

CITY OF ESCONDIDO

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION

April 22, 2014

The meeting of the Escondido Planning Commission 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; Bob McQuead, Vice-chairman; Ed Hale, Commissioner; Gregory Johns, Commissioner; James Spann, Commissioner; Merle Watson, Commissioner and Guy Winton, Commissioner.

Commissioners absent: None.

Staff present: Bill Martin, Principal Planner; Jay Paul, Associate Planner; Owen Tunnell, Principal Engineer; Adam Phillips, Deputy City Attorney; and Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk.

MINUTES:

Moved by Commissioner Winton, seconded by Commissioner Hale, to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2014, meeting. Motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – Received.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS – None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP, MASTER AND PRECISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, ZONE CHANGE AND AREA PLAN AMENDMENT – SUB 13-0009:**

REQUEST: The proposal consists of a Master and Precise Development Plan to construct 76 condominium residential units to be situated in four, three-story buildings on the subject site, along with a one-lot Tentative Subdivision Map, and Zone Change from Planned Development-Mixed Use (PD-MU) zoning to Planned-Development Residential (PD-R) zoning. An amendment to the South Escondido Boulevard Neighborhood Plan also is requested to allow a residential project to be developed on the site without a commercial component in conformance with the 2012 General Plan. The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

PROPERTY LOCATION: The approximately 2.53 acre project site generally is located on the eastern side of South Escondido Boulevard, north of Citracado Parkway and south of Brotherton Road, addressed as 2412 and 2424 S. Escondido Boulevard (APNs 238-141-31 and -36).

Jay Paul, Associate Planner, referenced the staff report and noted staff issues focused on whether the design of the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and South Escondido Boulevard Objectives and Design Guidelines for residential development, appropriateness of the mass, scale and height of the buildings, and whether a residential use without a commercial component is appropriate on the site. Staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) The proposed planned residential development would be in conformance with the General Plan which allowed for exclusively residential development within a target area of the South Escondido Boulevard Area Plan known as the "Centre City Parkway/Brotherton Road Target Area" (page II-70). The project also would be in conformance with the South Escondido Boulevard Neighborhood Plan Objectives and Design Guidelines that strive to provide opportunities for a balanced mix of housing types, and to revitalize and renew the commercial area, and maximize home-ownership opportunities. Adequate on-site parking would be provided; and appropriate open space amenities are provided. The project included a variety of amenities such as individual patios for selected units, enhanced walkways and paving, and landscape features. A mix of architectural elements had been incorporated into the buildings, especially along the lower levels, to project a more human scale along pedestrian ways and Escondido Boulevard; 2) Although the buildings would be larger and taller than adjacent one- and two-story commercial and residential structures, the overall mass and height of the three-story units has been addressed through the grading design; varied wall planes and roof lines; variety of material and color elements; appropriate setbacks; perimeter walls and landscaping, and balcony features to provide a more pedestrian scale along the street; and 3) Staff felt the proposed Amendment to the South Escondido Boulevard Neighborhood Plan to allow an exclusively residential project at this 'mid-block' location would be appropriate because this type of development would serve as an appropriate transition

between the mix of commercial uses to the north, south and west, and residential uses to the east. The General Plan vision for the Centre City Parkway/Brotherton Road Target Area called for locating non-residential uses at major intersections and specific nodes that are more conducive to commercial development. Staff also felt that an exclusively residential development on this site could provide the catalyst for future residential development in the corridor and strengthen the customer base for mixed-use development at key intersections and node areas.

Commissioner Johns referenced the language outlined in Planned Commercial Area 13 in the General Plan with regard to providing a 20-foot heavily landscaped buffer zone between commercial and residentially zoned properties. He questioned whether this should be applied to the subject project. Mr. Paul noted that staff felt the project met the intent for providing a buffer zone due to project's design. Commissioner Johns questioned whether a reference or statement was needed in the proposed amendment due to this language already being in the General Plan. Mr. Martin noted that the cited language was specific to one property in the area and did not need to be tied to the subject project. He also noted the commission could recommend additional buffer width for the proposed development if desired.

Discussion ensued regarding a clarification of the types and sizes of the tree replacements as well as a clarification of the driveway sizes meeting the fire department requirements.

Commissioner Hale asked if pedestrian amenities for the street frontage were required. Mr. Paul replied in the negative, noting they were in the general language for South Escondido Boulevard. Commissioner Hale stated that he would be opposed to having pedestrian amenities like benches in front of a residential property if he was the applicant.

Commissioner Winton asked if engineering was involved in the discussion about subsurface utilities with regard to the two streetscape alternatives for South Escondido Boulevard. Mr. Tunnell replied in the affirmative, noting that their main concern had to do with sight distance. He also stated that staff had a list of street trees to draw from that would not create structural issues.

Commissioner Winton questioned whether landscaping had been considered for the area across the street from the project between South Escondido Boulevard and Centre City Parkway. Mr. Paul noted that this had been discussed, but was not required for the subject project.

Commissioner Winton asked if the project was conditioned for no on street parking in front of the project. Mr. Paul replied in the affirmative.

Chairman Weber asked if a study had been conducted regarding the project's impact on the sewer pump station for the area. Mr. Tunnell stated that he was unaware of whether a separate study had been conducted for the project, but that the Utilities Department had been actively involved in the review of the proposal.

Chairman Weber asked if a traffic study had been conducted with regard to traffic impact fees associated with the traffic signal at Citracado and Escondido Boulevard. Mr. Tunnell noted that the previous project approved on the site had a traffic study and found there would be no significant traffic impacts. Mr. Paul noted that the project would pay the normal traffic impact fees but no additional fees were associated with the project. Chairman Weber expressed concern with the last project in the area being burdened with traffic upgrades and improvements, noting that he had observed long wait times at the subject intersection.

Ed Govani, Escondido, Chairman of the Board for the Elks Lodge, stated that they supported the project. He indicated that they had been assured there would be no parking impacts on their lot. He then asked that the retaining walls be treated with a graffiti proof material.

Peter Zak, representing the applicant, stated that they redesigned the project according to the updated General Plan. He asked that the Commission consider their sidewalk streetscape plan, noting their plan to place the sidewalk adjacent to the curb would match the sidewalks to the north and south of their site and provide for a wider landscape area next to the buildings.

Chairman Weber asked Mr. Zak what the demographic would be for the single-bedroom units. Mr. Zak noted that single-bedroom units targeted young professionals and empty nesters.

Chairman Weber questioned whether elevators had been considered. Mr. Zak replied in the negative. He stated the project would provide a significant amount of ground-floor units as well as providing significant amenities.

Commissioner Watson asked if the ultimate goal would be to sell the units. Mr. Zak stated that it would depend on the market, noting that the project was set up for both rental and/or sales.

Commissioner Johns and Mr. Zak discussed the expectations for occupancy.

Commissioner Spann asked whether they would be willing to sell a unit if someone was interested. Mr. Zak stated that all of the units would either be for sale or leased.

Commissioner Winton asked how long the condominium approval was good for. Mr. Zak stated that the Department of Real Estate approval was good for five years. Commissioner Winton was in favor of the project, feeling it felt was more suburban. He also felt the applicant's proposal for the sidewalk streetscape was more in line with being suburban.

Commissioner Hale stated that he was in favor of the applicant's sidewalk streetscape design. He also stated he was not in favor of requiring pedestrian oriented features in front of this project.

Commissioners Watson, McQuead, Johns and Spann were in favor of the applicant's sidewalk streetscape design.

Chairman Weber was in favor of the applicant's sidewalk streetscape concept but felt a wider sidewalk would be appropriate given the speeds of traffic in the area.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Winton, seconded by Commissioner Hale, to approve the applicant's sidewalk streetscape design for the frontage on South Escondido Boulevard. Motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

Commissioner Johns felt the project would create traffic impacts during peak hours, especially for those trying to access I-15.

Chairman Weber noted the proposed project would be better suited for the downtown area. He felt the proposed location was inappropriate due to having little to no public services, the area having low-density housing, and being out of scale with the suburban atmosphere. He felt this project was a case of spot zoning and would reduce the demand for future residential projects downtown. He also was concerned with the project not providing adequate parking, given there was no offsite parking available.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Winton, seconded by Commissioner Watson, to approve staff's recommendation. Motion carried. Ayes: Spann, McQuead, Hale, Winton, and Watson. Noes: Weber, and Johns. (5-2)

CURRENT BUSINESS: None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS: No comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Weber adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for May 13, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

Bill Martin, Secretary to the Escondido
Planning Commission

Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk