

CITY OF ESCONDIDO

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION**

January 13, 2015

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; and Guy Winton, Commissioner.

Commissioners absent: One position vacant.

Staff present: Bill Martin, Deputy Planning Director; Owen Tunnell, Principal Engineer; Rozanne Cherry, Principal Planner; Loretta McKinney, Director of the Library and Community Services; Jay Paul, Associate Planner; Gary McCarthy, Deputy City Attorney; and Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk.

MINUTES:

Moved by Commissioner Winton, seconded by Chairman Weber, to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2014, meeting with amendments from Commissioner Johns. Motion carried unanimously. (6-0)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS – None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

**1. GRAPE DAY PARK MASTER PLAN AND PLAYGROUND DESIGN –
PHG 13-0029:**

REQUEST: Provide comments regarding the proposed Master Plan for future improvements of Grape Day Park. The Master Plan includes adding a playground, splash pads, pedestrian paths, plazas, picnic shelters, an exercise course, half-court basketball, a stage and a new restroom building. Also

proposed are a Class I bike lane connecting to the Escondido Creek Bike Trail, traffic calming landscaped street medians, and an option to relocate the aquatic facility to an area in the parking lot off of Woodward Avenue with a stronger connection to the park. Grape Day Park with the historic structures along Heritage Walk is a significant historic resource and is designated as a Local Landmark.

LOCATION: Approximately 23 acres encompassing Grape Day Park and the adjacent parking lot located west of N. Broadway and east of N. Escondido Blvd., between W. Valley Parkway and Woodward Avenue. (APN: 229-352-12; 229-372-20 and 229-381-15).

Rozanne Cherry, Principal Planner, noted that the subject item was a draft master plan for future improvements to Grape Day Park. Staff requested comments on the draft plan master plan and land use aspects, which would be forwarded on to City Council.

Loretta McKinney, Director of the Library and Community Services, provided the background history for this item and noted that in response to the City Council Action Plan for Neighborhood Improvements, \$100,000 had been allocated for the Grape Day Park Master Plan and \$120,000 for new play equipment in Grape Day Park. She noted that RHA Landscape Architects-Planners, Incorporated were selected to prepare the master plan and design and manage the construction of the Grape Day Park playground equipment. She indicated that to date a committee comprised of various City departments and other Grape Day Park related organizations had been formed to assist with the project, three community meetings had been held, and social media venues had been developed to receive input. Additionally, staff and the consultant had received input from the Appearance Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, and Community Service Commission. She noted that the City Council would be hearing this item on February 4, 2015. She then introduced Doug Grove from RHA Landscape Architects to the Commission.

Doug Grove, RHA Landscape Architects, provided an overview of the Grape Day Park Master Plan and requested input.

Vice-chairman McQuead requested input regarding the plan for the existing Pepper Trees along Broadway. Mr. Grove noted that the plan was to replace the existing Pepper Trees with a different tree of similar scale due to the existing trees having potential maintenance and rot issues, and the need to create better visibility for the public and police, and have a cleaner appearance along the street

Vice-chairman McQuead expressed his enthusiasm with the acknowledgement of Lime Street Elementary School in the plan. He also noted that the length of the James Stone Pool originally was specifically designed to be less than the standard competition length. He questioned what the concept was for the City's storage area on the west side of City Hall with regard to creating a better connection between the Maple Street Plaza and Grape Day Park. Mr. Grove noted that not too much detail was spent on this due to the hotel concept still being on the table.

Vice-chairman McQuead questioned whether any discussions had occurred regarding creating a connection along Broadway from the Grand Avenue commercial core to the park. Mr. Grove replied in the negative. Vice-chairman McQuead felt a priority of the plan should be to create connections from Grand Avenue to the park along Broadway and Maple Street to enhance the ties between the Park/Civic Center and the commercial activity downtown. He also noted that he liked the conceptual design.

Commissioner Winton and Mr. Grove discussed the operations of the splash pads.

Commissioner Winton asked Mr. Grove if he was aware of how long the large Eucalyptus tree would last. Mr. Grove replied in the negative and noted that an arborist would have a better idea about this. He also noted that this was one of the biggest points of discussions during the community meetings.

Commissioner Winton suggested that a section of the flat simulated train rails and ties proposed along the edge of the walkway be three-dimensional railroad tracks, if this would not create a hazard. He asked if the plan impacted the Bandy Blacksmith shop. Mr. Grove replied in the negative and further noted that the access to the shop would be enhanced. Commissioner Winton suggested enhancing the Blacksmith shop further. He and Mr. Grove discussed the surface materials for the splash pads. Commissioner Winton expressed his concern with the dangers associated with the surface of splash pads creating slipping hazards. He also agreed with Vice-chairman McQuead that it was important to create stronger ties from the downtown core to the park.

Commissioner Spann suggested reducing the number of splash pads, feeling it would be detrimental to the patrons of the park and be a constant maintenance issue. He suggested creating more access points from the downtown core to the park, and bringing the trees on Broadway and the median all the way to Grand Avenue. He also noted that he was opposed to creating a community garden in the park.

Commissioner Johns referenced the community outreach section of the report and asked how many individuals participated in the community outreach. Ms.

McKinney and Mr. Grove noted that three workshops were held with a combined total of approximately 80 to 85 community members. Additionally, approximately 10 individuals had provide input on Facebook. Commissioner Johns felt this was a low number for input. Ms. McKinney and Mr. Grove noted that this was typical for this type of project.

Commissioner Johns and Ms. McKinney discussed the genesis for the master plan.

Commissioner Hale suggested using the Maple Street Plaza as the primer for access to the park. He also suggested creating more connections from the downtown core to the park and prioritizing these in early improvement projects. He questioned whether bicycle racks were include in the plan. Mr. Grove replied in the affirmative and noted that they were included in the detailed plans.

Commissioner Hale stated he was impressed with the plan.

Chairman Weber felt the linkage between the Maple Street Plaza and the park needed to be prioritized. He suggested utilizing connections along North Escondido Boulevard and Broadway for bringing people to the park. He suggested redeveloping the Parkview District, feeling it was the best option for creating high density residential in the downtown. He recommended softening the curves in the walkways, noting the tendency of people was to walk in straighter lines. He recommended looking at materials that would soften the hardscape due to the hot temperatures in the summer months, especially in front of the train depot. He expressed concern with having too many splash pads. He also was in favor of rehabilitating the existing pool area and making it competition length.

Commissioner Winton questioned whether there was a nighttime aspect that tied the park into Grand Avenue. Mr. Grove noted that the intent was to provide lighting and security cameras in the park. Commissioner Winton suggested that the lighting not be too intense for the park, that it have more of a pedestrian scale, and include elements identified in the Maple Street Plaza Pedestrian Corridor Plan. Mr. Grove noted that this was the intent.

Commissioner Winton questioned whether naming rights were a part of the proposal. Mr. Grove noted that this was an option that would help offset costs. Commissioner Winton expressed his concern with opening the park to any potential business names that might be inappropriate for the park. Ms. McKinney noted that the City had naming policies in place that would protect against inappropriate names.

Chairman Weber and Mr. Grove discussed the proposed drainage plan for the project.

2. MODIFICATION TO A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – PHG 14-0028:

REQUEST: A Modification to a Conditional Use Permit for an approximately 468 SF expansion to an existing auto repair building located on a commercial site within the South Escondido Boulevard Neighborhood Plan. The subject site currently is occupied with a used car dealership, auto repair shop and an automobile smog shop. The proposal also includes adoption of the environmental determination for the project.

LOCATION: An approximately 0.32-acre parcel generally located on the northwestern corner of South Escondido Boulevard and Sixth Avenue, addressed as 557 S. Escondido Boulevard (APN 233-231-09).

Jay Paul, Associate Planner, referenced the staff report and noted staff felt the small addition to the existing auto repair building is appropriate because the approved building is not large enough in depth to efficiently work on and store vehicles. The site currently is designed and used for automotive service and repair, and the proposed modification to the auto repair building would not significantly alter the current use or character of the site. Sufficient on-site parking is available to support each use.

Vice-chairman McQuead questioned whether patrons getting their vehicles smog checked had to back onto Escondido Boulevard. Mr. Paul replied in the affirmative and noted that this was a pre-existing condition. He also stated that the only way to address this was to modify the building.

Vice-chairman McQuead stated that he was uncomfortable with allowing vehicles to back out on to the street.

Chairman Weber asked if the site had access from the alleyway. Mr. Paul replied in the affirmative but noted that it was locked at the current time.

Chairman Weber asked if the interior height of the subject building would allow for a car lift. Mr. Paul suggested the applicant respond to this.

Chairman Weber asked if the measurements on the drawings had been confirmed, noting when he was at the site they appeared less than indicated on the plan, which would make it difficult to move vehicles around the site. Mr. Paul replied in the negative.

Commissioner Winton asked if the applicant was a new owner since the 2005 CUP approval. Mr. Paul replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hale asked if anything could be included in the CUP to prohibit the use of parking vehicles in the public right of way. Mr. Martin noted that it would be difficult to restrict parking on a public street, noting that from staff's perspective, staff wanted to ensure there was adequate parking for all three businesses on site.

Hassam Salama, Escondido, noted that he had operated the smog business at the subject site since 2005. He stated that according to his original contract no other automotive businesses could operate on the subject property without his permission. He felt the property was too small for three businesses, noting that the site did not have adequate parking or handicap parking. He also stated that he had received complaints from neighbors about noise, odors, and parking for the former mechanic shop, noting he has never received a complaint about his operations. Mr. Salama noted that the distance between his building and the subject building was smaller than outlined on the drawing. He noted that some of the ceiling supports had been removed from the subject building in order to lift vehicles. He also noted that the foundation for the subject building had been extended without proper authority.

Vice-chairman McQuead asked Mr. Salama which company he owned. Mr. Salama stated he owned the Smog Check Station.

Vice-chairman McQuead asked Mr. Salama if there was any way to drive through his building so as not to back out onto Escondido Boulevard. Mr. Salama replied in the negative, noting this would take a modification to the actual property. He also noted that they had not had any issues with backing out onto the road in the years he had been operating there.

Commissioner Winton asked Mr. Salama how long his lease was. Mr. Salama replied 20 years.

Commissioner Johns asked if the existing structure was a code violation. Mr. Paul replied in the affirmative. Commissioner Johns asked if the existing structure would need to be torn down if the new addition was not constructed. Mr. Paul replied that the unpermitted addition to the structure would have to be removed regardless.

Vice-chairman McQuead felt structurally the subject plan would not work for the proposed auto repair use. He stated that he would be voting in opposition of staff's recommendation due to the property having code violations as well as the subject structure needing extensive work. He then referenced Page 11, Item 3, feeling this finding could not be met as well as feeling the use would have negative impacts on the neighborhood.

Commissioner Spann felt the subject use was too intense for the property and was inappropriate for the subject site.

Commissioner Winton expressed his concern that the proposed improvements as part of the original 2005 CUP were never performed. He expressed his concern with the building being in disrepair and the property needing to be brought into conformance with the Zoning Code. He also felt the proposed use would be too intense for the site.

Commissioner Hale felt the finding of facts could not be made for the subject use, noting his concern for negative impacts on the neighborhood.

ACTION:

Moved by Vice-chairman McQuead, seconded by Commissioner Winton, to deny Conditional Use Permit PHG 14-0028. Motion carried unanimously. (6-0)

3. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – PHG 14-0024:

REQUEST: A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow Verizon Wireless to install a 10-kilowatt diesel backup generator in conjunction with a new wireless communications facility at a site occupied by Escondido Lumber Company. The facility will consist of a 50-foot faux palm tree installed in an area adjacent to the lumberyard's parking lot, and next to an existing live palm. Twelve panel antennas and one microwave dish antenna will be mounted on the faux tree. The facility will also include a masonry shelter to house the generator and other equipment. Generator use will occur only during power outages and maintenance/testing. The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

LOCATION: The subject property is 2.75 acres and is located at 310 South Quince Street (APN 233-121-02)

Bill Martin, Deputy Planning Director, referenced the staff report and noted staff issues were whether the design and location of the proposed facility was appropriate for the site and consistent with the Wireless Facility Guidelines, whether the proposal is consistent with the Zoning Code standards for standby generators, and whether the proposal is consistent with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) limits for radiofrequency emissions. Staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) The proposed 10 kW emergency generator would not create any adverse visual, noise, or air quality impacts because it would be located within a new masonry block equipment enclosure that would

provide appropriate sound attenuation and screening. The generator is intended for emergency use and is expected to be used only during power outages and for intermittent maintenance and testing. Per San Diego Air Pollution Control District regulations and Section 33-1122 of the City of Escondido Zoning Code, non-emergency generator use is limited to 52 hours per year to minimize impacts to air quality. Section 33-1122 further limits generator maintenance and testing to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to minimize noise impacts to surrounding properties. The applicant has indicated that maintenance and testing activities would conform to these restrictions; 2) The proposed project would be consistent with the various design and location guidelines contained within the Communication Antennas Ordinance and Wireless Service Facilities Guidelines in the Zoning Code. The Ordinance encourages the use of commercial, industrial, and public right-of-way sites for wireless facilities. The project site is part of the Mercado District in the Downtown Specific Plan Area, and is currently used for commercial purposes (a lumberyard). While a few properties in the general vicinity are occupied by legal non-conforming residential uses (at the northeast corner of 3rd Avenue and Quince Street, and on 5th Avenue between Quince Street and Pine Street), most properties in the area are occupied by commercial or industrial uses. The Ordinance also encourages stealth technology that would be in context with the surrounding environment. The proposed antennas and microwave dish would be mounted on a pole designed to resemble a palm tree, and this faux palm would be located adjacent to an existing live palm. The backup generator and other equipment would be housed in a masonry enclosure designed to provide appropriate screening and noise attenuation. Planning staff conducted design review for the project on September 4, 2014, and all recommendations made during that review have been incorporated into the project design; and 3) Staff felt the proposed facility would not result in potential health hazards to people in the area because the Radio Frequency (RF) study prepared for the project indicates the facility would be within maximum permissible exposure (MPE) limits for radio frequency emissions, as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Chairman Weber and Mr. Martin discussed the proposed coverage area for the subject equipment.

Chris Harrison, M&M Telecom, Carlsbad, representing Verizon, noted that they had submitted coverage maps with the application. He then provided a map outlining the proposed coverage area.

ACTION:

Moved by Chairman Weber, seconded by Commissioner Spann, to approve staff's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously. (6-0)

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Spann asked staff if they were aware of the unscreened cellular tower in Kit Carson Park. Mr. Paul stated that this was a temporary lease agreement with Verizon to ensure adequate holiday season coverage at Westfield North County and that the temporary facility would be removed when the recently approved facility at the Lomas del Lago Shopping Center was constructed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Weber adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for January 27, 2015, 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