



MINUTES
CITY OF SANTA MARIA PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF
MARCH 18, 2009



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

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

STAFF PRESENT: Acting Director – Peggy Woods
Senior Assistant City Attorney/Utilities Counsel – Wendy Stockton
Principal Civil Engineer – Shad Springer
Special Districts Planning Tech - Patty Ellis
Recording Secretary – Kathleen Wilson
Planner III – Bill Shipsey
Planner III – Brian Halvorson
Planner I – Greg Stones

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES: By motion, approved minutes of March 4, 2009, as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Nobody present wished to speak.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

ITEM 1 - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THE DOWNTOWN MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT FACILITY, 630 EAST BOONE STREET, U-2009-001, E-2009-001. Review of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a multi-modal transit facility to be located at 630 East Boone Street in the SP (Specific Plan) Railroad Loft zoning district, Downtown Specific Plan, Assessor's Parcel No. 125-150-002. This project has been reviewed as part of the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Downtown Specific Plan (E-2004-001). No further environmental review is required. (Planner: Brian Halvorson)

ACTION: By motion, continued project to the public hearing of April 1, 2009.

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

Brian Halvorson made the oral presentation, requesting a continuance for this item. Brian stated that an error was made in the public noticing for this project, so staff is recommending that the item be continued to the next public hearing.

Commissioner Andrade made the motion to move the item to the next public hearing on April 1, 2009. Commissioner Waterfield seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

Commissioner Lopez recused himself due to ownership interest in item 2.

ITEM 2 - PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FOR SANTA MARIA VILLAGE SENIOR APARTMENTS, 450 AND 460 WEST STOWELL ROAD, PD-2008-001, E-2008-001.

Review of a Planned Development Permit to allow the construction of a 54,224 square foot, 2-story independent living senior housing development, with 60 dwelling units for senior housing, on a 1.85 acre property, located at 450 and 460 West Stowell Road, Assessor's Parcel No. 117-250-023. A mitigated negative declaration was prepared for the General Plan amendment and zone change for this project in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. No further environmental review is required. (Planner: Greg Stones)

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

VOTE: 4-0-1 AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Waterfield, and Chairman Moats; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: Commissioner Lopez; ABSENT: None.

Greg Stones made the presentation, reviewing the project details as outlined in the written staff report. This item had been continued from the February 4, 2009 public hearing to await City Council action, and on March 3, 2009, the City Council adopted the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change to change the zoning from R-1 to R-3, with the second reading on March 17th. Greg gave a recap of the highlights of the proposed project, and concluded his presentation by stating that staff recommends approval, and was available to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Greg Stones stated that the proposed faux balconies project a maximum of eighteen inches from the building face.

With no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Moats invited the applicant to speak.

The applicant, Bill Orndorff, addressed the Commission, and reviewed details of the proposed project. Mr. Orndorff concluded by stating that the project will be nicely done, attractive to seniors and extremely functional.

Bob Ladd, 118 E. Morrison, Santa Maria, spoke in favor of the project, stating that it is a good location for increasing the density near the downtown core. Mr. Ladd listed the increase in the use of public transit, the increase of the residents' independence, and being close to downtown all as benefits to the project. Mr. Ladd stated his belief that the privacy issue was being mitigated by being far away from adjoining property lines, and added that he was sorry to see the upstairs balconies be eliminated to satisfy the privacy issues, because it is healthier for people in general to have balconies open to the outdoors.

Ken Hansche, 1300 Ronald Place, spoke against the project, and suggested that the height of the masonry wall on the east, south and west property lines be higher.

In response to Chairman Moats, Mr. Hansche stated that he thought the wall should be seven feet high.

Tina Centeno, 1324 South Wallis, spoke in opposition to the project, citing concerns about the wall height, and suggested that the height of the wall should be set after the backfill is in place. Ms. Centeno also commented on the proposed balconies, claiming that the ordinance states there will be no balconies on the second floor, anywhere, and asked for the square footage of the units.

Greg Stones stated that the units are to be 600 square feet in size.

In response to Tina Centeno, Commissioner Brown asked Greg Stones if the square footage included the walls, or if that was only livable space.

Greg Stones stated that the plans appear to include the walls in the dimensions, and noted that the maximum size of each of the units cannot exceed 600 square feet as required by the Santa Maria Municipal Code in order to meet the parking requirement.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Greg Stones stated that 30 parking spaces are required, and the applicant is providing 40.

In response to Tina Centeno, Peggy Woods stated that the square footage of each unit cannot exceed 600 square feet. Peggy added that when the construction plans are submitted for plan check, the Planning Division will verify the size of each unit and make sure each unit does not exceed 600 square feet. Peggy also informed the Planning Commission that the rezoning ordinance approved by the City Council states that the units facing the courtyard are allowed to have exterior balconies, and the exterior units are allowed to have a plant shelf not more than 18 inches in depth.

Commissioner Waterfield agreed with Peggy Woods, adding that the units should not be like cells, but that residents should be able to go outside on a balcony, and those would be for the units in the interior.

In agreement with Commissioner Waterfield, Peggy Woods restated that there are no exterior balconies on the east, west or south elevations.

Commissioner Brown commented that he would have liked to have had the balconies on the outside of the project, and he hated to see those go away.

Commissioner Andrade agreed with Commissioner Brown, stating that balconies should have been on the outside to allow residents to enjoy the outdoors.

Bill Orndorff clarified that the applicant is only proposing balconies on the interior courtyard, and the window boxes are 12 to 18 inches, and may project six inches with a faux balcony railing to address the privacy concerns. In reference to the perimeter walls, the applicant has agreed to build a six foot block wall on the south, east and west property lines, measured from the average finished grade adjacent to that, and is proposing to have it constructed on their own property, which will be easier than trying to coordinate demolition of all the existing fences, and it will be six feet high from the finished grade.

In response to Chairman Moats, Bill Orndorff stated that the structural requirements for a wall over six feet tall are huge, and it would be much more expensive to build. Bill added that a six foot wall is pretty high.

Commissioner Brown commented that he thought a six foot wall is plenty high enough, and added that the residents around the project will already have more security because there will be something on the lot instead of a vacant lot. This project will eliminate security concerns.

Commissioner Waterfield agreed with Commissioner Brown, and added that there will also be landscaping planted, which will grow higher than six feet.

Bill Orndorff added that the applicant is proposing to have rolling gates facing Stowell Road, with the east gate closed most of the time, only open for trash trucks. The western gate will be a rolling gate, which should help to make the area more secure.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Bill Orndorff spoke about the proposed grasscrete, and stated that if it is properly maintained and fertilized, it will work very well.

With no further comments, Chairman Moats closed the public hearing and called for a motion. Commissioner Waterfield made a motion to approve the Planned Development Permit for the Santa Maria Senior Village Apartments, 450 and 460 West Stowell Road, PD-2008-001, E-

2008-001, subject to the conditions as outlined in the preliminary draft of the Planned Development Permit. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and it passed, 4-0-1.

Commissioner Andrade commented that this project is going to be a very nice project, and because Mr. Hansche and other members of the community spoke of their concerns, the developer met with them, took those concerns into consideration, and now after all this, this is really going to be a beautiful project. Commissioner Andrade thanked the citizens for their input.

Peter Lopez thanked the Planning Commission.

Bill Orndorff thanked Greg Stones for his hard work on the project.

ITEM 3 - GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION FOR THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BETTERAVIA GOVERNMENT CENTER EXPANSION PROJECT LOCATED ON PROPERTY WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS, OWNED BY THE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, 511 EAST LAKESIDE PARKWAY, SP-2008-021.

Review of a general plan consistency determination for the County of Santa Barbara on approximately 5.5 acres of property generally located at 511 East Lakeside Parkway, in a PD/CPO (Planned Development/ Commercial Professional Office) zoning district, Assessor's Parcel Nos. 128-085-034, 128-085-043, and 128-085-044. (Planner: Bill Shipsey)

ACTION: By **Resolution No. 2541**, found that the expansion of the Santa Barbara County Betteravia Government Center is consistent with the City of Santa Maria General Plan.

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

Bill Shipsey presented the staff report, outlining the specifics of the project as detailed in the written staff report. Bill stated that the County of Santa Barbara is planning to expand on their Betteravia government campus. The site is designated as Commercial Professional Office, and the purpose of that land use designation is to "provide areas for offices which may be compatible with a range of other uses." The proposed government center project is needed for a growing county, and staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the resolution making the findings of consistency with the general plan.

The applicant, John Green, representing the County of Santa Barbara, addressed the Commission. Mr. Green commented that this project is an evolving project, progressing in design, and acknowledged that the handouts for this meeting looked a little different than they did at the study session. Mr. Green offered to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Brown, John Green spoke about the time line, stating that while the County is aggressively pursuing the design, it is currently unfunded. The County anticipates it may be ready in January for bidding, so it could be ready for any stimulus dollars that might trickle down into local government.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, John Green stated that it will be up to the County Board of Supervisors to decide what to do with the project if the County does not receive stimulus money from the government. Mr. Green added that the project has been in existence for about a year.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, Bill Shipsey stated that Greg Daniels with Pacific Blue Corporation out of Santa Barbara donated the property to the County.

Greg Ravatt, Ravatt Albrecht & Associates, Inc., the architect for the project, addressed the Planning Commission. Mr. Ravatt brought a model for better visualization of the proposed project

along with improved elevation depictions. Mr. Ravatt stated that he met with the landscape architect concerning the proposed type of grass, and had a handout about the grass and the bioswale. Mr. Ravatt offered to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, Greg Ravatt stated that the intention is to match the new building's color scheme to the existing buildings on the site, and added that the project will also go through the Board of Architectural Review, which will look at the details and colors of the project. Greg Ravatt added that the building will not be yellow.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Greg Ravatt commented on the idea of adding on to this proposed building by adding additional stories at a future date, stating that was not part of the plan.

John Green added that this project is being built on two parcels—this one is across the street from the existing Board of Supervisors hearing room, and there is also a master plan for another building up to 60,000 square feet and parking structure for sometime in the future.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Bill Shipsey stated that the entire site where the County administration's buildings are located was one project at one time, so it was designed as a whole. The retention basin is supposed to bleed out to the corner of Betteravia Road and Miller Street, and because it kept getting flooded, it was fixed, and now the system seems to work. The retention basin is intended to remain as it is with no development on that lot.

In response to Commissioner Lopez, Greg Ravatt stated that most likely there will be detail changes to the project, such as architectural or color changes, but not major alterations that would require bringing the project back to the Planning Commission.

With no further discussion or questions, Chairman Moats called for a motion. Commissioner Waterfield made the motion that the Planning Commission by **Resolution No. 2541** find that the expansion of the Santa Barbara County Betteravia Government Center is consistent with the City of Santa Maria General Plan. Commissioner Andrade seconded, and it passed, 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at **7:34 p.m.** to a Study Session on March 19, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Development Department Conference Room, 110 S. Pine Street, Santa Maria.

Next regular Public Hearing: April 1, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Peggy Woods

PEGGY WOODS, ACTING SECRETARY
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION