

CITY OF ESCONDIDO**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION****September 13, 2016**

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

Commissioners present: Michael Cohen, Commissioner Gregory Johns, Commissioner; Don Romo, Commissioner; James Spann, Commissioner and Stan Weiler, Commissioner.

Commissioners absent: Jeffery Weber, Chairman; and Bob McQuead, Vice-chairman.

Staff present: Bill Martin, Director of Community Development; Jay Paul, Associate Planner; Owen Tunnell, Principal Engineer; Adam Phillips, Deputy City Attorney; and Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk.

MINUTES:

Moved by Commissioner Weiler, seconded by Commissioner Cohen, to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2016, meeting. Motion carried. Ayes: Spann, Romo, Cohen, and Weiler. Noes: None. Abstained: Johns. (4-0-1)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – Received.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS –None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP, SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT, MASTER AND PRECISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – SUB 16-0001; PHG 16-0005; ENV 16-0001:**

REQUEST: A request for a one-lot Tentative Subdivision Map, Specific Plan Amendment, Master and Precise Development Plan and Development Agreement for the construction of 126 condominium units in three, four- and five-story

buildings in the Gateway Transit District of the Downtown Specific Plan. The proposed development includes approximately 1,000 square feet (SF) of flex space that could be for used commercial purposes. Proposed condominium units would range in size from approximately 810 SF to 2,090 SF with one bedroom lofts and two and three bedroom townhomes. Shared garage parking would be provided on the ground floor of each building and indoor and outdoor recreational amenities would be provided in the central area of the project for residents. The project would provide 226 parking spaces which is less than the City's multi-family standard, but higher than SANDAG's recommendation for transit oriented development. The proposed project includes a request to amend the Downtown Specific Plan (text on Page V-17, and Figure II-4 on Page II-12) to allow ground-floor residential (with permit) in all areas of the site. A Development Agreement is proposed to define construction and financial responsibilities including proposed pedestrian linkages to the Escondido Transit Center. The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION: The approximately 2.59-acre project site is located on the southern side of West Valley Parkway and the northern side of West Grand Avenue, between Spruce Street and Quince Street, addressed as 700 W. Grand Avenue.

Bill Martin, Director of Community Development, referenced the staff report and noted staff issues were the appropriateness of the proposed amendment to the Downtown Specific Plan to allow ground-floor residential uses on the entire project site; appropriateness of the proposed project design for the downtown area; whether the proposed reduction in parking based on SANDAG's Transit-Oriented Development parking standards is appropriate for the site; whether the provisions of the proposed Development Agreement provides adequate pedestrian access to the Escondido Transit Center; if the requested fee incentives can be justified; and the appropriateness of public street vacation and use of the public right-of-way for front steps on W. Grand Avenue. Staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) The site was directly across the street from the Escondido Transit Center. Due to its unique location, the property is well-suited for a transit-oriented development including high-density residential uses. In order to achieve the necessary residential density, the applicant has requested the ability to use the entire site for residential uses rather than being required to provide commercial uses along the street frontages. They have, however, built-in flex space that could be leased for a commercial use to serve area residents and commuters. Staff supports this request since it would increase the residential population in the downtown area in support of Downtown Specific Plan goals of providing high density residential uses and the creation of an environment with convenient access and opportunities for alternative modes of transportation; 2) The applicant has provided a project that is architecturally appealing through the use of various

materials and architectural elements, including smooth and sand finish stucco, white brick, metal awnings and balcony railings, vinyl windows for the residential units, and bronze aluminum storefronts for the flex space and leasing/rec building. Landscaping would be provided throughout the site, including within the rights-of-way along both street frontages and along the side yards. The buildings have been designed with variations in setbacks from property lines and rights-of-way, have projecting and recessed elements on all floors that give relief to the scale and mass of the buildings, and have front doors facing the streets in order to maintain the urban, pedestrian-oriented environment that is envisioned for the downtown area. Staff believes the project would provide an upscale living environment for people desiring an urban lifestyle with a variety of transportation options; 3) The requested parking reduction is based on the transit-oriented nature of the proposed project and its location. Rather than relying on the City's multi-family parking standards, the applicant has requested the ability to use parking standards recommended by SANDAG for transit-oriented developments. The 226 parking spaces proposed for the project fall approximately half-way between the City requirement (246 spaces) and SANDAG's recommendation (208 spaces). Additionally, the project would provide secure bicycle storage areas in each building in support of the use of alternative transportation options that may alleviate the number of resident parking spaces required. Staff believes the proximity to the Escondido Transit Center (and to a lesser extent, the provision of secure bicycle storage areas) justifies the requested reduction in parking; 4) As part of the proposed project, the applicant will be installing signalized pedestrian crossings between the Escondido Transit Center and the project site, and between the project site and Spruce Street. They will also be providing a public pedestrian sidewalk on their property (adjacent to the NCTD right-of-way) in order for pedestrians to easily access the transit station from areas to the south of the project site. In exchange, the City would provide financial incentives in the areas of fee credits for water and wastewater connections, and would freeze impact fees at the levels in-place at the time of entitlement. Staff believes the pedestrian access improvements, in an area where alternative transportation methods are encouraged, justifies the financial incentives afforded to the project; and 5) The City has excess right-of-way along the frontage of the project site on W. Grand Avenue. The developer has requested the vacation of a nine-foot wide strip of the right-of-way in order to accommodate the project. The applicant has also requested the ability to place two to three steps within right-of-way leading up to the front doors of twelve units on W. Grand Avenue. Staff supports the right-of-way vacation and use for stairs because W. Grand Avenue, after the vacation, would still comply with the requirement for a collector street identified in the Infrastructure and Mobility Element of the General Plan, and because the stairs would not encroach into the required eight-foot-wide sidewalk and would enhance the pedestrian-oriented urban environment by providing direct front door access from the public street.

Commissioner Johns felt the project lent itself to overflow parking demand and questioned where this would occur. Mr. Martin noted the intent was that the parking management plan would alleviate overflow parking issues. He also stated that there could be opportunities for short-term parking along Valley Parkway and Grand Avenue, as well as possibly leasing spaces from NCTD.

Commissioner Spann and Mr. Martin discussed the proposed 9-foot street vacation.

Commissioner Weiler asked if there was a restriction on the flex space so it could not be used as a living unit. Mr. Martin replied in the negative. Mr. Owen noted the final map would have to be re-mapped in order to add another unit to the project.

Commissioner Weiler and staff discussed the proposed fee credits.

Commissioner Romo and staff discussed the location for the one-bedroom units and the sizes for the loft spaces.

Commissioner Weiler asked if the steps on the landing off of grand encroached into the right-of-way, noting his concern for the City's liability. Mr. Tunnell replied in the affirmative and noted that the City's preference would be to increase the street vacation in order to alleviate this issue.

Greg Waite, Encinitas, Applicant, noted that the project was part of the downtown specific plan being realized. He stated that the project would provide safe connectivity to its residents to access transit, provide opportunities for local construction jobs, and provide significant tax revenue to the city. He also noted that the project would provide a living environment near downtown.

Commissioner Weiler expressed his concern with parking and asked how they planned on managing parking issues. Mr. Waite provided an overview of their parking management plan, feeling this would mitigate any parking issues. He also noted that they had discussed potential parking opportunities with NCTD.

Commissioner Weiler and Mr. Waite discussed the proposed guest-parking plan.

Marie Bowman, Escondido, noted that she was the original chairman of Mercado Association. She expressed her support for the project, noting that it would boost the economy for the Mercado and entire community.

Commissioner Johns did not believe the SANDAG or City parking ratios as pertained to the subject project were appropriate to provide adequate parking.

Commissioner Weiler stated he was originally concerned with the parking for this project but noted that he felt the proposed parking management plan and staff's recommendations would mitigate issues.

Commissioner Cohen and Mr. Waite discussed the proposed parking ratios.

Commissioner Spann was in favor of the proposed project. He also felt the parking management plan would work for the project.

Commissioner Weiler recommended conditioning the project so that the flex area could not be converted to a living unit and that the project's steps along Grand Avenue not be in the right-of-way.

Commissioner Romo was favor of the project as long as there was no on-street parking along Grand Avenue. Mr. Martin noted that the applicant was not proposing or relying on any on-street parking.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Weiler, seconded by Commissioner Spann, to approve staff's recommendation. The motion included conditioning the project so that the flex area could not be converted to a living unit, that the project's landing steps along Grand Avenue not be in the right-of-way, and that on-street parking along Grand Avenue was prohibited. Motion carried. Ayes: Weiler, Cohen, Romo, and Spann. Noes: None. Abstained: Johns. (4-0-1)

2. EXTENSION OF TIME FOR A TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP, MODIFICATION TO A MASTER AND PRECISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND GRADING EXEMPTION – SUB 15-0031 and PHG 16-0010:

REQUEST: The proposed project involves a request for a three-year Extension of Time for an approved five-lot Tentative Subdivision Map (original Map Number TR 900) consisting of one 1.82-acre commercial lot and four single-family residential lots on 1.38 acres in conjunction with a modification to an approved Master and Precise Development Plan (original File No. 2004-70-PD/GE) for a 71,285 SF self-storage facility on the commercial lot. The proposed modifications to the self-storage facility include an approximately 6,782 SF increase in overall floor area (78,067 total floor area) along with a change to the architectural design of the buildings from California/Mediterranean to a more contemporary style. The overall number of stories and height of the two commercial buildings would remain the same (Building 1 two stories over a basement, and Building 2 one story). The four single-family residential lots range in size from 12,810 SF to 14,000 SF similar to

the previously approved Tentative Subdivision Map. A Grading Exemption also was approved for a combination cut slope/retaining wall up to 18 feet in height with an inclination between 1-1/2:1 to 2:1 along the eastern boundary of the commercial lot. The revised project has been designed to conform to the new storm water permit requirements. The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

LOCATION: The 3.20-acre project site generally is located on the southwestern corner of Brotherton Road and Cranston Drive, east of Center City Parkway, addressed as 2319 Cranston Drive (APN 238-141-34).

Jay Paul, Associate Planner, referenced the staff report and noted staff issues were whether the design of the subdivision is consistent with the PD-C and R-1-10 development standards, appropriateness of the proposed modifications to the self-storage facility with respect to neighborhood compatibility, and whether the residential homes should be constructed prior to or concurrently with the self-storage facility. Staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) While the Planned Development-Commercial zone does not have specific development standards for a commercial lot, the proposed 1.82-acre commercial lot would be consistent with the General Commercial lot design standards. The four residential lots would be consistent with the underlying R-1-10 design standards for lot area, width and street frontage. All of the proposed lots are designed with sufficient area to develop a typical single-family residence, garage, and usable open space areas while meeting all setback and height requirements. Appropriate on-site and street frontage parking also would be available; 2) Staff felt the self-storage facility has been appropriately designed because the grading plan for the commercial development incorporates the same grading design and pad elevations as the previously approved project. Building heights also remain the same, and much of the floor area either is below ground or at grade to preserve views from the existing residence to the east and to reduce the overall mass and scale of the facility. The more contemporary building architecture incorporates residential like design elements and materials used throughout the surrounding area. The project also includes appropriate perimeter landscaping, along with the required 20-foot-wide landscape buffer and solid masonry separation/noise walls adjacent to residential development on the east and southeast; and 3) Staff did not have concerns with removing the original condition that requires the homes to be built at the same time as the self-storage facility because the Tentative Map would be required to be recorded as a single project and all street improvements, grading and storm water features associated with the commercial and residential components completed at the same time. In addition, appropriate security would be in place to ensure appropriate maintenance of any required frontage landscaping and on-site storm water features for both components of the project until the homes ultimately are completed.




Commissioner Weiler and staff discussed the timing for undergrounding the utilities and installation of sidewalks.

Commissioner Romo discussed the parameters of the extension of time.


Jim Barisic, Irvine, applicant, noted that they worked with staff for over a year on the subject project. He stated that they concurred with staff's recommendation. He also indicated that they were very pleased with changes to the architectural schemes.

Irene Shaw, Escondido, stated that she lived near the subject project. She noted that her neighborhood was unaware that the project was being expanded in size. She indicated that she was concerned with potential traffic impacts to the neighborhood. She did not feel the project would be compatible with the residential area. She also felt more neighbors would have attended the meeting had they known the project was being expanded.



Rick Ankrom, Escondido, referenced Page 63 of the staff report, noting that it did not show the full intersection of South Escondido Boulevard, Centre City Parkway, and Brotherton. He stated that this area had extensive traffic noting previous accidents at this intersection. He indicated that that most of the businesses take egress and ingress off of South Escondido Boulevard. He was opposed to the access for the project being off of Brotherton and Cranston due to the streets being narrow and residential. He noted that he had never seen a storage facility in a residential area. He was concerned with the requests to change the architecture, increase the square footage, and the extension of time. Mr. Ankrom then referenced the traffic analysis, feeling the projected ADTs generated by the self-storage units needed to be further analyzed. He felt the project's residences should be built in conjunction with the facility, noting his view that this would help provide additional screening, and that the new architectural design was did not match the surrounding residential area.

Commissioner Romo and staff discussed uses that were allowed in the subject zoning.



Mark Whitehead, Irvine, stated that they had just purchased the project a year ago, noting that the original applicant was not able to finish the project. He indicated that being able to sell the residential lots individually provided more flexibility to build custom homes. He noted they were a homebuilder and would not be opposed to building homes on the four lots. He stated that the egress and ingress had not changed from what was originally approved. He noted that the change in square footage, especially for Building 2 was a more efficient use of the site while providing appropriate screening. He also noted that self-storage facilities

were very low traffic generators as well as noting that they had worked with City on the appropriate architecture design.

Commissioner Romo and staff discussed the pad elevations.

Commissioner Johns and staff discussed the locations for the closest self-storage facility to the project.

Commissioner Spann stated that self-storage facilities were low traffic generators. He felt the proposed plan was superior to the previous plan.

Commissioner Romo noted that the project had already been approved, would have minimal impacts on traffic, and in his view be the best use for the site.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Cohen, seconded by Commissioner Weiler, to approve staff's recommendation. Motion carried. Ayes: Weiler, Cohen, Romo, and Spann. Noes: None. Abstained: Johns. (4-0-1)

CURRENT BUSINESS: None.

ORAL COMMUNATIONS: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Weiler and staff discussed status of the South Escondido Neighborhood Plan.

Mr. Martin noted that there could be some pending items that would require a November 22nd meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Romo adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for September 27, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.



Bill Martin, Secretary to the Escondido
Planning Commission



Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk