

CITY OF ESCONDIDO

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION

September 14, 2010

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

Commissioners present: Jack Campbell, Vice-chairman; Edward Lehman, Commissioner; Guy Winton, Commissioner; Jeffery Weber, Commissioner; Darol Caster, Chairman; and Don Yerkes, Commissioner

Commissioners absent: Bob McQuead, Commissioner.

Staff present: Barbara Redlitz, Director of Community Development; Bill Martin, Principal Planner; Owen Tunnell, Associate Engineer; Paul Bingham, Assistant Planner II; Ed Domingue, Director of Engineering Services; Alex Brizolis, Deputy City Attorney; and Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk.

MINUTES:

Moved by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Lehman, to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2010, meeting. Motion carried. Ayes: Lehman, Campbell, Yerkes, Weber, and Winton. Noes: None. Abstained: Caster. (5-0-1)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – Received.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS – None.

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE – None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – PHG 10-0013:

REQUEST: A Conditional Use Permit for the conversion of an existing 2,609 SF office building to a preschool facility (Tiny Tots). The program provides two daily sessions Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. with a maximum of 20 children in each session. No exterior changes to the building are proposed. Interior improvements consist of modifying former offices to activity rooms, an art room and a game room as

well as making the restrooms more age appropriate. Outdoor playground equipment and a shade canopy have been added to the site.

LOCATION: The 15,865 SF property is located on the northern side of Woodward Avenue, between Broadway and N. Escondido Blvd., addressed as 120 W. Woodward Avenue.

Bill Martin, Principal Planner, presented the staff report and noted staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) The pre-school facility would be located in an area that had traditionally hosted a mix of commercial, school, church and child-oriented facilities. The proposed facility would be consistent with established land uses in the area. The building was adequately sized for the programs that were offered and an appropriate amount of outdoor play area and parking had been provided. Circumstances required the Tiny Tots program to commence operations on the site while the CUP request was being processed. The facility appeared to operate efficiently and had not caused any problems in the area. No complaints had been received from neighboring property owners and no comments were received in response to the public noticing for the Conditional Use Permit.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Winton, to approve staff's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously. (6-0)

2. A PRECISE PLAN AND MODIFICATION TO THE MASTER PLAN – PHG 09-0040:

REQUEST: A Precise Plan for the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center and Modification to its Master Plan to allow for increased square footage, building height and the use of some compact parking spaces to meet parking requirements. The Preliminary and Master Development Plan for this project was approved by the City Council on August 23, 2006, consisting of a 196-room hotel and other related facilities including a restaurant, health club and administrative offices. As approved, the hotel building includes seven stories above ground and two levels of parking below ground with 209 standard-size parking spaces. An Extension of Time for the Preliminary and Master Development Plan was approved by the City Council on June 30, 2010. The Precise Plan includes details for the proposed hotel with its 196 guest rooms and other amenities. The hotel project includes the refurbishment and operation of the neighboring conference center existing to the west.

LOCATION: The project site is 2.38 acres in size and is located on the north side of West Valley Parkway, between North Broadway and North Escondido

Boulevard (APN 229-372-20 and 229-421-01 through -07). Specifically the hotel will be located between City Hall and the existing California Center for the Arts, Escondido (CCAЕ) Conference Center on the site currently occupied by a 75-space parking lot.

Paul Bingham, Assistant Planner II, referenced the staff report and noted staff issues were whether the proposed enlargement of the hotel by 25,517 SF and 5 feet in height was appropriate, whether the inclusion of 47 compact parking spaces from the 210 garage spaces was appropriate for the proposed hotel use, whether the changes in the hotel's latest design and the connection to the existing Conference Center were appropriate, whether the design of the Paseo and its associated elements are sufficient for pedestrian and occasional vehicular access, provide an adequate visual link and aesthetic design qualities between the downtown, Maple Street Plaza and Grape Day Park, and overall enhance and vitalize the space, and whether adequate access to adjacent facilities would be maintained during construction.

Staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) Much of the size increase in the square footage and height of the hotel was due to enlargement of the guest rooms (not the number of rooms), back-of-house operations and volume in the underground parking garage levels. None of these has an impact on requirements such as a need for additional parking; 2) Design efforts to improve the pedestrian corridor to the east, drop the hotel's front entry loop to ground level, and better link the hotel with the existing Conference Center, resulted in underground parking with 22% compact spaces. Staff felt the inclusion of some compact spaces, while not optimal, was nonetheless acceptable. The proposed plans also provide four more new parking spaces than was achieved in the previously approved Master Plan; 3) The current proposal links the Conference Center into the hotel's "Great Room" concept and visually connected the hotel lobby to the hallway in front of every salon. There were no level changes or need for winding passages. It also integrated much more effectively with the outdoor patio space that currently existed between the Conference Center and CCAE to the north; 4) The applicant's architects and engineers had worked closely with the Fire Department, SDG&E, the CCAE and other City departments to insure that the design of the Paseo as depicted in the current Precise Plan would meet all public safety and temporary vehicular access concerns. In addition, the hotel team had coordinated with the Maple Street Plaza and Grape Day Park designers to ensure that the Paseo properly integrated with and would provide a strong continuation of the experience envisioned in those designs; and 5) The contractor was exploring various temporary offsite parking locations for their workers. Depending on which of these is chosen, shuttling may occur. Pedestrian flow and emergency access would be maintained by means of temporary protective walkways during construction. Alternative CCAE drop-off locations also occur on both Escondido Boulevard and the Woodward lot. Only minimal interruptions in Credit Union,

City Hall, City Hall's Mitchell Room, the Conference Center, Grape Day Park and both CCAE theaters activities during certain construction phases were anticipated. Project related deliveries and construction traffic would be limited to Valley Parkway. No construction-related lane closures and no temporary or permanent roadways through Grape Day Park were part of this request.

Chairman Caster asked if staff was concerned about the compact spaces. Mr. Bingham noted that the parking consultant typically did not recommend compact spaces when avoidable.

Chairman Caster questioned the enforcement for ensuring that compact vehicles were parking in compact parking spaces, noting concern with circulation patterns being impacted. Ms. Redlitz noted that the City did not police compact spaces. She also referenced a condition in the staff report whereby the City would have the ability to regulate operations in the parking garage as they relate to public safety and accessibility.

Commissioner Weber asked if the parking requirement included parking for employees and guests. Mr. Bingham replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Weber asked if the parking spaces being lost by the hotel would be accommodated somewhere else. Mr. Bingham replied in the negative, but noted that the previous parking study took this into consideration as well as potential impacts to surrounding parking lots.

Chairman Caster and staff discussed whether additional parking had been provided for the new conference room inside the hotel.

Commissioner Campbell asked if the employees would pay for parking. A member of the project development team in the audience replied in the negative.

Commissioner Campbell felt the proposed plan was better than what was previously proposed. Chairman Caster concurred

Commissioner Lehman and staff discussed the proposed circulation patterns with regard to potential impacts on Valley Parkway.

Chairman Caster questioned whether adequate parking would be provided for the conference center aspect of the hotel. Commissioner Weber concurred and questioned where the conference center individuals would park. Ms. Redlitz noted that the parking study indicated that adequate parking existed in the surrounding areas, and that the Woodward parking lot would continue to be designated for use by conference center attendees.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Winton, to approve staff's recommendation. Motion carried. Ayes: Yerkes, Caster, Campbell, Lehman, and Winton. Noes: Weber. (5-1)

CURRENT BUSINESS: None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: Ms. Redlitz noted that a General Plan workshop would be held on September 15th at 6:00 pm at the Center for the Arts.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS: No discussion.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Caster adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for September 28, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

Bill Martin, Secretary to the Escondido
Planning Commissioner

Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk