



# City of Burlingame

BURLINGAME CITY HALL  
501 PRIMROSE ROAD  
BURLINGAME, CA 94010

## Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

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Monday, June 8, 2020

7:00 PM

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*On March 17, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-29-20 suspending certain provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act in order to allow for local legislative bodies to conduct their meetings telephonically or by other electronic means. Pursuant to the Shelter-in-Place Order issued by the San Mateo County Health Officer on March 16, 2020 (which was then extended on March 31, 2020, April 29, 2020, May 15, 2020, and May 29, 2020), the statewide Shelter-in-Place Order issued by the Governor in Executive Order N-33-20 on March 19, 2020, and the CDC's social distancing guidelines which discourage large public gatherings, the Council Chambers will not be open to the public for the June 8, 2020 Burlingame Planning Commission meeting.*

*Members of the public may view the meeting by logging on to the Zoom meeting listed on the next page. Additionally, the meeting will be streamed live on YouTube and uploaded to the City's website after the meeting.*

*Members of the public may provide written comments by email to [publiccomment@burlingame.org](mailto:publiccomment@burlingame.org).*

*Emailed comments should include the specific agenda item on which you are commenting, or note that your comment concerns an item that is not on the agenda or is on the consent agenda. The length of the emailed comment should be commensurate with the three minutes customarily allowed for verbal comments, which is approximately 250-300 words. To ensure your comment is received and read to the Planning Commission for the appropriate agenda item, please submit your email no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 8, 2020. The City will make every effort to read emails received after that time, but cannot guarantee such emails will read into the record. Any emails received after the 5:00 p.m. deadline which are not read into the record will be provided to the Planning Commission after the meeting.*

*Agenda continued on next page.*

**To Join the Zoom Meeting:****To access by computer:****Go to [www.zoom.us/join](http://www.zoom.us/join)****Meeting ID: 899 7374 1103****Password: 392178****To access by phone:****Dial 1-669-900-6833****Meeting ID: 899 7374 1103****Password: 392178****1. CALL TO ORDER**

*The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. Staff in attendance: Community Development Director Kevin Gardiner, Planning Manager Ruben Hurin, and City Attorney Kathleen Kane.*

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Present** 6 - Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, Loftis, and Schmid

**Absent** 1 - Sargent

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*There were no minutes to approve.*

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*There were no changes to the agenda.*

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS, NON-AGENDA**

*There were no Public Comments.*

**6. STUDY ITEMS**

*There were no Study Items.*

**7. CONSENT CALENDAR**

*There were no Consent Calendar Items.*

**8. REGULAR ACTION ITEMS**

- a. 2625 Martinez Drive, zoned R-1 - Application for Design Review, Hillside Area Construction Permit and Special Permit for attached garage for a new, two-story single family dwelling and attached garage. This project is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (a)). (Leonard Ng, LNAI Architecture, applicant and architect; Galen Ma and Tina Shi, property owners) (55 noticed) Staff Contact: Michelle Markiewicz

**Attachments:** [2625 Martinez Dr - Staff Report](#)  
[2625 Martinez Dr - Attachments](#)  
[2625 Martinez Dr - Plans](#)

*All Commissioners had visited the project site.*

*Commissioner Terrones noted he visited with neighbors at 2609 Trousdale, 2621 Trousdale and 2613 Trousdale to view the story poles from their properties.*

*Commissioner Gaul also visited 2609 Trousdale and had previously met with the property owner at 2613 Trousdale to go in the backyard.*

*Commissioner Loftis had a zoom meeting with the applicant and his architect but did not discuss the merits of the project.*

*Commissioner Comaroto had a discussion with the applicant and went to the backyard of 2613 Trousdale in the prior meeting and had an e-mail exchange with the owner of the property which provided the affidavit, but did not gain access.*

*Commissioner Schmid had a zoom call with the applicant and the architect to discuss the comments from the last meeting.*

*Commissioner Tse visited 2613 Trousdale to view the effects on their view from inside the house. She also visited 2609 Trousdale, met with the owner and was able to look at the view aspects from their backyard. She was invited by the property owner of 7 Castro Court to step inside and take a look at implications for their property from inside the house.*

*Community Development Director Gardiner provided an overview of the staff report.*

*There were no questions of staff.*

*Chair Tse opened the public hearing.*

*Leonard Ng, LNAI Architecture, represented the applicant with the property owner Galen Ma.*

*Commission Questions/Comments:*

- > The height reductions are substantive. Regarding the Hillside Area Permit, we received other letters from neighbors with view concerns, particularly 2609, 2613 and 2621 Trousdale. Have you had a chance to visit those properties, in particular 2609 Trousdale? (Ng: I had not had a chance to visit 2609 Trousdale.)*
- > Have the story poles been adjusted to reflect the currently proposed drawings? (Ng: Yes, they should be.)*

*Public Comments:*

- > Jason Sawyer, 2609 Trousdale: I just wanted to know if there was any attempt by the architect or the owner to contact us to access the viewing of the backyard to see the angle? There are attempts to talk to other neighbors with oblique views, but was there an attempt to contact us? I don't have any correspondence asking access to see our viewpoint. (Ng: Yes, sorry, we weren't aware that we had the opportunity to even ask to go look at the neighbor's views. Personally, we thought that was only allowed for the commissioners.)*
- > Sherry Lynes: I wanted to beg to differ about the story poles being changed. I was wondering when*

they were changed because they don't seem any different to us? (Ng: We submitted the story pole plan to the story pole crew. It has been certified by the engineer and also a copy of the story pole plan has been submitted to the project planner at the Planning Division. The owners have been coordinating that effort directly, but I believe the story poles have been revised and it happened at least a few weeks ago.) It doesn't look any different to us, so that's what I was wondering about that. (Ng: We discussed with the Planning Division whether to keep a reference point of the previous story poles, but everyone seem to say that might cause more confusion. So they lowered it two to three feet or more, but there's no mark of the previous height which makes it hard to compare.) I don't think the highest height has been changed. We looked at it and figured the changes that had been made would reduce the height that we're looking at right now, which was very satisfactorily, but it doesn't look like they changed the story poles, so it's confusing to us. (Gardiner: For the record, we have here the certification for the story poles dated May 26th.)

> Comment submitted via e-mail by Robert Elliston, 2606 Martinez Drive: In the photos presented by Leonard, a lower branch of the tree in the photo obscures views of the bay. That is easily removed and the view of the bay is substantial even though it may be oblique. If the branch is removed, it shows the story poles obscure more of the bay view. (Ng: The view at 2617 Martinez Drive has to be looked at in overall context like the location of window, the obliqueness and even without the tree. If you study the photo a lot of the netting is actually covering a tree as opposed to the bay. If you even zoom in the view, we're clipping the bottom most portion, but there's still a fairly substantive portion of bay all around and the views to the east bay and mountains beyond are still preserved.)

> Ma: Just in response with regard to commissioner's comment about the other homes and to echo Leonard's statement, we weren't aware we can contact the neighbors to access their home. We were told by our project planner that they sent specific follow up correspondents to request an affidavit from all neighbors who submitted written letters of concerns, and from our understanding, only one affidavit was returned signed with photos of view blockage.

Chair Tse closed the public hearing.

*Commission Discussion/Direction:*

> The changes are quite substantive relative to overall height. Reducing the massing of the height by 2'-3", particularly with a flat roof, is somewhat striking.

> Looking at it in that context and from the angles of the renderings and exterior elevations, the design has been improved but the issue remains on the Hillside Area Permit. Was able to visit three of the four houses that we've received letters from. We received these letters and we are struggling to visit homes to try to gain access and see these views. Did everything within reason to access these properties. Was able to visit 2613 Trousdale, 2609 Trousdale and 2621 Trousdale but was not able to visit 2617 Trousdale. Was able to observe from both 2613 Trousdale and 2621 Trousdale and did not see any view blockage issues. This refers to view blockages that can be seen only if you stand far out at the back fence of the rear yard of 2613 Trousdale, for example. The views from 2621 Trousdale are not blocked by the story poles but there are issues of tree blockages and vegetation that are obscuring views.

> During the visit at 2609 Trousdale, was able to gain access to the Living Room and see from that primary view window. The general view is what you would expect to see in terms of normal hillside views over the tops of rooftops of adjacent and nearby houses looking out across to the bay, and then you see the story poles of this house.

> Still stand by the concept that there is no restriction to two-story houses in neighborhoods just because that may or may not be the pattern. This is a well-crafted modern design house, but the issue of the two-stories comes down to the issue of view blockage of the Hillside Area Ordinance. Defaulting to that, have a hard time moving forward in approving this without some revisions and coordination with the neighbor or figuring out how something can be done to get us past the Hillside Area Ordinance issue.

> Was able to gain access at 2909 Trousdale today and the story poles are prominent in that view. This being a modern home is higher and stands out against all those sloped roofs as well. The view blockage

is considered significant because we have denied other projects with less view blockage from a less prominent window of a living space.

> Have previously seen 2613 Trousdale in the backyard and didn't see view blockages there.

> 2617 Trousdale was not available today, but by standing at the corner of Sharon Court across the street and just up the hill you can see that those story poles potentially would be in the line of sight of something from 2617 Trousdale. Will defer to the affidavit that was signed that there's a view blockage there.

> The applicant has done a tremendous amount of work to comply with everything we have asked for, and the house has come a long way. It's a very nice looking modern home. Don't have any objection to the design, but the view blockage is the biggest issue and don't know if can get past that on this particular application.

Kane: On the issue of the affidavit, the purpose of that was to deal with our current shelter-in-place environment, particularly how to get evidence of blockage if we're not able to or should not enter someone's living space. If there's some confusion about communication issues where the applicant may not have had that same information and the chance to make the same observations that the commissioners may have had, we need to allow them to access the same information and to respond to it before a final decision is made to deny on the basis of the view issue. If the commission were to take a different action, that's fine. But if at some point during your deliberation you're looking toward denial, the process requires the applicant is able to access the same information you did.

> Have no problem with the modern design. The applicant has done a great job in reducing the height. Walked up and down Martinez Drive and Trousdale Drive and found that the proposed house fits in the neighborhood. There are plenty of modern homes in the Mills Estates area and there are new constructions or remodels that look like modern style, so have no problem with that. Also have no problem with the garage.

> Was able to access 2613 Trousdale and saw that there is no view obstruction from that property. Did not get into 2609 Trousdale or into their backyard so would have to defer to my fellow commissioners on what they saw. However, was able to take pictures at 2613 Trousdale during the last go around and submitted that to the Planning Division.

> Love the project, it's a good looking house. If it is obstructing views, we have to take that into consideration. In the past we've had to deny other projects because of the view obstruction.

> Did not see any view blockage during the visit to 2613 Trousdale. The neighbor's vegetation is currently blocking that view. It was almost difficult to see the story poles beyond the vegetation. What was surprising was when visiting 2609 Trousdale, which is located next to 2613 Trousdale, was a drastic change in terms of view blockage at that property. The view in particular is framed between two trees as you look outside the main living space window and from the glass door of the main access point to the backyard adjacent to the living room. It basically blocked the entire distant view of the bay from their backyard and from the Living Room. Agree that the house is beautifully designed and this applicant has worked very hard. They should take a look at the implications of their proposed project at 2609 Trousdale to see the direct results of what they are currently proposing.

> The architect has done a great job of reducing scale. The elevations work really well in showing the relationship to the adjoining neighbors. The addition of the landscape and everything we asked them to do relative to soften and trying to make the second story look better, they've done a great job with that. Unfortunately was not able to get into 2609 Trousdale to be able to see the view blockage. But as we look at the other photos and rotate around, can see where that would be a challenge.

> Taking some lead or direction from the City Attorney, we need to give the applicant the opportunity to see what views we are talking about, in particular from 2609 Trousdale. Give them a chance to coordinate, cooperate and view from that neighboring property.

**Commissioner Terrones made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Tse, to continue the item. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 6 - Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, Loftis, and Schmid

**Absent:** 1 - Sargent

- b. 612 Burlingame Avenue, zoned R-1 - Application for Design Review for a new, two-story single family dwelling and detached garage. This project is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (a). (Jeremy Slater, applicant and property owner; Residential Design Solutions - Christian Ruffat, designer) (124 noticed) Staff Contact: Catherine Keylon

**Attachments:** [612 Burlingame Ave - Staff Report](#)

[612 Burlingame Ave - Attachments](#)

[612 Burlingame Ave - Plans](#)

*All Commissioners visited the project site. Commissioner Terrones noted that he was not present at the design review study meeting, but read the minutes and watched the video of the hearing.*

*Community Development Director Gardiner provided an overview of the staff report.*

*There were no questions of staff.*

*Chair Tse opened the public hearing.*

*Christian Ruffat, Residential Design Solutions, represented the applicant.*

*Commission Questions/Comments:*

> *On the window detail, we discussed it last time that it's going to be recessed. The dimension of the wall says "see plans" and don't see it on there, but is it correct to assume it is 6'-2" exterior walls? (Ruffat: That is correct.)*

> *Note K for the light over the entry states "City of Burlingame compliant exterior lighting which means it will have the proper cutoff." Can we assume that note will apply to every one of the fixtures all the way around the house? (Ruffat: Yes.)*

*Public Comments:*

> *KoAnn and Steve Skrzyniarz, 608 Burlingame Avenue: We've been out of town for the past couple of months due to Covid-19 and our son is living in the house. We're unaware that the remodel project was happening. We were told before we left that the house was going to be rented for the next year and there might be a construction project after that, but we didn't realize anything was under construction. This is the first time we're hearing about this. In looking at the plan, our primary concern is that the house is longer and pulls closer towards the street. It might block one of our living room windows and block part of our view. I wonder if there's a possibility of arranging to have the architect or builder take a look and see how our views might be affected and the light coming from the proposed house into our house since it's a two-story home replacing a one-story home? (Ruffat: What type of views are you referring to? The existing house actually protrudes beyond where we are planning our one-story portion. So I don't know what the reference is with regards to blocking of a view.) We currently can see up Burlingame Avenue towards downtown from our living room out the side window and it looks like the floor plan of the house now extends past our living room. So we wouldn't be able to see down the street any longer. (Ruffat: The house on the left, 300 Bloomfield Road, actually protrudes at least three feet beyond our house line from the front porch. So I'm just wondering about where that view down Burlingame Avenue is really referenced. Our front porch, which is a one-story element, actually is only impacting that front corner by about three or four feet. So in reality that house on the left of 612 Burlingame Avenue is really projecting a good eight or nine feet from the L-shape of your living room. So there's only an impact of about three feet from the front*

porch element at 612 Burlingame Avenue.)

> Reynold and Michelle Harbin, 615 Concord Way: We are the neighbors immediately behind the property and we brought up a couple of issues in the last meeting about the balcony. I want to let you know, the new owner Jeremy immediately reached out to us, addressed the issues we raised and was very responsive.

Chair Tse closed the public hearing.

Commission Discussion/Direction:

- > Really like this project. It's very traditional but it's very fresh and new, and it just feels very well-thought out.
- > The one challenge is the views, they are not protected outside the Burlingame Hills area. So that's something that the applicant and the neighbors could get together and talk about.
- > The team did a great job of hearing the commission's comments at the last meeting and made adjustments. Like this project quite a bit, and it's going to fit nicely into the neighborhood.
- > Looking through the site plans, the new house is going on the same footprint of the existing house, so it's not moving forward any considerable amount. Not sure if that's necessarily going to change anything. It's a good project.
- > It's unfortunate that this is the first time that the neighbor is seeing it, but also feel that the applicant followed the process and that it should probably move forward.
- > Really like the project, they did some really nice changes. They've listened to what the commission's requests were.
- > It's a well-crafted design. The only thing we're being asked to consider is design review and from that standpoint can make the findings for approval. As my fellow commissioner indicated, there is no view protection ordinance in the flat areas. Agree with the designer's assessment that the existing house footprint is out slightly further than what's being proposed. So in regards to adjacencies and impacts on neighbors, we have setback issues and declining height envelope issues, both front and side setbacks in particular, and that addresses the issues of proximity with other properties in these areas.
- > Views are not protected in this part of the city. The survey shows that the proposed house is set back further than the existing home on the property.
- > It's a beautifully designed home. The applicant has listened to our comments and done a nice job addressing all of the feedback including other neighbors in the neighborhood.
- > Wouldn't expect any conversation with the neighbors to lead to major changes to the project, so wondering if we approve it with the condition that when it's possible, the applicant and the neighbors meet and talk, so that any minor changes might come back to us as an FYI after such a conversation?

Kane: Yes, you can provide that direction. I would avoid making it a formal condition of your motion, however, because when we condition approval on something, it's important to be able to say whether it's happened or not happened and given the subjective nature of the conversation that you're suggesting between the parties, it would be hard for staff to assess that. Yes, any new changes warranted needs to come back as an FYI for the design review assuming this project gets approved and you can certainly give that encouragement to the applicant, but couldn't make it a formal condition.

**Commissioner Loftis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Comaroto, to approve the Action Item. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 6 - Comaroto, Terrones, Tse, Gaul, Loftis, and Schmid

**Absent:** 1 - Sargent

## 9. DESIGN REVIEW STUDY

There were no Design Review Study Items.

## 10. COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

*Commissioner Terrones reported that there had been a meeting of the Neighborhood Consistency Subcommittee. The subcommittee discussed a number of items to be followed up by staff, which will then be brought back to the full commission.*

## 11. DIRECTOR REPORTS

*Community Development Director Gardiner noted that at the June 1, 2020 City Council meeting, the council took up the item regarding extension of expiring permits that the Planning Commission had looked at last month. There was a change in the proposal, as feedback was received from applicants to extend the range of permits covered a little bit more in recognizing the hardship on projects right now, and the uncertainty of when things will get closer to normal. The resolution passed by the City Council extends all permits that have expired from the beginning of the shelter-in-place order up through September 30th, which includes some that will be expiring in the next couple of months. All of those will be extended to December 31st. Should we find that there needs to be another resolution in the future, we can look at that again as well.*

*Gardiner also noted that the City Council will be having a special meeting tomorrow night beginning at 6:30 to discuss closing Burlingame Avenue to allow expanded outdoor dining.*

*City Attorney Kane noted that the City will be hosting a wireless communications workshop webinar Thursday May 14th at 1:00 p.m. The link and log-in instructions will be on the City's website.*

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

*The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.*

*Notice: Any individuals who require special assistance or a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting, or who have a disability and wish to request an alternative format for the agenda, meeting notice, agenda packet or other writings that may be distributed at the meeting, should contact Ruben Hurin, Planning Manager, by 10:00 a.m. on Monday, June 8, 2020 at [rhurin@burlingame.org](mailto:rhurin@burlingame.org) or (650) 558-7256. Notification in advance of the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting, the materials related to it, and your ability to comment.*

*Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Planning Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for inspection via [www.burlingame.org/planningcommission/agenda](http://www.burlingame.org/planningcommission/agenda) or by emailing the Planning Manager at [rhurin@burlingame.org](mailto:rhurin@burlingame.org). If you are unable to obtain information via the City's website or through email, contact the Planning Manager at 650-558-7256.*

*An action by the Planning Commission is appealable to the City Council within 10 days of the Planning Commission's action on June 8, 2020. If the Planning Commission's action has not been appealed or called up for review by the Council by 5:00 p.m. on June 18, 2020, the action becomes final. In order to be effective, appeals must be in writing to the City Clerk and must be accompanied by an appeal fee of \$1,045.00, which includes noticing costs.*