



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PLANNING COMMISSION
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 02/24/2021

ITEM NO: 4

DESK ITEM

DATE: February 24, 2021
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Consider a Request for Approval for a Zone Change from R-1D:LHP (Single-Family Residential Downtown with a Landmark and Historic Preservation Overlay) to C-2:LHP (Central Business District with a Landmark and Historic Preservation Overlay) and a General Plan Amendment to Change the Land Use Designation from Medium Density Residential to Central Business District, for Property Located at **4 Tait Avenue**. APN: 510-44-054. Zone Change Application Z-20-002 and General Plan Amendment Application GP-20-001. Property Owner: Town of Los Gatos. Applicant: Jim Foley

REMARKS:

Exhibit 8 includes public comments received between 11:01 a.m., Friday, February 19, 2021 and 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 24, 2021.

EXHIBITS:

Previously received with February 24, 2021 Staff Report:

1. Location Maps (showing existing General Plan Land Use Designations and Zoning)
2. Draft Findings
3. Draft Resolution for the General Plan Amendment, with Exhibit A
4. Draft Ordinance for the Zone Change, with Exhibit A
5. Letter from the Applicant
6. Summary of Outreach
7. Property Plans

Received with this Desk Item:

8. Public comments received between 11:01 a.m., Friday, February 19, 2021 and 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 24, 2021

PREPARED BY: JENNIFER ARMER, AICP
Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

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From: Jim Pappas

Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 5:03 PM

To: Planning <Planning@losgatosca.gov>

Subject: Proposed 4 Tait Ave Development/February 24th Meeting

Los Gatos Planning Department,

We are in receipt of the green card dated February 12, 2021 concerning the above captioned, proposed development. We are the owner of 5 Tait Avenue, immediately across from 4 Tait Avenue. The link referenced in said card does not have any project information. A subsequent letter from Imwalle Properties/Pennant Properties, however, had more information and contact references for said development.

Jim Foley of Pennant Properties received my call today and was extremely helpful in discussing the project.

Below are the development comments I shared with Jim and I believe should be considered in the February 24th meeting (At least two neighbors have similar comments to mine):

1. Residential is the most preferred development for the property (Max. two single family residences).
2. Retail is not desired at all: traffic increases, ever changing tenants with other downtown vacancies, beach traffic prohibits activity, etc.
3. If it must be commercial, *low traffic office usage is preferred*: attorney, architect/engineer, tech, financial, general office, etc.

Note: The current parking lot sees various inflows of people/vehicles: daily parking (gets patrolled), homeless visits, homeless cars park for various activities, occasional high school hangout, etc. Developing something to improve the appearance and limit mischievous behavior will be appreciated and is needed.

My phone number is [REDACTED] should you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further.

Thank You,

Jim and Renee Pappas

Comments to Planning Commission with regard to 4 Tait Avenue :

Dear Planning Commissioners:

I have reviewed the limited information that was available for public review with regard to the 4 Tait Avenue historic firehouse building via the link provided in the green notice card at <https://www.losgatosca.gov/2390/T>.

I understand that the applicants are seeking to rezone such property from a Single-Family Residential Downtown LHP to a Central Business District LHP, and further to make an Amendment to the General Plan to allow for a change in land use designation from a Medium Density Residential to a Central Business District.

Whereas I am hopeful that the property might be carefully and thoughtfully restored and maintained as a true, valued historic property of the town, I am concerned as to issues that are not addressed in the current proposal for creating a business property in the middle of a historic neighborhood.

Parking and Traffic

In the Related Documents found at such link (including the Project Description and Justification Letter, Plans and Site Photos) there is no mention of the impact of parking in changing the property from residential to business zoning. A residential property's parking needs generally connotes two vehicles associated with the property. A business property generally connotes much more than two.

I urge the Planning Commission to stipulate conditions in any potential approval for a Zone Change and/or General Planning amendment that the property must, at a minimum, retain the seven parking places currently on the property. This might be enacted through conditions, or perhaps with a legal covenant that would run with the property.

The 0 to 100 block on Tait Avenue is a much narrower stretch of road than the rest of Tait, and indeed narrower than the roads in the rest of Almond Grove. Two cars can barely pass each other while a car is parked on one side of the street. With St. Mary's Church and School situated on Tait Avenue, traffic is incessant and parking is hard to find. The infamous "beach traffic" that plows through town May through September (and funnels down Tait) further exacerbates the bottleneck, and has cause several accidents over the past few years.

It is imperative that no additional parking issues and traffic be added to the mix with the potential rezoning of the 4 Tait Avenue property. In addition to the condition of retaining a minimum of seven parking places at the property, I urge the Planning Commission to require the applicants to provide a plan for traffic abatement with their proposal. For example, is it possible for the property to have an ingress and egress only off of the much wider Main Street rather than Tait Avenue?

BUSINESS HOURS ZONING

At this juncture, it is not clear as to what tenant might be located in the 4 Tait Avenue property (if it is rezoned as business). It is clear that the property faces residences on three sides. A business that operates earlier than 8 am and past the hour of 8 pm is not in keeping with the hours of quiet enjoyment long held by those in such historic residences. The noises and traffic stemming from a bar, a club, or a late-night restaurant would not be a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

I urge the Planning Commission to stipulate conditions in any potential approval for a Zone Change and/or General Planning amendment that the property must not allow for business operations earlier than 8 am and later than 8 pm.

ADDITIONAL STRUCTURES

It was not ascertainable as to whether additional structures would be permitted on the property at 4 Tait. Whereas the renovation of the existing property would be welcome, any additional structures would not. The character of Almond Grove is derived by historic homes with low-lying profiles. Any additional structures to the historic adobe fire station would be out of sorts with the history and character of the town. It would not be a “good neighbor”. I urge the Planning Commission to stipulate conditions against any additional structures added to the current property.

Whereas I welcome creative solutions to retaining and restoring the town’s historic property, the town must be mindful of not tearing at the fabric of the historic neighborhood in which the property resides.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Mammel
33 Tait Avenue

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