

Shape Our Fremont

Where Fremont residents can learn about shaping proposed housing developments...

September Development Hearings

As the days get shorter, the list of residential developments scheduled for final review gets longer. Here are a few that are coming up this month.

Centerville Junction

The developer proposes 52 three-story townhouses along the south side of Peralta Boulevard, east of Parish Avenue. Ten old houses and one small commercial center will be torn down. The house where long-time Washington High School educator "Pop" Goold lived is one of the homes slated for demolition unless it can be moved.

Opponents of the project point out that 23 of the townhouses will be placed in a straight line just 6 feet from the sidewalk on Peralta, in contrast with the Sequoia Crossings project across the street, which has generous front setbacks and less of a straight-line look to the buildings. Additionally, a quarter of the garages will have tandem (end-to-end) parking with no driveway apron, which often leads to the owners' cars being parked in the guest parking spaces or on the adjacent streets.

As for the "Pop" Goold house, if the development is approved, the fate of the old house depends on finding a place to move it. Although J. Vernon "Pop" Goold has been recognized as a person of historic significance in the Centerville area, the house itself is not considered historic because of a 2003 side extension.

This project was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on July 28 and is now scheduled to be reviewed by the City Council on Tuesday, September 13, at 7:00 pm.

Mega-Mansions

Another reason to attend the City Council meeting on September 13 is that residents from several areas plan to voice their concerns about the growing number of two-story "mega-mansions" that are sprouting up in existing neighborhoods. Because of their size, these houses can intrude on the privacy of nearby homeowners, block sunlight to adjacent gardens and solar panels, and clash with the established character of the area.

Currently, the only way for residents to restrict the size of these overly large houses is to obtain Designated Neighborhood status with special standards for their area. That takes a lot of time and effort on the part of the residents and the city staff. A better way might be for Fremont to establish new citywide size standards for all single-family houses in all existing neighborhoods.

Residents who are interested in limiting the size of mega-mansions in their neighborhoods are encouraged to attend the City Council meeting on Tuesday, September 13, at 7:00 pm and speak during the Public/Oral Communications portion of the meeting. Because this topic is not on the agenda for that meeting, the Council and Staff cannot discuss the topic, but they can hear residents' concerns -- and that's an important first step.

Walnut Residences

This 670-unit, four-story, above-market-rate apartment project will fill an entire square block at Walnut Avenue and Guardino Drive. The Planning Commission discussed it in July, but postponed any

decision until the developer could prepare a viable Traffic Demand Management proposal to reduce the impact of traffic generated by the project.

Besides traffic, many residents think the density and height of the buildings still need to be decreased and the parking needs to be increased. Some point out this property was meant to remain under its current approved 2004 Planned District zoning that limits housing to a maximum of 440 units and is excluded from having to meet Transit Oriented Development (TOD) requirements. Both the zoning and the TOD exclusion were in effect when the developer purchased the property.

Discussion of this topic is tentatively scheduled to continue at the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, September 22, at 7:00 p.m.

Bye-Bye Bob's Burgers

And finally, here's a sad update on some old news. When a development firm bought Connolly's Center and Chapel Business Center in Irvington, they proposed to tear down all the buildings and replace them with multi-family townhouses. That upset many local residents, who said the businesses were an important part of the community and should remain.

One of the businesses to be demolished is Bob's Giant Burger, which has been serving old-fashioned hamburgers, french fries, and milk shakes at this location for over fifty years. During the Planning Commission and City Council meetings, statements were made that Bob's would relocate in the Irvington District.

Unfortunately, that is not going to happen, and Bob's will be moving to Modesto in the Central Valley. Their last day in Fremont is October 16.

Bye-bye Bob's. Hello townhouses. Modesto wins. Fremont loses.

For the latest information on these and other residential development proposals, visit [**www.ShapeOurFremont.com**](http://www.ShapeOurFremont.com)