

## CITY OF ESCONDIDO

### MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION

July 9, 2013

The meeting of the Escondido Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Weber in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

**Commissioners present:** Jeffery Weber, Chairman; Bob McQuead, Vice-chairman; Darol Caster, Commissioner; Gregory Johns, Commissioner; James Spann, Commissioner; Merle Watson, Commissioner; and Guy Winton, Commissioner.

**Commissioners absent:** None.

**Staff present:** Jay Petrek, Principal Planner; Homi Namdari, City Engineer; Gary McCarthy, Senior Deputy City Attorney; and Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk.

#### **MINUTES:**

Moved by Commissioner Caster, seconded by Commissioner Watson, to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2013, meeting. Motion carried. Ayes: Winton, Weber, Spann, Caster, and Watson. Noes: None. Abstained: Johns, and McQuead. (5-0-2)

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS** – Received.

**FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS** – None.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

1. **DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN REZONING AND COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE – PHG 13-0018:**

REQUEST: Consideration of a comprehensive update to the Downtown Specific Plan map and text involving:

- 1) Rezoning multiple properties totaling approximately 57.75 acres from General Commercial (CG), Hospital Professional (HP), Commercial Professional (CP), Planned Development-Commercial (PD-C), and Planned Development-Industrial (PD-I) to Specific Plan (SP) (refer to shaded areas on graphic below),
- 2) Expanding Figure II-2 'Land Use Matrix' primarily to allow Home Occupation businesses in residential areas, and expand general retail and specialty services uses along Pennsylvania Avenue,
- 3) Clarifying standards for residential uses, parking, building heights, stories, setbacks and processing requirements,
- 4) Reorganizing existing text to better convey the SPA vision, and adding policies to enhance walkability,
- 5) Establishing 'Downtown Level of Service "E" Threshold Area' for the design and operation of certain streets,
- 6) Adding 'Projecting Wall Signs' subject to particular standards and Planning Commission approval,
- 7) Recertifying a previously adopted Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that assessed the Specific Plan Update.

**PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION:** Approximately 460 acres extending from I-15 and West Valley Parkway to Palomar Hospital Downtown, between Washington and Fifth Avenues.

Jay Petrek, Principal Planner, referenced the staff report and noted staff's main issue was whether the Downtown Specific Plan's comprehensive update addressed the Phase II recommendations and accurately promotes the vision for Escondido's downtown. Staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) The comprehensive text update and rezoning of 57.75 acres, which incorporated urban densities and building heights, was consistent with the vision calling for an increased downtown population to support a dynamic, attractive, economically vital, entertaining and vibrant city center with activity occurring throughout the day, evening and weekend hours; 2) The Downtown Specific Plan provided for a variety of unique uses and activities that draw people to the area. Refining the standards would enhance the pedestrian ambience and ensure such uses and activities retain their appeal; and 3) The proposed text amendments and rezoning were consistent with the General Plan because a) the boundaries were consistent with the Downtown Specific Planning Area #9 identified in the General Plan and, b) the text was consistent with the Guiding Principles (Downtown Specific Plan) because they promote design policies, standards and guidelines that focus on a pedestrian orientation, strengthen connections with outlying areas, promote economic development, provide convenient transit access, expand Grape Day Park, and embrace the vision for downtown as a vital social, cultural, economic center.

Commissioner Spann felt allowing 75 dwelling units per acre was excessive for the historic core on Grand Avenue.

Commissioner Winton and Mr. Petrek discussed the difference between a grocery and a convenience store.

Commissioner Caster and Mr. Petrek discussed the potential level of service for traffic downtown as well as the reasoning behind the proposed building height limits.

Commissioner Caster asked if the Latitude 33 paid the in lieu fee for open space. Mr. Petrek replied in the negative.

Discussion ensued regarding a clarification of the methodology used by the economic consultant for the subject plan.

Commissioner Johns and Mr. Petrek discussed signage requirements for home occupations in residential areas.

Commissioner Johns asked if there was any data that showed an increase in the downtown population or enhanced pedestrian ambiance as outlined in the staff report. Mr. Petrek replied in the affirmative, noting that Latitude 33 was almost completely leased out. He also indicated that during the General Plan update process numerous comments were received regarding having more residential opportunities around the downtown area.

Commissioner McQuead and Mr. Petrek discussed the proposed status for the sewer and waterline updates in the downtown area.

Chairman Weber and Mr. Petrek discussed Target Area I as identified in the staff report.

**David Ferguson, Escondido, representing Escondido Capital Investors, 505 and 535 Broadway,** requested that the Commission consider allowing convenience stores as a conditionally permitted use in the Parkview, Centre City Urban and Gateway transit districts in the food and Liquor section of the Permitted Use Matrix. He stated that this would help accommodate any future residential needs. He indicated that his clients were in possession of a vacant space for over six years, noting 7-11 was interested but not allowed in the subject area that had tire stores and vacant buildings surrounding it. He elaborated that they were requesting the chance to come before the City to see if they would consider the subject use.

**Barbara Kreis, Escondido, representing 641 East Pennsylvania,** asked if the property located 641 East Pennsylvania was included in the subject plan. Mr. Namdari replied in the affirmative. Ms. Kreis asked if the proposed cul-de-sac for Pennsylvania would be before the egress and ingress to the subject building, noting she was opposed to this. Mr. Namdari provided Ms. Kreis with his information and noted he would have to check into this.

**Patricia Borchmann, Escondido,** expressed her concern with exceptions to development standards pertaining to residential projects for useable open space. She felt the existing language provided incentives to developers to design onsite open space deficiencies, which lead to poor projects.

Commissioner Caster expressed no problem with allowing convenience stores as a conditionally permitted use in the Parkview, Centre City Urban and Gateway transit districts in the food and Liquor section of the Permitted Use Matrix. He expressed concern with increasing traffic in the downtown area and not mitigating it. He felt that the downtown area could be adversely impacted by the proposed height limits surrounding Grand Avenue, feeling it should be set at height limit of three stores. He also did not feel building multi-family units would help increase the median income.

Commissioner Spann was concerned with allowing the proposed height limits in the historic downtown core, feeling it would encourage individuals to tear down existing structures in order to build a three-story facility with a residential element on top. Mr. Petrek noted that there was language requiring the preservation of the façade.

Chairman Weber felt the proposed height limits allowed for spot zoning in the downtown area. He also felt the matrix need to be more consistent.

Commissioner Johns asked if the districts could be split, as you get closer to Grand Avenue with lower building heights closer to Grand Avenue. Mr. Petrek replied in the affirmative.

Chairman Weber felt the area around the hospital to the east and along Pennsylvania should stay at 5 stories, noting this allowed for upscale facilities and employment opportunities.

Commissioner Winton and Mr. Petrek discussed the committee's reasons for their recommendations.

Commissioner Caster felt the downtown area began at Centre City Parkway.

Commissioner Watson concurred with Ms. Borchmann's comments regarding maintaining open space on the actual development site. He expressed no problem with allowing convenience stores as a conditionally permitted use in the Parkview, Centre City Urban and Gateway transit districts in the food and Liquor section of the Permitted Use Matrix. He also concurred with the committee's height recommendations with the exception for extending the 3-story limit by one tier around the recommended proposed 3-story downtown recommendations. Chairman Weber commended staff on their recommendations for the setback requirements in the subject matrix. He felt staff should have some latitude to provide up to a 15 to 20 percent variance for setbacks. He also concurred with allowing convenience stores as a conditionally permitted use in the Parkview, Centre City Urban and Gateway transit districts in the food and Liquor section of the Permitted Use Matrix.

Commissioner McQuead was opposed to allowing the in lieu fee for open space offsite. He noted no problem with allowing convenience stores as a conditionally permitted use in the Parkview, Centre City Urban and Gateway transit districts in the food and Liquor section of the Permitted Use Matrix. He also felt the three-story height limit should be extended to Grand Avenue.

Commissioner Winton stated that he could support the in lieu fee for open space if the City had an aggressive program for utilizing open space and if the fee was substantial. He noted no problem with allowing convenience stores as a conditionally permitted use in the Parkview, Centre City Urban and Gateway transit districts in the food and Liquor section of the Permitted Use Matrix.

Chairman Weber expressed his concern with potential traffic impacts whereupon he and staff discussed potential future mitigation measures.

**ACTION:**

Moved by Chairman Weber, seconded by Commissioner Caster, to approve staff's recommendation with the following revisions: 1) Establish a 45-foot, three-story building height limit between Centre City Parkway, Valley Boulevard, Valley Parkway and Second Avenue; 2) Establish a 60-foot, four-story building height limit between Escondido Boulevard, Fifth Avenue, Second Avenue, Maple Street, and Broadway; 3) Allow convenience stores as a conditional use in the Parkview, Gateway Transit, and Centre City Urban districts; and 4) Maintain the 300 square foot open space requirement per residential unit, and allow up to 15% reduction on a case-by-case basis in exchange for appropriate street-level exterior open space to be provided on-site that was accessible to the public subject to a

Planned Development and Development Agreement approval. Motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

**CURRENT BUSINESS:** None.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Caster asked about the status of the Gas Station at the corner of Quince and Second Avenue. Mr. Petrek noted that some concepts were being reviewed that would tie in with the Mercado.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Weber adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for July 23, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

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Jay Petrek, Acting Secretary to the  
Escondido Planning Commission

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Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk