

CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Wednesday, February 21, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

Present

Vice-Chairman Jim Schoonover
Commissioner Dave Bratt
Commissioner Stephen Ensberg
Commissioner Yunus Rahi
Planning Manager Craig Hensley
Associate Planner Marco Espinoza
Associate Planner Laura Lockett
Assistant Planner Michael Concepcion

Absent

Chairman Emmett Badar

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Schoonover called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:03 p.m. and Commissioner Bratt led the flag salute.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes for February 7, 2007.
2. Approval of Parcel Map 05-02 (26891) – A request to subdivide one (1) 145,090 sq. ft. parcel into two (2) parcels; Lot 1 is 65,165 sq. ft., Lot 2 is 79,925 sq. ft., located at 606 South Walnut Avenue, in the Single-Family Hillside (Private Horse Overlay) zone. (APN 8382-011-048) **(The public hearing for this item was conducted and concluded on February 7, 2007)**

RESOLUTION PC-1348

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 05-02 (TPM 26891), A REQUEST TO SUBDIVIDE ONE LOT (3.33 ACRES) INTO TWO LOTS (LOT ONE: 1.5 ACRES

AND LOT 2: 1.83 ACRES) AT THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 606 S. WALNUT AVENUE IN THE SINGLE-FAMILY HILLSIDE (PRIVATE HORSE OVERLAY) ZONE (APN 8382-011-048)

3. Approval of D.P.R.B. Case No. 07-06 – A request to construct a 5,032 sq. ft. single-family residence at 1608 Calle Cristina, located in Specific Plan No. 11, submitted by Richard Lim. (APN 8448-038-047)

RESOLUTION PC-1349

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS APPROVING DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW BOARD CASE NO. 07-06, A REQUEST BY RICHARD LIM TO CONSTRUCT A 5,032 SQUARE FOOT SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE AT THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1608 CALLE CRISTINA, LOCATED IN SPECIFIC PLAN NUMBER 11 (APN 8448-038-047)

MOTION: Moved by Bratt, seconded by Ensberg to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0-1 (Badar absent).

PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. CONSIDERATION OF TENTATIVE TRACT MAP 04-01 (060865) – A request to subdivide one (1) 7.75-acre lot into eighteen (18) single-family lots for the development of single-family homes, located at 309 N. Lone Hill Avenue (west side of Lone Hill at Overland Court), in the Single-Family 7,500 zone. Project access would be from Lone Hill Avenue via a gated, private street, and a private park is also proposed. (APN 8383-012-019)

Staff report presented by *Planning Manager Craig Hensley* who stated this is a proposal to subdivide a vacant lot which has a significant knoll on the property. The parcel is several feet above the adjoining single-family properties. He outlined previous development proposals for this parcel, and stated the current application is quite different from those approved in the past. In terms of analyzing the proposal, the primary issue is General Plan consistency. The General Plan designates this area as Single-Family Low with 3.1 to 6 du/ac, and this project is quite a bit lower. Because of the topography and existing trees on the site, staff feels the site is being developed appropriately. The project also preserves important view corridors.

The map was reviewed by the Subdivision and Environmental Committee, as well as the Traffic Committee. The Subdivision Committee expressed concerns about access to Lot 1 because of the location of the entry gate. When it is in the open position, there would only be eight feet of clearance from the driveway. Another concern was the minimal rear setbacks on Lots 8 and 9. He also presented a revised drawing from Public Works and the City Traffic Engineer regarding the 80-foot setback of the gate from Lone Hill. Originally the Traffic Committee felt 100 feet of stacking area was needed, but the new plan finds the 80-foot setback adequate, and stated it would be appropriate for the Commission to discuss.

Another item of discussion is the overall appropriateness of having a gate at all. There have been several gated communities approved in the past, but the Council denied the requests for gates at the Standard Pacific and The Creek projects. While grading will be significant, it will also alleviate existing concerns with drainage onto the surrounding lots. The project proposes to preserve the knoll and the oak tree at the top. The developer is conditioned to build a decorative masonry wall around the property and will try to work with adjoining neighbors to eliminate a double wall situation and provide better drainage. He outlined the tree replacement plan which is proposed at a 2:1 ratio.

Manager Hensley stated the sole access would be from Lone Hill Avenue and would not utilize Americana Drive. He described the various floor plans and architectural elements and stated each lot had a house plan specifically designed for that location. The average house size is 4,200 square feet and spoke about the difference in size to the surrounding neighborhood and how the massing issue was addressed.

The Environmental Review Committee had a variety of proposed mitigation measures. He stated the Planning Commission should consider whether there is adequate access and the policy issue of allowing a gated community or not.

Commissioner Ensberg asked if the City had a policy requiring a certain percentage of a project to be affordable, and when is that considered.

Manager Hensley stated the General Plan Housing Element certified by the State in 2002 sets policy for overall and affordable housing requirements. There is an affordable requirement when a project is in a redevelopment area, but this property was not addressed in the Housing Element and affordability did not apply to this site.

Commissioner Bratt inquired about the amount of block walls on the plan. He also asked if the proposed storm drain would run down the common area or would it be in a concrete culvert or placed underground.

Manager Hensley stated there will be a large quantity of block walls on the property needed for retaining purposes since a large amount of grading is proposed. He stated there will be a v-gutter around the perimeter of the project and the rest of the run-off will go into the storm drain system on the street.

Commissioner Rahi expressed concern about the lack of a sidewalk next to the park which appears to have been removed for landscaping because he felt it created discontinuity for pedestrians. He also inquired about the community gate.

Manager Hensley stated there is still some discussion in regards to the sidewalk at the park but currently there isn't one in the design based on the gated entrance. In regards to the gate, he felt the Commission should consider the information provided by the Traffic Engineer and the applicant. Staff's concern is that there may not be enough clearance for the owner of Lot 1 to turn into the driveway when the gate was fully opened.

The Commission discussed the stacking and two-lane approach to the community.

Commissioner Ensberg stated he was opposed to having gates on residential projects.

Commissioner Rahi expressed concerns about controlling users of the private park if there wasn't a gate.

Vice-Chairman Schoonover asked for clarification between the original assessment of the Traffic Committee that 100 feet minimum was required for stacking space, but now the Traffic Engineer is stating 80 feet would be adequate.

Commissioner Rahi stated his experience is that 100 feet is a rule-of-thumb for stacking distance but you would need to know how many cars are going to access the property to be precise.

Vice-Chairman Schoonover asked if traffic from the Costco project would impact this intersection. He also had questions regarding the wall between Lots 13-16 and the properties on St. George.

Manager Hensley stated the Costco has already been taken into consideration and will not have an impact on the signal. The only difference is that it will become a 4-way signal instead of the current 3-way configuration. He added that for Lots 13-16, there will be a garden wall at the rear of the lot with approximately 8-10 feet between the walls. Lot 16 is approximately 20 feet higher than the lot on St. George and the corner lot of Americana, but to keep in mind that those lots also have rear-yard slopes, so the entire slope is not in the project area.

Vice-Chairman Schoonover opened the meeting for public hearing. Addressing the Commission were:

Guy Williams, 425 W. Bonita Avenue, Suite 202, stated he was the consultant representing Walton Development Company. Both Everett and Scott Hughes, Principals, were present tonight. He stated they have reviewed all conditions associated with the project and concur with them except for Condition #8 which requires removal of the entry gates. He was also the consultant on the project approved in 1989 for a 29-lot gated community. The Hughes' have been working more than two years on this property, which has many economic constraints. Originally 22 units were proposed for the project, but when the Council expressed concern about maintaining the knoll, they reduced the number by four and created the park area. The applicant feels the entry gate is virtually mandatory with this project because of the proximity of the industrial park across Lone Hill, combined with the fact this property has always been gated. If it is not a gated community, they did not see the feasibility of maintaining a private street and park.

In regards to alignment with Overland Court, the new entrance will be aligned. A signalization analysis was done in 1989 but they will do a current one. They are also concerned about stacking at the entry, but there are only 18 lots within the community and there is stacking space for eight full-size cars.

Commissioner Ensberg inquired about the necessity to build homes that were twice as large as the surrounding neighborhood. He also asked what was the prevalence of gated communities in San Dimas.

Guy Williams stated the surrounding homes were built a long time ago, and while they are all nicely maintained, the market demand has changed and most new construction is in the 4,000 to 5,000 sq. ft. range. Their primary concern was maintaining the scenic view vistas. They held a meeting with the surrounding homeowners last week and presented the project. He felt it was acceptable to the homeowners in attendance. There were some concerns expressed about the location of property lines, and stated they will survey the property and clarify boundaries for the neighbors. He spoke about the drainage improvements that will help the adjoining neighbors. He thought there were five to six developments in the Via Verde area that had gates, and of all the gated communities he has seen in the City, he felt this one warranted a gate the most due to topography, location to industrial users and the Costco project.

Commissioner Bratt asked if the Commission denied the gate, would that stop the project.

Guy Williams stated no, but felt things would change. They would have to take another look at whether to have a park since they would have no control over outside access. Also, they would not want a private street with private utilities if it was open so that would also change. They have worked two years making improvements on the project. As to Lot 1 they do not think there will be an access problem. A back-up area is being provided on the lot so that the homeowner can exit the driveway front first.

Mark Tabak, 1139 St. George, stated he has lived in the neighborhood for 23 years and felt this was the best proposal presented thus far. His only concern is that Lot 16, which is adjacent to his backyard, has the largest second story plan, and would like to see a smaller second story plan built there. Other than that, he liked everything else about the plan.

Commissioner Ensberg asked if he has spoken to his neighbors about the size of the proposed houses and were there any concerns.

Mark Tabak stated they did not have a problem with the size and felt it would help their property values.

Everett Hughes, President of Walton Development, stated they had a meeting with approximately 20-25 neighbors in attendance. The neighbors did not have any problems with the size of the proposed houses, it was mostly concern about privacy issues as expressed by Mr. Tabak. Many of the existing homes in the area have been remodeled to 2,000 to 2,500 sq. ft. The architect hired for the project is renowned in the field and has won many top awards for design. Special care was used because of the topography and they made sure to make the second floors a minor feature of the houses.

There being no further comments, the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Ensberg asked if there was a City policy in regards to gated communities, or was it handled on a case-by-case review.

Manager Hensley stated it is a case-by-case decision. The most recent submittal was for The Creek project, and the majority of the Council felt a gate was not the best choice, but did not feel

the reasons for that decision necessarily translated to this project. The Gables was built a few years prior and it was approved with a gate.

Commissioner Ensberg stated he is in favor of having a gate at this location. He also would like reference to the “crib wall” removed and replaced with a more accurate description of what is being proposed. While he would like to see an affordable component in all new housing developments, overall he felt this was a quality development.

Commissioner Rahi concurred. He felt the revised Traffic Engineer’s sketch should be given to the Development Plan Review Board for consideration.

Commissioner Bratt stated he is not a fan of community gates and doesn’t think they provide the security that everyone assumes they do. In this case, though, there is a private street and park located across the street from a large commercial/industrial development and felt a gate was appropriate. He felt this was the best plan he has seen in 20 years and it would benefit the surrounding neighborhoods.

Vice-Chairman Schoonover stated he was glad to hear that the developer met with the neighbors to discuss any concerns they might have. He felt it was a good project and a lot has been done to protect the surrounding area with appropriate screening and landscape.

RESOLUTION PC-1350

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 04-01 (60865), A REQUEST TO SUBDIVIDE A 7.75 ACRE PARCEL INTO 18 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL LOTS ON THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 309 NORTH LONE HILL AVENUE (APN 8383-012-019)

MOTION: Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Bratt to adopt the Negative Declaration and approve Resolution PC-1350 with the omission of Conditions 8 and 46. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0-1 (Badar absent).

ORAL COMMUNICATION

5. Planning Manager

Manager Hensley stated the contractor started work today on the Walker House Restoration Project, which is a 540-day construction process. The construction fence is up to secure the property and for the first few months it will be interior work including asbestos and lead paint abatement.

6. Members of the Audience

No communications were made.

7. Planning Commission

Commissioner Ensberg asked for clarification of the process for 405 W. Gladstone because the Commission approved a certain recommendation to Council, but when staff presented the case, they had a different recommendation.

Manager Hensley stated it is a very rare occurrence when staff would take any recommendation to the Council other than what the Commission approved, and no disrespect was meant to the Commission. However, in this instance, after the Commission meeting the developer brought in a revised grading plan which had a proposed negative impact on the neighbor. Staff presented the Commission's full recommendation in the staff report for the Council to review, but because of the change, felt it was necessary to make a different recommendation.

Commission Bratt felt it was inappropriate for staff to take a different recommendation to the Council than what the Commission had approved and stated if the plan had changed that drastically, staff should have advised the Council of that and recommend bringing the item back to the Commission to review prior to Council's final approval.

Vice-Chairman Schoonover stated he understood Commissioner Bratt's feelings, and stated if there was that significant of a change to the plans, he would like the opportunity to review it again. The staff report may have thoroughly explained the Commission's decision-making process, but that is not what came through on the presentation which was broadcast on television, and all the public knew is that staff was making a different recommendation than the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Vice-Chairman Schoonover adjourned the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for March 7, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Emmett Badar, Chairman
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Craig Hensley

Planning Manager

Approved: March 7, 2007