
**Coto de Caza
Planning
Advisory
Committee**

Meeting Minutes

**Coto de Caza Planning Advisory Committee
November 8, 2023
Coto de Caza Golf & Racquet Club**

Lucy Dunn
Chair

**Robert
Kallenbaugh**
Vice-Chair

Michael King
Secretary

Mike Ameal
Member

Gilad Ganish
Member

Gary Amelio
Member

Garrett Mott
Member

I. CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE

Chair Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

Present Committee Members: Kallenbaugh, Ameal, Amelio, Dunn, Mott, King
Staff attendees: Debbie Drasler, Contract Planner, OC Development
Services/Planning

Member Mott led the Flag Salute.

Chairperson Dunn requested to move all administrative items to the front of the agenda to include election of officers, approval of meeting minutes from June meeting, and discussion/approval of 2024 CPAC Meeting Schedule.

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Having elected officers at the June 2023 meeting Chairperson Dunn recommended that the current slate of officers be approved. Member Kallenbaugh Motion to approve, second by Member Ameal.

Chair: Lucy Dunn
Vice Chair: Robert Kallenbaugh
Secretary: Michael King

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 7, 2023

Motion to approve the June 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes from Member Ameal, Second from Member King. **Unanimously Approved.**

IV. DISCUSSION OF CPAC MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2024

The Draft Meeting Schedule for CPAC was reviewed and discussed, meeting to be held at 6:00 pm on the Second Wednesday of each month at the Coto de Caza Golf & Racquet Club. A brief discussion regarding the February meeting falling on 2/14 which is Valentine's Day raised by Member King, but following discussion, it was decided to keep the schedule "as-is" in the case that a County Planning hearing may be dependent on a CPAC meeting to provide input. Motion to approve from Member Ameal, Second from Member Mott. **Unanimously Approved.**

V. NEW BUSINESS

Item #1 – Project: PA160056

Owner/Applicant: Silver-Bronze Corporation/Oak Grove LLC

Location: 23432 Vista del Verde

Proposal: A Specific Plan Amendment (SPA), transfer of 13 dwelling unit allocations from PA 2 to PA 5.1, Tentative Tract Map, and a Conditional Use Permit for the future development of 13 single-family detached dwelling units on a 5.1-acre site located in PA 21 and designated Community Center/Commercial.

Staff Presentation: Debbie Drasler presented the project to the committee and provided a general overview of the project's history stating that it was initially submitted to the County in 2016 and a lot line adjustment was approved and recorded in 2017 providing the outline of the parcel as it currently stands. The proposed project will subdivide the parcel into 13 single-family lots with an average lot size of 13,000 square feet. There will be some utility re-routing and abandoning throughout the project site and adjacent Coto Equestrian Preserve to service the proposed project. In addition, a new sewer line would be installed along Vista del Verde. The improvement will require lane closure on Vista del Verde for 45 days. The new entrance would extend 14' outside the property line and require CZ Master Approval, which has not been received to date. The project is not within the Coto Oaktree Preservation Area. This area (if re-zoned) will receive a new planning area designation PA 5.1 and designated "Low Density" which requires a Specific Plan Amendment (SPA) and a reallocation of 13 dwelling units from PA 2 to PA 5.1 as well as development deviations for the proposed ingress and egress and internal roadway. The project complies with development standards for low-density residential (40% building site coverage). A Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared for the project stating that the County has determined that there is no significant impact to the environment.

Member Kallenbaugh asked if the County employs an outside consultant to review or if the review is done by County staff. Additionally, he asked that the Planner (Debbie) clarify the process for the public as the Committee has received letters addressing the project just in the last two days (since 11-6-23). The Member asked: what is the process for the Planning Commission to review the project?

Member Dunn asked when the CZ Master Association (CZMA) approval is taking place. Staff (Debbie Drasler) states that no hearing or presentation has been made to CZ Master nor has a decision been rendered by them on the project. Additionally, this project is not yet on the agenda for a Planning Commission hearing. Member Dunn stated that CPAC reviews projects that have already been scheduled for a Planning Commission hearing, Staff estimates that this project will be on either the January or February Planning Commission agenda and that the project will be conditioned by the County that it will need CZ Master approval.

Member Ameel asked if CPAC is here to make a recommendation of approval or denial on the project or only address the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). Staff states that the committee is to address the project only, not MND.

Member Mott clarified with staff that this project has received an MND, but no EIR prepared – staff confirms.

Applicant Presentation: Jonathan Bailey, Project Manager for the Oak Grove entitlement process, presented for the applicant. The applicant stated that the proposal is for the entitlement of 5.1 acres to be used for 13 single-family lots to be built as one-story homes with a “modern farmhouse” look and architecture. He showed precedent for the Specific Plan Amendment (SPA) process by highlighting Khalsa Development from 2011 and the Lyon Estates project in 2017, both utilizing a transfer of dwelling units. The applicant states the project benefits will be downzoning, decrease in traffic, oak tree preservation, an enhanced neighborhood aesthetic, an increase to surrounding property values, and less homeless/juvenile activity on the site. Support letters from Ranchos Colinas, Horse Lovers Petition, and Tennis Lovers Petition, Mark Hebner and Diane Ontko are cited (the applicant is to provide these letters to CPAC for review). The applicant cited a letter claiming the validity of the Coto Equestrian Preservation Easement and stated that there is a new buyer in escrow for the Equestrian Preserve (Ronald Spogli). The applicant showed list of Oak Grove Stakeholders (list of SBC members) and ended the presentation stating that the County staff recommends approval.

Committee Comments and Questions:

Member Mott: Has another entrance been studied such as off Via Pajaro?

Applicant Response: No.

Member Ameel: The average lot size is reflective of medium density, not low density as stated in the presentation.

Member Amelio: Is the project connected to the General Store development?

Applicant Response: No.

Member Mott clarified that this is not related to the proposed Legacy development in The Village.

Presentations/PowerPoints to be made available to CPAC.

Public Comment:

Katherine Flores, a Coto resident involved in the “Stop Legacy” movement raised concerns about public notification of the project and being on the CPAC agenda. She stated that she only found out through a Facebook post and believes more public involvement would have occurred if better notification was given. She stated that the Merryhill site is an eyesore, but has never seen homeless or juvenile issues at the site as stated by the applicant. Raised the issue of community egress in the event of a fire and increased traffic in the area because of new homes at the site.

Jennifer Lynch, an attorney with Manatt, Phelps, & Phillips, represents the Los Ranchos Estates Homeowners Association. Jennifer opened with a statement that “the committee cannot approve the project tonight.” She sent a 33-page letter to the County

on behalf of the Los Ranchos Estates stating perceived issues with the project and has raised a concern with the procedural issues of the County regarding the information presented and its dissemination to the public and CPAC. Her letter states that an EIR should be performed if a reasonable issue is raised under CEQA guidelines and that she does not believe the MND is sufficient or up to date.

Phillip Mitchell, a Coto resident and member of the CZ Master Association, stated that this project has not yet come before the CZ Master Association other than an initial meeting in 2016. He stated that only County can change the Specific Plan not owner. He raised concern about maintenance of the existing equestrian trail and future issues that may be raised by residents of the development regarding the adjacent equestrian property (smells, dust, etc.). Phillip mentioned that the board of CZ Master approached the Board of Supervisors for Orange County and recommended that a third-party group be hired to facilitate a discussion between the applicant, CZ Master, the Village, and the Los Ranchos Estates. He is concerned with the impact on surrounding developments/tracts, the height of the walls, increased traffic, and stated that 800 homes use that portion of Vista del Verde – it is already a busy street. He also asked if the Santa Margarita Water District has been involved with the project yet.

Bob Varro, a Coto resident for 22 years and former CPAC member, expressed his sincere objection to the project as it sets a process and precedent for the Equestrian Center to become dense housing. Bob stated that the SBC was established to “run the Equestrian Center, not run it down.” Bob does not believe that Coto should give up on commercial properties and wants CPAC to protect the community – urged a “NO” vote.

Gary Hayes, a Coto resident for 30 years, stated concern with the closure of Vista del Verde and finds it hard to believe that it is even possible to do so. No letter was received, or notice given regarding the project. Gary is not impressed by the amount of money spent by the applicant maintaining the property and explains that the property should be maintained regardless.

Jim Hicks, a Coto resident since 1995, believes that the commercial and recreational use in question provides value to the community and is part of the fabric of Coto. Jim does not think the public or CPAC has the necessary information to decide on the project. Jim cites the increase of young families in Coto, and The Village specifically, as reasons to keep the presence of commercial and recreational areas in the community.

Sean Bollettieri Abdali, a member at the Coto Tennis Club but not a resident of Coto, explained that it is difficult to see change in a community like Coto de Caza but believes that there is more support than dissent for the Oak Grove project.

Robert O’Hill, is the applicant seeking approval of the project. Mr. O’Hill believes the site is no longer viable for commercial use and that the community plan should be updated. He plans to sell to a merchant homebuilder to complete the development and has offered to write Specified Land Use Restrictions (SLURs) to handle construction traffic.

Stephan Coste, a Coto resident in The Village, is also a developer and owns property throughout the state. He acknowledged the traffic impact but recommends a traffic study to get the data needed to make a decision. He cited the requirement for municipalities in California to create more housing by order of the state and while he sees both sides here, feels that it is more important to embrace what may be required in terms of new housing and growth in the area. Retail or commercial can be done at the site but it would take the right developer.

Kenney Hrabik, owner of the Coto Valley Country Club, is very conflicted about the project and believes he will be in a position to repurpose the Coto Valley Country Club in the near future. He would support the project with mitigating factors.

End of Public Comments.

Chairperson Dunn asked Staff (Debbie Drasler) if there is any response to public comment or would like to provide clarification. Debbie responded that the Equestrian Preservation Easement has not been executed by the County. Additionally, not just any use can be implemented at the site, any commercial or recreational use (currently zoned) still requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

Member Mott asked if this needs to be approved by CZ Master, Debbie confirmed that it does.

Member Kallenbaugh asked why the letter to the Los Ranchos Estates HOA was not mentioned in the staff report or County memo. Debbie Drasler responded that the county did not find any evidence that an EIR would be required so the letter was not addressed. Member Kallenbaugh stated once again that he is trying to understand the process for this and what is to be included for CPAC review.

Committee Discussion:

Member Amelio stated that CPAC are officials of the County acting in the interest of all Coto residents. He is not aware of the history of the project but is in favor of low density housing – not assisted living. He is opposed to any new stops or breaks on Vista del Verde, would like to define the process further with more organization, and states that new homes make sense but he takes exception to the proposed style and architecture.

Member Mott would like clarification on the preservation easement, reiterated that this is a lot of information to digest in a short period of time, and says that the applicant and public deserve a fair process that is defined and followed.

Member King reiterates the comments on “process” from the previous two colleagues and states that it would be irresponsible to make any decision given the incomplete information and the time frame it was provided in.

Member Kallenbaugh raised the following issues with the project: drainage to the nearby flood plain, the submittal seems to be patched together over time, there are many technical issues that still need to be addressed, the retaining walls are not

needed, offsite easements should take place within the boundary of the project, and the proposed grading is more extensive than the site should require. He would like to see a study of the entrance coming from Via Pajaro and for the Manatt/Los Ranchos Estate letter to be addressed as it was well-thought and well-crafted. The four-foot deviation is ridiculous and since there is no tree preservation requirement, the tree would need to come out.

Member Ameel questioned the applicant's comment regarding increasing property values, and strongly disagreed. He stated that this project has received opposition from The Village, Los Ranchos Estates, and CZ Master in addition to the potential environmental risks, high fire danger, and large walls around the property. Mr. Ameel states that no element of this project is reflective of Coto de Caza. He asked if SBC has a financial interest, but this was not answered – CPAC would like clarification on the matter. In closing, Member Ameel believes the commercial use on this site and General store is still viable.

Member Dunn stated that further investigation of the project is required and supports the issues raised by Member Kallenbaugh. Not opposed to 13 homes at the site and referenced the current situation that the City of Huntington Beach is in regarding housing and the state's requirements. Member Dunn advises the County to work to ensure the project is consistent with the community and any future uses. Requests to walk the site to get a better understanding of the project.

Member Kallenbaugh expressed his understanding of the review process to include CPAC reviewing the same submittal that is put forth in front of the Planning Commission and states that this would be what CPAC wants to see on a submittal.

Member Mott reiterated that both the applicant and the community are entitled to a fair process, and he would like to see the letters of support as well as walk the property while acknowledging the issue for two intersections and corresponding Stop Signs being so close together – entrance on Vista del Verde and distance to Via Pajaro intersection.

Member Mott made a Motion to postpone the Item (Project: PA160056) until the January meeting (1/10/24), Second by Member Amelio. **Unanimously Approved.**

VI. Adjournment

Chair Dunn adjourned the meeting at 8:06pm.