



MINUTES
CITY OF SANTA MARIA PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF
JULY 1, 2009



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

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Adrian Andrade

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Division Manager – Peggy Woods
Senior Assistant City Attorney/Utilities Counsel – Wendy Stockton
Senior Civil Engineer – Rodger Olds
Special Districts Planning Tech – Patty Ellis
Advance Planner – Brian R. Smith
Recording Secretary – Kathleen Wilson
Planner III – Bill Scott

APPROVED PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF JUNE 3, 2009, AS WRITTEN.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Nobody present wished to speak.

ITEM 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. **ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF TIME FOR A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FOR THE MONTIAVO CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION, 2460 S. RUBEL WAY, PD-2006-014, E-2006-055.** Review of a one-year time extension for a Planned Development Permit to allow the conversion of 208 multi-family rental units to airspace condominiums, on 18.75 acres, located within a PD/R-2 (Planned Development/Medium Density Residential) zoning district, Assessor's Parcel No. 128-128-010. (Planner: Brian Halvorson)

ACTION: By motion, granted an extension of time for one year.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

ITEM 2 - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR A HYDROPONIC FARM AND ASSOCIATED PRODUCE PROCESSING FACILITY FOR WINDSET FARMS, 1650 BLACK ROAD, U-2009-013, E-2009-017. Review of a mitigated negative declaration of the potential environmental impacts and a Conditional Use Permit to allow the phased construction of a hydroponic production agricultural enterprise, including: four greenhouses totaling approximately 5.7 million square feet; a 174,000

square foot produce packing facility; four caretaker units; supporting water storage tanks; driveways; parking; landscaping and other supporting infrastructure in the following three zoning districts: OS (Open Space) on 145.5 acres; PD/CM (Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing) on 47.4 acres and PD/M-2 (Planned Development/General Manufacturing) on 28.7 acres on a 221.6 acre parcel, Assessor's Parcel No. 117-310-002. (Planner: Bill Scott)

ACTION: By motion, opened the public hearing and took public testimony on this item, and continued this item to the August 19, 2009, Planning Commission meeting to allow the Planning Commission and City Council time to take action on the Windset Farms Development Agreement.

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

Bill Scott presented the staff report, outlining the details of the proposal as written in the staff report. Bill introduced Steven Newell, owner and CEO of Windset Farms, and Brian Schwartz, of Urban Planning Concepts. Bill added that a major listing of the project description is on page 2 of the staff report. The pending development agreement concerns infrastructure improvements, required by the City Municipal Code, which are proposed by the applicant to be deferred until a future time. The development agreement will need to be approved by the City Council. In order to allow sufficient time to process the development agreement and the mitigated negative declaration, the recommendation to the Planning Commission will be to continue this item.

Bill Scott continued with the staff presentation, reviewing the project description and primary operations of the project, stating that the project has been analyzed for conformance with City regulations, City policy and land use compatibility. Bill also reviewed the project's conformance with the General Plan and the Draft Area 9 Specific Plan.

Bill Scott stated that 80 percent of the project site is in the Open Space (OS) zoning district; therefore, the project was evaluated based on the development standards established in the Municipal Code for the OS zoning district. Bill added that the OS zoning district is unique in that it does not establish a set of development standards. Instead, Municipal Code section 12.4-07 requires that a project specific development plan must be provided to define the parameters of the project. The site, landscape, and building design standards established by the development plan are presented as Exhibits B through G, attached to the staff report.

Bill Scott reviewed the setbacks, landscaping, and maintenance roads adjacent to the future road rights-of-way. Bill also reviewed the site design and parking.

Bill Scott concluded the staff presentation, and stated that staff was available to answer questions.

Wendy Stockton addressed the Planning Commission, clarifying that the requirements on the project are specified, not by the Public Works Department, but rather, as identified in the Municipal Code, and they are requirements that this project does not meet. The development agreement is being processed, so that if everyone agrees, the project can proceed in violation of the Municipal Code and have it be okay. Wendy added that it is necessary for the development agreement to be in place before the rest of the project can proceed.

Wendy Stockton instructed the Planning Commission to open the public hearing, take testimony, and keep it open, and continue the item; so that if there is future public testimony, it can be taken. Wendy added that having the Planning Commission review the project now is important in the review process, because it gives the Commission a chance to have early input on facets of the project, which is very valuable.

Peggy Woods reviewed the timelines for moving the project forward.

In response to Commissioner Lopez, Bill Scott clarified that the project site is located in Area 9B.

In response to Chairman Moats, Bill Scott stated the greenhouse is a conditional use requiring a Conditional Use Permit in the OS-Open Space zoning district, and a commercial greenhouse is also a conditional use requiring a Conditional Use Permit in the PD/M-2 (Planned Development/Light Manufacturing) zoning district. Bill added that the Planning Commission may make a finding that the greenhouse use is a similar and compatible conditional use in the PD/CM (Planned Development/Commercial Manufacturing) zoning district.

In response to Chairman Moats, Rodger Olds spoke about the estimated truck traffic once the project is completed, adding that while staff doesn't have the exact numbers, there is an estimate that there will be more truck traffic generated. Rodger added that the traffic study determined that more truck traffic does not mean a substantial impact to city intersections. Staff is also working on addressing comments received from Caltrans.

Brian Schwartz, Urban Planning Concepts, representing the applicant, addressed the Planning Commission, and introduced team members: applicant and CEO, Steve Newell; Jerry Williams, JW Design; Tim Limbers, LFR; Laurie Tamura, Urban Planning Concepts; Kevin Small, Pleinaire Design Group; Lori Speer, Bethel Engineering; and Michael Peachy, MW Architects. Brian made a PowerPoint presentation on the project, and concluded by offering to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Lopez, Brian Schwartz spoke about hours of operation, adding that the hours given in the staff report are guidelines.

In response to Commissioner Lopez, Brian Schwartz stated that the project is proposing to use well water, and septic systems. The Public Works Department has requested that the project be designed to have the ability to tie into future improvements, when Area 9 builds out, and then stub out once those improvements are installed.

In response to Commissioner Lopez, Brian Schwartz confirmed that when the project is built out, there will be no continuity in the center of the building.

Wendy Stockton made clarifications on a couple of statements incorrectly made: one statement made in the presentation was that the project is consistent with the City zoning policies and regulations. That statement is not correct. The project is proposing "private improvements" which are inconsistent with and in violation of the City's Municipal Code. That is why the development agreement is being processed because, as proposed, the project is not legal. Also, the last line in the presentation stated that construction of the improvements will be secured through a development agreement. Development agreements are not like a subdivision agreement; they do not secure improvements. A subdivision improvement agreement has security with it—bonding—and a development agreement is just an agreement.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Laurie Tamura stated that the operation of this project is that it is full employment throughout the year. In field cropping, there are not people out working every day in the field; and they average two people per acre when they're picking or planting, but not consistently. Jobs generated by this development are full employment for 400 people, when it is built-out.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Brian Schwartz stated that the County fees to build this project would be much higher than the City's fees.

Laurie Tamura added that over the past 18 months, Steve Newell has been looking at various properties throughout the Santa Maria Valley because the Central Coast is prime for this type of facility. The biggest issue found when looking at properties was the topography, and also the tiger salamander. This particular site has no problems with topography, and no mitigation measures for the tiger salamander. Laurie added that the processing of permits in the City is substantially easier than dealing with the County of Santa Barbara, all of which influenced the decision to choose this site.

In response to Chairman Moats, Laurie Tamura stated that according to the soils report, most of the soil on the project site is classified as Class 3 soil, which is considered sub-prime. Area 9 is non-prime soils.

In response to Chairman Moats, Brian Schwartz stated that each greenhouse has an associated break room and kitchen with it, available for each of the greenhouses. Typically, workers bring their own meals and eat on site, so there will be facilities for preparing and eating their food.

With no further comments or questions, Chairman Moats called for a motion. Commissioner Waterfield made the motion to continue the Conditional Use Permit for Windset Farms, open the public hearing and take public testimony on this item, and continue this item to the August 19, 2009, Planning Commission meeting to allow the Planning Commission and City Council time to take action on the Windset Farms Development Agreement. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and it passed, 4-0-1.

OTHER BUSINESS:

ITEM 3 - ELECTION OF OFFICERS: SECRETARY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY

SECRETARY: Larry Appel

ASSISTANT SECRETARY: Peggy Woods

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at **7:41 p.m.** to a Study Session on July 2, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Development Department Conference Room, 110 S. Pine Street, Santa Maria.

Next regular Public Hearing: July 15, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Peggy Woods

PEGGY WOODS, ACTING SECRETARY
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION