



Monday, March 7, 2016

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Gomez at 6:00 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers, 6615 Passons Boulevard, Pico Rivera, CA.

STAFF PRESENT:

Benjamin A. Martinez, Director
Julia Gonzalez, Deputy Director

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioners Celiz, Elisaldez, Garcia, Gomez, Zermeno

ABSENT: None

FLAG SALUTE: Led by Commissioner Garcia

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

To be approved in the next Planning Commission meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING: PUBLIC HEARING - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT MODIFICATION NO. 722 AND ZONE RECLAIFICATION NO. 322 AMENDING THE ZONING FROM GENERAL COMMERCIAL (G-C) TO COMMERCIAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT (CPD) TO DEVELOP A 12-UNIT TOWN HOME STYLE APARTMENTS

Project Location: 8421 Telegraph Rd.
Pico Rivera, CA 90660

Applicant: Frank Shen
Newridge Holdings, LLC
904 Silver Spur Road, No. 266
Rolling Hills, Estates, CA 90274

Julia Gonzalez, Deputy Director, presented the public hearing. The project location is located close to Manzanar Avenue and Telegraph Road next to the Guest House Inn & Suites and also to Pavilion Courts, a 130-unit apartment building. The project consists of 12 units, three stories in height. There are six units facing west and six units facing east. The property has been vacant since 2009. At the rear of property is Callum Lane, a private road, where there are single family homes that are facing the proposed

project. Deputy Director Gonzalez stated there is an existing block wall separating the project from the private road. The applicant is proposing to landscape the area with tall trees to try to block the view from the hotel and apartment buildings. A condition was added to close any gates at the rear. There is a condition of indemnification that the City attorney approved to be changed and has been included. There are other conditions the developer would like to discuss with the Public Works Department. Staff recommended that Planning Commission approve the project and authorize staff to modify, waive, or leave in place the outlined conditions before submitting to the City Council for final approval. The project was noticed for the public hearing and notices were sent to residences within a 300 foot radius of the project. There were no calls or comments received. A ten day notice was required but was extended to 20 days. Deputy Director Gonzalez stated that there is a local resident that is vocal and staff reached out to that resident. The resident canceled two meetings with staff. Deputy Director Gonzalez stated that at this point the project was not controversial.

Commissioner Zermeno asked for clarification about the back gate where there appears to be a walkway. He wanted to know if it was a walkway or an actual street. Deputy Director Gonzalez stated there is a private street and front yards of single family homes face the private street. She stated a condition was added to close off the gates so there is no access onto the private street.

Director Ben Martinez added there are properties to the east and west of project location that also had some openings. He said the business had all been asked to close off the street.

Chairperson Gomez opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone who wanted to speak on the project's behalf.

Frank Shen thanked the Planning Commission for the opportunity to present the project and staff for efforts in putting the presentation together.

Director Ben Martinez asked Mr. Shen what the monthly rent is for the units.

Mr. Shen stated the starting rent would be \$1,900 to \$2,000.

Commissioner Garcia asked about one of the bedrooms being on the ground floor.

Director Martinez stated it's modern living. He mentioned a 50-unit project down the street from project site with a similar layout. It could serve like a live/work situation for a lawyer's office but in this case it would be an extra bedroom. Commissioner Celiz added that townhomes at Passons and Washington Boulevards are for sale and Mr. Shen's project are apartments.

Frank Shen stated that at the moment his project is meant to be for rent apartments. His intention is to sell if the market permits and this is the reason why he designed them

to townhome specifications.

Commissioner Elisaldez voiced his concerns regarding density, parking, and traffic. He stated that with rent at \$1,200-\$2,000 there is likely to be more than one family living there.

Deputy Director Gonzalez stated there was a traffic letter prepared by a traffic engineer in regards to the 12-units. The project is small and meets capacity. The City's traffic engineer also approved. She stated that there are two parking spaces per unit as required by the code. Per the code one guest parking space for every 8 units is required. The project would require 2 guest parking spaces. The guest space parking is exceeded.

Commissioner Elisaldez stated he understands the requirements are being met but the reality was different.

Commissioner Celiz commented that it's going to impact Manzanar Avenue and that's where the residents will find room to park.

Frank Shen stated they will not allow two families in one unit.

Commissioner Gomez asked if there will be someone living on the grounds to manage the apartments since an apartment setting will typically have a manager. Frank Shen stated that law requires onsite manager for 16 units or more.

Commissioner Gomez asked how Mr. Shen would handle a resident complaint having an issue with visitor parking being used by residents.

Frank Shen stated signs would be posted with a contact telephone number stating that vehicle of a resident consistently taking a guest parking would be towed.

Commissioner Gomez asked how many units similar to the project he owns.

Frank Shen stated over 60.

Commissioner Garcia asked if Mr. Shen is the manager and the company. Frank Shen stated yes.

Commissioner Garcia asked in what cities his apartment buildings are located. Frank Shen stated mostly in Norwalk and in West Covina.

Commissioner Gomez asked if this is his first project in Pico Rivera. Frank Shen stated yes.

Commissioner Garcia motioned to close public hearing and seconded by Commissioner Celiz.

Recommendation(s):

Commissioner Garcia remarked that he likes the project but has the same concerns voiced by Commissioner Elisaldez. He feels there will be problems on Manzanar Avenue. He said it was a smart idea to close the fences at the rear.

Commissioner Gomez remarked that the project location has been an eye sore for many years. He stated he was leaning towards believing the project was positive however he did not believe there was a need for apartment units.

Commissioner Zermeno remarked that development needed to go in this lot but he also had concerns.

Commissioner Elisaldez remarked that the property is an eyesore but it did lend itself to apartment living. He said people that are going to rent these townhomes are probably going to come out of apartments anyway. He likes the design but still has concerns on the density, the parking, and so forth; He stated that seems to be a good project and Mr. Shen seems to stay on top of his properties according to what he is saying.

Director Martinez stated that staff vetted the project for a long time for apartments as well as rentals. He said he pushed this through the City Manager's office. He said the project is developed so that it can be subdivided and sold in the future. He said that's why staff is calling it a townhome-style project. He said this kind of housing could be for someone who can't afford a home, but can afford the rent. He said he believes the benefits of the project and the great need for rental housing. This kind of townhome style housing outweighs the potential problem of over renting the property or perhaps having some parking impacts. It's a quality project; it's going to be a little gem in a not-so-attractive area. He said that millennials need housing. He said he understood all the points raised but he believes overall that the project is a positive contribution in the long run.

Commissioner Gomez remarked this is a very different generation—they don't want homes, or yard work.

Commissioner Elisaldez remarked vertical is the new way. The key element that keeps repeating is quality. Mr. Shen seems to have done due diligence in that area. The unit was designed intentionally for vertical living and that bottom bedroom for elderly, handicap, whatever it happens to be, it's accessible.

Commissioner Celiz motioned to accept staff's recommendation, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, and passed.

The Commission and staff congratulated the applicant and welcomed him to City.

New Business:

Commissioner Zermeno reported on Commissioners Academy he and Commissioner Garcia attended. He said the academy was really informative. The meetings were on ethics training, corridors centers and California new growth. They also spoke on vertical expansions in lot of cities. Social media was another big topic where attorneys talked about the Brown Act—need to be very careful. Unfortunately, the Brown Act hasn't been upgraded in many years; it's an old book.

Commissioner Garcia added to Commissioner Zermeno's comments about the Academy. He liked the sessions on "Planning Fundamentals" and "City of Dysfunction Junction". City of San Ramon is very interesting; they're building up that city. He said it looked like a miniature Irvine and that it would be interesting to return in 3 years to see the changes.

Commissioner Celiz brought up the parking issue regarding Manzanar Avenue. She suggested permit parking which would eliminate people from parking on their streets.

Commissioner Zermeno added this would get some of the homeowners to park in their driveways and use their garages. Commissioner Celiz added that the permit would be for residents that live there only.

Director Martinez stated that Public Works Department more than the CEDD has been engaged with that community. A number of things have been brought up—speed humps, parking districts, even the cul de sac, blocking off the street. If residents wants to pursue, staff can mention it.

Commissioner Elisaldez stated that ironically, there's a new signal on the next street over (unable to recall name of street) which helps people go to that street. Before it was impossible to cross but now you got a signal.

Old Business:

Director Martinez provided an update on an issue Commissioner Gomez asked staff to look into regarding trailer at the corner of Paramount and Industry. The property owner posted private property sign and that unauthorized parkers are subject to tow. The trailer in question has been towed. Staff is working on a signage program prohibiting trailers or trucks from parking in private parking commercial lots.

Commissioner Celiz voiced her concerns about the new wave of apartment buildings and what they eventually become; like the Clarkson, the Villa, the horrible apartments on Rosemead Boulevard. We know what's coming and you can't get those tenants out because of their legal right and what this does to the surrounding community.

Commissioner Zermeno added that the 10x10 rooms really hurts.

Director Martinez remarked that Pico Rivera is not the only city this is happening in. What needs to be recognized is that a lot of the developments the community suffers from are those motels that converted into residential use.

Commissioner Celiz remarked that we have a beautiful library but we have that horrible apartment next to it.

Director Martinez stated newer developments will higher standards than those types of development. The projects that city mostly suffer from are those converted motels and/or poorly developed and planned apartment buildings

Commissioner Zermeno then asked if there are any plans for El Rodeo or if it could be discussed at the meeting. Director Martinez stated that staff can give status update on El Rodeo at the next meeting.

Commissioner Zermeno asked if new hotel can be discussed. With regards to this, Director Martinez reported that plan check has taken a full year. The Commission approved the project in January 2015 and it's not fully plan checked.

Commissioner Zermeno brought up an issue regarding the Pico Rivera Sports Arena. He stated that a couple of years ago the Commission received a rendering of the arena to put some facades around it, remodel it a bit. He asked if staff had information on this.

Director Martinez stated this will be another one to bring back to next meeting with a status update.

Commissioner Gomez asked about the medical building at Lindsey and Citronell that was knocked down. Director Martinez stated the plan check took long but construction should start soon. Commissioner Celiz asked if there will be four or seven homes. Director Martinez believed seven homes.

Commissioner Celiz asked about what's coming in to former Fresh and Easy. Director Martinez stated there was no word on that yet.

Commissioner Gomez asked if Smart & Final still a go. Director Martinez stated yes but no word yet on when.

Commissioner Celiz asked about obtaining permission from Planning to have live entertainment. She referred to very loud music coming from Culichitown and wanted to know if there is a law restricting loudness to certain decibels. Deputy Director Gonzalez stated that at this time, only a temporary permit was issued to Culichitown. She said staff is currently working with City Attorney Lam in updating the entertainment permit process to avoid having two licenses issued by two separate departments—a business license permit and another one from Planning. Deputy Director Gonzalez also

mentioned that a conditional use permit runs with the land and the city does not want to continue this.

Commissioner Celiz asked if noise is from a live band or just speakers that are so loud. Deputy Director Gonzalez stated it's a live band.

Commissioner Zermeno asked if applicants that apply for an entertainment permit need to state what kind of entertainment will be occurring. City Attorney Lam responded, yes.

City Attorney Lam stated decibel limitations under city code to be 70 and typically measured from the property line.

For March 8, Commissioner Garcia confirmed attendance.

There being no further business Planning Commissioner Gomez adjourned meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Paul W. Gomez, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Benjamin A. Martinez, Secretary
Planning Commission
Director of Community and Economic Development