



City of Ukiah, CA Design Review Board

MINUTES

Regular Meeting

September 17, 2015

Ukiah Civic Center, 300 Seminary Avenue

1. **CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chair Hawkes** called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in Conference Room #3.

2. **ROLL CALL Present:** Vice Chair Howie Hawkes, Alan Nicholson, Colin Morrow

Absent: Chair Tom Liden, Nick Thayer

Staff Present: Kevin Thompson, Principal Planner
Shannon Riley, Senior Management Analyst

Others present: Holly Brackmann
Roger Foote

3. **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Vice Chair Hawkes referenced correspondence from Member Thayer that will be incorporated into the minutes as attachment 1.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes from the July 9, 2015 and August 13, 2015 meetings are available for review and approval.

The July 9, 2015 DRB meeting minutes were approved at the August 13, 2015 DRB meeting.

M/S Nicholson/Hawkes to approve August 13, 2015 minutes, as submitted with Member Morrow abstaining. Motion carried.

5. **AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

The DRB is required by the City Code to review and make a recommendation on all Site Development Permit applications.

6. **NEW BUSINESS:**

6A. Minor Site Development Permit to allow the construction of an electrical vehicle charging station and associated improvements in an existing parking lot located at 351 N. Oak Street. The charging stations will be available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Principal Planner Thompson gave a staff report:

- Proposed project will consist of eight electric car charging stations; Each charging station will have a sign; Four SuperCharger equipment cabinets; switchgear; transformer and two 71/2-foot pedestrian lights. The switchgear will be placed on a concrete pad and enclosed with Trex fencing. The fence will be eight feet high. The transformer will also be placed on a concrete pad.
- The project will be located in a City-owned parking lot at the corner of S. School Street and W. Clay Street.
- After looking at sites in different locations within the City Tesla has indicated the proposed site located in the City public parking lot adjoining the Ukiah Valley Conference

1 Center (Parking Lot E) is 'ideal' because of its proximity to services and electric utility
2 access, its aesthetics, and the presence of a landscaped area that will mostly screen the
3 equipment. Tesla would pay the City's Electric Department for labor and equipment,
4 landscaping around the station, and other infrastructure-related costs.

- 5 • The site design plans and information related to the materials, signage, lighting are
6 provided for in the staff report packet for reference purposes.

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Vice Chair Hawkes:

- 9 • Inquired about the discretionary review process and the reason the Tesla electrical
10 vehicle charging station project was first reviewed by City Council.

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Principal Planner Thompson:

- 13 • A reason for City Council review early on in the discretionary review process is that the
14 Tesla project involves City-owned property and the applicant wanted to make certain
15 problems/issues were properly addressed so as to make a decision whether the project
16 could move forward in the process.
- 17 • The Tesla project is essentially viewed as an economic development tool. If the City can
18 capture Tesla drivers recharging their electric vehicles in the Downtown area for 40
19 minutes to an hour, this is viewed as an economic benefit to the City, particularly as they
20 dine and shop in the Downtown while waiting for their car to recharge.
- 21 • Tesla has a very sophisticated design plan and associated specific criteria for the siting of
22 a supercharging location. The site has many amenities that makes it attractive in that
23 there is an existing transformer/other existing infrastructure and it is located in the
24 Downtown area.

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Member Morrow:

- 27 • Rents office space in the professional building located adjacent to the City-owned parking
28 lot and asked staff to explain the nature of the lease and/or the concession between the
29 City and Tesla.

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Senior Management Analyst Riley:

- 32 • It is likely the reason the DRB did see the project first is the project was not initially
33 looked at as a development matter that needed to go through the discretionary review
34 process but rather a ground lease on a City-owned parking lot. City Council approves
35 City leases.
- 36 • Provided a project overview as well as an update of the process to date.

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Roger Foote:

- 39 • Is a Tesla electrical vehicle owner.
- 40 • Is supportive of the project and as a user provided technical information about the
41 operational aspects of superchargers and the different charging levels for electrical
42 vehicles.
- 43 • Tesla supercharging stations are a relatively new concept. From an aesthetic perspective
44 generally likes the proposed design concept but questions/is unclear about the red and
45 white color concept for the individual charging connectors/stations.

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Holly Brackmann:

- 48 • Roger Foote contacted Tesla with the idea of trying to coordinate some kind of
49 supercharging station project with the recently approved Grace Hudson Museum Garden
50 Project.
- 51 • Also elaborated on the technical aspects of supercharging electrical vehicles.

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There was general discussion about electrical vehicles (EV) and the different type of charging station levels.

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2 **DRB comments:**
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4 **Member Morrow:**

- 5 • Biggest project concern is the choice of 'Trex' material proposed for the Tesla equipment
6 enclosure. It is incongruous with the other structures in the neighborhood and provides
7 for a 'cheap' appearance. Would like to see some type of natural wood product as an
8 alternative material.
9 • Has observed that portions of the site near the fencing/bike rack/trash receptacle and
10 City transformer tends to be hangout place for transients. Does not want to see trash
11 thrown over the fence as this would become a City nuisance for property owners and an
12 eyesore. Would like to see measures taken to see this does not occur with regard to the
13 existing infrastructure in this location.
14 • Who is responsible for maintenance concerning the project and how often does
15 maintenance need to occur?
16

17 **Vice Chair Hawkes:**

- 18 • Noted Member Thayer had a similar comment in his email to staff dated September 17,
19 2015.
20

21 **Principal Planner Thompson:**

- 22 • Will ask the applicant about the best/most effective approach to prevent/deter trash from
23 being thrown over the fence.
24 • The lease agreement states tenants shall be responsible for maintenance. No timeframe
25 is specified for maintenance to occur. In working with the Tesla people noticed they are
26 very committed and particular about the location and how the project looks/operates.
27 • The site is located in close proximity to City Hall so it is possible that staff can inform
28 Tesla of problems and/or of maintenance issues. Will ask Tesla about
29 maintenance/formulating a maintenance schedule and management thereof.
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31 **Senior Management Analyst Riley:**

- 32 • Related to the project there has been discussion about existing transient population in the
33 area and the associated issues thereof. As such the operating equipment will take up
34 space between the parking lot and fence such that access in this area will be limited. The
35 proposed pedestrian lighting system that will be installed for the project will also help
36 deter transient activity occurring in the area.
37 • Has not given thought to the potential for trash to be thrown over the fence. The issue of
38 possible graffiti occurring to the proposed equipment enclosure and/or other project
39 components is a concern.
40 • Agrees that the use of 'Trex' material may not be the best choice. Questioned whether or
41 not 'Trex' is easier to clean than natural wood in the event of graffiti occurring.
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43 **Vice Chair Hawkes:**

- 44 • Acknowledged 'Trex' is a plastic based fiber-type of product that would likely make it easy
45 to clean.
46 • Natural wood for the equipment enclosure could be epoxy wood and/or an exotic/tropical
47 wood of some kind.
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49 It was noted 'Trex' could be power-washed.
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51 **Member Morrow:**

- 52 • Natural wood can also be power-washed.
53 • Understands Member Thayer does not support the use of 'Ebay' type of wood.

- 1 • Is of the opinion 'epay wood' is a fashionable and/or high-end type of wood such that the
2 design would fit better with the whole 'Tesla' concept/character and/or superchanging
3 station protégé.
4 • Supports selecting a material that architecturally fits with the Victorian design of the
5 building located to the north of the project and/or take some 'queues' from this building.
6

7 **Roger Foote:**

- 8 • Finds from an aesthetic perspective the charging stations themselves stand out more
9 appearance-wise than the equipment enclosures.
10

11 **Member Nicholson:**

- 12 • Recalls 'Trex' is not an approved/acceptable material for use in the DZC areas. 'Trex' is a
13 specific term for a generic plastic-based material. Related to the formulation of the DZC
14 and corresponding process it was decided not every item could be listed that might or
15 might may not be an approved material but rather in general supports that artificial
16 composite materials be discouraged. As a replacement material, recommends the
17 application of hardboard/cement board that come in a variety of colors. Is of the opinion
18 hardboard/cement board looks a lot cleaner, is durable and would be good for 50 years.
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20 **Principal Planner Thompson:**

- 21 • Related to the DZC standards, does not see that 'Trex' is expressly prohibited.
22 • Referred to Table 12: materials section of the DZC and noted footnote 6 says, 'Synthetic
23 materials such as hardboard, sidings and stone (e.g., limestone, glazed tile, and heritage
24 materials known to be used historically in Ukiah) may also be allowed if it accurately
25 simulates the natural material and has equal or better weathering characteristics. The
26 use of the material is at the discretion of the review and authority (i.e., Planning
27 Commission, Zoning Administrator, Director).'

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29 **Member Morrow:**

- 30 • Asked if Member Nicholson is proposing large hardboard panels or strips?
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32 **Member Nicholson:**

- 33 • Related to use of hardboard panels or strips would leave this decision to the applicant.
34 • Stucco would be an appropriate material to use.
35 • Would not support the use 'Trex' material in the DZC districts.
36 • Noted the Savings Bank of Mendocino County constructed an architecturally pleasing
37 trash enclosure structure using stucco and metal.
38 • Would like to see a material type that would be 'right' for an urban civic installation in the
39 Downtown area. Could use material that would fit with the design aspects of the Alex
40 Thomas Plaza. The material could be modern in appearance and in context/keeping with
41 the character of the Tesla supercharging protégé.
42 • Would not support the use of corrugated metal for this particular project.
43 • Related to the photographic simulations, the hinges have a 'hardware store' appearance
44 and do not look like they should be used on a civic-minded installation.
45 • Again, would recommend cement board that can be done in panels/individual panels,
46 shiplap, larger modules, etc.
47 • Likes the project and supports approval.
48

49 **Vice Chair Hawkes:**

- 50 • Corrugated metal would not be architecturally compatible with Tesla's modern electrical
51 vehicle type of project and the Victorian building located to the north of the proposed
52 project.
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1 There was a general discussion concerning the design and material selection of Tesla
2 supercharging stations in other communities.

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4 There was also discussion about the number of Tesla dedicated supercharging stations and
5 regular parking spaces and how the proposed project will work relative to parking enforcement
6 and/or other potential issues in connection with the Downtown parking improvements.

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8 There was further discussion with examples given about the length of time it takes to charge
9 electrical vehicles that depend on the vehicle level type.

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11 The DRB reviewed Member Thayer's comments as provided in attachment 1 of the minutes with
12 specific questions/comments about the necessary trenching and tree protection on the site with
13 regard to the Live Oak tree between the Ash and the proposed cabinet, operation of the parking
14 lot pertinent to the dedicated charging stations and regular parking spaces, landscaping/tree
15 species, proposed 'Trex' brand composite lumber for the equipment enclosure and site
16 design/layout in conjunction with the overall function as a public parking lot.

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18 **Principal Planner Thompson:**

- 19 • Will consult with Tesla about maintenance, alternative materials that could be used in
20 place of the proposed 'Trex' material and/or measures to prevent/discourage other
21 nuisance issues, such as trash.
- 22 • Will craft a project condition of approval that will specifically address trenching for
23 equipment and tree protection such that if a tree(s) is damaged or dies it shall be
24 replaced.
- 25 • The proposed project will be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator.

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27 **DRB consensus:**

- 28 • Supports either the use of epoxy wood, hardboard/fiber cement board, or stucco in natural
29 earth tone colors in place of the proposed 'Trex' material for the equipment enclosure
30 structure.
- 31 • Supports Member Thayer's recommendation regarding the tree species for the one tree
32 being proposed for removal.
- 33 • Provide for tree protection during trenching to accommodate the necessary
34 undergrounding of equipment for the charging stations.
- 35 • Replace any landscaping/trees damaged during construction.

36
37 **M/S Nicholson/Morrow** to recommend Zoning Administrator approval of the Minor Site
38 Development permit to allow construction of an electrical vehicle charging station at 351 S. Oak
39 Street with consideration given to the DRB comments concerning the design aspects of the
40 project made above.

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42 **7. MATTERS FROM THE BOARD:**

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44 **8. MATTERS FROM STAFF:**

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46 **9. SET NEXT MEETING**

47 The next regular meeting will be Thursday, October 8, 2015. There will a special DRB meeting on
48 Thursday, September 24, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. to review the request for a major site development
49 permit for the renovation of the existing Redwood Tree Carwash on N. State Street.

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51 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

52 The meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

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Cathy Elawadly, Recording Secretary

Kevin Thompson

From: Michelle Johnson
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 10:58 AM
To: Kevin Thompson
Subject: FW: DRB Meeting September 17th 2015 - Tesla comes to town

From: Nicholas Thayer [<mailto:mail@lateafternoon.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 10:27 AM
To: Michelle Johnson; Alan Nicholson
Cc: colin@morrowlegal.com; Howell Hawkes (howie@pacific.net); Tom Liden
Subject: DRB Meeting September 17th 2015 - Tesla comes to town

Greetings All,

After reviewing the application for the electrical charging station I have a few comments and questions:

+ Generally approving of the project, seems the best location of those proposed in town.

+ Will these parking stalls be dedicated only to those cars that are using the charging station? Will non-charging cars be ticketed for using these spaces otherwise? Will advisory signs be posted to that effect? Has the Ukiah Main Street Program weighed in with their opinion, as they seem particularly sensitive to losing any parking stalls downtown?

+ One tree is being proposed for removal, but no plans to illustrate how it will be replaced. Applicant must include species, location, and container size of replacement. Suggest 24" box Platanus x acerifolia 'Bloodgood' replacement in suitable open location of border.

+ Necessary trenching will negatively effect existing Ash shade tree adjacent to parking stalls. Application needs to address how utility lines will be routed to not impact tree health. Trenching can not cut laterally across root system of tree. Besides effecting water and nutrient uptake, the tree will be potentially unstable in windy conditions.

Alternately the Applicant could remove this tree and replant with a 36" box Platanus x acerifolia 'Bloodgood' in a similar location to the existing Ash tree.

+ The Privet tree can be safely removed during construction. Was not intentionally planted.

+ The Live Oak between the Ash and the proposed cabinet needs to be protected with fencing during construction. It is young enough to regrow from any root damage.

+ A landscape screening plan should be submitted by the Applicant to address the site disturbance. There is discussion in the application package from Staff that Applicant to respond to.

+ The Trex brand composite lumber of the cabinet seems inappropriate for this location, particularly at eight feet in height. A puzzling choice of materials from a car manufacturer known for their progress designing styling. Alternate materials need to be proposed.

If ventilation requirements allow, suggest a painted masonry or fiber cement sided enclosure with metal doors. This would, at least, create a connection with the adjacent Alex Thomas Plaza construction and be less visually obtrusive than the plastic fake wood look of the Trex.

Happy to clarify any of these points. Best of luck with the project, Nick

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