



**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF SANTA MARIA PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF**  
**APRIL 1, 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:** Senior Assistant City Attorney/Utilities Counsel – Wendy Stockton  
Principal Civil Engineer – Shad Springer  
Special Districts Planning Tech – Patty Ellis  
Advance Planner – Brian R. Smith  
Recording Secretary – Kathleen Wilson  
Planner III – Brian Halvorson  
Planner I – Neda Zayer

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**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** Nobody present wished to speak.

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**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**ITEM 1 - ZONE CHANGE FOR NKT COMMERCIAL, 1201 EAST MAIN STREET, Z-2009-001, E-2009-009.** Review of a recommendation to City Council regarding a request for a zone change for a 0.56 acre site from FS (Freeway Service) to PD/HC (Planned Development/ Highway Commercial), located at 1201 East Main Street, Assessor's Parcel No. 128-120-004. The project is a class 5 categorical exemption. No further environmental review is required. (Planner: Neda Zayer)

**ACTION:** By **Resolution No. 2542**, recommended the City Council adopt an ordinance to rezone the 0.56 acre site **FROM** FS (Freeway Service) **TO** PD/HC (Planned Development/ Highway Commercial) as shown on Exhibit A to the Planning Commission resolution.

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

Neda Zayer presented the staff report, outlining the details as written in the staff report. Neda reviewed that the City Council added the Highway Commercial zoning district to the Santa Maria Municipal Code on December 2, 2008. The City Council found the Highway Commercial zoning district to be compatible with the purpose and intent of the Freeway Services zoning designation. Rezoning 1201 East Main Street is the first project to implement the new Highway Commercial zoning district. Neda concluded the presentation by stating that staff recommends approval of the zone change, and is available to answer questions.

Brian Schwartz, Urban Planning Concepts, representing the applicant, addressed the Planning Commission. Mr. Schwartz stated that the applicant is in agreement with the conditions as found in the staff report.

In response to Commissioner Lopez, Brian Schwartz stated that the applicant did approach the neighboring business concerning a shared access to the site, and added that he did not think that idea was being pursued at this time.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Brian Schwartz stated that the applicant, Mr. Tompkins, has two potential tenants for the vacant spaces at the project site: a cell phone retailer and an auto rental, maybe Enterprise.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Brian Schwartz stated that the applicant appreciated the work and effort and speed in which this application was processed.

Brian Smith noted for the record that a letter in support of the rezoning was received from General Development Co., L.P.

With no further discussion, Chairman Moats called for a motion. Commissioner Waterfield made the motion by **Resolution No. 2542** to recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance to rezone the 0.56 acre site **FROM** FS (Freeway Service) **TO** PD/HC (Planned Development/ Highway Commercial) as shown on Exhibit A to the Planning Commission resolution for NKT Commercial, 1201 East Main Street, Z-2009-001, E-2009-009. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

**ITEM 2 - 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, approved subject to the conditions as outlined in the preliminary draft of the Conditional Use Permit.

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

**Commissioner Lopez recused himself due to ownership interest within 300 feet of the project site.**

Brian Halvorson made the oral presentation, outlining the specifics of the project as detailed in the written staff report. Brian noted that this transit center is intended for use only by City SMAT buses, not Greyhound or Amtrak busses. Brian reviewed the proposal, and concluded by stating that staff recommends approval of the project in accordance with the draft Conditional Use Permit, and was available to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, Austin O'Dell described the operations of the Greyhound bus service, and stated that Greyhound's type of job model is not conducive for a transit center, because Greyhound requires parcel service, as well as selling tickets, functions that would be borne by the City. Amtrak buses currently use a location right off the freeway, and to come into the City would throw their bus schedules off, so this location would not be conducive to their operations.

In response to Chairman Moats, Austin O'Dell stated that Amtrak is not interested in locating at the Transit Center because of the location and amount of time it would take for buses to get there. Austin added that the Greyhound bus service is not an operation conducive to public

transportation because they require ticket sales, as well as pickup and delivery of parcels which is part of their side business.

In response to Chairman Moats, Austin O'Dell outlined the funding available for this project.

In response to Chairman Moats, Austin O'Dell stated that five parking spots are enough for this type of use, because as a transit center, it is not something that cars will come to other than to purchase tickets.

Commissioner Waterfield complimented Austin O'Dell on the project, stating that it is a vast improvement from the first iteration and a great fit for the area.

Bob Ladd, 118 East Morrison, spoke against the project, citing concerns with the location and orientation of the project, and spoke about utilizing nearby light rail. Mr. Ladd stated that the best results come from giving people options, and suggested a dedicated bus line directly to the airport. Mr. Ladd also suggested bike lockers that could be leased, an expanded snack bar, and added that he would like to see Amtrak and Greyhound utilize the Transit Center so that commuters wouldn't have to go elsewhere.

In rebuttal, Austin O'Dell discussed the location, stating that at the current location on Cook Street, the buses stack up, and there are a lot of people standing around. This proposed site would provide an offsite safe location for a one-stop transfer. The architect chose this configuration because Boone Street provides the best location for entering and exiting the site. Austin introduced the architect, Craig Atkinson, to address the configuration concerns.

Craig Atkinson, bfgc Architects, addressed some of the concerns that Bob Ladd spoke about. Mr. Atkinson stated that all the mitigating factors needed to be considered, including the fact that the railroad tracks are being removed and will become a pedestrian bike path connecting McClelland Street to Allan Hancock College. Mr. Atkinson added that a strong pedestrian connection was created from the building, so if light rail was in existence, that could be connected from the corridor to the south to the building. The architect looked at a lot of orientations, and chose to create a stronger focus for the park element rather than the building element.

Chairman Moats closed the public comment period and called for discussion for a motion.

In response to Chairman Moats, Brian Halvorson explained why a Conditional Use Permit is required for this project, stating that basically, it is because the Downtown Specific Plan dictates that.

Commissioner Andrade commended everyone involved for their efforts, and Commissioner Waterfield for leading the opposition against the first proposal, which seemed out of place. Commissioner Andrade also thanked Lois Capps for the money, and the stimulus package for getting this project moving, and added that this will be a very nice place for Santa Maria.

Commissioner Brown observed that the City bus routes go by the Greyhound Bus service location as well as the Amtrak bus location, so that could take care of any transportation issues.

Commissioner Waterfield made the motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit for the Downtown Multi-Modal Transit Facility, 630 East Boone Street, U-2009-001, E-2009-001, subject to the conditions as outlined in the preliminary draft of the Conditional Use Permit. Commissioner Andrade seconded the motion, and it passed, 4-0-1.

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**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at **7:17 p.m.** to a Study Session on April 2, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Development Department Conference Room, 110 S. Pine Street, Santa Maria.

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Next regular Public Hearing: May 6, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Peggy Woods

PEGGY WOODS, ACTING SECRETARY  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION