

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES
November 22, 2011 at 8:30 A.M.
245 EAST BONITA AVENUE
CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL**

PRESENT

*Emmett Badar, City Council
David Bratt, Planning Commission
Dan Coleman, Director of Development Services
Scott Dilley, Chamber of Commerce
Blaine Michaelis, City Manager (arrived at 8:38 a.m.)
Krishna Patel, Public Works
John Sorcinelli, Public Member at Large*

CALL TO ORDER

David Bratt called the regular meeting of the Development Plan Review Board to order at 8:35 a.m. so as to conduct regular business in the City Council Conference Room.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Scott Dilley moved, second by Dan Coleman, to approve the minutes of October 6, 2011. Motion carried 4.0.0.3 (Badar, Bratt and Sorcinelli Abstain)

Tree Permit No. 11-40

A request to remove seven (7) Eucalyptus trees within the Common Area at Tiburon Puddingstone Homeowners Association.

Zone: Single-Family 10,000 (RPD-6)

Assistant Planner Concepcion is requesting to remove seven (7) Eucalyptus trees in the Tiburon Puddingstone Homeowners Association. The table below identifies the approximate locations and reasons for removal.

Tree #	Common Area Location adjacent to	Species	Trunk Diameter	Reason for Removal
1	758 Knollwood	Eucalyptus	34"	Poor form/Leaning
2	758 Knollwood	Eucalyptus	36"	Poor form/Leaning
3	765 Knollwood	Eucalyptus	20"	Leaning
4	765 Knollwood	Eucalyptus	32"	Leaning
5	765 Knollwood	Eucalyptus	32"	Leaning
6	765 Knollwood	Eucalyptus	35"	Leaning
7	765 Knollwood	Eucalyptus	22"	Deep wound on trunk

Assistant Planner Concepcion stated that the Gingko Boloba trees are proposed as replacement trees at 1:1 ratio (totaling seven trees). The trees will be planted in the same vicinity as the ones proposed for removal. The applicant also provided a tree survey that was prepared by their certified arborist. Trees 1 and 2, the Eucalyptus trees have poor structure due to the trees previously being topped. Trees 3, 4, and 5 are tightly spaced and are growing at an angle leaning towards existing building residences. Tree 6 grows at an angle and is also leaning over an existing building residence. Tree 7 appears to have declining health and has a deep wound at the base of the tree and appears bare. Staff recommends the removal of all 7 Eucalyptus trees with a tree replacement plan, with the ratio at 1:1 rather than the required 2:1 with Gingko Boloba's as the replacement tree due to the already significant amount of mature trees throughout the Tiburon Puddingstone HOA development.

Mr. Patel asked if the replacement trees will be planted in the same area.

Assistant Planner Concepcion replied that all 7 trees will be replanted in the same greenbelt area.

Mr. Badar asked the species of the replacement trees.

Assistant Planner Concepcion replied Gingko Boloba.

MOTION: Moved by Emmett Badar, seconded by Scott Dilley to approve with a tree replacement ratio of 1:1.

Motion carried 7-0

DPRB Case No. 11-50

A request to approve an off-site directional sign at the intersection of S. Valley Center Avenue and Gainsborough Road for the property at 1100 S Valley Center Avenue.

Zone: Specific Plan No. 4

Tony Chen, on behalf of Tzu Chi Foundation, was present
Peter Chiu, on behalf of Tzu Chi Foundation, was present

Associate Planner Espinoza stated that the applicant representing the Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation submitted an application for an "off-site directional monument sign." The access onto the property is off a private driveway at S. Valley Center Avenue and Gainsborough Rd. The directional sign is proposed adjacent to the private driveway at the intersection of S. Valley Center Avenue and Gainsborough Road. The applicant has met the requirements permitted by code for the height and size of the sign which will be 8" high stone veneer based topped by a 40-inch high stucco sign. Staff feels that the monument is designed similar to a tract sign found in many residential projects that does not create a negative visual effect and added that the Tzu Chi property cannot be seen from the street due to its location at the base of the canyon.

Associate Planner Espinoza pointed out Staff's concerns which include: the choice of color being used for the lettering, the repetition of the name Tzu Chi on the sign, the appropriateness of the inclusion of a logo, the material used for the arrow and the proposed location due to the possibility it may be encroaching into the undeveloped parkway. The letters proposed are blue and green Plexiglas; however, Staff feels letters with metal material are preferable. He explained that the location of the monument sign is on a portion of the property that is purchased. A detailed dimension site plan still needs to be submitted and added that the sign is not in the unimproved parkway and does not obstruct the line of sight to access the property.

Mr. Badar asked if directional signs fall under any new sign codes that have been amended recently and asked if Staff has reviewed the outstanding concerns with the applicant.

Associate Planner Espinoza replied that it does not apply to any new amendments in the sign code update and added he has spoken with the applicant about remedies for the outstanding issues.

David Bratt, Planning Commissioner, asked if there is a religious significance behind the colors used for the sign.

Tony Chen, applicant, replied that the blue and green have always been the colors associated with the Tzu Chi Foundation.

Mr. Patel commented he doesn't have a problem with the sign; however, the street drops down 30 ft. and the right-of-way is 10-15 ft. away from the public right-of-way which will cause line of sight issues.

Mr. Badar stated that the applicant will need to have the location surveyed.

Mr. Patel added that even if it is surveyed, it will be challenging.

Mr. Coleman stated that the sign is not allowed in the right-of-way and may need to be elevated from the base but not until the location is surveyed, then a visible analysis can be done. He recommended extending the base up.

Mr. Sorcinelli asked if Staff objects to the right-of-way.

Mr. Patel replied that the directional sign causes liability issues.

Mr. Sorcinelli asked if the surface was stucco.

Associate Planner Espinoza replied that the structure is stucco over metal.

Mr. Chen commented that the letters are routed out and the Plexiglas is pushed through the face.

Mr. Sorcinelli asked if the sign is illuminated.

Mr. Coleman commented that the sign is not illuminated and it defeats the purpose it would serve since the sign should be visible at night.

Mr. Sorcinelli stated that the colors are unrealistic and asked the applicant to provide color samples at the next meeting.

Mr. Badar asked if an illuminated monument sign exists.

Associate Planner Espinoza replied not in residential zones but in commercial those signs can exist.

Mr. Badar stated that he is not sure if the surrounding community will want to see this type of sign at the end of their street.

Mr. Sorcinelli added that the sign will work without having to be illuminated from all directions.

Mr. Coleman asked if there are any directional signs currently.

Mr. Chen replied yes and added that the sign is 18 by 24 but is difficult to locate.

Mr. Badar stated that his concerns are the colors used and asked if the applicant has addressed all other issues.

Mr. Chen replied the colors are used to represent the Tzu Chi Foundation and added they will work with all outstanding issues. He pointed out the Tzu Chi appears twice because one is standard to be used with the logo but the other is solely to state the name of the foundation.

Associate Planner Espinoza explained that the sign will read Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation with Tzu Chi omitted the 2nd time and added that the applicant agrees with this.

Mr. Coleman pointed out his concern with construction before the street improvements occur and added it may be challenging.

Mr. Patel pointed out to the applicant that the once the finished improvements occur, it will be a lot easier to install the directional sign.

Peter Chiu, applicant, asked what suggestions Staff has to offer.

Mr. Patel recommended that the sign be installed outside of the right-of-way, that the improvements occur first, and then the sign be installed.

Associate Planner Espinoza added that this item can be continued and explained the street improvements to the applicant.

Mr. Chiu emphasized that it is necessary to install a larger sign for directional purposes.

Mr. Badar asked if there can be a temporary sign installed in the meantime.

Mr. Patel responded that the directional signs are restricted in size and the Public Works Department is responsible for these types of signs.

Mr. Badar asked when the street improvements are expected to occur and if they have been designed yet.

Mr. Sorcinelli pointed out that both should occur together.

Mr. Chiu stated that they will take all these suggestions into consideration; however, there needs to be an enlarged sign.

Mr. Badar stated that there has been a lot of discussion and added that this item needs to be continued so that the Public Works Department can sit down with the applicant.

Mr. Michaelis asked what Staff recommends for color usage.

Associate Planner Espinoza replied that there is an objection for Plexiglas use because it is used more for commercial developments.

Mr. Sorcinelli agreed with using metal material versus Plexiglas.

MOTION: Moved by Emmett Badar, seconded by Dan Coleman to continue the item so that the applicant can work with the Public Works and Planning Department in regards to the street improvements that will affect the installation of the proposed directional sign, color samples must be provided at the next meeting and that Plexiglas is not used for the letters but metal material instead.

Motion carried 7-0

DPRB Case No. 11-49

Previously approved under DPRB Case No. 08-20, approval has since expired. The applicant is requesting re-approval to construct a one-story 6,100 sq. ft. medical center at 1359 W. Arrow Highway.

APN: 8383-016-011

Zone: Specific Plan No. 2

Ben Kawachi, property owner of 674 S Walnut Ave, was present
Juan Kivotos, architect, was present

Daniel Minehart, was present

Associate Planner Espinoza stated that this project was approved by the Board and Planning Commission in 2008; however, the approval of the project has since expired. The developer has been going through the plan check process and is nearing completion; however, the issuing of building permits is on hold until the project is reapproved. The re-approval is for a one-story 6,100 sq. ft. medical center with a Spanish architectural theme. The lot is currently vacant and has a 10-foot vehicular easement along the east property line that is vacated as part of this project. The building will have architectural features such as: smooth plaster finish, mission clay roof tile, decorative parapet walls, arched colonnade, decorative tile quatrefoils, decorative tile inserts and decorative still moldings. The parking requirements have been met for this project.

Associate Planner Espinoza pointed out that there is an outstanding issue with the previous approval that needs to be revised. The issue is the 10-foot wide access easement that crosses four of the residential properties cannot be totally vacated as previously approved. Staff has removed the condition and discussed the total vacation of the easement and the property reverting back to the four property owners. The vacations of the easement are not possible because it was discovered that there are a total of three man holes within the easement. Since they are required to be maintenance, the access to them cannot be blocked. Instead, the developer will be conditioned to install a 10-foot wide, six-foot high wrought-iron gate with perforated metal painted on dark brown at the north ease corner of the property line. The gate will prevent vehicular access except for maintenance workers to access the manholes which will have a padlock that will be given to LA County Sewer and the City only. Surrounding homeowners were notified of the project and of the meeting date via certified and regular mail. The project is still the same as previously presented and approval is recommended with a few minor modifications.

Mr. Sorcinelli asked if the storm drains are draining water at the back of the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Patel replied that the street above, which is Kennedy Rd., has their water draining down from the North to the South and then drains to the West.

Mr. Michaelis asked if the property at the end of St. George Ct. is privately owned.

Associate Planner Espinoza replied yes and added it has the potential for four lots.

Mr. Patel stated that when that property is developed, it will be required to have a wall and be built to the west of the property line.

Mr. Bratt pointed out that the undeveloped property is where it has been agreed a driveway will be built and asked if it will be done soon.

Associate Planner Espinoza replied yes and added that the property owners told the City they wanted something simple.

Mr. Patel asked what Condition of Approval triggers that.

Associate Planner Espinoza replied Condition No. 24 which states that the developer shall legally vacate the existing 10-foot wide access easement, with consent of the property owner at 1353 W Arrow Hwy, prior to the issuance of grading or building permits. Also, the developer shall provide a new solid driveway for access.

MOTION: Moved by John Sorcinelli, seconded by Krishna Patel to approve with standard conditions.

Motion carried 7-0

DPRB Case No. 11-46

A request to allow a professional office use to be located on the ground floor within the Frontier Village area at 100 North San Dimas Avenue.

APN: 8387-009-038

Zone: Creative Grown (CG-2)

Angela Jakum, applicant, was present
Georgia Valaskatjis, property owner, was present

Associate Planner Grabow stated that the request to is establish a new office use on the ground floor. The building is located within the Creative Growth; Area 2 Zone in the General Plan designation is commercial. The applicant would like to open a business that provides: taxes, real estate, lending, bookkeeping, and general clerical. The office will be opened 3 to 4 days a week during the daytime. During tax season, January 15 – April 15, the business will operate by appointment basis; however, open to walk-in customers. There are currently no employees but potential to hire 2-3 independent tax accountants to help during the beginning of the year but there will only be one tax accountant in the office at a time. The previous business to occupy this location was a salon. The parking lot occupied by the applicant is also shared with other businesses (restaurant, salon and office). During the lunch and dinner hours, the parking lot is typically full with restaurant customers. She pointed out that there are no parking requirements because it is located in a parking district which has parking lot approximately 200 feet away from the property line which could be a concern for any potential retailer or restaurant use. The outstanding issue is that professional and administrative offices are permitted in the downtown area but not on the ground floor of any structure unless approved by the Board. She added uses since 1990, there has been 13 office uses permitted and 4 requests denied. She added that Staff has made the required findings for approval; therefore, recommends approval.

Mr. Michaelis asked about the layout of the business.

Associate Planner Grabow responded that currently there is one office, lobby, one storage room and one bathroom and if approved, it will go through the building permit process so that there will be 2 additional office spaces.

Mr. Badar asked how many people will be working during tax season.

Associate Planner Grabow responded two to three employees at the location and during office hours only one employee will be there with clients.

Mr. Badar expressed his concern with the parking and stated that there is not much available even for three to four employees. He noted that if this item is approved, the manager/owner will need to persuade employees to use the public parking lots.

Angela Jakum, applicant, agreed with parking situation and added that she agreed that her employee's will park in the public parking lot so that there are more available parking spots at the store front for business patrons.

Mr. Badar asked if Staff has heard from any potential buyers in regards to having opening up a business at this location. He commented that this item will end up in front of City Council if denied.

Associate Planner Grabow stated that she did not hear any comments from the public and added neighbor notifications were sent out to surrounding properties.

Mr. Bratt commented that the entire center is awkward due to its parking limitations.

Mr. Sorcinelli commented that there are not enough retail businesses in the area and decided that this is not a use he will support. He added that a retail use will bring a lot more activity and pointed out that there are other areas within the City that this type of use would fit very well at. He pointed out that there are vacant office spaces available on the second floor in the Downtown area.

Gloria Valakatjis, property owner, explained that the only type potential tenants calling for this location have been for real estate and office uses and not retail businesses. She added that during these difficult financial times, a new tenant for a landlord and job opportunities for employees seems like fortunate opportunity.

Mr. Sorcinelli commented that retail business need to be promoted.

Associate Planner Grabow pointed out a goal in the General Plan is to revitalize and improve downtown as a community focus by incorporating the objective to encourage office and mixed uses to increase day time population of downtown to support the retail and service establishment such as restaurants and other business in downtown and emphasized this type of business falls under that.

Mr. Sorcinelli stated that by approving this project, Staff will be chipping away at retail opportunities. He recommended that the building owner consider remodeling the building to meet the needs that are suitable for retailers.

Mr. Coleman agreed with Mr. Sorcinelli that the Downtown area is a distinct place and if this office use if approved, it will hinder retail businesses to move in.

Mr. Dilley stated that the center does not have enough parking. However it is in a parking district. This is a use that will add diversity and encouraged approval. He explained that there are other uses besides restaurants that will bring more foot traffic into the City and recommended giving this use a chance.

Mr. Sorcinelli commented that surrounding cities are making strides to bring more retail businesses into their City and added that this City should mimic that.

Ms. Valaskatjis added she respects the Board's opinion but argued that if parking is limited, why a retail business would be more favorable.

Mr. Dilley stated that this seems to be a case by case situation, which is why it has been brought to the Board and commended Staff's findings.

Mr. Patel agreed with Mr. Coleman and Mr. Sorcinelli that the City should strive for more retail businesses and emphasized that it cannot be done if retail spaces are being approved for office uses.

Mr. Badar added that he will abstain from the vote since it will be presented to City Council.

MOTION: Moved by Scott Dilley, seconded by Blaine Michaelis to approve the office use on the ground floor.

Motion failed 3-3-0-1 (Bratt, Dilley and Michaelis Yes and Coleman, Patel, and Sorcinelli No and Badar Abstain)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m. to the meeting of December 8, 2011 at 8:30 a.m.