



Monday, July 18, 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
Christina Gallagher, Senior Planner
Hector Hernandez, Assistant Planner
Evelyn Millare, Executive Assistant
John Lam, Assistant City Attorney

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Elisaldez, Garcia, Gomez, Zermeno, Celiz

ABSENT: None.

FLAG SALUTE: Led by Commissioner Elisaldez

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Elisaldez made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 6, 2016 meeting.

AYES: Elisaldez, Garcia, Gomez, Zermeno, Celiz

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

PUBLIC HEARING:

2A. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 724 TO CONSTRUCT THREE DUPLEXES ON THREE CONTIGUOUS PARCELS LOCATED ON THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LAS POSAS STREET AND ROSEMEAD BOULEVARD (ASSESSOR'S IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS 5272-015-025, 5272-015-011, 5272-015-012) IN THE GENERAL COMMERCIAL (C-G) ZONED DISTRICT AND THE MIXED-USE OVERLAY (M-U OVERLAY) ZONE.**

Commissioner Gomez stated the public hearing item would be continued to the meeting of August 1, 2016 as recommended by staff. Since there were some people in the audience who specifically attended to speak on this item, Assistant City Attorney John Lam stated it would be appropriate to open public hearing and discuss further at the August 1, 2016 meeting.

Anna Winters, resident of Pico Rivera was the only speaker on the item. She stated it was unfair that there was no notification of item being continued to another meeting

date. Her main concern is the added parking problem that will result from the project and that the residents are struggling to find parking.

Someone from the audience asked if notices would be sent regarding the item being continued to August 1, 2016. Assistant City Attorney John Lam stated that since the meeting was noticed, re-noticing the meeting was not required.

A motion was made by Commissioner Zermeno to continue the public hearing to the meeting of August 1, 2016.

AYES: Elisaldez, Garcia, Gomez, Zermeno, Celiz

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

2B. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 728 AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION WITH MONITORING PLAN – A REQUEST TO CONSTRUCT AN ADVANCED WATER TREATMENT FACILITY ON A 5.2 ACRE SITE LOCATED AT 4320 SAN GABRIEL RIVER PARKWAY IN THE INDUSTRIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (IPD) ZONE DISTRICT

Senior Planner Gallagher made a presentation using PowerPoint for visuals. Senior Planner Gallagher stated that the proposed project would be a component of the Water Replenishment District's (WRD) Groundwater Reliability Improvement Program (GRIP) that will focus on reducing reliance on imported water and create a locally sustainable ground water supply. Senior Planner Gallagher discussed the project's features such as the learning center, processing building, the chemical storage and the outdoor open space areas. Senior Planner Gallagher emphasized that the chemical storage area is within a secured and fenced area and that the open space areas that surround the learning center will be accessible and open to the public seven days a week from dawn to dusk.

Senior Planner Gallagher discussed the traffic impact analysis conducted which deemed no significant impact to the surrounding intersections and adequate access via two driveways along San Gabriel River Parkway. The intersection at San Gabriel River Pkwy and Melita Street would be signalized and a new signal would be synchronized with the existing signal at the intersection at San Gabriel Rivera Parkway and Beverly Boulevard to avoid unnecessary delays.

Senior Planner Gallagher stated that since May 2015, WRD has conducted continuous outreach including door to door outreach to approximately 1,100 homes, hosting a community meeting at the golf course and distributing quarterly newsletter to keep affected residents informed of the project. She stated that staff would continue to work with WRD to ensure community outreach is ongoing throughout construction.

Senior Planner Gallagher concluded her presentation stating that the date indicated under condition of approval number three should be July 14, 2016. She added that one

written correspondence was received from an individual that stated he was not provided additional information and requested the meeting be pushed to August 1, 2016.

Commissioner Gomez opened public hearing.

Senior Planner Gallagher introduced the first speaker, Albert Robles, WRD Director. Mr. Robles thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak and Senior Planner Gallagher for her comprehensive and thorough presentation. He provided a brief video that highlighted the features of the proposed facility.

Mr. Whittaker a WRD employee presented a slide with an image of the proposed project which included the treatment building, learning center and the open space for use by the community. Mr. Whittaker brought in copies of the 1,300 support cards mentioned and made special mention of a support letter from Senator Mendoza. Mr. Whittaker stated that there will be security and security cameras 24 hours a day and at least one personnel patrolling the site in the evenings.

Jaime Sanchez, resident of Pico Rivera talked about the declining water supply, growing demand for water, long term drought, global warming and declining ground and surface water supplies. He stated it is imperative that the City develop answers to long term sustainable water supplies required for both human use and a healthy environment. Mr. Sanchez voiced his support of the project and encouraged the approval of the project by the Commission.

Randall Martinez, a resident from the City of Whittier stated he lived a few miles from the proposed project site and supports the GRIP project. He stated that the project would reduce demand for imported water, reduce high cost of transporting water from hundreds of miles and that the increased use of recycled water actually increases the availability of pure drinking water. Mr. Martinez asked the Commissioners to consider the substantial benefits to the consumers and the positive impact to the environment and to encourage WRD to keep an active and open communication with the community. In closing, Mr. Martinez encouraged the Commission to approve GRIP as a matter of good prudence and forward thinking.

Pamela Jaramillo, Pico Rivera resident stated she lives across the proposed project site and supports the project. She stated that GRIP is a solution to drought and to help the community be completely independent from expensive imported water.

Sandra Martinez, of Monterey Park stated she supports GRIP.

Joe Fregoso, Pico Rivera resident stated that GRIP is a great idea and it would place Pico Rivera on the map not only in California but throughout the nation.

George Sevilla, Board President of the Pico Rivera Chamber of Commerce stated he supports GRIP and understands the need for improvements in Pico Rivera's infrastructure. He stated that he appreciates the fact that the Pico Rivera plant will be receiving treated water from the San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant and that the

project would be increasing the purification level of that water to that of distilled water. He stated that the project is a great addition to the strategic importance of the City and community and valuable water resource.

Ruben Alvarez, Executive Director of the Pico Rivera Chamber of Commerce stated he is in support of project. He stated that project is ground breaking and trend setting for the community. He mentioned the jobs that would be created during construction and asked the Commission to support.

Jesse Perez, a Pico Rivera resident stated that he witnessed the water depletion of Folsom Lake in Nevada. He said greener landscape generates oxygen and fights pollution. Mr. Perez stated that he supports all programs to recycle water but it was important to control and test the water to be recycled and also to test the water before the use by the community.

Isabel Vega, Pico Rivera resident stated there is too much traffic. She made reference to the chemical storage as being dangerous to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Garcia asked the applicant to address the issue about dangerous chemicals and how they would be stored and protected.

Ken Ortega, WRD Assistant General Manager stated that most of the chemicals are non-hazardous and mostly disinfectants. Sodium hydrochloride which is a very strong concentration of bleach has the largest volume that will be stored. Mr. Ortega stated there are stringent regulations with respect to chemical handling and storage and that the holding tanks have double containment to capture the entire capacity. The chemical handling area is completely secured and only accessible by certified operational personnel. The facility has alarms which will be monitored by full time operational personnel but also the close circuit TV system.

Commissioner Celiz asked if the tanks would be stored above ground or underground.

Mr. Ortega answered above ground. The main reason is that the above ground tanks are visible and can be inspected on a daily basis. The tanks are 5,000 gallons and are made of very thick Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC). The above ground tanks allow visibility to physically see the surface in the double containment area.

Chairperson Gomez asked if the tanks have individual containment or continuous containment around the entire perimeter.

Mr. Ortega responded that the tanks are completely separated because certain chemicals like ammonia do not cooperate well when they come in direct contact with chlorine so the double containment areas are completely segregated from one another.

Antonia Chavez, Pico Rivera resident asked if there was a need for extremely strong chemicals and if there would be any recycling.

Mr. Ortega replied that the chemicals are not that strong and that the concentration of chlorine is common to bleach.

Antonia Chavez, Pico Rivera resident stated that she heard rumors that there would be human waste recycled.

Mr. Ortega stated that the statement was inaccurate.

Commissioner Gomez stated that by the time water gets to the facility, it has already been treated.

Mr. Ortega stated that the Facility should not be confused with a waste treatment facility. This is an advanced treatment water facility that is only processing tertiary treated water and that there is no handling of solids at this facility.

Jesse Perez, a Pico Rivera resident is concerned about the smell.

Mr. Ortega stated that tertiary waste water does not have an earthy smell or odor to it. Under the future amphitheater there would be an underground three million gallon water reservoir that will not be exposed to the atmosphere. It will not be an open reservoir.

Commissioner Gomez thanked the public for attending and speaking out in favor or against the project.

AYES: Elisaldez, Garcia, Gomez, Zermeno, Celiz

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

2C. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT MODIFICATION NO. 532.3 TO ALLOW THE APPLICANT OF CULICHITOWN RESTAURANT TO SELL DISTILLED SPIRITS AND OBTAIN A TYPE 47 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL LICENSE AT THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 9333 SLAUSON AVENUE

Commissioner Gomez stated that per staff's request, the public hearing item be continued to the Planning Commission Hearing of August 15, 2016.

AYES: Elisaldez, Garcia, Gomez, Zermeno, Celiz

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None. No one in the audience.

There were no public comments or non-agenda items.

NEW BUSINESS:

a) INVESTIGATION BY PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE LEGAL NON-CONFORMING STRUCTURE LOCATED AT 8615 WHITTIER BOULEVARD (FORMER WHITTER MANOR APARTMENTS)

Assistant Attorney Lam stated that the first item under new business is an investigation by the Planning Commission of a legal non-conforming structure located at 8615 Whittier Boulevard. The former apartment complex is located on the northwest corner of Whittier and Paramount Boulevard. Several years ago there was significant damage during a rainstorm where portions of walkways collapsed and became very dangerous and the City red-tagged the building. The property is considered a legal non-conforming structure because in the 1970's it was permitted as a motel and it was later converted to apartments. Because it is a legal non-conforming structure there are various ways that the legal non-conforming structure will either expire or terminate. Staff considers the property dangerous and has asked the property owners to continue investigating the remaining structures before they are converted back to apartments. Staff is asking that the Planning Commission initiate the investigation so that staff can direct the property owner to provide a comprehensive structural report on the remaining structure to ensure that the building is safe for people to occupy.

Commissioner Elisaldez asked if staff has had communication with the property owners regarding the request for additional structural studies.

Assistant Attorney Lam stated that staff has discussed the issues with the property owners and they have stated that they have made an inspection based on the existing areas that are exposed. However staff is requesting a structural study of the building for items that are not visible.

Commissioner Elisaldez asked if the owner is not willing to comply.

Director Martinez stated that the conversation is still ongoing but that City staff would like the owners to provide a complete structural report.

Commissioner Gomez asked staff to confirm if the owners plan to reopen the building as apartments.

Assistant Attorney Lam replied that there have been various discussions and it is most probable that the owner's desire is to reopen the building as apartments.

AYES: Elisaldez, Garcia, Gomez, Zermeno, Celiz

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Commissioner Zermeno requested that the landscape in the medians and parkways on San Gabriel River Parkway be upgraded, watered and maintained. He stated this has been an issue for the past three years and the issue has not been addressed. He also stated that he saw a trespasser on the second floor of the red tagged building at 8615 Whittier Boulevard (the former Whittier Manor Apartments).

Commissioner Gomez stated that he had previously requested that staff look into the issue of non-existent sidewalks on Washington Boulevard from Paramount Boulevard west to the City limits.

Director Martinez stated that staff would look into the issue.

Commissioner Celiz asked what safety precautions were being taken to address the accident on Paramount Boulevard.

Commissioner Zermeno stated that the accident was attributed to a drunk driver and perhaps a dividing wall would help to address the safety accident.

Commissioner Gomez stated that there is a committee looking into the accident and that in order to place a median in the center of that roadway, parking would need to be eliminated and residents are not in favor of the elimination of parking.

Commissioner Zermeno stated that there are food vendors on Rosemead Boulevard north of Gallatin Road which may cause a traffic issue.

Director Martinez stated that the food vendors may not be within Pico Rivera boundaries.

Commissioner Celiz asked if staff could contact the jurisdiction that is in charge.

Deputy Director Gonzalez stated that staff has called the County Public Health Department.

Commissioner Zermeno asked about the Los Angeles County Probation Academy at 3300 Sandoval Avenue. He stated they should advise the residents regarding noise activities in the early morning.

Director Martinez stated that the probation center is on El Ranch School District property and under their jurisdiction.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS:

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF Tuesday, June 14, 2016 – Commissioner Celiz stated that Council did not approve the construction of the townhomes behind the Norm's

property. She stated that community members spoke against the project and had a petition.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF Tuesday, June 28, 2016 – Commissioner Zermeno stated there was nothing significant to report.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF Tuesday, July 12, 2016 – Commissioner Gomez stated that the accident on Paramount Boulevard was the predominant issue.

There being no further business the Planning Commission meeting was adjourned

Paul Gomez, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Julia Gonzalez, Interim Secretary
Planning Commission
Deputy Director of Community and Economic Development