

CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Thursday, June 2, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

Present

Chairman Jim Schoonover
Commissioner John Davis
Commissioner M. Yunus Rahi
Assistant City Manager of Comm. Dev. Larry Stevens
Director of Development Services Dan Coleman
Planning Secretary Jan Sutton

Absent

Commissioner Dave Bratt
Commissioner Stephen Ensberg

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Chairman Schoonover called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and Commissioner Davis led the flag salute.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes: April 20, 2011
 May 4, 2011

MOTION: Moved by Davis, seconded by Rahi to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously, 3-0-2 (Bratt, Ensberg absent).

COMMISSION BUSINESS

2. **REVIEW OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT LIST**

Assistant City Manager of Community Development Larry Stevens stated the Project List is maintained for the benefit of the Council and Staff, and it is updated approximately twice a year. The list is comprised of items that have been prioritized by importance, items to continue tracking, and items that may not be technically a project but are topics of interest that need to be followed.

The first part of the list consists of active projects. In regards to the Downtown Specific Plan, Staff is hoping to have a hearing on this item in the fall, but since the next part of the process will probably be done in-house and not by the consultant, that schedule could change. This would include incorporating the current CG-2 zone and expanding the boundaries to areas

outside of the zone as identified through the charrette process, such as the packing house and industrial buildings that are in Specific Plan No. 23. These buildings have been designated in the Housing Element as a future location for multi-family housing, so they are looking for ways to incorporate that into the Specific Plan as well. It would also extend east to Walnut to include the area for the proposed Gold Line Station. While he had a draft Specific Plan from the consultant, he felt it needed to be simplified before holding the public meetings.

He stated they have identified the more important properties, such as the Bonita/Cataract property, the Johnstone Block, parcels adjacent to Bank of America, the west side of Exchange Place, the Sheriff's facility, Grove Station and the Cirrito parcel, and will focus on utilizing a form-based code on the target opportunity sites, letting them maintain their current function until they are interested in redeveloping, and then the City can look at them comprehensively like they did with the hardware store for mixed use. Staff is also looking at modifications to the intersection of Bonita/Cataract to support the Gold Line crossing and would like to see a flyover to minimize intersection closures.

Commissioner Davis stated since Bonita Avenue is an east/west street, it would be considered a commuter street, and asked if that was considered a positive or negative for the Downtown.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated it is not necessarily good for Downtown, but they can work around that. He has also been trying to get the Gold Line Authority to recognize that Bonita/Cataract is valuable as an entrance to the Downtown.

Commissioner Davis was concerned that if they narrow Bonita Avenue west of the train tracks, it will make it unfriendly to commuters.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated they would only be narrowing the street one block west of where it narrows now so it would be about the same impact. Staff is trying to balance moving traffic to Arrow Highway and the merchants' desire to have traffic in front of their stores. The Council has also given direction to look at removing the Liquid Ambar trees and eliminating the wood sidewalks and western facades, and moving towards a more "historical" look in the Downtown area, but any redevelopment will depend on what the State does with redevelopment funding. He also presented information on the preliminary analysis of incorporating offices or residential units on the second floor of the unreinforced masonry Johnstone building on the south side of Bonita Avenue. This part of the building had residential uses in the 1930's through the 1950's. Any new project would require seismic retrofitting of the building, but again, it will depend on the availability of funding.

He stated they are also working with five downtown property owners on façade upgrades. These include the buildings owned by O'Malley's florist, Cyndia Williams, and the three west of exchange place, excluding the Shoemaker building. He discussed issues associated with the Shoemaker building and why the City is not interested in purchasing the building, but how it may have an impact on the decisions of the neighboring property owners. Staff has been exploring other options for the facades, such as utilizing other materials and only using wood as an accent, and exposing the clerestory windows.

Commissioner Davis asked if there was a strong push to stay with the western theme because he and a number of people feel it should be phased out and a more historical look used.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated when the City Council discussed the sidewalks they indicated they would like to move away from the western theme so Staff is moving more

towards a historical look. They have to be aware of structural issues however, and are looking for appropriate materials to improve the façades that won't require structural work to the buildings themselves.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated another project is the Walnut Creek Preserve encompassing the 60 acre property purchased in conjunction with the Rivers and Mountain Conservancy (RMC). The RMC has hired a consultant, and they will be working with the Tzu Chi on developing a plan. He expects there will be community workshops in the fall regarding this. The RMC is taking the lead and the City is participating with them.

Chairman Schoonover asked if they will be taking access off Loma Vista Park.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated access to the City's six acres will likely be through the park. The City will need to provide some sort of access to the RMC, either in conjunction with the City's, or limited access through the gate on Calle Bandera. Their use is primarily a nature preserve so they may have trails, a trailhead and facilities to take school children on nature walks. The Tzu Chi would like to add an elementary school to their property. They will try to coordinate the Tzu Chi's master plan with ours on a general basis but isn't sure how that will work out.

Another project Staff has been working on is the renovation of the covered wagon and City entry and directional signs. The Council has determined they prefer a plan utilizing a platform, columns and an arch to replace the existing wagon. They are also looking to incorporate a field wagon which was commonly used in the citrus industry. This will be a way to introduce packing crate labels to the design and it will be consistent with the historic framework they want to move towards.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated the General Plan update has been put on hold due to budget issues. While they want to do an update, the cost can be upwards of \$750,000.

Staff is continuing to work with the property owner on replacing the Village Court freeway sign near the Red Roof Inn that should have been removed when the new Lowe's sign was installed. Staff is also exploring different approaches for processing community events through the city process. Work is continuing on rezoning properties relative to the Housing Element. They are reviewing standards for downtown relative to setbacks, working with the City Attorney on the status/use of the M&E building, working on updating horsekeeping standards in regards to subdivision of equestrian property, and updating the non-conforming uses and standards.

He stated last year they conducted an energy audit using COG and grant money on how to improve energy efficiency in the City Hall, and are working thru COG on SB375 air quality standards. At Bonita Canyon Gateway the commercial portion is almost complete and the developer is working on finding financing for the residential portion, though they will need to come back through the entitlement process again. At Grove Station there is a significant issue relative to the sewer lines so they are holding release of occupancy on the 14 units along San Dimas Avenue until everything is worked out. The City has also received applications to develop an Olive Garden restaurant and a Panda Express drive-through at the Costco center.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated NJD has received their entitlements and have 11-12 years to start development, and the City is working on getting a license for trails through the lower McHenry property. The property at the end of Valley Center has been purchased by the Tzu Chi; at this point they do not have any plans to develop it and the City is monitoring the erosion control measures in place at the site. He stated the City Council has appointed a Subcommittee to investigate ways to improve and enhance San Dimas Station. Staff is also

working with Metro on a location for the Gold Line Station, and that the draft EIR for the Gold Line should be ready sometime this fall for the City to review. He stated this was just a quick overview of some of the projects being worked on by Staff, and they have quite a few current projects they are working while trying to move forward on these larger projects.

Commissioner Rahi asked about the status of the old Sheriff's Station on San Dimas Avenue, and if there was any talk of adding a parking structure to the downtown area.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated the County is still utilizing the building and at the next meeting with Supervisor Antonovich the City will ask what the long-term plans for it will be. During the charettes on the downtown, the idea of adding a parking structure to downtown was brought up with mixed reactions, but at this time there is more than enough public parking available.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

3. Director of Development Services

Director of Development Services Dan Coleman stated the High Speed Rail Authority was hosting an open house next Wednesday at Ladera Serra Park for the public to provide input on the EIR for the proposed High Speed Rail project. It is an informal, drop-in format and will run from 4:00-7:00 p.m.

4. Members of the Audience

No communications were made.

5. Planning Commission

Commissioner Davis stated he would be out of town for the June 16th meeting.

Commissioner Bratt stated he would be out of town for the July 7th meeting.

Chairman Schoonover stated he would be out of town for the July 21st meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved by Davis, seconded by Rahi to adjourn. Motion carried, 3-0-2 (Bratt, Ensberg absent). The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for June 16, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.

James Schoonover, Chairman
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Jan Sutton
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: September 21, 2011