

# CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting  
Thursday, February 6, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.  
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

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## **Present**

Chairman Jim Schoonover  
Commissioner David Bratt  
Commissioner John Davis  
Commissioner Stephen Ensberg  
Commissioner M. Yunus Rahi  
Senior Planner Marco Espinoza  
Planning Secretary Jan Sutton

## **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 Bratt led the flag salute.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Approval of Minutes: January 16, 2014 (Davis absent)

**MOTION:** Moved by Bratt, seconded by Ensberg to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried 4-0-0-1 (Davis abstain).

## **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **2. CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST TO INITIATE THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS:**

- **Municipal Code Text Amendment 13-08** – A request to create a new Specific Plan zone for a 48-unit single-family detached residential development.
- **Zone Change 13-01** – A request to rezone the project site from Light Agriculture (AL) to a new Specific Plan which would allow for the proposed development, as well as rezoning a small portion of City land (3,500 sq. ft. +/-) from Open Space (OS) to the new Specific Plan; this land will be acquired by the applicant through a Development Agreement.
- **General Plan Amendment 13-01** – A request to change the Land Use Map designation of the project site from Open Space (OS) to Multi-Family Medium (8.1 to 12 units to the acre), as well as change a small portion of City land (3,500 sq. ft. +/-) from Open Space (OS) to Multi-Family Medium (8.1 to 12 units to the acre).

### **Associated Cases:**

- **DPRB Case No. 13-20 & Precise Plan 13-03** – A request to develop a 48-unit two-story, single-family residential project as part of a private gated community on a six acre site.

- **Tentative Tract Map 13-01 (72368)** – A request to subdivide two lots into 48 single-family lots and several HOA common area lots; final number has not been determined.
- **Tree Removal 13-27** – A request to remove 56 of the 59 trees on site; a tree replacement plan will be required as part of this application.

Staff report presented by *Senior Planner Marco Espinoza* who stated there has been an application submitted to redevelop the equestrian center located at 299 E. Foothill Boulevard with single-family housing. This would require a Municipal Code Text Amendment, Zone Change and General Plan Amendment. Prior to starting detailed work on the applications, the City's code requires approval from either the Planning Commission or City Council to initiate the process. Tonight's discussion is not about the actual project, but to consider whether to grant the applicant approval to move forward in the process, then the actual analysis would be conducted prior to bringing the applications back to the Commission for public hearing tonight. The Commission is to consider whether the applicant's request to go from the current zoning to another is reasonable and warranted.

*Commissioner Davis* stated then the action tonight is not saying whether medium density residential is appropriate or not, they are just saying it is acceptable to consider the idea of changing the zone to a residential zone.

*Senior Planner Espinoza* stated that is correct, they are just deciding if it is appropriate to consider the residential rezoning and if the proposal is reasonable to consider.

*Commissioner Ensberg* stated it would be as if a reasonable person viewing this in the abstract thinks that this is a possible thing to discuss. Some ideas are so far from being reasonable that they are not worth considering. So his understanding is could a reasonable person initiate a project like this and could it be considered as one of any number of options that could fit into that area.

*Senior Planner Espinoza* stated that is correct. The subject property was zoned RA-7500 which was a County single-family designation at the time of incorporation in 1960. It was then zoned A-1, another County designation, and subsequently rezoned in April 1974 to AL Light Agricultural. The proposed site is comprised of three separate parcels, with one of the parcels owned by the City. The Applicant is proposing to obtain a portion of that parcel to integrate into the project. He described the shape of the project and stated there will be only one entrance from Foothill Boulevard. The proposal is to change the zoning from AL to medium density residential with 9.1 dwelling units per acre (dua) and amend the General Plan to allow medium density residential as well. The applicant is also proposing a new Specific Plan for this area.

*Chairman Schoonover* asked if the purpose of creating a Specific Plan was to have different development standards than a common residential project.

*Senior Planner Espinoza* stated that is correct and that Staff is recommending approval of the initiation.

*Commissioner Ensberg* asked if this project would help the City's RHNA requirements.

*Senior Planner Espinoza* stated the applicant is not proposing any low or moderate income units; they would all be market rate. The housing number for above-median has been met so it does not provide any units towards the City's RHNA requirements.

**Commissioner Davis** asked why they are proposing a new Specific Plan, what the density of the development to the west was, and what uses are allowed in the AL zone.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated the reason they are proposing a Specific Plan is the existing development standards for single-family housing would not accommodate the design of the project and a Specific Plan can create new standards tailored for the plan. The houses to the west are in the Single-Family Agricultural zone which has a .02 density level. While the proposed project's density is higher than that, the houses built to the east of this along Foothill Boulevard in Specific Plan No. 9 have an even higher density. He stated current uses allowed in the AL zone would be one residential unit per lot, horticulture, agriculture, grazing, and keeping of agricultural animals.

**Commissioner Rahi** clarified that at one time this area was zoned for residential development.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated it was zoned for residential by the County prior to the City's incorporation.

**Commissioner Ensberg** asked if the current boarding facility closes, will the surrounding facilities be able to accommodate the horses.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated he conducted a survey of surrounding facilities and felt they could take most, if not all, of them and went over the capacity of the various sites.

**Chairman Schoonover** stated the only entrance to the project will be from Foothill Boulevard, and there will also be an access to Horsethief Canyon Park, and asked if a signal at Walnut and Foothill was going to be considered.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated if this is approved to go forward, that will be part of Staff's analysis of the project.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated the current entrance to the equestrian center does not align with Walnut Avenue and asked how that would work with signalization.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated that is something they are reviewing. He added that with the widening of the bridge in that area they are looking to align the project access as much with Walnut as they can, but it may end up being similar to San Dimas Canyon Road at Foothill Boulevard where the road does not align from north to south.

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

**John Reekstin, The Olson Company**, stated they recently completed the Village Walk project and it was very well received by the community. He hoped that they would approve moving forward with this application. They have been working with Mr. Meredith, the property owner, regarding the relocation of the boarders and will be sure that they can all relocate to another facility.

There being no further comments, the public comments were closed.

**Commissioner Ensberg** stated that without committing to the project it seems reasonable to discuss if this is appropriate to meet the needs of the community, and that there is a basis in fact for seeing a proposal of that type being presented, and he would support this initiation.

**Commissioner Bratt** asked what species of trees were proposed for removal.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated there are a few oak trees but most of them are ash trees.

**Commissioner Davis** stated he was not comfortable with the proposed density considering the homes to the west. He asked if approving the initiation was approving the higher density as proposed.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated if this is approved to allow the project to come forward and the Commission doesn't feel the proposed density is warranted and they want to see a lower density in that area, it will be up to the applicant to decide if they want to try to redesign the project or just move forward with it to City Council. The Lone Hill project went through several different submittals and each time lowered the proposed density until the final approval of 18 lots.

**Commissioner Rahi** asked about the comment in the report that the desire for equestrian property was diminishing within the community.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated that is something that will be analyzed further. It seems more in the sense of large lot single-family equestrian facilities, and that they have had some developments in the City where the people who purchased the homes have not installed any horse corrals or even want any horses even though they are allowed to. He stated approving the initiation doesn't mean they are supporting a higher density and no horsekeeping; it is just saying they are willing to hear the proposal.

**Commissioner Rahi** stated he was in support of the initiation to allow discussion on the matter.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated he shares the concerns of Commissioner Davis regarding the density, but felt the owner should at least be able to try something with the property and was willing to move the process forward.

**Chairman Schoonover** concurred, and while he was willing to let the process go forward with further examination, he wanted the applicant to be aware that the Commission has concerns and questions, and that they may want to tweak the project at a later point.

**MOTION:** Moved by Bratt, seconded by Ensberg to approve the initiation of Municipal Code Text Amendment 13-08, Zone Change 13-01 and General Plan Amendment 13-01, and associated cases DPRB 13-20, Precise Plan 13-03, TTM 13-01 (72368) and Tree Removal 13-27.

**Commissioner Davis** stated that since the site borders Horsethief Canyon Park he would like to see the City purchase the land and extend the park, and felt the property was already zoned appropriately.

Motion carried 4-1 (Davis voted no).

### 3. **CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST TO INITIATE THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS:**

- **Municipal Code Text Amendment 13-06** – A request to amend Specific Plan No. 23, Planning Area 1 – Business Park District to allow for multi-family residential developments.

- **General Plan Amendment 14-01** – A request to change the Land Use Map designation from Industrial to Multi-Family High (12.1 to 16 units to the acre) for the lots within Specific Plan No. 23, Planning Area 1.

**Associated Cases:**

- **DPRB Case No. 13-31** – A request to develop a 49-unit three-story townhome development within a gated community on a 3.65 acre site located at 155 N. Eucla Avenue.
- **Tentative Tract Map 13-02 (72590)** – A request to subdivide the subject site into a condominium map for 49 units and the associated HOA common areas. The condos will be sold as townhomes.
- **Tree Removal 14-05** – A request to remove an unknown number of trees from the site; a comprehensive tree survey is currently being conducted at this time and will be submitted to the City for review. A tree replacement plan will be required as part of this application.

Staff report presented by *Senior Planner Marco Espinoza* who stated the subject properties were zoned M-1 at the time of incorporation. In 1990 they were rezoned Specific Plan No. 23 Planning Area 1 Business Park District which permitted similar uses but would allow for a more flexible design and land use, and take into consideration the historic nature of the residential neighborhood abutting the area. The current application is for the property located at 155 N. Eucla, which is located north of the railroad tracks, is elongated in shape and takes access from Eucla only. There will be one entrance with several driveways. He stated while there is currently a development proposal for Block 1, it was felt they should also look at including Block 2 in the rezoning as it was similar in size and uses, making it a candidate for future residential development. Blocks 1 and 2 are also both in Planning Area 1, while Block 3 is in Planning Area 2. Staff is requesting approval to initiate the amendment for both parcels in Planning Area 1.

*Commissioner Davis* asked if they were not looking at Block 3 at this time because of the packing house building, what uses are currently allowed in Specific Plan No. 23, and clarified the proposal was for multi-family medium high density up to 16 dwelling units per acre (dua).

*Senior Planner Espinoza* stated that site is more sensitive because of the historical structure and would require more detailed analysis for any proposed redevelopment, whereas there are no historical structures on Blocks 1 and 2 which makes it easier for new development. He explained the uses in the Specific Plan and stated it is currently an industrial zone but that it does not allow the more intense uses allowed in M-1, and that the applicant is only proposing about 13 units per acre.

*Chairman Schoonover* asked if the plan was to have one ADA unit in each building, and if the Bonita Canyon Gateway project was the only other three-story residential in the City.

*Commissioner Davis* asked what the density at Bonita Canyon Gateway was.

*Senior Planner Espinoza* stated he believed the idea was to have one ADA unit per building, and that both Grove Station/Village Walk and Bonita Canyon Gateway had three-story units, and possibly a small development on San Dimas Canyon Road. There was one portion of Bonita Canyon Gateway that was zoned 30 dua for the affordable housing requirements, but he was not sure what the density was for the remainder of the project.

**Chairman Schoonover** stated at Bonita Canyon Gateway the three-story units were next to two-story units, but in this area they will be near single-story homes. It seems like the buildings will be too large to be compatible with the neighborhood.

**Commissioner Ensberg** asked why Staff is proposing to include Block 2 when there wasn't an application and it would use limited staff resources to review.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated there have been inquiries about that area, and since they will be considering whether housing is an appropriate use for Block 1 and this is in the same Planning area, this would be a good time to look at both areas to see if this would be appropriate for the neighborhood as times change and industrial may no longer be suitable for that area. In regards to staff time, it would actually be more efficient to look at both Blocks simultaneously.

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

**Adam Lunzer, City Ventures, Applicant**, stated they have been working with staff from Planning and Public Works to develop a plan that was suitable for the neighborhood, being sensitive to the Town Core Design Guidelines. In regards to concerns about the height of the project, they are hoping to develop a design that will be complimentary to the single-story Craftsman homes in the neighborhood.

**Commissioner Bratt** asked what they intended to do with the long narrow strip along the railroad tracks.

**Adam Lunzer, Applicant**, stated right now it would be an open space and could possibly be used for things like walking paths, a dog park area, or bocce ball.

**Jon Ciuri, Owner, 127 N. Acacia Street**, stated he worked two jobs for 14 years to purchase this property. He understands there are federal funds for housing, but he resented that his property was included in this proposal without being consulted. He invested in this property for his retirement, and if the zoning is changed, it will negatively impact the value of the property.

**Commissioner Ensberg** asked him if he felt that if the property was rezoned to allow for residential it would have a negative impact instead of making his property more valuable.

**Jon Ciuri, Owner**, stated his options would be limited to just developers where now he can work with anyone that wants an industrial property. He is not opposed to it being developed and understands he could stay and operate his business as long as he wanted to, but he bought this as an investment and felt the city was taking away the possibility of selling this in the future to fund his retirement.

**Chairman Schoonover** asked if notices were mailed out to the surrounding neighborhood about this meeting.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated this was not a public hearing item, but Staff notified the property owners and the applicant. The item tonight is to consider initiation, and if it is approved, a radius mailing will be done as they bring the project forward.

**Commissioner Davis** felt there should be a proposed project before they consider any rezoning.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated it is not uncommon to change zoning before there is a project. An example is when they were amending the CG-3 zone to allow for the Grove Station project, they also included the property across San Dimas Avenue in the zone even though there wasn't a proposed project at the time. Part of the planning process is to envision what development trends in the future may be in the City and try to facilitate the zoning for that. It is not unusual to rezone properties ahead of receiving a development application.

**Jon Ciauri, Owner**, reiterated that he did not feel he would be able to get top dollar for his property if he had to sell it to a housing developer who would want to pay the least possible than if he were able to sell it to another industrial user.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated the current trend in city planning is to predict where trends are heading and help guide developers in that, and that is part of what they are considering tonight.

**Jon Ciauri, Owner**, stated he was concerned that if his property is made non-conforming his options will be limited.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated that would be part of the analysis if this initiation moves forward. Would the existing uses become non-conforming, would housing be allowed as part of an overlay zone, etc. After further review, they may even decide that they do not want to rezone Block 2. It is being suggested to be included in the analysis but it may be determined that they do not want to include it after all.

**Jon Ciauri, Owner**, asked the Commission to not consider rezoning until they talk to the owners of the property.

**William Tweedy, 159 N. Acacia, Owner since 1987**, stated he is the third owner of the site and would agree there are no historical buildings there except that it also was a packing house. Theoretically the value could increase when a property is zoned appropriately, but when you rezone a parcel and make the current uses non-conforming so that you cannot get refinancing or sell it, then it is inappropriate. He felt the previous item was appropriately done because the owner was involved and agreed with the change. His property is more than just a piece of land, it is in a critical location for his business due to the freeway access to all the major cities and his customers. He not only has his land value, but has invested almost \$1 million into improvements. When he hears his parcel described as a tear-down, he doesn't feel he will be able to recoup the money he has invested into the site.

There being no further comments, the public comments were closed.

**Commissioner Ensberg** asked to have this item considered separately for each Block.

**Chairman Schoonover** stated it would be appropriate to consider the Blocks separately.

**Commissioner Ensberg** stated he would be in favor of initiating an amendment for Block 1 because there appears to be a viable plan that is acceptable to the property owner for making the property more valuable and consistent with the housing trends. He was not in favor of including Block 2 as there is no plan for development, the property owners are opposed and felt any time and cost savings from processing both blocks at the same time would be minimal. However, while being sensitive to the concerns of the two property owners in Block 2, he felt that rezoning to include housing as an option on their parcels would increase their resale value; however, in deference to their feelings he would want Block 2 removed from the initiation.

**Commissioner Davis** asked if the surrounding homeowners were aware of this action.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated the surrounding homeowners know about the proposal for 155 N. Eucla and have been invited to community meetings. Tonight is to talk about initiating an amendment and is not a public hearing so no notices were sent.

**Commissioner Rahi** stated he could support the initiation for Block 1 but not Block 2 as the owners were not in support of the rezoning.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated he wasn't sure since the surrounding residential were one-story single-family homes that building three-story townhomes was appropriate.

**Chairman Schoonover** stated he had similar concerns but was not opposed to moving forward and allowing this to be studied.

**Commissioner Davis** asked if after going through the process it is decided that high density multi-family was not appropriate but lower density residential would be acceptable, would it decrease the value of the property. If they reject the application for high density, what would it be.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated property with a higher density would be worth more, but you can't determine value until a density is determined. He stated the Commission can deny the application and the zoning will remain as it is, or they can select something else. They will be reviewing the Applicant's initial submittal, but the initial submittal is not always the final version that is approved.

**Commissioner Davis** stated he can see this area being residential so he would support moving forward with the process.

**MOTION:** Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Rahi to approve initiating Municipal Code Text Amendment 13-06 and General Plan Amendment 14-01 relative to Block 1. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**MOTION:** Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Bratt to defer consideration of Block 2 for rezoning.

**Commissioner Bratt** reiterated the fact that Staff's proposal to consider changing the zoning prior to having an actual application is the current thought in the planning field.

**Commissioner Davis** concurred but felt if the property owners were opposed, he didn't want to go through the process when it wasn't really necessary.

Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

## **ORAL COMMUNICATION**

**4. Assistant City Manager for Community Development**  
No communications were made.

**5. Members of the Audience**  
No communications were made.

## 6. Planning Commission

**Commissioner Bratt** stated the Downtown Merchants had asked if there was a new train store that has moved in next to Walterscheid's location. He added they were also putting together a petition opposing the conversion of the beauty supply store into a salon with individual units, and asked if Staff had any information on that.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated he was not aware if there was a new train store in the downtown. In regards to the salon, someone came to City Hall and inquired about modifying the business but no plans were submitted and they have not been back in the last two weeks, so we are not sure if they are going to move forward with the idea because the cost may have been more of a factor than they thought. However, a beauty shop or barbershop are allowed uses in the downtown area and would be permitted.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated he had been told by a resident that someone was operating an animal sanctuary behind Pinnacle Peak's and asked if that was allowed.

**Senior Planner Espinoza** stated he was not aware of any sanctuary, but that the use may not be permitted in that zone.

## ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION:** Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Bratt to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 20, 2014, at 7:00 p.m.

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Jim Schoonover, Chairman  
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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Jan Sutton  
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: February 20, 2014