

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

RECORD OF ACTIONS

July 14, 2011

A. Call to Order 9:00 a.m.

Board members present: Carol Bell, Sandy MacDougall, Ed McArdle, Carol Rea, and Merle Watson

Board member absent: Karl Ulle & Rob James

Staff present: Rozanne Cherry

B. Record of Actions June 23, 2011 Meeting.

MOTION: Moved by M. Watson, seconded by S. MacDougall to approve the minutes.

APPROVED: 5-0-0

C. Oral and Written Communications – None

D. Consent Calendar – None

E. Individual Case Review:

1. ADM11-0100, New Freestanding Canopy to cover 6 existing spaces at Quality Chevrolet Dealership, which would contain Photovoltaic Panels on top of the canopy and charging stations for Electric and Hybrid Vehicles, 1550 Auto Parkway

Applicant: Mr. Joseph Marca Architect, 240 Market Place, Escondido, CA 92029

Planner: Jasmin Perunovich

Staff described the project which included a 1,200 SF (60' x 19') canopy, similar to an existing canopy on site, over six parking spaces with photovoltaic panels on top and electric charging stations. Staff recommended approval of the project as submitted.

Chairman Bell confirmed that the color was the same as the building.

MOTION: Moved by S. MacDougall, seconded by C. Rea to approve the project as submitted.

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0-0

2. 93-05-PD, New paint, awnings and signs for Chili's Restaurant in the PD-C zone (Planned Development Commercial), 1105 W. Valley Parkway

Applicant: Robert Montgomery, Brinker International, 6820 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75240

Planner: Bill Martin

Staff described the remodel to an existing Chili's restaurant in the La Entradad center (La Terraza) which included updating the exterior of the restaurant to the current Chili's branding program, new awnings and signs. Staff recommended approval of the project as submitted with the condition that staff work with the applicant on the size of the signs.

Board member Rea felt that the white oval "to-go" sign looked odd in the upper corner. Chairman Bell clarified that the sign panel changes were on the monument sign and the freestanding sign.

MOTION: Moved by S. MacDougall, seconded by K. Ulle to approve the project as submitted subject to staff's recommendations.

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0-0

3. PHG11-0017, Reconstruction of Fire Station No. 4 in Kit Carson Park, 3301 Bear Valley Parkway

Applicant: Jeff Katz Architect, 6353 Del Cerro Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92120

Planner: Bill Martin

Staff described the rebuilding of Fire Station #4 in Kit Carson Park, which included increasing the square footage of the building from 2,800 SF to 8,100 SF and the bays from 2 bays to 2 ½ bays, and incorporating architectural elements, colors and materials of other buildings within Kit Carson Park. Staff noted that the project was consistent with the Kit Carson Park Overlay, and that 15 mature eucalyptus trees were to be replaced with tristanias and sumac trees. Staff recommended approval of the project as submitted.

Board member Rea had a concern with the efficiency of backing into the ½ bay. She recommended adding a fire resistant plant demonstration garden. Chairman Bell further discussed maintaining existing angled orientation and circulation.

MOTION: Moved by S. MacDougall, seconded by E. McArdle to approve the project as submitted.

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0-0

F. Current Business: Board member MacDougall left at 9:40 a.m.

1. Discussion of the draft City Council Action Plan and workshop:

Staff discussed with the Board the direction from Council and several design review alternatives. Board members made general comments including: Chairman Bell noted that staff works out many design issues with applicants, which reduces the time a project is reviewed by the Design Review Board. Board member Rea stated that the public Design Review meeting is an opportunity for the public to see a proposed project and comment on it. She felt that the Design Review Board does not hold up projects and that there was a misconception of an overlap between the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board, although each has a different purview, land use and design. She also noted that the purpose of the Design Review Board as stated in the Zoning Code Article 64 is still appropriate and supports the Councils priorities and goals. Board member McArdle noted that eliminating the Design Review Board may not streamline the review process if applicants argue with staff or other design body over design issues. He further discussed his experiences as a project architect in other cities, which had staff design review or a contract architect.

Alternatives:

1. Retain the Design Review Board and/or reduce the number of members, but only require one review; if Design Review Board recommends changes, staff would review and make determination.

Board members supported this alternative but felt that seven members resulted in a better diversity of professional training, experience and points of view. It was also noted that a reduced number of members may result in more meetings being canceled due to a lack of a quorum. Board member McArdle felt that an independent board of professionals was expedient and a well-balanced method of design review that reduced the possibility of a staff person becoming a “design czar”. With professional members, applicants get independent comments based on extensive design experience that staff may not have. He noted that the perceived problem was not the process but the current economy, which will pick-up in a year or two.

He stated that the foresight of the City to establish a Design Review Board of design professionals made Escondido better than other cities and demonstrated Escondido's commitment to improving the appearance of the city. The comment was also made that staff learns a great deal from the design discussion between the professionals.

2. Established a formal Design Review Committee that could meet weekly or as needed.

Board members felt that this would provide no opportunity for the public to review and comment on projects and that weekly meeting would require more of staff's time, which would result in less time for staff to review projects.

3. Hire a consulting architect and refer certain types of projects for review and that the consultant would be paid through the Design Review Board fee.

Board member McArdle noted that Temecula had done something similar but felt it could create a clash of individual styles when design review was in the hands of just one person, and would create a more subjective process. He felt that different viewpoints stimulate other thoughts and suggestions on projects.

4. Standardize the Planning Commission staff report template to include a specific section on design review issues and compliance.

Board members felt that staff would have to create and develop upgraded design guidelines for the Planning Commission members, but felt that the Design Review Board provided more flexibility in working with unique designs.

5. Revise Planning Commission qualifications to include at least one member with qualifications as an architect, landscape architect, or other design professional.

Board members concurred that one design professional was not enough to fully address all of the design issues and would only provide one perspective; as an architect or landscape architect, or interior designer.

6. Retain Planning Commission members at no more than seven and that anymore would be unworkable.

Board member McArdle indicated that the current Design Review Board meetings were informal, provided a relaxed workshop atmosphere and allowed board members the opportunity to explore alternatives with the projects' architects. The council chamber is too formal and would be off-putting to some applicants.

7. Further streamline the process by reducing the number/type of projects going to Design Review Board.

The Board concurred.

8. Retain the Design Review Board on as-needed basis for appeals.

The Board agreed that although this alternative would have the board only review problematic cases, it would put the tougher designs issues in the hands of design professionals. Board member Rea felt that the Council impression of the Design Review Board was just as a road bump and that the Board should be considered as an integral component of the image and appearance of the City.

G. Oral Communications – None.

H. Board member discussion –None.

I. Adjournment at 10:28 a.m. to the next regularly scheduled Design Review Board meeting to be held on August 11, 2011, at 9 a.m. at City Hall in Training Room 1, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, CA.

Carol Bell, Chairman
of the Design Review Board

Rozanne Cherry, Secretary
of the Design Review Board