

CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Thursday, July 7, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

Present

Chairman David Bratt
Commissioner John Davis
Commissioner Margie Green
Commissioner Tomas Molina
Commissioner Ted Ross
Planning Manager Fabiola Wong
Associate Planner Luis Torrico
Planning Secretary Jan Sutton

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. June 16, 2016

MOTION: Moved by Davis, seconded by Green to approve the minutes of June 16, 2016. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. **CONSIDERATION OF VARIANCE 16-01** – A request for a variance from the following Single-Family Downtown Residential Zone development standards: (1) allow the development of an undersized (5,600 sq. ft.) parcel which does not comply with the minimum lot size of 7,000 square feet, and (2) to increase the 35% lot coverage maximum to 40% to allow the construction of a 1,466 square foot one-story single-family home with a 525 square foot detached two-car garage located at 244 West 1st Street. (APN: 8387-014-049) **Associated Case: DPRB Case No. 16-07**

Staff report presented by Associate Planner Luis Torrico who stated this request is to construct a new single-family residence and replace the existing non-conforming commercial building that has been vacant for over a year. Because the size of the lot is less than allowed in the code for development, a variance is required. While reviewing DPRB Case No. 16-07, the Board also

recommended the lot coverage amount be increased from 35% to 40% as long as all structures do not exceed one-story in height to allow for a better site layout.

The current building will be demolished along with the concrete in the front area. The Board is recommending approval subject to some additional conditions which are highlighted in Exhibit D. They did not take action on the variance application as that is under the purview of the Planning Commission. He went over the proposed changes, including the increased lot coverage to allow for a larger garage, and shifting the garage towards the east property line.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the Applicant is requesting the increase in lot coverage based on the Board's recommendation and has submitted a redesigned and relocated garage to create a more efficient layout. They are also showing a covered patio attached which maximizes the lot coverage. However, they could chose to add square footage to the house instead of building the patio with the increased lot coverage allowance. He went over the architectural style of Colonial Revival and the proposed materials to be used. He stated while the design gives the appearance of a raised foundation similar to other homes in the Town Core, it will actually be built on a slab.

He stated in terms of the variance, there are two parts to it. The first item is to allow development of the site because it does not meet the minimum required lot size of 7,000 square feet, and secondly to increase the lot coverage from 35% to 40% as long as all structures were one-story. He went over a comparison of the square footage allowed on this site and a standard 7,000 square foot lot, and how increasing the lot coverage would still be less than that allowed on a typical lot. Therefore, Staff feels the request is appropriate and not granting any rights that are atypical in that zone. The design complies with all other architectural and development standards of the Town Core so will not have a negative impact on the neighborhood, and will comply with the General Plan designation. Staff is recommending approval of Variance No. 16-01, and pointed out that if it is denied, then it will void out the approval of associated DPRB Case No. 16-07.

Commissioner Green asked about the property line along Cataract and where is that in relation to the parkway area, and will the existing block wall be removed with this proposal. She also asked who is responsible for maintaining the parkway, and if the expansion of the parkway area on the north side just involved cutting the existing concrete.

Associate Planner Torrico stated along Cataract Avenue there is an 11-foot wide public right-of-way, and the existing wall will be removed and a new wall will be installed. Maintenance of the parkway is the responsibility of the property owner, and there is a condition that drought-tolerant landscaping will be installed. Along First Street they will just cut the concrete around the existing tress to lessen the amount of hardscape and increase the landscape area.

Commissioner Davis stated if the property line is only to the block wall along Cataract and the rest of the area to the street is owned by the City, who is responsible for the irrigation, and did we feel it was better to have landscaping there instead of giving the owner five more feet of developable space.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the irrigation in the parkway area would be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. Selling public right-of-way to the owner was never discussed as an option.

Commissioner Davis stated while the zoning is for residential, there was a commercial use there, and asked if someone can open up a similar use on this property. He also asked if the lot coverage calculation included patios and sheds.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the prior commercial business was closed more than a year and therefore lost its non-conforming status so a new business would not be allowed to operate there. Lot coverage calculations include any structure with a roof that requires a building permit. If a shed is less than 120 square feet without utilities, it does not require a building permit and would be exempt from the calculation.

Chairman Bratt asked to clarify if the existing retaining wall was being removed and a new wall built in its place, or was it remaining and a new wall would be built behind it.

Associate Planner Torrico stated originally the property owner was going to just put a wooden fence behind the wall, so a condition was written that if that was done, it needed to be set back 24" to allow for landscaping. But since the Board felt a block wall was more appropriate, the Building Official did not think the existing wall could be raised higher as there were no records as to how it was constructed and if it could hold the additional weight; therefore, it is being removed and a new wall constructed.

Chairman Bratt asked how far south on Cataract will the new block wall extend to, and will the interior fence be made of wood.

Associate Planner Torrico showed how the beginning of the wall aligned with the house and would extend back to the alley. The interior fence could be built of either wood or block.

Commissioner Green asked how the six-foot tall block wall would impact visibility when pulling out of the alley.

Associate Planner Torrico stated there would be corner cuts or it would be lowered a bit in that vicinity.

Chairman Bratt asked if a cement slab is constructed on the west side of the garage, is that counted towards lot coverage.

Associate Planner Torrico stated no, it is not.

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

Rick Fujimoto, Applicant, stated he appreciated the Commission's consideration of his application.

Commissioner Davis asked if he was planning to live there or if he was going to build and sell it.

Rick Fujimoto, Applicant, stated he intended to sell the house.

Resident, 240 W. First Street, stated there is a large oak tree at the rear of his property and was concerned that it was going to be impacted by placing the garage closer to the property line and asked if there would be a five-foot setback on the east side. He stated there is also a storm drain in that area, and that the one by the fire hydrant isn't working

Associate Planner Torrico stated there will be a five-foot setback on the east, and they would try to protect the oak during construction. He asked if he knew how high the lowest branches on the tree were.

Resident, 240 W. First Street, stated he did not know, he just knows it is very near the property line.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the highest point of the garage is 14 feet at the peak and then it will drop down. He stated Staff will go to the site with the City Arborist prior to construction to see about minimizing impacts on the tree.

Chairman Bratt asked if the trees along Cataract Avenue were being removed, and if the oak tree needed to be trimmed to accommodate the garage, would that be at the developer's cost or the neighbor.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the trees along Cataract will remain in place, and if the oak needs branches trimmed for the project, the developer would pay for it, but with the neighbor's permission to perform the trimming.

Planning Manager Fabiola Wong stated there are things that can be done to protect the oak such as fencing off the root area and using hand tools nearby.

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

Commissioner Davis asked if this application moves up to City Council.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the Planning Commission has the authority to grant the variance request.

Commissioner Davis felt this will be an improvement to the neighborhood and the variance makes sense when combined with the conditions set by the DPRB.

RESOLUTION PC-1567

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, APPROVING VARIANCE 16-01, A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE FROM THE FOLLOWING SINGLE-FAMILY DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS: (1) ALLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN UNDERSIZED (5,600 SQ. FT.) PARCEL WHICH DOES NOT COMPLY WITH THE MINIMUM LOT SIZE OF 7,000 SQUARE FEET, AND (2) TO INCREASE THE 35% LOT COVERAGE MAXIMUM TO 40% TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 1,466 SQUARE FOOT ONE-STORY SINGLE-FAMILY HOME WITH A 525 SQUARE FOOT DETACHED TWO-CAR GARAGE LOCATED AT 244 WEST 1ST STREET (APN: 8387-014-049)

MOTION: Moved by Davis, seconded by Green to adopt Resolution PC-1567 approving Variance 16-01. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

3. Community Development Department

In response to Commissioner Green, Planning Manager Wong stated some field changes were made during construction of the Mixed-Use Project on San Dimas Avenue without authorization by the City so they are in the process of trying to work that out. They are also still trying to work out the issues with the epoxy on the foundation at the rehab center project.

4. Members of the Audience
No communications were made.

5. Planning Commission
No communications were made.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved by Davis, seconded by Green to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Thursday, July 21, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

David A. Bratt, Chairman
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Jan Sutton
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: September 1, 2016