

**MINUTES REGULAR MEETING  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
APRIL 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007**

**ROLL**

**APPROVED**

Members Present:	Chair Kent, Huntsberry, Alternate Member Machnowski
Members Absent:	Crew, Dickens
Planning Commission Liaison:	Lang
Staff:	Senior Planner Raffi Boloyan Associate Planner Caron Parker Economic Development Coordinator Katie Korzun

**A. Staff Communications**

- 1) Past City Council, Planning Commission and Design Review Board Action on Design Review Matters

Boloyan announced that two out of the four design discussion meetings have occurred with Commissioner Lang and Chair Kent Member Huntsberry in attendance. The first covered the current City process, the second meeting focused on brainstorming or identifying areas that needed improvement and what would constitute a good design review process. The third meeting will focus on an evaluation by Frank Fuller of Field Paoli Architects of some of the recently approved and built projects in San Rafael and other communities. The last meeting will focus on brainstorming ideas in order to enhance the process. Any proposal to modify the current process would have to be by the members of the group requesting the changes to the City Council. The major point of the process was to educate various stakeholders in the group.

Boloyan updated the Board on the radio controlled vehicle track on Third Street, which the Planning Commission heard last week. The applicant decided to withdraw the fuel-powered component of the project, so the Commission focused on the aesthetics and consistency with the Canal front polices. In conclusion, the Commission approved the project with certain modifications that the track-viewing platform be moved to one side or the other to create additional views and public viewing opportunities from the site out onto the Canal.

Boloyan noted that the gas station located on the corner of Second and D Streets did have an approved color board on file, so staff will be in contact informing them that the colors

must be revised to meet the color board. Also, their landscaping is in a state of disrepair and must be enhanced to meet the approved landscape plan.

Boloyan indicated that the Best Buy was issued temporary occupancy to open, but they have outstanding landscaping improvements along the frontage and their final lighting review must occur. They requested additional time to complete the landscaping and staff pointed out that a few lights must be modified as well.

Boloyan then announced that the April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 DRB meeting might be canceled.

**B. Board Communications - None**

**C. Approval Of Minutes – February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007**

Boloyan announced that the February minutes must be continued to the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

**D. New Business**

- 3) PA07-003      **Conceptual Design Review of the remodel of an existing auto dealership (Sonnen VW/Audi) and the construction of a new 53,074 sq. ft. auto dealership**  
740 Francisco Blvd. (Katie Korzun)

Katie Korzun, Economic Development Coordinator, summarized the staff report and requested input from the Board on how successful this has been and whether the Board supports staff's position on the sign height and landscaping. This is a pre-application review, and staff and the applicant would request the Board's comments and direction on whether the major elements of the design, the building massing, use of the raised piles and platform, exposed parking area, building entries, façade treatments and site circulation are appropriate. Staff would also request that the Board comment with respect to plans and materials that would assist in review and would be in addition to the required submittal materials.

Kit Wong, Transystem Project architect, provided a three-dimensional model for the Board's consideration as well as photographs of the site. Visibility is the key operational need in regard to the freeway and street. The onsite parking area for the dealership is a key business operation component and they desired as much ground level staging area as possible. They desired a balance of landscape screening and amount of hardscape to display and sell vehicles. He then discussed the design and indicated that two tower elements were added to the roof to be visible for both sides of the freeway. Sonnen is concerned about the denseness and height of the trees in the required front landscape area in terms of the vehicles being visible. He stated that the freeway flyover wall is about 25 feet in height, so Sonnen's visibility is very impaired by that wall being constructed. He then provided several simulations of the project showing the different views, tower elements and mechanical equipment for the Board's consideration.

Chair Kent asked the height of the pylon signs in the simulation provided to the Board. The architect responded that the pylon sign is 35 feet.

Peter Sonnen, the dealership owner expressed concern for visibility and noted that every car dealership is highly dependant on visibility and hopes the Board finds his application acceptable.

Chair Kent opened the public hearing on this item, and seeing no one wishing to speak, he closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Board for discussion and action.

Alternate Member Machnowski thanked the applicant for providing the three-dimensional model. He believed this is an important setting and very difficult site. He realized it is a tough location and the dealership is hidden. The Nissan structure is smaller and believed the Nissan building should have more exposure to the highway. He noticed that the curved shape had been deleted and wished that had not changed because he liked the curve shape design. In regard to VW and Audi, he recommended swapping the two by having VW as the first building. This would expose the Nissan building if the two buildings are switched. Then the arch roof of Audi will be in the middle and provide more light. Dwarfing the existing Nissan building is a concern in his view. Visibility from the highway and street is a concern and recommended planting ornamental landscaping to provide more color rather than trees. He suggested that the applicant use caution in regard to glazing. The neighboring buildings were not shown and he wished that information were provided to the Board. On signage, he would not have a problem if the signage is higher and more visible such as the proposed roof sign as opposed to having a 35-foot pylon sign. There is exposure on the curved roof to the north and if the buildings are switched the Audi sign would work well on that end facing the north. He believed it is a nice design that brings original elements, provides glazing and the curved shape as the Toyota dealership.

Huntsberry understood the idea of switching the two buildings and believed that should be seriously considered by the applicant. The rendering shows that the center building will overpower the proposed Nissan building. The top of the roof element in the center lines up with the element at the rear of the Nissan, which is very misleading. The Nissan building is very low in comparison and by switching the building shapes with the curved roof as suggested, the curved element would come down to about the height of the existing Nissan building, which would be a way of making it more satisfying. The clearstory on the VW building will be visible from the hills and freeway and did not see any reason to grant an exception over the 36-foot height limit up to 45 feet for signage and visibility. He understands the need for visibility, but from a public standpoint they do not want it to be an eyesore to the town and currently it is too large, too bulky and too much mass fitting on this site. He believed the site should only have one of these buildings, not two. Parking is being forced and no landscaping is being provided. It was very difficult for him to understand the buildings because no sections were provided. He applauded the presentation in regard to the three-dimensional renderings, but as presented

there is too much building, massing, height and too much parking for this one site that is being shoehorned in. Stepping back the setbacks of the two new proposed buildings would help. The Nissan building must be respected and recognizing how small it is in conjunction with the large buildings, the center building setback should be the same as the Nissan building. Then the stagger could go forward onto the Audi building to the north, which might help not to bury the Nissan building. In regard to circulation, the ramp is 8% and he is concerned about stacking. The ramp idea is foreign for him and not well designed for a facility such as this. He applauded the use of the traditional display area in front for automobiles, but more landscaping along the north side of the Audi building is needed. He realized the freeway ramp is a large imposing mass in front of the project, but thinks as people travel they will see these buildings going south before they hit the ramp and once on the ramp they will be able to look down at the facility as well. He stated that massing continues to be a concern. He added that the Nissan building must be respected more. The setbacks should be greater and desired sections. He objected to the 35-foot pylon sign and believed it should be lower. He further noted that it is too much of a building on too small of a site.

Chair Kent agreed with the comments of the Board. Exploring the idea of flipping the buildings is an interesting idea in order to respect the Nissan building. In regard to the element added to the VW, he is not sure what it does other than add more mass to the building. He felt signage has improved. He did not like the detail that ties the two buildings together, but believed they are on the right track and some architectural detail is needed to help tie those buildings in front together. In regard to the landscaping, it is hard to understand, but to a certain extent the percentage can be thrown out and just make sure that the landscaping is nice. There is a lot of display area in front now and he felt some areas could be partially or totally landscaped. From the simulation, he suggested using the plant palette and consider other ground covers in addition to turf in order to add more variety to the site. He hoped when this comes back as a formal application that more grading and drainage information is provided to the Board.

The architect noted that the existing ramp at the VW/Audi dealership has the same slope as the slope proposed for the new building. It is not ideal but given the scarcity of land, it has not been a problem and wanted to clarify that issue for the Board. Also, the availability of space is critical to sell automobiles. They are keeping the lower level as open as possible to comply with FEMA regulations. In regard to using the same concept as Nissan, cost is a concern and that is the reason why that concept is not proposed. The notion of flipping the two buildings, the Audi hanger has a certain direction to it, so from a brand perspective that is a requirement that must be explored. In regard to moving the building back, there is a public easement that must be respected and they are not able to encroach on that public easement. Also, if they have to move the façade, the building might need to be smaller and it is an economic issue for the owner.

- 4) ED06-097 **Environmental and Design Review Permit and Use Permit to construct a new wireless communication facility on a new 45-foot high stealth monopine with three antennas mounted at the 36-foot level.**

333 Biscayne Dr. (Caron Parker)

Caron Parker, Associate Planner, summarized the staff report and explained that staff supports the proposed project because it is in keeping with the General Plan 2020 policies, meets all zoning code requirements, is of stealth design, meets the performance standards establish for wireless communication facilities and will blend in with the existing land uses on the project site. The Board, in fulfilling its role of providing professional design advice to the City, may have additional concerns, information requests, and may provide additional recommendations it deems appropriate for these Design Review applications. Following the recommendation of the Board, the application will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for their consideration.

Lang asked staff how the Country Club renovation will affect this shed and particular area. Parker responded that this shed is separate from that renovation proposal. Boloyan noted that the Golf Course is undergoing a few different projects at one time. Staff is not sure how the renovations will effect this application, but if it does change the design of the buildings, it will be reviewed at that point in time.

Alternate Member Machnowski asked staff to discuss maintenance of this monopine tree. Parker directed that question to the applicant.

Peter Hilliard, representing Verizon Wireless, explained that the Golf Course leased this area because it had nothing to do with any future redevelopment. They have a long-term lease agreement and this location will not be affected in the future with their redevelopment plans. If they did approach this area for redevelopment, they would go through the same design review. In regard to monopine tree, it is a steel trunk. The branches are made of fiberglass and plastics and over years there will be some maintenance. This small tree will require very little maintenance and probably just a couple visits per year. Their operations field personnel will keep up the facility and would inform Verizon of any disrepair.

Huntsberry expressed concern for the base of the tree and wondered if the base could be thinner. Also, he asked why a diesel generator is needed at this site. Mr. Hilliard explained that the diameter of the base is 36 inches. He explained that it is a policy of Verizon to have a facility that can stay online during any emergency situation or power outage.

Huntsberry asked how many Verizon sites are located in the City of San Rafael. Mr. Hilliard did not know the exact number, but believed several in the City of San Rafael. He explained that not every one has a generator. It is about the space, location and permitting issues. They are trying to add generators to existing facilities.

Huntsberry asked if there is a difference in diesel tanks versus propane generators. Mr. Hilliard responded that there is not much difference, just Verizon desired diesel tanks because it is a compact unit. He further added that a diesel truck would fuel this site by running a 50-foot hose.

Alternate Member Machnowski expressed concern for lightning. Mr. Hilliard responded that every facility is grounded, and lightning rods are no longer used.

Alternate Member Machnowski wanted this facility to have more of a residential appearance. He expressed concern for the exterior siding proposed. Mr. Hilliard explained that it is a pre-fabricated fiberglass building and the color will match the existing maintenance building in order to blend in. The view of this structure will be limited. He then discussed landscaped areas and indicated that to the east of the leased area there are two existing Eucalyptus trees; immediately adjacent to that is an existing fence; to the north side there are sand bins; and to the west there is a grove of Eucalyptus trees. There is not a lot of room to landscape within this leased area and desired guidance in that regard. This is a very tight location and looked forward to the Board's direction in that regard.

Chair Kent asked if this monopine treepole comes in different species. Mr. Hilliard responded that an antenna oak would be great, but this shape is easy to work with. He then provided photographs of other monopines for the Board's consideration. He pointed out that the antennas would be flushed mounted to the pole, so it will not be a very large silhouette. They will use some kind of a primer with a weathered non-reflective brown color to match other trees in the past.

Chair Kent opened the public hearing on this item.

Michael Dupery, Peacock resident, very concerned about this tower. Very concerned about the preservation of the neighborhood. This proposed tower is located at the main entry point for many hikers and bikers. He is very concerned about the visual blight that this monopine will bring. He is also very concerned about property devaluation from this tower. He expressed concern for the health and safety issues from this tower in regard to radiation exposure. He sees very little upside for this project.

Chair Kent noted that safety and radiation issues associated with the antenna is more of a Planning Commission issue. He explained that the Board addresses the design issues.

Huntsberry pointed out that concerns related to the RF emissions has been discussed in the past and the Board and Commission have been informed by the City and the City Attorney that the RF emissions are not factors for health anymore and that they cannot rule on that basis.

Parker announced that the Planning Commission meeting will probably take place in May, but notices will be sent out and the site will be posted.

Lang pointed out that the Commission cannot address health issues. It has been explained to the Commission and Board by the City Attorney that the Federal Communications Commission has addressed and resolved these issues and has pre-empted them from taking any actions based on health issues. Boloyan noted that there is a three-year review.

The City hired a consultant that will measure all facilities to make sure they are operating within the threshold allowed by the FCC. Staff noted that the only local control the City has relates to aesthetics.

There being no further questions or comments from the public on this project, Chair Kent closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Board for discussion and action.

Huntsberry has seen these stealth tree antennas and some are done better than others. Given the location, it will blend into the neighborhood. The small maintenance structure will also blend in with the surroundings. He desired bushes and other shrubs to be planted to hide the area better. He wanted to see the main trunk of the tree painted more camouflage to give it shadowing and shading to make it blend in. He further noted that if it looks like the photo simulation he could support.

Alternate Member Machnowski agreed with Huntsberry's comments.

Chair Kent agreed with the Board's comments. Since the existing Eucalyptus trees help make this disappear, he suggested a condition of approval that the existing Eucalyptus trees be retained. Huntsberry recommended that Chair Kent review plantings. Board and staff agreed.

Boloyan summarized the Board's consensus items:

- Design of monopine will effectively blend in with surroundings and the same goes for the new accessory structure
- The main truck of the stealth monopine should be painted in a better camouflage pattern
- Additional trees within the Eucalyptus trees should be planted now as part of this application that are fast growing to help better screen the new monopine
- Shrubs should be added on all sides of the accessory structure
- The planting plan be reviewed by Chair Kent
- Monopine must be maintained properly to ensure that it blends and does not stick out

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

**Huntsberry moved and Machnowski seconded, to approve the project as conditioned by staff. Motion carried unanimously.**

<b>AYES:</b>	<b>Member:</b>	<b>Huntsberry, Alternate Member Machnowski, Chair Kent</b>
<b>NOES:</b>	<b>Member:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>ABSENT:</b>	<b>Member:</b>	<b>Crew, Dickens</b>
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	<b>Member:</b>	<b>None</b>

**E. Old Business**

- 5) ED05-076 **Final lighting review of an illuminated entry portal as required by the conditions of approval for a previously approved Environmental and Design Review to allow an addition and remodel to auto dealer.**  
445 Francisco Blvd. (Raffi Boloyan)

Raffi Boloyan, Senior Planner, summarized the staff report and recommended that the Board review the lighting of the portal and provide their recommendations as to whether the as-built lighting of the portal is appropriate and consistent with their previous approval. Should the Board find that the lighting is excessive, the lighting levels of the portal can be required to be reduced or eliminate entirely.

Huntsberry asked staff if general review of the flood lighting is part of their approval. Boloyan responded that there is an overall lighting review as well. Huntsberry has mixed emotions and wondered what lamps were installed around the site and if they were the same wattage as approved because it is very bright in this area. Boloyan responded that final occupancy has not occurred, but if there is other lighting issues staff will certainly review.

Alternate Member Machnowski asked staff if this lighting is comparable to other dealerships. Boloyan noted that in general the lighting is consistent. Alternate Member Machnowski believed this dealership is very bright.

Bob Wright, TWM Architects, noted that they are present tonight to deal with the portal lighting only. They wanted to come before the Board to make sure they are in conformance. Their intent tonight is to deal with the portal lighting and discuss the other lighting issues at a separate meeting. As staff noted, the portal lighting is within the lighting levels as presented early on with the initial concept design. Majority of lights are within a very low level of foot-candles as shown in the lighting levels provided. In regard to the hot spot that staff mentioned, it is not really a hot spot, it is slightly over a eleven foot-candles due to an overflow from an adjacent parking lot standard. It is not a portal light issue. With the new photographs presented tonight it shows a warm glow, not a white glow. They created a wall for this portal that is a warm glow, acceptable to the neighbors. Both properties immediately adjacent to this property found this acceptable and a much better solution than what was presented previously. It is their feeling that what was presented to the Board early on is what they produced, which is a warm light level they feel is appropriate.

Huntsberry asked the size of the squares in the portal. Architect Wright responded that they are 4 by 4. There is a single 55-watt bulb in each square that creates the light, which defused because the sides and back are solid and the front is frosted glass. Huntsberry clarified that there are access panels. Architect Wright responded that there are access panels in the back. Huntsberry asked if the Board deemed it too bright, what the cost would be to down size. Architect Wright noted that he talked about lowering the wattages with the Toyota franchise group who indicated that the system is designed for these bulbs

and these wattages and is not compatible for different size wattages or dimming capacities.

Boloyan noted that in general the average foot-candle reading for the overall recent dealerships is between 5 and 7; maximums up to 23 – 25 foot-candles; minimums of 1.2 or 0.5 at the property lines; and the averages is around 6 to 13 range of the different dealerships in regard to the overall site lighting.

Architect Wright noted that what is presented to the Board tonight is the photometric of the portal that also has the showroom lights, but it is the portal lights primarily and what light levels that creates. They were the architects for BMW, Team Chevrolet and Lexus and some of those have gotten bright, but those are overall site lights and parking lot lights. When they did Team Chevrolet after they did BMW, they changed the lamps to much lower wattages. BMW has always been an issue, but Team Chevrolet has gotten down to City standards and that is what they are attempting to achieve as well in regard to site lighting.

Huntsberry asked the size lamps of the parking lot lighting in front of the portal. Architect Wright responded that he is not sure about the wattage, but they were existing lights and were only re-lamped by installing new lights to replace the lights that existed. Boloyan noted that new parking lot lights or site lights were installed around the rear and backside of the building, which were 250-watts. Huntsberry desired to know what exists in regard to the parking lot lights.

Boloyan pointed out that tonight's review is focused on the portals since that is a specific condition they are trying to address. Staff has not taken readings of the entire site. The approved photometric for the front area was ranging between 3 and 25 foot-candles on the parking spaces along the street frontage.

Chair Kent opened the public hearing on this item, and seeing no one wishing to speak, he closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Board for discussion and action.

Alternate Member Machnowski commended the design of the overall project because the building and renovations are very nice and the letters the Board received from the public is a reflection of that acceptable design. Although the portal may comply with the approve levels, the whole front side is like daylight and it takes away from that amber lighting desired. He felt the Board was tricked because that was not the intent of that area. It is very bright. He noted his frustration with the interior showroom lighting and did not see a need or reason for the lighting levels to be so bright.

Huntsberry agreed with Machnowski's comments. The bright floodlights along Francisco are the problem. The whole area where the vehicles are parked is like daylight and there is not a problem with the portal if the lighting levels for the floodlights can be reduced.

Chair Kent believed this is a perfect example of the reason why lighting review occurs.

He agreed it is a very bright and this whole wall becomes a sign. In his view, it is a great big bright area and this lighting level makes the whole wall appear as one big sign. He further noted that he cannot support this lighting level.

Boloyan summarized the Board's options:

- Continue the matter to have the site lighting come back as a consideration as well with a strong recommendation that the site lighting be toned down to better achieve the glow that was previously presented; or
- Find that the portal lighting is not appropriate and make that recommendation.

Boloyan noted that the general feeling of the Board is that if the site lighting was toned down that could probably address a lot of the concern. The condition of approval on the portal lighting clearly reads that if they cannot achieve the glow that was presented and approved that the lighting be lowered in intensity or removed.

Chair Kent asked staff what keeps this whole wall from being part of the signage. Huntsberry indicated that was discussed during review and the Board felt that the high-tech design deserved to move forward. Even with floodlighting from Francisco, if it were a white plaster wall, it would still be fairly bright.

Architect Wright noted that site lighting and portal lighting are two separate issues. They are before the Board for the portal lighting, which is well within a reasonable level. The majority of them are within the 2 to 3 to 4 foot-candles range, which is not a bright light. To combine the portal lighting and site lighting is not what they anticipated tonight. Also, it is not a sign, just as Best Buy across the freeway is not a sign even though it has huge blue walls seen day and night as opposed to the portal, which is only illuminated at night. This is a portal that is part of the building, not a sign.

Chair Kent pointed out that site lighting is influencing the perception of how bright the portal is. Architect Wright pointed out that the staff report brought up the issue of portal lighting as separate lighting, which has been done. Site lighting is a separate issue and should be brought back as a separate agenda item by staff.

Tom Price, owner, explained that the portal is part of a national design initiative. A national firm has designed it and they did meet both the color and lighting intent. In terms of the other site lighting, they are happy to review. They had their best month and are very excited. They would appreciate the Board's consideration to get the portal lighting complete and then discuss the site lighting at a later date.

Boloyan announced that there is a separate condition that allows a 90-day review period of the general lighting following the final certificate of occupancy, which is a separate condition from the portal lighting.

Boloyan summarized the Board's consensus items:

- Majority of Board felt the site lighting was leading to a different look and feel of the portal lighting than what was presented originally.

- Board unable to give a clear indication of whether the portal lighting was at an appropriate level without understanding the site lighting.

Huntsberry indicated that it is very bright and the combination of the lit portal with the old light fixtures around the site that were relamped and the fact that the building is closer to the street, it is like daylight. He is not condemning the portal or architecture, but maybe the applicant might be willing to work with the Board to get the lighting levels down to the other dealerships and then look at the overall effect.

Chair Kent added that any motion must have to do with just the portal. Huntsberry felt they cannot consider one without the other. He recommended continuing this matter because they cannot make a decision on the portal until they understand what is going on with the site lighting. Board agreed.

Lang noted that this was a very controversial matter at the Planning Commission and they are relying on the Board to do a thorough review of this and if the site lighting has to be reviewed at the same time as the portal lighting, she strongly encouraged the Board to do so.

Chair Kent asked for a motion.

**Huntsberry moved and Machnowski seconded to continue the item since the Board cannot make a judgment on the final product of the portal lighting until the site lighting has been reviewed and lowered in its wattage or in its illumination of the site, which by doing that might affect the perceived image of the portal. Motion carried unanimously.**

<b>AYES:</b>	<b>Member:</b>	<b>Huntsberry, Alternate Member Machnowski Chair Kent</b>
<b>NOES:</b>	<b>Member:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>ABSENT:</b>	<b>Member:</b>	<b>Crew, Dickens</b>
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	<b>Member:</b>	<b>None</b>

ADJOURNMENT

BY ORDER OF THE CHAIR, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Woods