



**CITY OF SANTA MARIA
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 7, 2007**



Chair Waterfield called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Lawnae Hunter, Michael W. Moats, Rodger Brown, Adrian Andrade and Chair Etta Waterfield.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Division Manager – Peggy Woods
Deputy City Attorney – Wendy Stockton
Senior Civil Engineer – Rodger Olds
Director of Recreation & Parks - Alex Posada
Planner II – Bill Scott
Recording Secretary – Kathleen Villegas

BY MOTION, APPROVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2007, AS WRITTEN.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: There was no one present who wished to comment.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

ITEM 1 - GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION FOR THE SANTA MARIA-BONITA SCHOOL DISTRICT ON 8 TO 12 ACRES OF PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED ON THE WEST SIDE OF SOUTH WESTERN AVENUE BETWEEN SONYA LANE AND CARMEN LANE, IN THE BLOSSER SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN AREA, SP-2007-001. Review of a general plan consistency determination for the Santa Maria-Bonita School District on 8 to 12 acres of property generally located on the west side of South Western Avenue between Sonya Lane and Carmen Lane, in the Blosser Southeast Specific Plan area, in a PF (Public Facilities) zoning district, Assessor's Parcel No. 117-33-087 (Project Planner: Bill Scott)

ACTION: Adopted Resolution No. 2451, finding that the Santa Maria-Bonita School District's public school project is consistent with the City of Santa Maria General Plan.

VOTE: AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Moats, Brown and Waterfield; NOES: None, ABSTAINED: Commissioner Hunter, ABSENT: None.

Bill Scott presented the staff report. He stated that the Santa Maria-Bonita School District has expressed its intent of eight to ten acres of land to construct an elementary school. The site is located at the southwest corner of the South Western Avenue extension between the extension of Sonya Lane and Carmen Lane. In accordance with Government Code Section 65402(b), the

School District has requested a determination that the proposed school site is consistent with the City of Santa Maria General Plan. The subject site is designated CF, Community Facilities, in the City of Santa Maria Land Use Element. The site is also designated as a public school by the Blosser Southeast Specific Plan. The site is zoned PD/PF. Therefore, construction of an elementary school on all or a portion of the subject site would be consistent with the City of Santa Maria General Plan and the zoning designation as well as the Blosser Southeast Specific Plan. He concluded his report by stating that staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution finding that the Santa Maria Bonita School District's public school is consistent with the City of Santa Maria General Plan, and he welcomed any questions.

The applicant, Mike Grogan, 708 South Miller, of the Santa Maria Bonita School District office, addressed the audience, and was available to answer any questions.

In response to Commissioner Brown's inquiry, Mr. Grogan stated that they needed about 10 acres to build a school that the California Department of Education would approve for 650 students. They have several ideas pending to the property owners right now, so they are not sure yet what the outcome will be, but hope to have an answer soon.

Mr. Grogan also spoke on the shape of the parcel, the location of oil sumps on a portion of the site, and where they were hoping the school site could be located.

Commissioner Hunter stepped down, citing a conflict of interest with Capitol Pacific Homes.

Mr. Grogan spoke of the difficulty in finding appropriate parcels for school sites. He stated that this location is right for a school, since it is where the houses are being built. He spoke of the sizes of the schools and that extra capacity is needed for students.

Commissioner Brown complimented the schools on having the new cafeteria/gym combination.

Jay Higgins of Capitol Pacific Homes, 3217 Calle Nigera, Santa Barbara, addressed the Commissioners. His stance on the project was neutral. He commented that this request by the School District for a General Plan Consistency Determination was a bit early in the process. He stated that Capitol Pacific Homes has owned the property for the past eighteen months, and has been endeavoring to negotiate with the School District. However, a deal has not been made yet. They have received only a couple of letters from the School District in the past eighteen months expressing interest in the property, and both of those letters included land values that were dramatically below fair market rates. He stated that Capitol Pacific Homes is no longer able to hold on to the property until the School District decides what to do, and they have doubts as to whether or not the site will be suitable for a school. They don't oppose the action being asked for by the Planning Commission, just want to clarify that this wouldn't affect only a public school, but could also apply for a private school. He also submitted an email message to the Commissioners and into the record that asked staff some questions that weren't all answered.

Chair Waterfield asked Mr. Higgins if it was the position of Capitol Pacific Homes to not sell to the School District. Mr. Higgins responded that they would love to sell to the School District, but the offers being received are far below the fair market value of the property.

Commissioner Andrade asked staff if this consistency determination would preclude a private school from locating in this location. Ms. Wendy Stockton responded that this request is a consistency determination that has been requested by the attorney for a school that might be public, but it does not preclude any other consistency determination or any other use on the property that would be appropriate. All that is being requested is a determination of whether or not this school would be appropriate under the General Plan.

Ms. Stockton also responded to Commissioner Andrade's question on the zoning by stating that the zoning titles are there for convenience. This particular zoning, Public Facility, is a designation for a building that is designed to serve a lot of people at a time, as opposed to something small.

Mr. Scott added that uses like churches are allowed in the Public Facilities zone, as well as private schools. The Blosser Southeast Specific Plan specifically states that these areas are intended to support a junior high school and an elementary school, as well as a community cultural center.

In response to Commissioner Moats' question, Mr. Scott stated that rezoning this parcel to residential would not be consistent with the long-range intent of the specific plan. The Blosser Southeast Specific Plan does provide that any left over portions of property could be amended and rezoned to allow other uses once a school has been constructed.

Commissioner Moats also commented on the discrepancy between what Capitol Pacific Homes and the School District claim the parcel is worth, and asked how fair market value is established.

Mr. Higgins responded by stating that fair market value is determined by appraisal. He said that Capitol Pacific Homes' suggestion would be to average two appraisals.

Wendy Stockton reminded the Commission that only a consistency determination was being decided upon; nothing else.

Commissioner Andrade commented on the indication that there are a number of sumps located on the site, and he asked how many there are and what kind of remediation is going to be done.

Mr. Higgins responded that in the entire tract, which is 80 acres, there are eight sump locations, and they have all been remediated. Capitol Pacific Homes has the 'no further action' letters for the entire property from the County Fire Department. They have also brought in certified clean fill dirt, pursuant to the State Department of Toxics thresholds.

After no further comments, Chair Waterfield closed the hearing and called for a motion. Commissioner Brown made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2451 for a General Plan Consistency Determination for the Santa Maria-Bonita School District on 8 to 12 acres of property generally located on the west side of South Western Avenue between Sonya Lane and Carmen Lane, in the Blosser Southeast Specific Plan Area, SP-2007-001. Commissioner Moats seconded it, and it passed, 4-0-1 (Hunter abstained).

ITEM 2 - PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FOR AN OFFICE BUILDING AND OFF-SITE PARKING, LOCATED AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF EAST MAIN STREET AND VALERIE STREET, PD-2006-022, E-2006-079. Review of a Planned Development Permit to allow the construction of a 3,688 square foot office building and approval of an off-site shared parking arrangement, located at the northeast corner of East Main Street and Valerie Street, in a PD/CPO (Planned Development/Commercial/Professional Office) zoning district, Assessor's Parcel No.128-055-039. This project qualifies for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption. No further environmental review is required. (Project Planner: Bill Scott)

ACTION: By motion, approved subject to the conditions as outlined in the Preliminary Draft of the Planned Development Permit.

VOTE: AYES: Commissioners Hunter, Andrade, Moats, Brown and Waterfield; NOES: None, ABSTAINED: None, ABSENT: None.

Bill Scott presented the staff report, outlining the details of the project as well as the parking, landscaping and architectural elements. He detailed the primary issues related to the site, which include the building height in proximity to residential use, and the shared parking and access agreement with the building to the east of the project site. He stated that there is no upper floor or balcony in the building that would impact adjacent residences, and also that there is an eight to nine foot high wall between the subject site and the adjacent residence that would provide further separation. Mr. Scott also showed a shade study provided by the applicant that demonstrates that the position of the building would not cast or create shade on the adjacent residence to the north. Staff believes that with these facts, the small increase in additional building height would not have any adverse affect on the adjacent residential use. Mr. Scott spoke about the parking requirements, and that the project is adequately parked. The applicant has provided a shared parking access agreement that has been reviewed by the City Attorney's office and has been accepted. Mr. Scott also mentioned that the applicant will submit a rear lot line adjustment to relocate the rear property line roughly ten feet away to meet the building code requirements for setbacks.

Mr. Scott stated that staff heard from Ms. Susanna Martinez, who lives just to the north of the project site, and she cited three concerns: the height of the building; the potential for parking in front of her house on the residential street; and the height of the existing wall between the two lots. Staff spoke with Ms. Martinez about the building height and parking issues, and as a follow up, sent her a copy of the staff report.

Mr. Scott concluded his report by stating that staff is recommending approval of the project subject to the conditions outlined in the Preliminary Draft of the Planned Development Permit, and is available to answer any questions.

In response to Commissioner Hunter's question, Wendy Stockton stated that the reciprocal parking agreement runs with the land, so it would in effect be forever.

Commissioner Moats inquired about the height of the wall and why it was so tall.

Peggy Woods responded that the general height requirement for walls is eight feet, and that height is measured from the highest elevation of a building pad. So the resulting height of the wall could have been because of a difference in elevations of the two adjacent building pads.

In response to Commissioner Brown, staff clarified that the front of the building faces Valerie Street.

Commissioner Brown also expressed concern about parking on Valerie Street, and asked staff if there were any solutions for that should it become a problem.

Rodger Olds of the Engineering Division responded by stating that when and if parking on Valerie Street becomes an issue, then the Traffic Committee would determine what the best action would be. There are a variety of ways to address this sort of problem.

Commissioner Andrade expressed concern that the resident to the north of the project site only got notice this afternoon about the project, and he asked staff what kind of notice she received.

Bill Scott responded that the notices for the project went out over a week ago. Also, staff had been in phone discussions with Ms. Martinez for the past few days, and when she indicated she would not be able to attend the Planning Commission meeting, staff faxed the report to her.

In response to Commissioner Andrade's question, Mr. Scott stated that he went to Ms. Martinez' house this afternoon to invite her to the Planning Commission, and to ask for any

comments that she might have. He put the Planning Department's fax number on the correspondence, and asked for her input.

Commissioner Andrade complimented staff on a job well done.

Bruce Frasier, 917 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo, architect for the project, spoke in behalf of the applicant. They agree with the conditions as set forth, and have had a good deal of communication with staff during the development of the staff report. He commented on the design of the building, which was designed to be compatible with the In West Insurance building to the east. This building has better green design and sustainability. It has much deeper recesses and shading, as well as ventilation features that don't require mechanical conditioning. He stated that the applicant has discussed putting strong encouragement into the leases to use the designated parking spaces. He commented that he was available to answer any further questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Hunter raised the question of pigeons and how their presence could be mitigated. Mr. Frasier described how the building has been designed to discourage the roosting of pigeons.

Chair Waterfield closed the hearing and called for a motion. Commissioner Moats made a motion to approve a Planned Development Permit for an office building and off-site parking, located at the northeast corner of East Main Street and Valerie Street, PD-2006-022, E-2006-079, subject to the conditions outlined in the Preliminary Draft of the Planned Development Permit. Commissioner Andrade seconded it, and it passed, 5-0.

ITEM 3 - GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION FOR AN ABANDONMENT OF UTILITY EASEMENTS AT MERRILL GARDENS, 1220 NORTH SUEY ROAD, SP-2007-002.

The Public Works Department is seeking the Planning Commission's determination that the proposed abandonment of on-site utility easements at the Merrill Gardens site is consistent with the General Plan. Per the revised design of the Merrill Garden project (formerly Arbor View), a portion of the existing on-site utility easements are required to be relocated. The existing easement location was dedicated within the previously planned on-site project roadways, and was dedicated as part of the initial phase of Arbor View. The current proposal by Merrill Gardens will modify the location of the on-site access roads, thereby modifying the proposed utility easements. There are no existing utilities within the easements proposed to be abandoned. (Project Engineer: Rodger Olds)

ACTION: Adopted Resolution No. 2452, affirming that the subject vacation is in conformity with the City's General Plan.

VOTE: AYES: Commissioners Hunter, Andrade, Moats, Brown and Waterfield; NOES: None, ABSTAINED: None, ABSENT: None.

Rodger Olds of the Engineering Division of Public Works presented the staff report, stating that the Public Works Department is seeking a finding from the Planning Commission for a General Plan Consistency Determination for the summary vacation of an existing utilities easement that is currently located on the Merrill Gardens Property which was formerly Arbor View. The reason for this abandonment is due to a redesign based on a revision to the property boundaries. He stated that the reason the property boundary was changed was due to the purchase of the northwest portion of the property for a future fire station. He concluded the presentation of the staff report by stating that he was available to answer any questions.

With no questions from the Commissioners, and nobody in the audience who wished to speak, Chair Waterfield closed the public hearing and called for a motion. Commissioner

Andrade made the recommendation that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 2452 affirming that the subject vacation of an existing utilities easement that is currently located on the Merrill Gardens Property which was formerly Arbor View is in conformity with the City's General Plan and maintaining the easement indicated in the exhibit, 1220 North Suey Road, SP-2007-002. Commissioner Brown seconded it and it passed, 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m. to a Study Session on February 8, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Development Department Conference Room, 110 S. Pine Street, Santa Maria.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Peggy Woods
PEGGY WOODS, ASST. SECRETARY
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION