#### **AGENDA**

#### CITY OF ANTIOCH ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2016 3:00 P.M.

#### **REGULAR MEETING**

## CITY HALL SECOND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM 200 "H" STREET

## **APPEAL**

All items that can be appealed under Section 9-5.2705 of the Antioch Municipal Code must be appealed within five (5) working days of the date of the decision. The final appeal date of decisions made at this meeting is 5:00 PM on **THURSDAY**, **DECEMBER 15**, **2016**.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

## **NEW PUBLIC HEARING**

1. V-16-03 – Contra Loma Estates Fence Variance – Contra Loma Homeowners Association requests approval of a variance to install new metal picket fencing, six feet in height, within the front yard setback zone and the installation of new chain link fencing with barbed wire adjacent to the existing railroad right of way. The subject properties are located in the Contra Loma Estates Subdivision located along L St., Sycamore Drive, Lemontree Way, and Peppertree Way (APN's 074-341-003 through 074-353-132).

## **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

#### ADJOURNMENT

## Notice of Availability of Reports

This agenda is a summary of the actions proposed to be taken by the Zoning Administrator. For almost every agenda item, materials have been prepared by the City staff for the Zoning Administrator's consideration. These materials include staff reports which explain in detail the item before the Zoning Administrator and the reason for the recommendation. The materials may also include resolutions or ordinances which are proposed to be adopted. Other materials, such as maps and diagrams, may also be included. All of these

materials are available at the Community Development Department located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of City Hall, 200 H Street, Antioch, California, 94509, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. or by appointment only between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for inspection and copying (for a fee). Questions on these materials may be directed to the staff member who prepared them, or to the Community Development Department, who will refer you to the appropriate person.

## STAFF REPORT TO THE CITY OF ANTIOCH ZONING ADMINISTRATOR FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 8, 2016

Prepared by:

Kevin Scudero, Associate Planner

Reviewed by:

Alexis Morris, Senior Planner

Date:

November 17, 2016

Subject:

V-16-03 Contra Loma Estates Fence Variance

## **REQUEST**

Gene Bicksler, on behalf of the Contra Loma Estates Homeowners Association, requests approval of a variance to install a six (6) foot high fence within the required front yard and side yard setback of the Contra Loma Estates Subdivision along L Street, Sycamore Drive, Lemontree Way, and Peppertree Way, and a chain link fence, six feet in height, with lattice topped with three strands of barbed wire along the property line bordering the Union Pacific Railroad Corridor (APN's 074-341-003 through 074-353-132) (V-16-03).

## **BACKGROUND**

The Contra Loma Estates Homeowner's Association is requesting a variance to install new common area six-foot high fencing improvements along the project's frontage on L Street and Sycamore Drive in the required front yard setback. They are also requesting a variance to allow a chain link fence, six feet in height, with lattice topped with three strands of barbed wire along the property line bordering the Union Pacific Railroad Corridor.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL**

This project has been deemed Categorically Exempt from CEQA under Article 19, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1.

## <u>ANALYSIS</u>

## Issue #1: Project Overview:

Contra Loma Estates condominium complex was developed in the late 1960's under an "open air" concept that was common at the time for condominium developments. Contra Loma Estates HOA and its membership have experienced and continue to experience unwanted trespass occurrences where HOA common areas adjoin L Street, Sycamore Drive and the Union Pacific Railroad facilities. The proposed fencing will be located between the front yard setback of the homes fronting L Street and Sycamore Drive and the proposed barbed wire fencing will be located behind the homes fronting Sycamore Drive along their property line with Union Pacific Railroad. The applicant feels that the proposed

fencing will provide additional security measures to meet the ongoing security needs of the residents at Contra Loma Estates.

The surrounding land uses and land use designations are as noted below:

North:

Union Pacific Railroad Corridor

South:

State Route 4 and East Antioch Creek

East:

Single Family Homes and Neighborhood Shopping Center / Single Family

Residential (R-6), Convenience Commercial (C-1)

West:

Multi-Family Housing / Medium Density Residential District (R-20)

The use of the subject site is consistent with the R-20 Zoning District and the General Plan High Density Residential (up to 20 du/ac) designation.

## Issue #2: Zoning Ordinance Requirements – Front Yard Setback

Section 9-5.1602 (c) of the Municipal Code states that "No fence, wall, hedge or screen planting shall exceed a maximum height of 36 inches in the required front yard." In the R-20 zoning district the required front yard setback is 15 feet from the public right of way. The applicant is proposing to place the fence in a location varying from 5 feet to 12 feet from the public right of way. The presence of mature landscaping and trees prevents the fence from being placed outside the required front yard setback and given that the proposed encroachment will not block public sidewalks or line of sight corridors, staff believes that the proposed fencing is in a reasonable location. There are several multifamily apartment complexes in the City of Antioch that feature similar fencing in their front yard setback as a means to providing security to their property.

## Issue #3: Zoning Ordinance Requirements – Barbed Wire Fencing

Section 9-5.1601 (B) of the Antioch Municipal Code states that "Barbed wire, razor ribbon and other similar wire shall be prohibited on top of any fence. Exceptions may be granted by the Zoning Administrator for special circumstances." Staff does not find any special circumstances that exist and staff does not recommend that the Zoning Administrator make an exception in this case. For example, an eight foot high "mini-mesh no-climb fence", or something similar, would be a reasonable and safer alternative to barbed wire fencing in a residential zone. Therefore, staff recommends the denial of the request to add barbed wire and instead allow the installation of an eight foot high fence in this location. No variance is required for an eight foot high fence because fences up to eight feet in height are allowed in the rear and side yard setbacks if the fence is not solid material.

## Issue #4: Variance Findings

To approve a variance, four findings must be made (Antioch Municipal Code Section 9-5.2703). If an application can meet all four of the findings, then the variance can be granted. Conversely, if any one of the findings cannot be made, the variance should be denied.

## Fence in Front Yard Setback

The four findings and their applicability to the variance request for a six foot high fence to be placed in the front yard setback are as follows:

1. That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved, or to the intended use of the property, that do not apply generally to the property or class of use in the same zone or vicinity.

Multi-family complexes developed today often have a fully fenced in perimeter to secure the property. Contra Loma Estates was developed in the late 1960's under an "open air" concept and did not face the challenges with unwanted trespassing that are prevalent today. Placing the proposed fencing in the front yard setback is a reasonable way to provide security to the complex that more recently developed multi-family projects currently have.

2. That the granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public health or welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in such zone or vicinity.

The granting of the variance will have little or no effect on the surrounding properties. The fence is open, wrought iron construction and creates no line of sight issues. The fence is an attractive design and the area around the fence is landscaped. The Antioch Police Department supports the installation of the proposed fencing for security purposes and the fence has been conditioned to provide access to police and fire departments.

3. That because of special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the zoning provisions is found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity under the identical zone classifications.

There are special circumstances that are applicable to the subject property that make application of the zoning provisions for fencing difficult to adhere to. Specifically, there are mature trees and landscaping that would make it difficult to place the fencing in the required front yard setback. Providing fencing that is high enough to provide adequate security and is located outside of the required front yard setback would not be feasible.

4. That the granting of such variance will not adversely affect the comprehensive General Plan.

The applicant's request would not adversely affect the comprehensive General Plan because the existing use of the property, multi-family residential housing, is consistent with the General Plan and this proposal will not change that.

### Barbed Wire

The four findings and their applicability to the variance request for barbed wire to be placed on a chain link fence along the northern property line adjacent to Union Pacific Railroad are as follows:

 That there are <u>no</u> exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved, or to the intended use of the property, that do not apply generally to the property or class of use in the same zone or vicinity.

There are no exceptional or extraordinary circumstances applicable to the property that would permit the Zoning Administrator to grant an exception to the Antioch Municipal Code to allow the installation of barbed wire fencing. An eight foot high fence made of "no climb" material would provide an effective barrier to trespassing without the danger posed by barbed wire fencing.

2. That the granting of such variance <u>would be</u> materially detrimental to the public health or welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in such zone or vicinity.

The granting of the variance would be potentially detrimental to the public health and safety. The proposed barbed wire fencing is in a densely populated neighborhood. There are risks of both children and adults climbing the fence and injuring themselves on the barbed wire.

3. That because of special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the zoning provisions is found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity under the identical zone classifications.

There are no special circumstances that are applicable to the subject property that would permit the Zoning Administrator to make an exception to the Antioch Municipal Code to allow the installation of barbed wire fencing. Alternative fencing can be installed to deter trespassing without the danger posed by barbed wire fencing.

4. That the granting of such variance <u>will not</u> adversely affect the comprehensive General Plan.

The applicant's request would not adversely affect the comprehensive General Plan because the existing use of the property, multi-family residential housing, is consistent with the General Plan and this proposal will not change that.

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Zoning Administrator **APPROVE** the request to install six foot high fencing in the front yard setback and **DENY** the request to install barbed wire fencing along the property line adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad (**V-16-03**), subject to the conditions contained within the attached resolution.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

A: Variance Exhibit

B: Applicant's Variance Request

# CITY OF ANTIOCH ZONING ADMINISTRATOR RESOLUTION NO. 2016-\*\*

WHEREAS, the Zoning Administrator for the City of Antioch did receive a request for a variance from Gene Bicksler, on behalf of the Contra Loma Estates Homeowner's Association, to install a six (6) foot high fence within the required front yard setback of Contra Loma Estates Subdivision along L Street and Sycamore Drive and a chain link fence, six feet in height, with lattice topped with three strands of barbed wire along their common are bordering the Union Pacific Railroad Corridor (APN's 074-341-003 through 074-353-132) (V-16-03).

WHEREAS, this project has been deemed Categorically Exempt from CEQA under Article 19, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1; and

WHEREAS, notice of public hearing was given as required by law; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Administrator on December 8, 2016, duly held a public hearing, received and considered evidence, both oral and documentary; and

**WHEREAS,** as conditioned, the Zoning Administrator <u>can</u> make the following required findings for approval of a variance for a six foot high fence in the required front yard setback:

 That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved, or to the intended use of the property, that do not apply generally to the property or class of use in the same zone or vicinity.

A multi family complex developed today would likely have a fully fenced in perimeter to secure their property. Contra Loma Estates was developed in the late 1960's under an "open air" concept and did not face the challenges with unwanted trespassing that are prevalent today. Placing the proposed fencing in the front yard setback is a reasonable way to provide security to the complex that more recently developed multi-family projects currently have.

2. That the granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public health or welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in such zone or vicinity.

The granting of the variance will have little or no effect on the surrounding properties. The fence is open, wrought iron construction and creates no line of sight issues. The fence is an attractive design and the area around the fence is landscaped. The Antioch Police Department supports the installation of the proposed fencing for security purposes and the fence has been conditioned to provide access to police and fire departments.

3. That because of special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the zoning provisions is found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity under the identical zone classifications.

There are special circumstances that are applicable to the subject property that make application of the zoning provisions for fencing difficult to adhere to. Specifically, there are mature trees and landscaping that would make it difficult to place the fencing in the required front yard setback. Providing fencing that is high enough to provide adequate security and is located outside of the required front yard setback would not be feasible.

4. That the granting of such variance will not adversely affect the comprehensive General Plan.

The applicant's request would not adversely affect the comprehensive General Plan because the existing use of the property, multi-family residential housing, is consistent with the General Plan and this proposal will not change that.

**WHEREAS,** the Zoning Administrator <u>cannot</u> make the following required findings for approval of a variance to install barbed wire fencing along the property line adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad property:

1. That there are <u>no</u> exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved, or to the intended use of the property, that do not apply generally to the property or class of use in the same zone or vicinity.

There are no exceptional or extraordinary circumstances applicable to the property that would permit the Zoning Administrator to grant an exception to the Antioch Municipal Code to allow the installation of barbed wire fencing. An eight foot high fence made of "no climb" material would provide an effective barrier to trespassing without the danger posed by barbed wire fencing.

2. That the granting of such variance <u>would be</u> materially detrimental to the public health or welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in such zone or vicinity.

The granting of the variance would be potentially detrimental to the public health and safety. The proposed barbed wire fencing is in a densely populated neighborhood. There are risks of both children and adults climbing the fence and injuring themselves on the barbed wire.

3. That because of special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the zoning provisions is found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity under the identical zone classifications.

There are no special circumstances that are applicable to the subject property that would permit the Zoning Administrator to make an exception to the Antioch Municipal Code to allow the installation of barbed wire fencing. Alternative fencing can be installed to deter trespassing without the danger posed by barbed wire fencing.

4. That the granting of such variance <u>will not</u> adversely affect the comprehensive General Plan.

The applicant's request would not adversely affect the comprehensive General Plan because the existing use of the property, multi-family residential housing, is consistent with the General Plan and this proposal will not change that.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Zoning Administrator of the City of Antioch does hereby APPROVE the request for a variance to install a six (6) foot high fence within the required front yard and side yard setback of the Contra Loma Estates Subdivision along L Street, Sycamore Drive, Lemontree Way, and Peppertree Way and DENY the request for a chain link fence, six feet in height, with lattice topped with three strands of barbed wire along the property line bordering the Union Pacific Railroad Corridor V-16-03, subject to the following conditions:

## A. GENERAL CONDITIONS

- The project shall comply with the Antioch Municipal Code. All construction shall conform to the requirements of the California Building Code and City of Antioch standards.
- 2. The applicant shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City in any action brought by a third party to challenge the land use entitlement. In addition, if there is any referendum or other election action to contest or overturn these approvals, the applicant shall either withdraw the application or pay all City costs for such an election.
- 3. The project shall be implemented as indicated on the application form and accompanying materials provided to the City and in compliance with the Antioch Municipal Code, or as amended by the Zoning Administrator.

- No building permit will be issued unless the plan conforms to the project description and materials as approved by the Zoning Administrator and the standards of the City.
- 5. This approval expires two years from the date of approval (expires December 8, 2018), unless an extension has been approved by the Zoning Administrator. Requests for extensions must be received in writing with the appropriate fees prior to the expiration of this approval. No more than one, one-year extension shall be granted.
- 6. No permits or approvals, whether discretionary or mandatory, shall be considered if the applicant is not current on fees, reimbursement payments, and any other payments that are due.
- 7. This approval supersedes previous approvals that have been granted for this site.

## B. AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

- The applicant shall submit a minimum of two (2) complete sets of plans and specifications of the subject project to the Fire District for review and approval *prior* to construction to ensure compliance with minimum requirements to fire and life safety. Plan review and inspection fees shall be submitted at the time of plan review submittal.
- 2. Pedestrian gates must be installed for fire access for every paved walkway from the entry sidewalk to the public way for all buildings with fencing installed in front of it.
- 3. Access gates for Fire District apparatus shall be a minimum of 20-feet wide. Access gates shall slide horizontally or swing inward and shall be located a minimum of 30 feet from the street. Electronically operated gates shall be equipped with a Knox Company key-operated switch. Contact the Fire District for information on ordering the key-operated switch. (D103.5) CFC.

## C. FEES

- 1. The applicant shall pay all fees as required by the City Council.
- 2. The developer shall pay all required fees at the time of building permit issuance.

## D. USE REQUIREMENTS

 Fencing shall not obstruct any public sidewalk or clear vision zones along the public roadways. RESOLUTION NO. 2016-\*\* DECEMBER 8, 2016 Page 5

- 2. No barbed wire fencing shall be permitted.
- 3. An eight (8) foot high open type of fence may be installed along the property line adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad corridor.
- 4. Access to all pedestrian gates shall be provided to the Antioch Police Department and Contra Costa County Fire Department.
- 5. All fencing in the front yard setback shall be limited to six (6) feet in height and conform to the details on the plans submitted.

I HEREBY CERTIFY the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Zoning Administrator of the City of Antioch, County of Contra Costa, State of California, at a regular meeting of said Zoning Administrator held on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December 2016.

Forrest Ebbs
Zoning Administrator

# ATTACHMENT "A"

SHEET

# ATTACHMENT "B"

## **Contra Loma Estates**

## **Variance Application – Narrative**

The Contra Loma Estates Homeowner's Association is submitting a variance application to implement its desire to install new common area fencing improvements along the project's frontage on "L" Street, Sycamore Drive and adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad Right of Way (Former SPRR).

The Association's Board of Directors with the support of a majority of a quorum of the association members are in support of the submitted variation application. In support of this application and its desire to install the requested fencing improvements, the association has voted, in compliance with the current HOA CC&R's, to implement a special assessment to fund the desired project.

The Association has found it necessary to control access to its common area from non-member individuals who trespass on to Association property in order to engage in unlawful activity. This is predominantly occurring along Association Common Areas fronting "L" Street, Sycamore Drive and adjacent to the UPRR corridor.

The Contra Lom HOA is seeking the same controlled assess to Association Common Area as is provided to our neighboring Associations at Antioch Ridge HOA, Delta Pines apartments, Riverstone apartments and Spanos.

The proposed new fencing program would consist of the following:

- 1. Installation of new fencing, consisting of black metal picket fencing, six feet in height, matching the current fencing at the Association Pool Complex to be placed along association common areas fronting "L" Street and Sycamore Drive.
- 2. Replacement of an existing chain link fence along association common area bordering the Union Pacific Railroad corridor. The new chain link fence will consist of new chain link fabric, six feet in height, with lattice topped with three strands of wire barb wire. The barbed wire is desired since the UPRR corridor is an area that is not visible from the street or directly accessible from Sycamore Drive. The railroad corridor is a widely used pedestrian corridor and because of its secluded nature requires additional security measures to protect both association common area improvements and

association members from unwanted and unsolicited trespass in this specific area. Our membership has repeatedly complained to the Board that this area is routinely populated by unsavory characters who try to break through and climb over the fence to gain entry to our property.

3. New vehicle ingress/egress gates will be installed at selected areas to control association alleyways and direct/ funnel vehicle traffic through specific points that are service by the perimeter public roadways, being "L" Street and Sycamore Drive.

License plate cameras readers will also be installed at each of the three public street entrances; Peppertree at Sycamore, Lemontree at Sycamore and near the Peppertree Court/Private Alleyway/Lemontree intersection.

The seven buildings that front the north portion of Sycamore Drive will be completely fenced and gated.

## Variance Request

The Contra Loma HOA is requesting approval of a variance application consisting of two (2) separate considerations:

- 1. Permit the installation of new metal Picket fencing, six feet in height, to be placed within the front yard structural setback zone. Current structure setback for the applicable zoning district is fifteen feet (15'). The current variance request is to permit the encroachment of the fencing varying from five feet (5') to eight feet (8') due to mature landscaping and trees. Variance request occurs at three locations, west side of "L" Street and the north and south sides of Sycamore Drive.
- 2. Permit the replacement of existing chain link fencing with new 6' posts and fabric topped with three wire barbed wire. Variance request occurs at one location only along the north portion of the Association property adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad facilities.

## Findings in Support of the Variance Request.

The following findings are offered in support of the Contra Loma Estates Variance Application:

1. The Contra Loma Estates HOA and its membership have experienced and continue to experience on a daily basis unwanted trespass occurrences where HOA common areas adjoin "L" Street, Sycamore Drive and the Union Pacific Railroad rail facilities. Contra Loma Estates project is one of the original condominium developments constructed in the late '60's and early '70's. Mature landscaping exists along the common area improvements fronting Sycamore Drive and "L" Streets. The existing landscaping consisting of mature trees poses difficulty in placing new security fencing along the project frontages of Sycamore Drive and "L" Street.

Contra Loma Estates is one of the few remaining high density condominium projects which does not maintain perimeter securing fencing along frontages adjoining major arterial and or collector streets; largely due to the age of the project.

- 2. The granting of the requested variances will not be materially detrimental to the public health or welfare or injurious to the property or improvements. The existing public sidewalks within "L" Street and Sycamore Drive will not be impeded or block by the proposed fencing. The requested encroachments in to the structure setback zone will not introduce siting or impeded visual line of sight corridors within either of the two adjoining public roadways.
- 3. Given the age of the project approval, being in the late 1960's, the site was designed under a "open air" concept. Given the projects current location and current recent and ongoing economic impacts additional site security measures are necessary to promote the ongoing security needs together with health and safety of the Contra Loma Estates Association membership.
- The granting of the variance has no impact the City's current General Plan.