

CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

Present

Chairman Jim Schoonover
Commissioner Dave Bratt
Commissioner John Davis
Commissioner Stephen Ensberg
Commissioner M. Yunus Rahi

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Chairman Schoonover called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. and Commissioner Bratt led the flag salute.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes: December 21, 2011 (Bratt, Rahi absent)

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. **CONSIDERATION OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 11-10** – A request to construct 67 townhomes within the undeveloped portion of the Grove Station, located on a 5.29 acre property on the east side of San Dimas Avenue, south of the railroad tracks and north of Arrow Highway. (APNs: 8390-018-077, -082, -085, -086, -087, -103, -106, -113, -116)

Staff report presented by *Associate Planner Marco Espinoza* who stated this is for the rear portion of Grove Station that was previously approved for 96 residential units, but due to the economic downturn was never constructed. Olson Company is in the process of acquiring the property and is proposing to build 67 townhomes. They have also submitted an application for Lot Line Adjustments to conform to the proposed project. There will be twelve separate building pods, two to three stories in height, and each unit will have a two-car garage at ground level. They are also proposing to construct the project in phases; Phase 1 will be buildings 1-2, then 3-4. After 50% of Building 4 has been sold, then they will continue with the next phase. He described the size of the units and the parking requirements. The General Plan allows for a density of 16 units per acre; the project as proposed is at 12.74 units per acre, well below the maximum standard. Originally the project was going to provide seven affordable units and only

four have been built. Due to the recent abolishment of Redevelopment Agencies, it is uncertain if the original agreement is still valid, and Staff is continuing to review that issue.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated it was determined the project will not cause a greater impact than the previous project so they will be utilizing the previously approved Mitigated Negative Declaration. In order to comply with legislative changes regarding greenhouse gases, Olson is proposing to build the project to LEED standards. The design incorporates an early California industrial theme and went over the features of the project. He stated the DPRB did a preliminary review of the project at their January 12, 2012 meeting and raised a number of issues. The applicant is in the process of addressing these issues, including trash enclosure design, access to certain buildings from the parking area, use of alternative materials, and providing a variety of garage doors.

Commissioner Ensberg asked if the concerns brought up by the DPRB are still under discussion. He also asked if by reducing the number of units, that makes it a better project.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated most of the issues have been resolved except the trash container design. Olson feels they cannot accommodate the requested access to the second floor of the specified buildings so Staff will be taking that back to the Board for review. He stated as to the number of units proposed, it just makes it a different project and you can't really compare it to the original proposal.

Commissioner Davis asked why this required a CUP, and how does the reduction in housing units impact the City's RHNA numbers, when just a few years ago the City was being pushed to increase density.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated in this zone multi-family housing requires a CUP, and in regards to RHNA requirements, the City just had to zone properties to accommodate the numbers; they did not have to actually be built.

Commissioner Ensberg asked if Staff has taken a position on requiring some of the units to still be affordable even with the change to Redevelopment because he felt the need still existed and he would be in favor of requiring some type of affordability in this project.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated there is a need but funds provided through the Redevelopment Agency helped to offset the cost of providing affordable housing, and the City is still investigating what options are left to them after the recent court decision. A lot is still unknown at this time.

Commissioner Rahi asked if reducing the number of units on this site will impact the Housing Element, and how are they meeting the requirement for one guest parking space for every three units.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated not all of the properties identified in the Housing Element have been rezoned yet, and it might be possible to make up the lost units on one of the other parcels in order to comply with the numbers identified in the General Plan. In regards to guest parking, the project meets all parking requirements and the open parking spaces will not be designated specifically for resident or guest parking; they will just be available for anyone to park in.

Director of Development Services Dan Coleman stated Condition No. 19 in the resolution speaks to the issue of affordable housing. He stated Mr. Stevens has had discussions with Olson, and that it could be months before there is a final decision on this issue.

Commissioner Bratt stated so separate from the OPDDA, that will be a deciding factor on whether or not affordable housing is required, and wondered if there had been thought given to implementing some type of affordable housing either way.

Chairman Schoonover expressed concerns about the phasing of the project and the length of time being given to the developer for developing the final buildings without requiring some type of interim landscaping and thought that was proposed is longer than the standard time frame.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated this has been discussed with the applicant, and that once they start and there is continual development, then the project will be considered active.

Director Coleman clarified the conditions are saying that if the area does not develop in three years, then it will be fully landscaped as if complete, but temporarily the area will be hydroseeded.

Commissioner Bratt asked where the Gold Line Station would be located and how far from the tracks will the buildings be.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated the buildings are approximately 30 feet from the existing tracks. There has been discussion to put a platform along the north property line.

Director Coleman stated the latest concept is to use the existing track for freight, and then add a new track both north and south of the existing one for the Gold Line to run on. The Gold Line project has not been designed yet, but the previous project did record an easement to take people across the site if a platform is built there.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated that easement will now be vacated and a new easement will be recorded along the east property line to provide access to the Gold Line. He stated disclosure about the proposed station will be included in the CC&Rs.

Chairman Schoonover asked if there has been discussion to install a signal at Commercial Street due to the proposed project on the west side of San Dimas Avenue.

Director Coleman stated the prior project did not generate enough traffic to warrant a signal and this project is less intense.

Chairman Schoonover stated he was just concerned that if the Gold Line was built, people would park on the west side of San Dimas and want to cross at Commercial.

Associate Planner Espinosa stated a revised resolution was before the Commissioners which includes the mitigation measures as Exhibit A, a revision to Condition 4 which includes Phase 1 within the description, and a revision to Condition 14 that deletes subsection F.1 prohibiting roof-mounted air conditioning units because the project will have parapet walls to screen the units per code.

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

Allison Kunz, Vice President, Olson Company, who stated they are very excited to work on this site in San Dimas, and that their design team was present to answer any questions.

John Reekstin, Vice President of Community Development, Olson Company, stated they have been working with Staff on the issue of affordable housing knowing the potential for dissolution of the Redevelopment Agency may occur. He stated when they made the offer for this property they were willing to comply with the OPDDA, and if the agreement does survive, they will implement it. However, if it doesn't, then the project will be strictly market rate as they cannot build the affordable units without financial assistance. In response to Commissioner Ensberg he stated they need this process to be approved in order to close escrow with the receiver at the end of March.

Commissioner Davis asked what is the typical demographic for a project like this.

John Reekstin, Olson Company, stated they expect young professionals and young families with small children to be their main occupant. San Dimas is centrally located to Los Angeles, Orange and San Bernardino counties so they think these will do very well on the market. The previous product was denser with subterranean parking which has become less desirable since the economic downturn, but their proposed product seems to be selling well and will meet the minimum LEED certification.

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

Commissioner Ensberg stated there has already been an approved project on this site and felt the new proposal was actually better. He hopes the affordable housing component will remain and be part of the project, but either way he felt they need to move forward on this.

Commissioner Bratt concurred. He would like to see the affordable units remain regardless of the issues at the State level and that it is an element of community development that needs to be maintained, but overall agreed it is a very good project.

Commissioner Davis concurred but was disappointed the density was less than the previous plan.

Commissioner Rahi concurred and *Chairman Schoonover* felt it was superior to the previous project.

RESOLUTION PC-1457

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 11-10, A REQUEST BY OLSON URBAN HOUSING, LLC TO CONSTRUCT A 67 TOWNHOUSE STYLE COMPLEX AS PART OF THE GROVE STATION DEVELOPMENT ON THE PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE 100 BLOCK OF EAST COMMERCIAL STREET

MOTION: Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Davis to approve Conditional Use Permit 11-10 and adopt Resolution PC-1457 as amended. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

3. **CONSIDERATION OF REVISED TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 65790** – A request to revise the Tentative Map from its original approval, to change the street access for Lots 1 and 2 from Gladstone Street to Chaparral Road. The number of lots will remain the same at four, located at 405 W. Gladstone Street. (APN: 8392-015-029)

Staff report presented by *Associate Planner Marco Espinoza* who stated the applicant had previously submitted for subdivision of the property under TPM 06-02 to subdivide the one parcel into four lots. Staff's recommendation at that time was to reduce the number of lots to three to reduce grading, the number of tree removals and to eliminate the landlocked parcel to comply with code requirement and good planning practice. After discussion by the City Council, the project was approved as a four lot subdivision. Since then the tentative map has been revised to address issues raised by Staff and to change street access. The applicant is once again proposing four lots.

The subject property is located at 405 W. Gladstone, and the northeast corner is at the intersection of Cody and Chaparral Roads. There are currently several abandoned buildings on site that will be demolished as part of the project. The revised map has been reviewed by the Equestrian Commission, who recommended that Lots 3 and 4 take access off the private driveway. They also felt the revised map alleviates the steepness of Lots 1 and 2 for horse trailer access. The Environmental/Subdivision Committee also reviewed the revised map, and while they had concerns about the circulation of Lots 1 and 2, they did not recommend combining the lots.

This property is in the Single-Family Agricultural zone, and in 2000 the City Council adopted a policy by Resolution setting standards for subdivision. All of the proposed lots meet the minimum requirements of the policy. He went over the chart outlining the differences in cut and fill from the previous map and the revised map and stated that by vacating access from Gladstone Street, there was no longer a need for the high retaining walls for the driveways. Another issue was the number of trees proposed for removal. The applicant's arborist report identified 117 trees on site and the previous proposal would only retain 11 trees. The majority of trees to be removed were on Lots 1 and 2 on the southern portion, but with the deletion of the driveways from the south, they can now preserve 29 trees. Additionally, there are four oak trees on Lot 1 that Staff feels might be eligible for preservation, but that can't be determined until the location of the new walls are staked in the grading process. Staff would like to see a condition that would initially call for preservation of the oaks until a determination can be made on site. There are also two oak trees on Lot 3 that are currently shown within the proposed house pad. Staff would like to see the house pad relocated or the house built around them.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated previously vehicular access was a concern. The revised map has access to Lots 1 and 2 from a shared driveway at the northeast corner of the property, crossing Lot 2 to access Lot 1. The equestrian trail is along the new driveway for easier access. While on the previous map only Lot 2 was landlocked, in the revised map both Lots 1 and 2 will be landlocked. This is still a concern of Staff's because not only does the code encourage lots to take direct access from the street, it is also poor planning practice to create landlocked parcels. In rectifying one issue in regards to the grading, another has been created by increasing the number of landlocked parcels. Staff is recommending the elimination of Lot 2 to reduce the number of lots to three and utilizing the driveway from Gladstone where possible, and direct the applicant to bring back a revised map.

Commissioner Ensberg stated the map has been improved by the reduction in grading and tree removals, and felt the issue of having four lots has already been decided so did not understand why Staff was going back to trying to reduce the number of lots.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated three lots was Staff's original recommendation based on the intent of the code, and in that respect no changes have been made to address the landlocked parcels; thus they are recommending a reduction in the number of lots. In response to Commissioner Davis, he stated technically Lot 4 might be considered landlocked as well but it was felt the existing driveway provided access.

Chairman Schoonover stated the sign says it is a private road, and asked if it was a street or a driveway, and would the developer have to do something to utilize that access.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated it is a private driveway with easements maintained by the property owners. That is one of the access issues created with landlocked parcels in that there will need to be access easements and maintenance agreements recorded to take care of that driveway in the future.

Chairman Schoonover stated there may need to be an account created to deposit money into for future maintenance of the driveway and horse trail access. He felt access to Lots 3 and 4 for horse trailers would be difficult.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated there will be an elbow installed which will increase the radius for both driveways. The new driveway will be 20 feet wide, with a 10 foot equestrian trail adjoining the paved driveway. The existing driveway will be increased to 20 feet also.

Commissioner Davis stated it appeared there is a 20 foot change in elevation from the street to the lot pad.

Commissioner Bratt stated he is concerned about the driveway situation because repairs or repaving can be very costly for four homeowners to bear all the costs and felt they were inviting a huge problem down the road, though he also felt that accessing Gladstone was not reasonable.

Commissioner Rahi asked if instead of a private driveway if there had been any consideration given to extending Chaparral Road to Gladstone and dedicating it to the City.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated that idea was reviewed by RKA and it was determined that continuing the street to Gladstone was not viable. Staff has also had three different homeowners contact the City in the last few days stating they would be opposed to an access from Gladstone to Chaparral.

Chairman Schoonover opened the meeting for public hearing. Addressing the Commission was:

Stan Stringfellow, 326 W. Arrow Highway, Applicant, stated the original map approved in 2007 had a difficult and dangerous access to Gladstone, so they redesigned the map to improve safety. With the change in access and elimination of the previous grading, they have been able to relocate the house pad on Lot 1 which makes the development less congested, as well as relocating the equestrian trail to the side of the access easement. The addition of the knuckle will provide better access to Cody and Chaparral. In regards to the issue of the landlocked

parcels, he read from the resolution approved by the City Council in 2007 that cited the project was consistent with the General Plan and land use, and meets all the requirements of the SF-A 16,000 zone. He stated having landlocked parcels was not uncommon in this area, and felt this issue has already been addressed by the City Council. He also felt the access to the north was a safer alternative since the traffic has increased on Gladstone with the opening of Costco. In regards to the trees, he would agree to try and preserve the four oak trees as identified by Staff; however it may be more difficult to preserve the other two oak trees as that whole area will be raised 3-5 feet from current grade and it may require construction of a retaining wall around the drip line to save them. He objected to the phrase "if possible" because anything can be possible with the right amount of money, but in this case he felt it was impractical and would be very costly and time consuming to save the two trees. He felt the Commission should permit removal of the two oaks and leave the house where proposed, or if they wanted the trees preserved, to allow the house to be relocated to the south and restrict equestrian use on the lot and any construction that would adversely impact entrance to the lot.

Stan Stringfellow, Applicant, requested the Commission approve the following revisions to TPM 69750:

- Access to Lots 1 and 2 through a reciprocal access easement across the easterly boundary of Lot 3 and elimination of the Gladstone access;
- Relocation of the equestrian trail as shown on the revised Map, revised conceptual grading and retaining wall plans, and revised location and orientation of the building envelopes for Lots 1 and 2;
- Approve Staff's recommendation to make efforts to save trees 48, 49, 52 and 66 by redesigning the retaining wall and allowing some possible wall height increases, and approve removal of trees 6 and 7; or if not, to approve relocation of the building envelope to the south portion of Lot 3 with the house facing east and restrict the lot use;
- All other revisions as proposed in Revised Tentative Parcel Map 69750.

Commissioner Ensberg asked why this property has not been developed when approval was granted in 2007.

Stan Stringfellow, Applicant, stated he is not the current owner and there were issues with the economy, but was in the process of purchasing the property from them.

Commissioner Bratt stated he was concerned about the access to all the properties and asked what Mr. Stringfellow had in mind for maintaining the driveways.

Stan Stringfellow, Applicant, felt an access easement would create a way to handle it. He has spoken to one of the property owners to the west in regards to how the existing driveway will be impacted when the northern portion is widened to 20 feet, but that is still to be determined. He stated all of this will be disclosed up front in the deed to new buyers.

Commissioner Rahi asked if it had been considered making the extension of Chaparral a public cul-de-sac.

Stan Stringfellow, Applicant, stated this option had been reviewed but it would require a significant amount of grading and would create four lots back to back, which is not an ideal layout. He felt the current configuration is the best layout for the properties and will sell in this market.

Owner, 443 W. Gladstone, stated he preferred this revision with the entrance from Chaparral and not Gladstone, and was glad they were saving more trees. They currently have a maintenance easement on the existing driveway between three properties, and two homeowners maintain it now without any problems.

Don Davies, 713 Cataract, had concerns about drainage from his property as it currently drains to the west and wanted to know if that was going to change. He also had questions about the setback of the driveway from the property line, if two-story homes were going to be built, and what a casita is. He also felt the driveway should be concrete to limit maintenance on it.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated Mr. Davies' property is adjacent to Lots 2 and 3, and the intent was to have Lot 3 drain towards Chaparral and Cody. The flow from his property cannot be blocked and it will be accommodated. The setback of the driveway appears to be two feet from the property line. The applicant is proposing one-story houses on Lots 3 and 4, and per the Code, they are showing on the map where horse corrals can be located, but they do not have to be built. These lots are large enough to possibly have a second unit on them, but there are limitations on the size and who can live there.

Stan Stringfellow, Applicant, stated they will be addressing all the drainage issues in the construction documents. Currently they are not proposing to build the casitas; they just wanted to show where they could be located on the map in relation to the corrals. There are significant setback issues relative to horse keeping, which is another reason why he would like to be able to remove the two oak trees on Lot 3 so that they could meet all the setback requirements.

Mark Rief, 404 Mustang, stated he lives across from Lot 3 and is generally in favor of the project. He stated the private driveway has been well maintained all these years, so did not see that as an issue. His concern was if the elevation of Lots 3 and 4 would be at the original grade or the current grade created when a lot of dirt was brought in.

Director Coleman stated it would be 5-7 feet higher than the original grade, so roughly where it is now.

Naz Nageer, 412 Mustang, stated he was concerned with the widening of the private driveway behind his house because it now has the appearance of a road and wanted to be sure his children would be safe.

Pierre Brodeur, 450 Cody, stated he is concerned over who will be paying for repairs to the private driveway and how will it look when it gets to his property and turns south. He was concerned that when it is widened people will start parking on it. He supported new homes being built and wanted to cooperate, but was concerned about the homes being situated higher than his and how drainage would be addressed.

Andrea Mota, 482 Cody, and Naz Nageer, 412 Mustang, concurred with Mr. Brodeur's comments.

Stan Stringfellow, Applicant, stated he felt that all of the concerns expressed tonight by the neighbors could be reasonably dealt with in the construction documents. They will merge the widened drive to the existing 10-foot wide driveway to the south, and if the neighbors wanted, the new driveway could be posted as a private drive with no parking. The interior portion of the lots are lower than the existing public right-of-way so they will be raised just enough to drain

properly. The single-story homes will only be 25 feet in height and should have limited impact on the neighbors.

There being no further comments the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Ensberg felt the number of lots was decided in 2007 and did not think they needed to reconsider that issue. He stated the revisions to the map have made the project better and reduced the amount of grading and tree removals needed. The public comments show the surrounding neighbors are not opposed to the development in general, so he would be in support of the project.

Commissioner Davis stated he liked that the access to Gladstone has been removed. It looked like the building pads for Lots 3 and 4 were going to be raised just a couple of feet, and felt they should address the issue with trees 6 and 7, and whether they should be removed or not. He thought eliminating them was not a major issue and didn't think they should make the applicant go through extensive design work to save those two trees.

Commissioner Bratt wanted to be sure the homeowners' concerns about safety on the existing driveway on the west side were addressed, and wanted to know if there was a way to condition that all the driveways installed be concrete.

Associate Planner Espinoza stated that could be added to the conditions.

Chairman Schoonover stated he, too, was glad the access from Gladstone has been removed and prefers the new access. He also felt the driveways should be concrete. He was not concerned with the landlocked issue based on the new plan and was in favor of the project.

MOTION: Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Bratt to direct Staff to bring back the appropriate resolution recommending approval, including conditions that the driveways be made of concrete and allowing the removal of trees 6 and 7. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

4. Director of Development Services

Director Coleman stated there will be a community workshop on Business Improvement Districts and another community workshop on the Walnut Creek Preserve. Information on both of these events is posted on the City's website, along with information on a number of energy upgrade workshops, including one in San Dimas on May 1st. The City Council's first budget study session is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on February 28th.

5. Members of the Audience

No communications were made.

6. Planning Commission

Commissioner Rahi congratulated Associate Planner Espinoza on his five years of service to the City that was recently recognized at the City's Award Banquet.

Commissioner Davis stated he would not be attending the March 7th meeting as he would be out of the country.

Commissioner Rahi stated he did not think he would be attending the Planning Commissioner Institute in March.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Davis to adjourn. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for March 7, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

Jim Schoonover, Chairman
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Jan Sutton
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: April 4, 2012