

CITY OF ESCONDIDO**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION****February 13, 2018**

The meeting of the Escondido Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Weber, in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

Commissioners present: Jeffery Weber, Chairman; Don Romo, Vice-chairman; Michael Cohen, Commissioner; Joe Garcia, Commissioner; James McNair, Commissioner; James Spann, Commissioner; and Stan Weiler, Commissioner.

Commissioners absent: None.

Staff present: Mike Strong, Assistant Planning Director; Owen Tunnell, Assistant City Engineer; Ann Dolmage, Associate Planner; Adam Phillips, Deputy City Attorney; and Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk.

MINUTES:

Moved by Commissioner Spann, seconded by Commissioner McNair, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2018, meeting. Motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – Received.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS – None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: – None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP, REZONE, MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN, GRADING EXEMPTION, SPECIFIC ALIGNMENT PLAN, AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – SUB 15-0002; PHG 15-0004; ENG 17-0004; PHG 16-0022; and ENV 15-0001 (Continue to a Date Uncertain):**

REQUEST: The project consists of the following components:

- A Tentative Subdivision Map for 55 residential lots (net sizes ranging from 10,015 SF to 24,557 SF), eight open space lots, one private street lot, and one emergency access road lot.
- A Rezone of the residential development site from RE-20 (Residential Estates; minimum lot size of 20,000 SF) to PD-R (Planned Development-Residential).
- A Master Development Plan to allow lot clustering and reduction of lot sizes below the 20,000 SF required for the Estate II designation of the General Plan.
- Grading Exemptions for cut and fill slopes exceeding height limits specified in the Grading Ordinance.
- A Specific Alignment Plan (SAP) for street improvements to Bear Valley Parkway in the vicinity of the project. The applicant or developer would bear the full responsibility for SAP improvements along the residential project frontage (approximately 2,937 linear feet on the east side of Bear Valley Parkway), to include an additional northbound travel lane, curb, gutter, sidewalk, overhead power line relocation, parkway, and bike lane improvements.
- A proposed Development Agreement to define the terms of shared responsibility (between the developer and the City) for SAP improvements along 262 linear feet of the "triangle lot" to the direct south of the residential development site, as well as transitional improvements between Sunset Drive and the south boundary of the triangle lot.

The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION: The 40.62-acre development site is located on the east side of Bear Valley Parkway, just south of the intersection with Choya Canyon Road and north of the intersection with Sunset/Ranchito Drive, and is addressed as 661 Bear Valley Parkway (APNs 237-131-01 and 237-131-02).

ACTION:

The item was continued to a date uncertain, at the request of the applicant.

2. MODIFICATION TO A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – PHG 16-0020:

REQUEST: A Modification to a Conditional Use Permit for the expansion of the Self-Realization Fellowship church facility. The proposed project would occur across four phases, with the first phase starting within three years of project approval (ideally by the end of 2019), and remaining phases occurring as funding allows. Phase 1 would construct a new sanctuary and meditation building (7,424 SF) with an outdoor entry/gathering court at the northeast corner of the project site, expand the parking lot from 56 spaces to 99 spaces, and construct two bioretention basins at the southwest corner of the site. Phase 2 would remove two freestanding caretaker units at the south end of the site and construct a new Sunday school building (3,973 SF and containing eight classrooms) in their place. Phase 3 would replace the existing multipurpose building at the east side of the property with a new multipurpose building (4,278 SF) and adjoining patio/performance stage. Finally, Phase 4 would expand the existing two-story bookstore building (which contains the bookstore on the ground floor and a caretaker unit on the upper floor) from 1,300 SF to 1,644 SF. The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION: The 2.55-acre development site is located on the south side of Scenic Drive, at its intersection with Del Dios Road (APN 235-190-05).

Ann Dolmage, Associate Planner, referenced the staff report and noted staff issues were whether the design of the proposed project is attractive and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, whether the on-site parking provisions are sufficient for the land use and proposed schedule of activities and events, and whether the proposed outdoor activities would exceed City noise standards and create a nuisance for neighboring residences. Staff recommended approval based on the following:

- 1) The completion of the project would result in new improvements to an existing chapel/sanctuary. The proposed project design is compatible with the surrounding types of use and structures. The proposed colors, materials, and architectural features are well coordinated and complementary to the site and its surroundings and would enhance the appearance of the neighborhood. Buildings would be constructed with white plaster walls with light gray accents and a blue tile band running along most rooflines. The meditation chapel/sanctuary would feature a tower topped with a gold dome. Similar (but smaller) domes would be located on a pillar adjacent to the Sunday school building, as well on a pillar attached to a wall at the front of the property. The three main buildings on the site

(meditation chapel/sanctuary, multipurpose building, and Sunday school) would shield the patio area from the residential properties to the north, east, and south of the project site, serving to minimize noise and visual impacts related to the church's outdoor activities.

- 2) Currently, the Self-Realization Fellowship parking lot contains 56 parking spaces. The proposed project would increase the size of this lot to 99 spaces. As explained in detail in the "Conformance with City Policy" section of this staff report, parking requirements for churches are determined based on square footage of the facility (or number of seats in the assembly area, if seating is fixed), not number of congregants. Adding up the square footage of all structures proposed for this site would result in a parking requirement larger than 99. A parking calculation that adds together just the buildings in use at a given time results in a parking requirement of fewer than 99 spaces on most days, though certain special events could have significantly higher parking needs. A condition of approval has been proposed that would require the applicant to monitor parking conditions at the largest special events to verify that parking needs can be accommodated with the on-site parking lot. If parking cannot be accommodated within the on-site lot, the applicant would be required to implement additional efforts to reduce parking impacts on surrounding off-site public streets, as further described in the staff report.
- 3) In general, the existing and proposed buildings are designed, situated, and landscaped so that sounds from chapel/sanctuary activities will not carry into surrounding properties. Most regular church activities would occur indoors under the proposed project, but some special events would include outdoor activities. As explained in detail in the "Conformance with City Policy" section of this staff report, these types of events are limited and would be subject to all regulations as would be applied to permanent uses located within the same zone. Also, the applicant has provided a noise evaluation that analyzes the project's potential noise impacts on the site and the surrounding neighborhood. The noise evaluation states that no permanent amplified sound equipment would be installed in any outdoor areas of the church campus, though some outdoor special events (specifically the once-yearly performance/dinner, which would include a concert, play, and/or a speaker) would likely utilize temporary speakers. The speakers would be located far enough from property lines to conform to noise standards outlined in the City of Escondido Municipal Code, assuming they would be volume-controlled as specified in the noise evaluation. A condition of approval has been proposed to require the applicant to conform to the noise standards in the Municipal Code at all times.

Commissioner McNair asked if staff felt confident that there would be no parking issues for special events. Ms. Dolmage replied in the affirmative.

Chairman Weber and staff discussed the proposed driveway and parking for the project as well as reasons for the three-year extension.

Stephen Wilkinson, Self Realization Fellowship, provided the background history and a brief summary of the services offered by the Self Realization Fellowship Organization. He stated that they offered solutions to everyday issues, spiritual guidance and meditation. He stated that they cultivate quiet grounds with greenery and would be providing meditation gardens in the future. He noted that they were not looking to grow beyond their current size. He indicated that they would be providing 99 parking spaces, which was more than required. He also stated that they coordinate parking during special events so as not to adversely impact the neighbors. He elaborated that they lowered the elevation of the facility due to the input from the neighborhood. In conclusion, he asked for Commission support.

Chris Splane, Escondido, felt the project would be overpowering and too close to the street. He expressed his concern with the golden dome being approved when another one was denied by the City. He felt the facility should be located closer to the parking lot so as to reduce visual impacts from the fence line.

Commissioner Weiler noted he was originally concerned with the proposed location of facility on the eastern side, but felt the proposed design would be best for the adjacent neighbors. Commissioner Spann concurred.

Commissioner McNair noted he could support the project as long as there would be no parking issues during special events.

Chairman Weber felt the proposed pad heights would help mitigate visual issues. He also stated that he would like to see the tower height lowered.

Commissioner Garcia stated that he understood the time needed for fund raising.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Weiler, seconded by Commissioner McNair, to approve staff's recommendation, including a revision to Conditions of Approval #15 and #16 to change the trigger point to which a temporary use permit would be required (changing the amount of attendees from 200 people to 225 people). Motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

3. ZONING CODE AMENDMENT – AZ 16-0008:

REQUEST: A series of Escondido Zoning Code Amendments to address changes in state laws, correct errors, and improve existing regulations. The proposal involves minor amendments to Articles 1, 3, 6, 16, 25, 26, 34, 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 56, 57, 58, 61, 65, 68, 69, 70, 73, and 75 of the Escondido Zoning Code. The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION: Citywide

Mike Strong, Assistant Planning Director, referenced the staff report and noted staff recommended approval of the proposed Zoning Code Amendment for the following reasons: 1) The batch of amendments relate to organizational effectiveness and efficiency and are considered a housekeeping measure; and 2) The proposed Zoning Code changes would make the code more internally consistent and easier to understand and apply. The amendments make corrections, clarifications, and updates to improve the application process or how the codes are administered.

Commissioner Spann referenced a 20th century term that needed updating in the existing zoning code language.

Commissioner McNair and staff discussed the reasons for eliminating Section 33-1109 Item (d) 2 and 3 as outlined in the staff report.

Chairman Weber and Mr. Strong discussed the setback requirements for accessory units as well as height limitations for accessory dwelling units.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Spann, seconded by Commissioner Cohen, to approve staff's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

CURRENT BUSINESS ITEMS: None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

An audience member requested information regarding when the public hearing for Item 1 would be placed back on the agenda. Chairman Weber noted that this item was continued to a date uncertain and would be re-noticed.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Spann asked if the plans for the Old Palomar Hospital would come before the Commission. Mr. Strong replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Spann asked who the contact person was for the Grand Avenue modifications. Mr. Strong noted that Julie Procopio was facilitating the grant proposal for potential streetscape improvements to Grand Avenue. Commissioner Spann asked if this would go before Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Strong noted this did not fall within the purview of the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Weber adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for February 27, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.



Mike Strong, Secretary to the Escondido
Planning Commission



Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk