commissioned a shadow study. She stated that on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m., the existing peak was on the fence of the Alvarados at 49 Austin. In wintertime they might cast a shadow a foot closer. However, there is no significant impact. They have talked to the people across the street about the garage. It is large but they have tried to make the scale so it does not have a massive roof. The owners of 52 Austin expressed concern about the windows with regard to the privacy issues. They will be very conscience about respecting everyone's privacy. The west elevation is the most visible and the Alvarados have a tree that provides them privacy. She noted that the master bedroom window would not look down on the Alvarados anymore than they do now. She presented photographs that were taken from the Claire's roof at 55 Austin Avenue. She also presented photographs of the back of their house, facing Vineyard. She noted that there is so much vegetation that the residents on Vineyard will not be able to see the addition. She showed photographs from various positions on Vineyard, as well as photographs from her house and street. She felt the photographs indicate there will be very little impact to the neighbors. Regarding the 3'3" variance request, she does not feel it would impact the people on Vineyard, and if they see it, it would only be once a day because no one goes up the street. The family room is the most important issue to them. It is a very narrow room now. They are asking to pull out the wall to line it up with the kitchen to give them adequate space. The laundry room is in the kitchen and would like to open out the kitchen and make it more functional. They want to put the laundry room in the basement. They want to make other internal changes to make their life more livable and they want to have the deck on one level.

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Colleen Mahoney, architect representing the applicant, stated that it made sense to place walls over walls and step the stories back. There are exceptional circumstances given the location of the house on the site. She explained the shadow study. It was done on December 21st at noon, which would be the worst case scenario. The best case is on June 22nd. The impact is nominal in summer; in winter it will impact a small portion of the street. The house is challenging and they have spent months working on this plan. The requests that they have made are reasonable and not detrimental to anyone and would not be setting precedent. She has kept the plate heights in the garage low so it would not be a looming structure. The garage is detached from the home and quite a bit removed from the home.

Commissioner Wittenkeller asked about the unused space in the basement. Ms. Mahoney responded that she calculated 479 square feet, which has been included, even though it is unconditioned.

George Covell 48 Vineyard Avenue, stated that he wants the project to be denied because it will ruin his view. He stated that he has a tree that will be taken down this summer and it will open up the view. He does not want any construction vehicles to be on Vineyard. He is also speaking on behalf John Keenan, who also asked the project be denied.

Dolly Frauens, 30 Oak Avenue, stated that she has a street to street lot and her fence backs on to Austin Avenue. She noted that there would be another new house at 85 Austin Avenue that has been demolished. She said the Commission should look at the neighborhood and see how it is changing with large additions and she felt it was a shame. She is opposed to construction vehicles on Vineyard.

Pam Richards, 36 Vineyard, stated that it is important to live within the allowed guidelines of the town and she does not want the variances granted.

Andrew Claire, 55 Austin Avenue, stated that they currently have a view of the Seminary property and they will lose that view with the addition. They do have a planned addition at the back of their house, which would impact the applicants a little.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Zwick asked if this is a three-story house. Ms. Wight responded that it is however it is about 27% slope and the tree stories is allowed.

Commissioner Zwick stated that it is difficult to tell what is existing and what is proposed and therefore it is difficult to make a decision to support the variances. It is also hard to get a sense of the impact on the neighborhood. It would be nice to have aerial photographs. The shadow study was helpful. The sense of privacy is difficult to tell because there are no existing and proposed elevations. If photomontages are going to be helpful there should be story poles in the photographs. The existing house is nice, but is a upslope lot. The existing foliage and house slopes down the hill gracefully. He is not sure this proposal does that. He is not sure the addition will fit into the neighborhood character. This is 51% FAR, and the proposal has a lot of bulk. Placing a two-story garage up on the street would be difficult to support.

Commissioner Wittenkeller stated that many people want to enlarge their homes to accommodate a family. This situation is different because the other families need more space from an approximate 1,100 square foot house. This house is already at 2,500 square feet, although 500 square feet is not quality living space. There is not a hard-pressed reason for a variance. He leans toward approving a good quality home and encourages families to stay, but this has gone overboard. He cannot approve the variance as submitted. The applicant needs to rethink the total scope of the project.

Chair House was in concurrence with the other Commissioners. The garage is right at the street and it is not very interesting. It would be helpful to have a model but that is the applicant's decision.

Commissioner Wittenkeller stated that the existing drawings that are not integrated with the proposed drawings are difficult to understand. The Commission also wants to understand the adjacent houses and the impact to them. He suggested they either minimize the variances, or eliminate them. An alternative would be to capture more space at the lower level.

Ms. Goefft stated that every elevation shows the existing house and there will be no elevation changes to the existing house. The drawings also show the windows and how they will impact privacy of the neighbors.

Commissioner Zwick stated that one neighbor has said they do not support variances. If the applicant wants a variance, the Commission must see that there is no other reasonable alternative, or that the proposal is a benefit to the Town over the no variance alternative. He supported staff's analysis of the project at this time. If this were a design that he could support, he would be commenting on the design.

Chair House stated that she supports staff recommendation. The applicant is asking for many variances and that should be looked at carefully.

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M/s Zwick/Wittenkeller, and unanimously passed (3-0) to continue the application to the meeting of April 16, 2001.

1. **Town of San Anselmo, Ross Valley Fire Department, Station No. 20, 150 Butterfield Road**, 5-111-68, public review and comment of a proposed 1,843 square foot accessory building to be used for training purposes. This building is proposed to be located within 20' of the rear property line and within 8' of the south side property line, with a roof peak at 20.5' above grade (Code setbacks: 20' from the rear property line and 8' from the interior side property line; Code height maximum: 30'), located within the PF (Public Facility) Zoning District. (Staff person: Wight)

Ms. Wight presented the staff report, noting that this is for information only and no action is necessary by the Commission.

Michael Groshong, Fire Chief, stated that they have three stations and all are fairly small with no room for training. They also do not have enough apparatus space. They are also proposing to put in a small bathroom and kitchen. They will not be using it on a daily basis.

Commissioner Wittenkeller commented that when he saw the word apparatus he thought they would be setting up personal training. He noted that the exterior cladding on the building would be very important as well as the color.

Chief Girshong responded that they wanted to match the existing color and trim of the Fire Station.

The hearing was opened to public testimony.

Harry Devinney, 140 Butterfield Road, stated that the proposed new facility would be half the size of the existing fire station and pretty close to his house. He wanted to know why it had to be built in that location.

Jeanny Lang, 12 Arroyo, likes being a neighbor of the fire department but she would like them to park in the fire station parking lot so they would not take up street parking. She is not concerned about the normal every day noise associated with the fire station but is concerned about the noise associated with this building and use. Perhaps a fence around the building would be in order to block the noise.

Jacqueline Quam, 140 Butterfield Road, has always thought the fire department was an asset. This structure however will be right on the fence line and she will have no privacy. The story poles are up and appear to be almost in her kitchen.

John Swoffer, 137 The Alameda and owner of 140 Butterfield Road, stated that the fire department is at a higher grade than his property. This structure is extremely massive. He noted that Brookside School has also expanded to the other side of his property as well.

Betsy Irwin, 16 Arroyo Avenue, stated that she was happy to have the fire department as neighbors. There is already a parking problem on Arroyo and The Alameda. The training center will increase the noise and traffic problem. The three houses on the street are fairly open and not screened by fences so the noise will appear even greater.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Wittenkeller said that having the fire department near by provides assurance. The testimony he has heard seems reasonable. With a normal application, a landscape plan is required as well as paint samples to see how it will integrate with the neighborhood. He would like the fire department to work out some of the issues.

Commissioners Zwick said many of the issues could be worked out by way of conditions or perhaps coordinate with Brookside School to use their facilities for training. The apparatus room appears to have a tall ceiling. Perhaps the training room and dormitory do not have to share the same roofline and the roofline could be lowered towards the neighbors. He likes the simple roofline but if the neighbors are overwhelmed by it, it should be modified. The materials used and details of the façade are important as well.

Chair House said it might be helpful to get more information about why the building should be located at this location. As part of the application the Commission will need to know where the people will park, how close the neighbors are to the structure, how noise would be mitigated, and a landscape plan. This is a utilitarian building but not very attractive and she would like to see it a little more interesting and pleasing. She would like more information about the exterior of the building, noting that she is not wild about the green exterior.

Chief Groshong stated that they couldn't use the other two stations. There is no space, public or private, to have training sessions. He did not want to spend a lot of money on this proposal until he got input from the Commission and the public on the basic concept. Now he will go forward with a more detailed plan.

M/s Zwick/Wittenkeller, and unanimously passed (3-0) to continue the application to the meeting of April 16<sup>th</sup>.

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**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

1. 196 Oak Springs - siding change from Planning Commission approval.

The consensus of the Commission was that the new design was an improvement even though it was changed without permission.

**REPORT OF UPCOMING APPEALS TO TOWN COUNCIL**

None at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, APRIL 2, 2001**