

**CITY OF ESCONDIDO**

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

**March 24, 2015**

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; Ed Hale, Commissioner; Gregory Johns, Commissioner; Don Romo, Commissioner; James Spann, Commissioner; and Guy Winton, Commissioner.

**Commissioners absent:** None.

**Staff present:** Bill Martin, Deputy Planning Director; Owen Tunnell, Principal Engineer; Jay Paul, Associate Planner; Homi Namdari, Assistant City Engineer; Gary McCarthy, Senior Deputy City Attorney; and Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk.

**MINUTES:**

Moved by Commissioner Spann, seconded by Chairman Weber, to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2015, meeting. Motion carried. Ayes: Spann, Johns, McQuead, Weber, Hale, and Winton. Noes: None. Abstained: Romo. (6-0-1)

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS** – Received.

**FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS** – None.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** – None.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

1. **ANNEXATION; TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP; DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION – SUB 14-0002; PHG 14-0006; PHG 14-0007 AND ENV 14-0003:**

REQUEST: The proposed project consists of a 43-lot Tentative Subdivision Map on approximately 13.97 acres to include 40 single-family residential lots and 3 open space lots to accommodate on-site storm water facilities. The development

also includes annexation of the development site (APNs 224-130-07, -08, -12 and -13) into the City of Escondido, along with one additional developed residential parcel (APN 224-142-20), and three street segments: Lehner between Vista and Ash; Ash between Lehner and Vista; and Vista between Lehner and the City boundary located approximately 500 feet east of Ash Street. Vacation of a portion of the unnamed roadway along the western boundary of the site and a portion of Lehner Avenue also is requested. A Development Agreement is proposed to address the construction and timing of on- and off-site infrastructure improvements along with additional fees toward future construction of priority street and drainage improvements in the North Broadway Deficiency Area. The development would require a boundary adjustment to be recorded for a 15-foot by 318-foot strip of land on the north side of the site that would remain within the County jurisdiction and benefit an adjacent property owner. The project includes the demolition of all of the on-site structures. Proposed off-site improvements include widening Lehner Avenue and installation of storm drain facilities; widening of approximately 690 feet of the northern side of Vista Avenue (including curb, gutter and sidewalk) west of the development site to existing roadway improvements; widening of the western side of Ash Street from Lehner Avenue to Vista Avenue; widening a portion of the eastern side of Ash Street along three parcels (APNs 224-142-19, -20 and -29) to the intersection of Vista Avenue; widening the northern side of Vista Avenue along the frontage of APN 224-142-20; and intersection improvements to Ash Street/Vista Avenue including signalization; and transition improvements south of Vista Avenue, which would require the acquisition of a small section of right-of-way at the southwest corner and slope easements for off-site grading improvements along APN 227-010-57 (1781 N. Ash Street). The proposal also includes the adoption of the environmental determination prepared for the project.

**LOCATION:** The proposed development site generally is located on the northwestern corner of Ash Street and Vista Avenue, and is bisected by Lehner Avenue (APNs 224-130-07, -08, -12 and -13). An additional developed parcel located on the northeastern corner of Ash Street and Vista Avenue (APN 224-142-20) also would be included in the annexation.

Jay Paul, Associate Planner, referenced the staff report and noted staff issues were the appropriateness of the project design, closure and vacation of a portion of Lehner Avenue and vacation of the unnamed street, the appropriateness of the annexation boundaries, and whether the proposed Development Agreement adequately addresses infrastructure deficiencies in the area. Staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) Staff felt the design and orientation of the proposed 40 single-family residential lots is appropriate because each lot meets the design standards of the proposed R-1-10 zone; the size of the lots would be compatible with the surrounding development patterns and lot sizes; adequate

on-site and on-street parking would be provided; appropriate utilities are available to serve the project site; all traffic related impacts would be mitigated; the project would not adversely impact any sensitive resources; and no grading exemptions are needed; 2) The annexation area was located in the city's Sphere of Influence within an 'island' of unincorporated territory surrounded by Escondido's corporate boundaries. Including this territory with the City will reduce the fragmented jurisdictional boundaries and enhance efficiencies for providing services to affected residents by consolidating public services. The subject parcels previously were rezoned to R-1-10 to correspond to their underlying Escondido General Plan land-use designation of Suburban, that allows a maximum density of up to 3.3 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and minimum lot size of 10,000 SF. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), which oversees all annexation activity, has reviewed the proposed annexation boundary, and indicated initial support for the proposed annexation area. The proposed annexation area is contiguous with the City boundary on the west and southwest, and all services can be provided to the site. The proposed annexation/reorganization would allow for the orderly development of the City without adversely affecting adjacent properties. Although the annexation would result in the creation of a small county island, the remaining county area would not adversely impact the ability to provide continued public and other services to the four remaining county parcels. These parcels only are separated from adjacent county parcels to the north by Lehner Avenue and the property owners do not want to be included in the annexation; and 3) Staff felt the Deficiency Fee and other terms proposed in the Development Agreement are reasonable and prudent because the agreement will allow the construction of the residential development, along with appropriate street, water and sewer line improvements in a coordinated fashion that will result in reduced costs while maximizing public and private resources to construct necessary public infrastructure at the earliest practicable time.

Commissioner McQuead and staff discussed the proposed design and location for the project's sound walls.

Commissioner McQuead and Mr. Paul discussed the pad elevations for Lots 1 and 4.

Commissioner Johns asked if the Commission would provide input during the design review phase for this project. Mr. Paul replied in the negative. Mr. Martin noted that the project before the Commission was a land subdivision. The future home designs are typically reviewed at the administrative level.

Discussion ensued regarding a clarification of the purview of the Commission with regard to its role in the design review process.

Commissioner Hale asked if there were published architectural design standards that the proposed project would be subject to. Mr. Martin replied in the negative.

Chairman Weber asked if staff confirmed that access could be provided to the off-site properties adjacent to the western boundary of the site if the proposed vacation of the unnamed street was approved. Mr. Paul replied in the affirmative.

Chairman Weber and staff discussed the proposed access to the subject property in relation to the County's 40-foot minimum street access.

**John Kaye, Irvine, Pacific Land Investors**, stated that the subject project would create a community that would provide street and offsite improvements in a more cohesive manner. He stated that the pad elevations for Lots 1 and 4 were in line with the existing grade. He indicated that the Lehner Avenue closure would create a safer traffic situation and still provided pedestrian access. He then asked that the Commission support staff's recommendation.

Commissioner McQuead suggested the developer carefully look at the elevations and homes proposed for Lots 1 and 4, noting his concern with it lending itself to having vehicle headlights spilling into the second story window as well as other issues.

**Jada Cassell, Escondido**, expressed her view that the closure of Lehner Avenue to westbound traffic would create issues with school traffic. She then asked how much of her property would be needed on the west side of Ash Street as a result of the proposed street widening. Mr. Tunnell stated that none of Ms. Cassell's property would be required.

**Henry Mason, Escondido**, questioned what would happen to the utility poles near his property on the unnamed street as well as the overhead wires that came from Vista Avenue. He stated his property had taken access from the unnamed road since 1948. He questioned whether the remaining western half of the unnamed street could be dedicated to him and his neighbors. He also asked that the project be conditioned to install a solid block wall on the north/south boundary, noting this would help provide separation from the project to his more rural neighborhood.

**Don Perish, Escondido**, expressed his concern with the closure of Lehner Avenue adding additional traffic to Stanley Avenue. He then referenced an area on the staff report that was identified as a lot line adjustment, noting his concern if this was proposed to be a road.

**Marie Escobedo, Escondido**, expressed her concern with the project potentially contaminating her well, which was located approximately 100 feet from the property. She requested that the project be conditioned to install a solid wall for Lots 34 and 35. She expressed concern with the potential closure of Lehner Avenue, noting this would impact school drop-off and pick-up activities as well as jeopardizing students walking to and from school. She felt that the uniqueness of Lehner Avenue created traffic calming for the area. She also suggested that the project be conditioned to provide open space.

**Mike Lawrence, Escondido**, asked that the western half of the unnamed street be dedicated to the homeowners from Aspero Court south to Vista Avenue and that the project be conditioned to install a perimeter block wall in order to help preserve the rural atmosphere of the area. He expressed concern with potential drainage issues occurring along the sides of the property and asked that this be mitigated. He also asked that the house heights for Lots 20-22 be limited to single story so as to preserve his views.

Commissioner McQuead asked staff if the area identified by Mr. Perish would become a road. Mr. Tunnell replied in the negative.

Commissioner McQuead asked if staff was aware of any engineering issues with regard to installing solid walls along the perimeter of the subject property. Mr. Paul stated that typically this type of detail was not required as part of tentative maps.

Commissioner McQuead asked if the unnamed street could be vacated to the existing property owners. Mr. Tunnell replied in the affirmative.

Chairman Weber referenced Page 6 of the staff report and asked if the unnamed street, as being a fee ownership, could be vacated. Mr. Tunnell replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hale questioned why the applicant was not being required to underground the utilities northbound of Ash on Vista. Mr. Tunnell stated that the utilities would have to be undergrounded or a waiver fee would have to be paid.

Commissioner Hale asked Mr. Kaye if he had an opportunity to meet with any homeowners in the area. Mr. Kaye stated that the only communication so far was a petition that was submitted. He noted that they would be responsible for ensuring everyone still had utilities in the area. He stated that a block wall would be provided around the perimeter of the property. He also stated that another project in the area would be improving Ash Street going south to Vista Avenue with sidewalks and street improvements.

Commissioner Hale felt it would be reasonable to condition the project to be responsible for preparing the vacation of unnamed street. He also felt the project should be conditioned to install block walls for Lots 20-23 and 34 and 35.

Commissioner Winton asked if the project was being conditioned to relinquish access along the unnamed street which would only be half of the street thus still allowing access. Mr. Tunnell replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Winton and Mr. Namdari discussed the process for vacating the unnamed street.

Commissioner Spann suggested conditioning the project to have a masonry wall around the perimeter of the project as the applicant had agreed to. He also concurred with requiring vacating the unnamed street.

Commissioner Spann asked if the City would be in favor of vacating half of the unnamed street. Mr. Namdari replied in the affirmative. He then provided a brief description of the process for vacating the unnamed street.

#### **ACTION:**

Moved by Commissioner Winton, seconded by Commissioner Spann, to approve staff's recommendation. The motion included the project being conditioned to add masonry walls to all perimeter property lines, and conditioned to require the developer relinquish access to the western side of the unnamed street on the western boundary of the development. Motion carried unanimously. (7-0)

#### **CURRENT BUSINESS:**

##### **1. Discussion regarding duties of the Chairman.**

Bill Martin, Deputy Planning Director, noted that the selection of the Chairman and Vice-chairman would be put on the next agenda. He then referenced the role of the Chairman and Vice-chairman.

##### **2. Discussion of the Planning Commission's interest in a public workshop on SANDAG's Draft "San Diego Forward – The Regional Plan," anticipated to be released in May 2015.**

Bill Martin, Deputy Planning Director, referenced the handout and asked if the Commission was interested in a presentation of SANDAG's Draft. The Commission concurred with inviting SANDAG to provide a presentation to the Commission.

**CURRENT BUSINESS:** None.

**ORAL COMMUNATIONS:** None.

**PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Weber adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for April 14, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

*Bill Martin*

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Bill Martin, Secretary to the  
Escondido Planning Commission

*Ty Paulson*

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Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk