



CITY OF SANTA MARIA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING OF  
MARCH 19, 2008



Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Adrian Andrade, Rodger Brown, Etta Waterfield, Michael W. Moats, and Chairman Tom S. Lopez.

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Division Manager – Peggy Woods  
Senior Deputy City Attorney – Wendy Stockton  
Senior Civil Engineer – Rodger Olds  
Special Districts Planning Tech – Patty Ellis  
Deputy Fire – Robert Moreno  
Recording Secretary – Kathleen Villegas  
Advance Planner – Brian R. Smith  
Planner II – Brian Halvorson  
Planner III – Bill Scott

APPROVED PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2007, AS WRITTEN.  
4-0-1 (ANDRADE ABSTAINED)

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**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** No one present wished to speak.

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1. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** The consent calendar is approved with one motion. These items are read only on request of Commission members. Should anyone, including members of the public, wish to discuss or disapprove any item, it must be dropped from the blanket motion and considered as a separate item.

a. **PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FOR SMITH ELECTRIC, LOCATED AT 1340 WEST BETTERAVIA ROAD, PD-2007-026, E-2007-077.** Review of a Planned Development permit to allow phased expansion of an existing 17,785 square foot industrial building on a 2.82 acre site in a PD/CM (Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing) zoning district. Phase I would consist of a 4,500 square-foot addition with a 2,500 square foot canopy; Phase II would consist of a 3,500 square-foot free-standing storage building to be developed at a future date, Assessor's Parcel No. 111-400-076. The project is a Class 32 Categorical Exemption. No further environmental review is required. (Project Planner: Bill Scott)

**ACTION:** By motion, continued this item to the April 16, 2008 Planning Commission hearing.

**VOTE: 5-0** AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Moats, Waterfield, and Chairman Lopez; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

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**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**ITEM 2 - PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FOR CALE-WEST STREET, EIGHT SMALL LOT DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL UNITS, TO BE LOCATED AT 302-308 WEST STREET, PD-2006-002 E-2005-036.**

Review of a Planned Development Permit to allow the construction of eight (8) single family residential units in a PD/R-2 (Planned Development/Medium Density Residential) zoning district, Assessor's Parcel No.117-340-069. This project qualifies as a Class 32 Categorical Exemption. No further environmental review is required. (Project Planner: Brian Halvorson)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** By motion, approve subject to the conditions as outlined in the Preliminary Draft of the Planned Development Permit.

**VOTE: 3-2** AYES: Commissioners Brown, Moats, and Chairman Lopez; NOES: Commissioners Andrade, and Waterfield; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

Brian Halvorson presented the staff report, reporting that the tentative tract map had been approved last night by the City Council, which approval was needed for this project (the Planned Development Permit) to move forward. Brian reviewed the discussion that the City Council had concerning the elevations of the project. The City Council recommended that the project have only one architectural style, concluding that the development would look nicer if it had a consistent style. Brian stated that staff could modify the conditions so that the applicant could choose either Type 1 or Type 2 with the appropriate conditions.

Brian Halvorson reiterated a few items about the project, including the variable setbacks with smaller lot sizes, and the smaller open space size.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, Peggy Woods stated that the City Council thought the two proposed elevations for the project were too different, and requested that the applicant choose one elevation so that the structures look more similar. Peggy added that the direction was to choose one elevation, but the Council did not state which one they preferred.

In response to Commissioner Moats, Wendy Stockton stated that the City Council recommendation was for the Planning Commission to adopt or reject the recommendation, and subsequently that decision could be appealed to the City Council, who would then make the final decision.

Commissioner Moats added that he used to live in Foxenwoods, where there are many different styles but with the same floor plan, and stated his belief that the project should proceed as originally proposed.

Commissioner Brown suggested leaving the decision up to the applicant.

Bill Orndorff, Orndorff Planning Services, addressed the Planning Commission on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Orndorff commented on the question of elevation styles, and stated that they would do whatever the Planning Commission decided.

After some discussion concerning the elevation choices, Commissioner Andrade asked Mr. Orndorff what the applicant preferred as to the style of elevation.

Mr. Orndorff responded to Commissioner Andrade that the applicant would prefer the Spanish Mediterranean architecture.

Chairman Lopez concurred with Mr. Orndorff, commenting that because the project is on such small lots, a single elevation type would be preferable.

Commissioner Brown stated that he would go along with what the applicant chose.

Commissioner Andrade agreed with Commissioner Waterfield that the elevations should be a mixture of the two proposed elevation styles.

Ken Kopcho, 317 West Street, Santa Maria, spoke in opposition to the project, stating that the different elevations increases the dollar value of the project. If the units all look the same, the value drops in resale. Mr. Kopcho also commented that he believes that all of the properties on West Street have oil issues, stating that he has picked up pancake sized plops of oil.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Bill Orndorff addressed the oil issue, stating that a Phase I study and report was done by a registered civil engineer as required by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Division. During that study, an abandoned oil well was discovered, owned by Chevron. One of the conditions of approval is to have a no-build easement around the well. Mr. Orndorff stated that the Phase I study showed no visual signs of oil on this property, and added that as the project proceeds, they will record the final map and then proceed with the Phase II study, which includes the trenching and digging.

In response to Commissioner Moats, Brian Halvorson stated that he met with Mr. Kopcho at the site, and they had found residue and pieces of oil on the adjoining properties. In order to find out if asphaltic material is hazardous, it needs to be analyzed, with studies, borings, and samples testing for appropriate hazardous materials. The outcome is not known until the final reports are reviewed by the City Attorney's office and Community Development Department, and then signed off by the County of Santa Barbara and the City.

Brian Halvorson clarified for Bill Orndorff that the pieces of asphalt were found on the property to the west of the Cale property, on Mr. Ward's property.

Bill Orndorff added that the soils engineer, Mr. Brinksmeyer, did walk the property and his Phase I report stated that there was no observation of oil residue on the property in question. Bill added that Chevron is currently testing the property to the southwest of the project site.

Brian Halvorson remarked that oil features associated with past oil activities can remain on property for a long time. However, once a development is proposed and has been reviewed, the site is conditioned appropriately, so that the result prior to development of the project is a site that has been cleaned and remediated. Brian added that the conditions of approval on this project address potential contamination and abandoned oil wells appropriately.

Brian Halvorson clarified for Chairman Lopez that if the site is deemed clean by Santa Barbara County Fire Department Hazardous Materials, then the map can be recorded. Brian added that the project has been conditioned twice, once prior to map recordation, and also prior to building permit issuance.

Mr. Don Cale, the applicant, 477 Platino Lane in Arroyo Grande, addressed the Planning Commission for the help they've given on this project. Mr. Cale clarified on the oil well issue, and stated that Chevron has done bore samples around the oil well, and has a remedial action plan before the County for approval of the clean-up.

In response to Chairman Lopez, Brian Halvorson stated that meetings regarding oil issues are continuing on this topic. Brian outlined the requirements by the County if oil is found, as well as the review process by the City. If oil is found, then the applicant would have to cease work and report it to the County immediately. It would be the responsibility of the property owner to work with the appropriate agencies and oil companies.

In response to Chairman Lopez, Brian Halvorson stated that if contamination was found on the site, it could possibly hold up the tract map. Since the applicant's property goes out to the road, the applicant would be responsible for any contamination found in the road, and it would have to be addressed appropriately.

With no further comments or questions, Chairman Lopez closed the public hearing and called for a motion, along with a consensus on the elevations. Commissioner Moats made the motion that all eight units be in the Spanish Mediterranean architecture. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion on the architecture.

Wendy Stockton interjected that the motion could be incorporated into the motion for approval of the project.

Brian Halvorson reiterated that staff has suggested wording for the condition on the architecture, on the green sheets, page 2, under Community Development Department Special Conditions, first condition, under "Exterior materials and colors," would read: "The project shall be developed in accordance with the architectural elevations Type 1 or Type 2 per the recommendations of the City Council." Mr. Halvorson stated that as written, the condition allows Type 1 or Type 2.

Commissioner Moats made a motion that the Planning Commission approve the Planned Development Permit for Cale-West Street, eight small lot detached single-family residential units to be located at 302-308 West Street, PD-2006-002 E-2005-036, subject to the conditions as outlined in the Preliminary Draft of the Planned Development Permit, and subject to the conditions as amended for the Type 1 (Spanish Mediterranean) architecture. Commissioner Brown seconded it, and it passed, 3-2 (Andrade and Waterfield voting no).

**ITEM 3 - AMENDMENT TO THE WEST MAIN STREET SPECIFIC PLAN ON PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF WEST MAIN STREET AND SOUTH BLOSSER ROAD, SPZ-2007-003, E-2007-087.** Review of an amendment to the West Main Specific Plan text and figures to facilitate future development on property located generally on the southwest corner of South Blosser Road and the future westerly extension of Cypress Street, portion of Assessor's Parcel Number 117-200-018. The environmental review for this project was completed as part of the Sphere of Influence Project Environmental Impact Report E-88-10. No further environmental review is necessary. (Project Planner: Bill Scott)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** That the Planning Commission take the following action:

By resolution, recommend that the City Council:

- a) Adopt a resolution modifying the objectives and recommendations contained in the text, exhibits, diagrams and figures in Sections 1.0 and 2.0 of the *West Main Specific Plan*; and
- b) Adopt an ordinance amending the *Land Use Development Standards Text and Figures* contained in Section 3.0 of the *West Main Specific Plan*.

**VOTE: 5-0** AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Moats, Waterfield, and Chairman Lopez; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

Bill Scott presented the staff report, giving an overview of the West Main Specific Plan from when it was adopted in 1994, to facilitate orderly development from Main Street to Hanson Way. Mr. Scott stated that the primary and most immediate intent of the Specific Plan amendment is to facilitate a future development proposal located at the southwest corner of the future extension of West Cypress Street and South Blosser Road.

Mr. Scott reviewed the details of the proposal as presented in the written staff report, and highlighted the proposed revisions. The exhibits displayed and incorporated in the written staff report detail the complete list of revisions.

Mr. Scott summarized staff's presentation by stating that the proposed project is found to be consistent with the General Plan goals and policies. Mr. Scott added that the environmental

impacts for the project were reviewed under the Sphere of Influence environmental impact report, and no further environmental review was required.

Mr. Scott concluded, stating that staff is recommending that the Planning Commission take the following action: By resolution, recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution modifying the objectives and recommendations contained in the text, exhibits, diagrams and figures in Sections 1.0 and 2.0 of the *West Main Specific Plan*; and adopt an ordinance amending the *Land Use Development Standards Text and Figures* contained in Section 3.0 of the *West Main Specific Plan*.

Mr. Scott concluded staff's presentation, and volunteered to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Bill Scott clarified that the mitigation measure requiring ten storm water basins could be a typo, and stated that staff would research that mitigation measure.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Rodger Olds spoke about the environmental mitigation measures carried over from the original environmental impact report concerning intersections. Mr. Olds clarified that #5 and #6 were referring to the table that shows all the intersections in the Specific Plan, some of which are remaining the same, and some are changing, which is why these amendments are being made. The applicant is requesting to have left turn access to and from the proposed road at the intersection of Blosser Road and Cypress Street. Mr. Olds stated that the City had a traffic study done, which concluded that a signal could work there, but it would need to be interconnected with the intersection of Blosser Road and Cook Street, as well as the intersection of Main Street and Blosser Road.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Rodger Olds stated that the proposed intersection at Blosser Road and Cypress Street is about 800 feet from the intersection of Blosser Road and Cook Street, which is not ideal spacing to have another signalized intersection. Mr. Olds stated that there could be problems with cars waiting to turn left at Cook Street, and then cars waiting at the new signal at Cypress Street. That is why there should be some separation—about 1400 feet. However, the traffic study revealed that if the signals are coordinated, it will not be an issue.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Rodger Olds agreed that having a median in the street is safer, because it allows less conflicting movements, but it also limits what the applicant can do with their property. The property would be much less marketable with no easy access. The applicant spent a lot of money on a traffic study to show that this will work.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Bill Scott explained that staff utilized the 1988 environmental impact report and extracted the relevant mitigation measures for this project.

Responding to Commissioner Andrade's inquiry about the project being transit oriented, Rodger Olds explained that the main objective is to allow for development that does not cut itself off from transit facilities. Currently there is not a development proposal for this site, but staff would look at it to make sure there are pedestrian corridors to the arterials where the transit will be, with perhaps a few interior bus stops.

The applicant, Tracy Stone, owner and architect, addressed the Planning Commission. Ms. Stone stated that she worked hard with staff, Bill Scott and Rodger Olds, to propose revisions in the spirit of the specific plan. Ms. Stone clarified that the multi-purpose trail is part of the original specific plan, not a new proposal, and added that a traffic study was requested by staff, but paid for by the applicant. Ms. Stone commented that while a traffic signal is expensive, it is critical for this site to be used in the way that the specific plan is dictating.

In response to Commissioner Moats, Ms. Stone stated that the idea of rerouting Cypress Street seemed to make sense because it allows more flexibility for the parcels to the north.

With no further questions or comments, Chairman Lopez closed the hearing and called for a recommendation for a resolution.

Commissioner Waterfield made a motion that the Planning Commission by Resolution No. 2500 recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution modifying the objectives and recommendations contained in the text, exhibits, diagrams and figures in Sections 1.0 and 2.0 of the West Main Specific Plan, for an amendment to the West Main Street Specific Plan on property generally located at the southwest corner of West Main Street and South Blosser Road, SPZ-2007-003, E-2007-087, and recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance amending the Land Use Development Standards Text and Figures contained in Section 3.0 of the West Main Specific Plan. Commissioner Andrade seconded it, and it passed, 5-0.

**ITEM 4 - ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 34 (RELATING TO SIGNS) OF TITLE 12 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE, Z-2008-001, E-2008-008.** Review of recommendations to the City Council regarding a negative declaration and an ordinance amending Chapter 34 of Title 12 of the Municipal Code (Zoning Regulations) relating to sign regulations. (Project Planner: Brian Halvorson)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** That the Planning Commission continue this item to the meeting of April 16, 2008.

**VOTE: 5-0** AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Moats, Waterfield, and Chairman Lopez; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

Brian Halvorson gave the staff presentation, outlining the details of the project as stated in the staff report. Mr. Halvorson stated that since the adoption of the sign ordinance in 2005, staff has taken note of various issues concerning signs that have been faced by the Community Development Department, and realized that some changes would be necessary to the sign ordinance. Under consideration with these amendments are some revisions, highlights from the study session, as well as adding some definitions, and amending others, such as the new building code definitions, found on page 2 of the draft sign ordinance. Brian concluded the staff presentation and volunteered to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, Brian Halvorson stated that banners are allowed for 30 days per calendar quarter. Brian added that the most important way to regulate the use of banners is by enforcement. Applicants are required to come get a no-fee, over the counter permit, so if Code Compliance calls about it, staff can see how long the banner has been up.

Brian Halvorson clarified for Chairman Lopez that temporary signs put up by contractors working on projects are addressed in a section in the code about subdivision and construction signs, which states that they don't require a permit and can be up for the duration of the project period. So if the project takes a year or two, those signs can stay up for that length of time.

In response to Chairman Lopez, Brian Halvorson stated that staff discussed the 60 mph wind load design factor for sandwich board signs with the City Plancheck Engineer who mentioned that a 50 pound sandbag, or a 50 pound bag of rock salt, would be needed to withstand that kind of wind load factor.

Commissioner Andrade wondered whether the 60 mph wind load design factor requirement is unreasonable, and therefore whether people are being precluded from using this type of sign.

After some discussion concerning the wording for the wind load design factor and sandwich board signs, Brian Halvorson offered to do some research from some of the windy cities in the country, agreeing that stating 60 mph seemed excessive.

The Commissioners agreed that the 60 mph wind load design factor requirement seemed excessive, and something less would be appropriate.

Rodger Olds suggested asking the Building Official to find out what is used for buildings in Santa Maria, adding that staff doesn't want to set the standard too low and then have signs flying all over the city.

After discussion, it was decided that this item would be continued to allow staff time to research information on this issue of wind load design factor, and then bring it back before the Planning Commission for a report and subsequent decision.

The Commissioners voted in favor to continue item to the Planning Commission meeting of April 16, 2008, 5-0.

**ITEM 5 - AMENDMENT TO THE NOISE ELEMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING TEXT CHANGES IN THE R-2 (MEDIUM-DENSITY), R-3 (HIGH-DENSITY) RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS AND RESIDENTIAL MIXED-USE PROJECTS APPROVED UNDER CHAPTER 49 OF TITLE 12, GP-2008-001, Z-2008-002, E-2008-007 (CITYWIDE).**

Review of recommendation to City Council regarding a draft mitigated negative declaration, E-2008-007, an amendment to the Noise Element of the General Plan, and zoning text amendments to Sections 12-7.14, 12-8.15, and 12-49.09 of the Santa Maria Municipal Code to allow exterior noise levels above the 60 decibel limit. The proposed project would potentially affect multiple-family residential developments and residential uses in mixed use developments, potentially occurring in zoning districts located throughout the City. (Project Planner: Brian R. Smith)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. By resolution, recommend that the City Council adopt a negative declaration of environmental impact, E-2008-007, for an amendment to the Noise Element of the General Plan and Municipal Code Text Amendment to Chapters 7, 8, and 49 of Title 12, pertaining to outdoor living area noise exceptions; and
2. By resolution, recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution amending the General Plan Noise Element and adopt an ordinance revising Santa Maria Municipal Code Chapters 7, 8, and 49 of Title 12 (Zoning Ordinance) relating to noise (file numbers GP-2008-001 and Z-2008-002).

**VOTE: 5-0** AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Moats, Waterfield, and Chairman Lopez; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

Brian Smith presented the staff report, stating that the fundamental purpose of the proposed amendments is to recognize the more urban lifestyle that the City is promoting, as opposed to 1987 when the first noise element was adopted. Mr. Smith clarified that this amendment does not affect interior living areas, just those on the outside, such as on patios and balconies. These revisions will only affect the R-2, R-3 and mixed use zones.

Brian Smith concluded his presentation by stating that staff recommends approval of the general plan and zoning text changes to allow flexibility in the design of multi-family residential projects, and stated that he was available to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, Brian Smith stated that these amendments would not affect the operations of the Santa Maria Fairpark, because the amendments are intended for new construction. Whatever the noise source, this code amendment allows the flexibility to have balconies in higher noise areas for new construction.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Brian Smith responded that these amendments as proposed would apply to multi-family type projects.

In response to Commissioner Moats, Brian Smith explained how these amendments would allow a patio or deck somewhere where they otherwise would not be allowed, and cited the example of Los Angeles, where there are multi-family units with outdoor balconies right next to freeways with high decibel ratings. While that is not what Santa Maria is promoting, the City is seeking to have some flexibility on the noise level on outdoor patios and balconies.

Tony Cocho, 701 S. Railroad, Santa Maria, audience member, addressed the Planning Commission, stating that he has a concern about the rail line. Mr. Cocho has property along the railroad track, and asked how these amendments would pertain to that property.

Brian Smith responded to Mr. Cocho by displaying the text of the actual code, explaining that typically a noise study is completed when the property is located along a noise corridor, and the appropriate recommendations are made in the noise study. If the result of the noise study is higher than 60 dB, but not more than 75 dB, with the proposed amendments that project could have an exterior balcony without any barriers. Mr. Smith stated that primarily, these amendments are an urban design feature so that there does not have to be Plexiglas or a solid wall on balconies.

With no further comments, Chairman Lopez called for a motion. Commissioner Moats made a motion that the Planning Commission by Resolution No. 2501 recommend that the City Council adopt a negative declaration of environmental impact, E-2008-007, for an amendment to the Noise Element of the General Plan and Municipal Code Text Amendment to Chapters 7, 8, and 49 of Title 12, pertaining to outdoor living area noise exceptions. Commissioner Andrade seconded it, and it passed, 5-0.

Commissioner Moats made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2502, recommending that the City Council adopt a resolution amending the General Plan Noise Element and adopt an ordinance revising Santa Maria Municipal Code Chapters 7, 8, and 49 of Title 12 (Zoning Ordinance) relating to noise (file numbers GP-2008-001 and Z-2008-002). Commissioner Brown seconded it, and it passed, 5-0.

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**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m. to a Study Session on April 3, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Development Department Conference Room, 110 S. Pine Street, Santa Maria.

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Next study session: March 20, 2008; next regular Public Hearing: April 16, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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PEGGY WOODS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION