



Planning Commission Work Session Staff Report

December 27, 2006
Staff Report
Item 6.b.

SUBJECT: Work Session for Case PRZ-36,
Sport Court Municipal Code Amendment

APPLICANT: City of Pleasanton

PROPERTY OWNERS: Various

PURPOSE: Work session to review and receive comments on proposed amendments to the Pleasanton Municipal Code to establish development standards for sport courts.

**ZONING/
LOCATION:** Residential, Agricultural, PUD, PUD-Residential, PUD-Agricultural

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit A, Proposed Code Amendment
2. Exhibit B, Table Comparing Sport Court Regulations
3. Exhibit C, Sample Application for a Sport Court, Sport Court Fencing, and Sport Court Lighting

BACKGROUND

In September of 2006, the City Council directed staff to review the City's existing sport court standards. Most areas of Pleasanton do not have specific sport court regulations, or, at best, have vague regulations. Staff has completed a comparison of sport court regulations in Pleasanton to other cities, and has prepared draft amendments for initial consideration and comment. The draft regulations would clarify the existing regulations, ensure that sport courts can be approved quickly and administratively if certain criteria are met, and help ensure that sport courts are designed and used in a manner which minimizes impacts to neighbors and the environment. The purpose of this work session is to receive the Planning Commission's and the public's initial comments about the draft amendments. The proposed amendment will return to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council at a later date.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the work session is to receive initial feedback on proposed amendments to Chapter 18.84, Site, Yard, Bulk, Usable Open Space, and Landscape Regulations, of the Pleasanton Municipal Code. A summary of the proposed amendments to be added to the existing Code section is described below:

1. Require sport courts, sport court fencing, and sport court lighting to:

- be located between the main structure and the side property line or between the main structure and the rear property line;
- adhere to the minimum side and rear yard setback requirements for class I accessory structures in the applicable zoning district;
- in no case have a side and rear yard setback less than 10 feet; and
- not be located in an agricultural, open space conservation, view corridor, and public service easement areas.

Staff Comment: This will clarify that sport courts are not allowed in open space and public service easement areas, and establish minimum setback regulations.

2. Require sport courts to:

- be subject to the same grading requirements applicable to pools in the applicable PUD, if located in a PUD without specific sport court grading requirements; and
- not be restricted as to color.

Staff Comment: This will establish grading requirements for sport courts in PUDs. Pools and sport courts have the same grading/retaining wall issues on hillside lots. This will also clarify that sport courts can be any color.

As drafted, basketball hoops, centerline netting, soccer goal netting, and similar types of sport court equipment would not be subject to Design Review.

3. Require sport court fencing to:

- be open view fencing;
- be black, green, brown, or if wire mesh, gray;
- be a maximum of 10 feet (10') in height;
- have a wood or metal top cap;
- have panels which are open view mesh fabric, vinyl clad mesh, or wire mesh, not including gray chain link;
- have posts which are only made of wood or metal;
- be installed such that the panels are taught;
- be located within 5 feet (5') of the sport court; and
- not include barb wire or razor wire.

Staff Comment: This will establish design standards for sport court fencing.

4. Require sport court lighting to:

- be directed downward, designed so as to not shine on neighboring properties, and designed so as to not spill light on the surface of adjacent properties;
- be off between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.;
- be no more than 15 feet (15') in height; and
- be located within 5 feet (5') of the sport court.

Staff Comment: This will establish minimum standards for sport court lighting.

5. Establish a quick administrative City review process, if the above mentioned criteria are met.

Staff Comment: This is a streamlined review process.

6. Clarify that sports may be played between the front property line and the main structure; however, a sport court, sport court lighting, and sport court fencing shall not be allowed. As proposed, a basketball hoop could be located above a garage, portable basketball hoops could be located in a front yard, and an application would not be required to play sports between the front property line and the main structure.

Staff Comment: This is for clarification.

7. Clarify that in rear and side yards, existing lawn areas, and similar types of areas, are not considered sport courts if:

- there is no sport court fencing or lighting;
- only portable sports equipment is used; and
- the equipment is less than 6 feet (6') in height or, if taller than 6 feet (6') in height, the equipment is removed when not in use.

Staff Comment: This is for clarification.

8. Eliminate the requirement that all accessory structures, including sports courts, sport court lighting, and sport court fencing, must be within 35 feet of the rear yard property line.

Staff Comment: On deep lots, this would allow accessory structures to be located anywhere between the rear property line and the back of the house, so long as the minimum standard setbacks and design criteria are met.

9. On residential corner lots, eliminate the requirement that accessory structures, including sport courts, sport court lighting, and sport court fencing, must have the same street side yard setback as the adjacent front yard setback of the house to the rear.

Staff Comment: On many typical corner lots, the existing requirement prohibits trellises, sheds, pools, and other structures etc. to be within 23 feet of the street side property line, even if the structure is in the rear yard, behind a solid 6 foot tall fence, less than 6 feet in height, and meets all other standard setback requirements for corner lots. Staff feels that this requirement is overly prohibitive, and difficult to enforce.

ANALYSIS

The proposed amendment would allow sport courts to be approved administratively and limit potential visual and noise impacts, light pollution, and grading impacts. For the Commission's information, attached is a comparison of sport court regulations in other cities and Pleasanton (see Exhibit B). Also attached is a sample application for a sport court (see Exhibit C). As proposed, staff would typically review and approve the application the same day it is received.

Lighting

Staff evaluated whether sport court lighting should be allowed. Many of the City's parks have sport court with lights; these are required to be turned off at 10:00 p.m. The light standards have generally been allowed to spill approximately 5 foot candle of light onto adjacent residential properties. Residents who move near parks are generally aware of the lighting, or, at the very least, aware of potential park impacts, prior to purchase. The sport court lighting addressed in this Code amendment would be for private residential use only. Staff believes that the Code amendment would help address potential neighboring impacts; however, light from the standards may still be visible from neighboring properties, which some neighbors may find visually annoying.

As proposed, an applicant wishing to install lighting would be required to submit a photometric foot candle diagram demonstrating that no lighting will shine onto the surface of adjacent properties, and submit a diagram showing that all lighting will be shielded, and downward facing. As proposed, all sport court lighting would be required to be turned off at 10:00 p.m. and limited to 15 feet in height. Fifteen feet is the maximum height allowed for most accessory structures in Pleasanton. Staff researched sport court lighting and found that many sport court designers recommend that the light standards be at least 20-25 feet tall in residential areas. Staff believes this is too tall, and may negatively impact neighbors.

Existing Regulations

The Ruby Hill PUD, Kottinger Ranch PUD, and the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan area all have specific sport court regulations, as shown in Exhibit B. Most residential areas in Pleasanton do not have specific sport court regulations, and, as such, the City's standard requirements apply. Generally, a City review process is required for accessory structures greater than 10 feet in height (such as a light standard) and there are fence height requirements for fencing located in required yards, e.g., max. height of 42" in a front yard, 6' in a side or rear

yard. Generally, the paving for a sport court would be exempt from review, if it were located in a side or rear yard with no special grading requirements.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this workshop was published in the newspaper. At the time this report was drafted, no public comment had been received.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(3), and it has been determined that the ordinance will not cause a significant negative effect on the environment.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes the proposed amendment will create design and locational standards, help minimize impacts to neighbors, and establish an expedited review process for proposals which adhere to the established criteria.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the proposed amendments, listen to public comments, and provide staff with comments.

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