

CITY OF ESCONDIDO**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION****April 12, 2016**

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; Michael Cohen, Commissioner; James Spann, Commissioner and Stan Weiler, Commissioner.

Commissioners absent: Don Romo, Commissioner; and Gregory Johns, Commissioner.

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

MINUTES:

Moved by Commissioner Spann, seconded by Vice-chairman McQuead, to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2016 meeting. Motion carried. Ayes: Spann, McQuead, and Weber. Noes: None. Abstained: Cohen and Weiler. (3-0-2)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – Received.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS – None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP, MASTER and PRECISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, ZONE CHANGE, and AMENDMENT TO THE SOUTH ESCONDIDO AREA PLAN – SUB 15-0022; SUB 15-0023; PHG 15-0031; AZ 15-0002 and ENV 15-0011;**

REQUEST: The project involves a Master and Precise Development Plan for 113 air-space, three-story condominium/townhome units on approximately 4.90 acres

of land. Two Tentative Subdivision Maps (Del Prado North – 81 units and Del Prado South – 32 units) are requested because all of the subject parcels are not contiguous. An Amendment to the South Escondido Boulevard Area Plan is requested to allow an exclusively residential project on the site in conjunction with a Zone Change from General Commercial (CG) zoning to Planned Development-Residential (PD-R). Project components includes a mix of two- and three-bedroom units ranging from 1,109 SF to 1,584 SF situated in 27 separate buildings (21 buildings Del Prado North and 6 buildings Del Prado South). A dedicated two-car garage would be provided for each unit along with additional on-site open parking spaces. The project includes shared recreational facilities including a pool, deck/trellis features and BBQ areas. The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

PROPERTY LOCATION: The 4.90-acre project site generally is located on the southwestern corner of S. Centre City Parkway and Brotherton Road. The project consists of five parcels (APNs 238-130-11; -26; -27; -35 and -36) addressed as 2329 Centre City Parkway. The site fronts onto and takes access from Brotherton Road on the north, and Centre City Parkway frontage road on the east.

Jay Paul, Associate Planner, referenced the staff report and noted that staff issues were whether the design of the proposed project was consistent with the General Plan and South Escondido Boulevard Objectives and Design Guidelines for residential development, and whether a residential use without a commercial component was 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 allows 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, revitalize and renew the commercial area, and maximize home-ownership opportunities. Staff believes the development provides an appropriate amount of on-site parking for each project component as well as overflow on-street parking, and that a quality living environment will be ensured by the level of amenities provided in the recreation areas and landscape features distributed throughout the project. Although the buildings would be larger and taller than adjacent one- and two-story residential structures, compatibility with the adjacent neighborhood and overall mass and scale of the project has been addressed through the use of multiple smaller building groups rather than fewer but larger buildings; architectural style and building materials similar to adjacent single- and multi-family development; varied building setbacks around the perimeter of the site and larger setbacks adjacent to residential uses; varied wall planes and roof lines; and perimeter fencing/walls and

landscaping to provide the appropriate transition between the adjacent land uses; and 2) Staff believed the proposed Amendment to the South Escondido Boulevard Neighborhood Plan to allow an exclusively residential project would be appropriate for this site because this type of development would serve as an appropriate transition between the mix of lower density residential uses to the west and low intensity commercial on the north, south and east across Centre City Parkway. The General Plan vision for the corridor anticipates that commercial and mixed-use type development should be located towards major intersections and within specific commercial nodes. Although the project is located at a significant intersection, staff believes this specific corner is not conducive to a mixed-use or exclusively commercial development with higher traffic generation due to the proximity to single-family residential development and the overall configuration of the intersection and operational characteristics/limitations. Staff also believes a mixed-commercial component consisting of smaller and more restrictive shopkeeper type units is not anticipated to be a successful project within this southern section of South Escondido Boulevard, due to the mix of other commercial opportunities along the corridor and past experience with similar mixed-use projects.

Commissioner Spann and Mr. Paul discussed the proposed location for the onsite guest parking.

Vice-chairman McQuead and Mr. Tunnell discussed the proposed access to the site from Centre City Parkway.

Chairman Weber asked if a full traffic study was conducted for the project. Mr. Tunnell replied in the affirmative, noting that it took into consideration the cumulative impacts of four other future projects.

Chairman Weber asked if the cumulative traffic impacts of the other projects would change the Level of Services (LOS) in the area. Mr. Tunnell replied in the negative and noted that the peak hour traffic congestion had to do with the ramp metering.

Commissioner Weiler and staff discussed the timing for the update to the South Escondido Boulevard Neighborhood Plan.

Discussion ensued regarding a clarification of the electrical poles that were to be undergrounded in conjunction with this project.

Chairman Weber questioned whether the project would provide secondary access. Mr. Paul replied in the negative and noted that the Fire Department had no issue with this.

Munther Ghazal, San Diego, noted that he owned the commercial property across Brotherton Road and had witnessed multiple accidents at the intersection of Centre City Parkway and Brotherton, feeling a traffic signal would help. He also stated that he would be willing to pay his proportionate cost for said traffic signal.

Rex Little, Escondido, stated that he was opposed to a traffic signal at Brotherton and Centre City Parkway, feeling it would cause more accidents. He stated that he was not opposed to the project but was concerned that the project would add to the issue of limited on-street parking in the area.

Lynn and Patricia Buck, Escondido, expressed their concern with the density of the project creating on-street parking and traffic safety issues in the area. They expressed their concern with the project not providing adequate green space. They were concerned with the area needing infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks so as to create safer conditions for students and pedestrians in the area. They also expressed concern with the western buffer zone not creating adequate space between their residence and the project. Mr. Buck questioned how high the western units would be as well as asking what the definition of the buffer zone was. Chairman Weber indicated that the western units could be 30 feet or higher along with noting that the buffer zone was the setback with landscaping. Mr. Buck noted that he was opposed to a three-story project adjacent to his residence due to loss of privacy in his backyard.

Cynthia Hamilton, Escondido, expressed her concern with the existing and potential increase in traffic on Brotherton Road due to new developments. She expressed her concern with Brotherton Road having limited on-street parking, noting that individuals were parking in front of her yard as well as using her driveway to turn around. She felt the left-turn lane from northbound Centre City Parkway was too short to accommodate additional traffic from the proposed project as well as others in the area. She felt that parking and traffic issues in the area should be addressed before considering the project.

George Hesse, Escondido, expressed his concern with considering any project until the infrastructure and roads in the subject area were upgraded, noting his main concern for traffic flow.

Vice-chairman McQuead questioned whether in light of approving the subject project whether the infrastructure needed to be considered. Mr. Tunnell noted that the traffic studies show no significant traffic impacts.

Vice-chairman McQuead asked if sidewalks could be tied into the subject project. Mr. Tunnell noted that in order to construct sidewalks the streets would have to be improved which went beyond the project's scope.

Vice-chairman McQuead and staff discussed the horizontal buffer zone on the west side of the project which staff indicated would be between 16 and 21 feet with vegetation and trees.

Commissioner Weiler questioned whether the applicant could add more vegetation in the western buffer zone. Mr. Paul replied in the affirmative, but noted this could create issues with overgrowth. He also noted that larger specimen trees could be required for the project.

Chairman Weber expressed his concern with the project potentially having a low owner occupancy rate, noting that Urbana was only 57% owner occupied after 5 years. He felt higher density projects were not attractive to owner occupancy. He then referenced the Walk Score program used by the real estate industry, which rated projects on their walkability, transit, and biking ability and noted his view that the subject project would score very low with regard to providing walkability to City services or transit services. He felt the subject project focused its attention on traffic and parking. He stated that he was opposed to this type of project due to being in the gateway, adding to traffic flow issues and due to the infrastructure in the area not being present to support this type of project. He also felt the parking standards needed to be increased.

Commissioner Weiler stated that the General Plan was completed in 2012, noting that the subject project was allowed per the General Plan. He noted that higher density residential was allowed in this area, noting that if the Commission has issues with this type of development then it needed to address this with staff. He then questioned whether a commercial project constructed under the current zoning would create more impacts to the area.

Commissioner Spann noted that he was in favor of the project's architecture, but felt the project would be more suitable in the downtown area. He did not feel the project would impact traffic but felt the infrastructure in the area needed to be upgraded. He felt the project was too dense, noting his concern with the area being the gateway to the City. He also suggested that the last row of units on the western boundary be conditioned to be single-story.

Vice-chairman McQuead suggested that the west side units be lowered and that the applicant meet with staff to work on the infrastructure in the area.

Vice-chairman McQuead moved to deny the project. The motion included encouraging the applicant to meet with staff to review the site mix of building heights with emphasis of single-story on the western boundary and to look at opportunities to improve the infrastructure for traffic and sidewalks in the general area. The Motion was withdrawn.

Kerry Garza, Touchstone Communities, noted that the existing density for the subject property was 30 units per acre minimum and up to 80 units per acre maximum with mixed use. He stated that they worked closely with staff to reduce the density below 30 units per acre, noting some of the structures were at 22 units per acre. He noted that they also created more greenbelt space in the front of the project so as to create a transitional project, reiterating that the project could have been four- to five-stories. In conclusion, Mr. Garza elaborated that they created a project with less traffic and less density than could have been approved. Additionally, the project provided the needed parking and blended well with the neighborhood. He noted that they worked with the fire department with regard to the proposed landscaping for the buffer zone. He also stated that the type of buyers for the project was younger families, who typically did not have the amount of vehicles associated with older families. He asked that the Commission consider their project.

Elizabeth Metzger, Escondido, expressed her concern with Brotherton Road not having sidewalks and being narrow. She stated that they were not impacted by the commercial in the area due to the traffic being transient. She expressed her concern with the safety of pedestrians and students on Brotherton Road being impacted by increased traffic. She also noted that there was no bus stop in the area.

MOTION:

Vice-chairman McQuead motioned to deny staff's recommendation. The motion included directing staff to work with the applicant to lower the total height of the buildings on the western boundary of the project and to look for opportunities to improve the infrastructure in the surrounding area to potentially include sidewalks and street improvements on Brotherton Road between Centre City Parkway and Alexander Drive. Commissioner Spann seconded the motion.

Commissioner Weiler and staff discussed a clarification of the motion.

ACTION ON MOTION: Motion carried. Ayes: McQuead, Spann, and Weber. Noes: Weiler and Cohen. (3-2)

CURRENT BUSINESS:

1. Approve Planning Commission Resolution 6063 Recommending DENIAL of a Tentative Map, Master and Precise Plan, Zone Change and Amendment to the South Escondido Boulevard Area Plan (**SUB 14-0018; AZ 14-0006**) to construct 65 attached, three-story condominium units.

Location: 2516 S. Escondido Boulevard

Bill Martin, Interim Director of Community Development, referenced the staff report and noted that staff recommended approval of Resolution No. 6063 from the March 22, 2016, Planning Commission meeting which was attached with revised findings supporting the Planning Commission's decision to recommend denial of the proposed development. Mr. Martin then referenced a grammatical correction in the staff report from Vice-chairman McQuead.

ACTION:

Moved by Chairman Weber, seconded by Vice-chairman McQuead, to approve the revised resolution recommending to deny the project. Motion carried. Ayes: Weber, McQuead, and Spann. Abstained: Weiler, and Cohen. (3-0-2)

ORAL COMMUNATIONS – None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:

Chairman Weber expressed his concern with the development pressure shifting to the outer areas of the City versus the urban core. He felt higher density projects needed to be directed to the urban core where walkability and city services were readily available.

Commissioner Cohen felt that the problems identified for the south Escondido area would be the same with any project.

Mr. Martin noted that residential developments were being proposed for the downtown area, noting that the Commission soon would be hearing one major downtown residential development for the old police station site.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Weber adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for April 26, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.



Bill Martin, Secretary to the Escondido
Planning Commission



for Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk