



AZUSA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES (revised)

March 12, 2008
7:00 P.M.

NOTICE: *A copy of the following public hearing staff reports and Initial Studies, if applicable, for the Planning Commission projects will be available for review during regular working hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday - Thursday at the Planning Division and during regular hours of the Azusa City Library. Any questions regarding any agenda item may be answered by the Planning Division at (626) 812-5299. The Planning Commission Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. in the Azusa Civic Auditorium at 213 East Foothill Boulevard, Azusa, California.*

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dierking called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Rosales led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: RENTSCHLER, ALVA, DIERKING, DODSON and ROSALES.

Members Absent: NONE

STAFF PRESENT:

Director of Economic and Community Development, Bruce Coleman; Assistant City Manager, Robert Person; Senior Planner, Susan Cole; BBK Attorney, Michael Torres; and Assistant Planner, Kim Pilmer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Minutes of February 13, 2008.

Commissioner Rosales stated that the revised language on page (9), paragraphs (2) and (3) needed to be revised due to the fact that the added language was placed in the wrong location.

Chairman Dierking stated that on page (7), paragraph (6), the language should be revised to say, "Chairman Dierking stated that normally the purpose of the Development Code is to provide an enforcement mechanism of the General Plan, which is the vision for the community."

Motion by Commissioner Alva to approve the minutes with the corrections and seconded by Commissioner Rentschler.

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2. Minutes of February 27, 2008

Commissioner Rosales stated that the first paragraph on page (6) should be corrected to reflect that the size of the home is 1,300 sq.ft. rather than 13,000 sq.ft.

Commissioner Rosales stated that on page (8), paragraph (1), the minutes state, "Commissioner Rosales clarified which parcels the RDA was looking to acquire." Commissioner Rosales stated that he had inquired about two specific properties with APN numbers: 8608-029-901, and 8608-029-903.

Commissioner Rosales stated that the fourth paragraph on page (8) should indicate the parcel number 8608-028-908 for the property referred to as the MTA parcel, and that for clarification, the city is not acquiring the property; the Redevelopment Agency is acquiring the property.

Commissioner Rosales motioned to approve the minutes with the corrections and was seconded by Commissioner Dodson.

AYES: RENTSCHLER, ALVA, DIERKING, DODSON, ROSALES
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

The Minutes were approved with the recommended corrections.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(Person/Group shall be allowed to speak without interruption up to five (5) minutes in compliance with applicable meeting rules. Questions to the speaker or response to questions or comments shall be handled after the speaker has completed his/her comments.)

1. Mike Lee: 636 Lee Place, Azusa, CA: Mr. Lee commented on the armory meeting, and stated that it provided useful information.
2. Art Morales, city resident. Mr. Morales commented on the progress of the Azusa movie theatre, which has been under construction within the Citrus Crossing shopping center. Mr. Morales commented that when a Commissioner must recuse him or herself, that the minutes should not only reflect the fact that the Commissioner was absent, but should state that the Commissioner was absent for a reason.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. DESIGN REVIEW DR-2007-43, VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP TTM-069751, GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT GPA-2007-01, ZONE CHANGE AMENDMENT ZCA-226 AND Z-2007-01, AND ADDENDUM TO THE GENERAL PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT.

APPLICANT: CITY OF AZUSA

LOCATION: 700 BLOCK OF N. DALTON AVENUE, AZUSA CALIFORNIA

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Commissioner Alva recused himself from the public hearing, on the grounds that he has a conflict of interest due to the fact that he owns property within 500 feet of the subject area.

Mr. Coleman, Community Development Director introduced the project, stating that the Redevelopment Agency is presenting what it believes to be an important revitalization project for the city's Downtown. Mr. Coleman stated that the Redevelopment Agency is requesting the Planning Commission take action on recommending approval to the City Council of a proposed development of a mixed-use commercial and residential development in the 700 block of North Dalton Ave

Lisa Brownfield, the City's Planning Consultant for the Foothill/Dalton project, presented the staff report. Ms. Brownfield commented on the community involvement and outreach, stating that staff has worked with the Downtown North Advisory Committee, holding approximately (11) meetings, and that the DNAC voted unanimously in support of the plan as it is currently proposed. Ms. Brownfield stated that city staff met with the City's Senior Citizen Patrons in November of 2007, and received a number of comments and recommendations. Ms. Brownfield stated that in January 2008 the City staff met with the Senior Advisory Council, where the Senior Advisory Council voted to favor a joint Senior Center and library facility within the Civic Center. Ms. Brownfield stated that the joint facility is not part of the proposed project, but is what the Senior Advisory Council has suggested they would like to see developed in the future.

Ms. Brownfield also stated that planning staff met with numerous city departments and other agencies, and conducted an Azusa Design Review Board in November of 2007, where all the agencies within the city as well as some of the outside agencies such as the School District and the Fire Department, were asked for their comments and conditions of approval. Ms. Brownfield stated that the city staff had ongoing Conditions of Approval discussions with the Fire Department, Police Department, Azusa Light and Water, and Engineering, which took place over a number of months from October 2007 to January 2008. Ms. Brownfield stated that the L.A. County Fire Department approved this project and provided 73 conditions of approval, which have been included in the Conditions of Approval for the project. Ms. Brownfield gave a PowerPoint presentation of the project describing the details of the two phases as well as details about zoning and General Plan conformance.

Ms. Brownfield stated that there were some studies conducted as a part of the project including a General Plan EIR Addendum, a noise study, and a traffic study. Ms. Brownfield stated that the General Plan EIR Addendum states that the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and is generally consistent with the Development Code. Ms. Brownfield explained that the proposed overlay zone would result in the project being consistent with the Development Code. Ms. Brownfield stated that the anticipated environmental impacts are not substantial enough to warrant additional environmental review. Ms. Brownfield explained the results of the noise study and the traffic study, and explained mitigation tactics included in the Conditions of Approval for the project.

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Ms. Brownfield stated that the Planning Commission will be considering the Design Review application for the project, and described the architectural details, parking, landscaping, and mixed-use aspects of the project.

Ms. Brownfield stated that the proposed General Plan Amendment will apply to five parcels located at the current Senior Center parking lot site. Ms. Brownfield stated that the parcels are currently designated as Public/Civic, and that the proposed General Plan Amendment would change the designation to Commercial/Residential Mixed-Use.

Ms. Brownfield stated that the proposed Development Code Overlay would modify the Development Code requirements to allow townhouses as stand alone units as well as address building heights, frontage types, fencing, walls and hedges, outdoor lighting, establish landscape standards and also refine the requirements for parking and loading spaces.

Ms. Brownfield stated that the proposed Vesting Tentative Tract Map grants vested rights to proceed with the project in accordance with the ordinances, policies, and standards that are in effect at the time of approval. Ms. Brownfield stated that with the VTTM would consolidate (11) lots into (4) lots, and that two of the four lots would be temporarily deeded to the developer in order to do the infrastructure improvements, but that the two lots would be deeded back to the city after the work has been done.

The Commission had questions for Staff.

Commissioner Rosales: Who is the project applicant?

Mr. Coleman: The City of Azusa and the City of Azusa Redevelopment Agency is the applicant and developer at this time and will be marketing the site to a developer for construction.

Commissioner Rosales: The project has also been known as the Dalton project, also known as the Watt/Genton project, and that some documents have been presented to the Planning Commission that make reference to the project as Block B-4.

Commissioner Rosales: No language in staff report referring to a strip of street right-of-way in the staff report?

Ms. Brownfield: Report will be revised.

Commissioner Rosales: The project is not in a Redevelopment Project Area?

Mr. Coleman: Correct.

Commissioner Rosales: No development on the site of the current Senior Center parking lot until replacement parking has been established?

Mr. Coleman: Correct.

Commissioner Rosales: Economic and Community Development Director to be given authority to approve alternate driveway design?

Mr. Coleman: Correct.

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Commissioner Rosales: Proposed diagonal parking in front of the Senior Center is recessed?

Ms. Brownfield: The proposed diagonal parking does not go further out into Dalton than the existing curb line.

Commissioner Rosales: Is project in compliance with the General Plan's "Park Once" concept?

Ms. Brownfield: Proposed project is only providing parking for itself.

Commissioner Dodson: Any prior projects entered into without a developer chosen?

Mr. Coleman: No

Commissioner Dodson: Is there is a contingency plan?

Mr. Coleman: Only option is to find a suitable developer.

Commissioner Dodson: Project would come back to the Planning Commission if there are changes?

Mr. Coleman: Any significant changes to the project would come before the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Rentschler: Status of the Exclusive Negotiating Agreement with the developer Watt-Genton?

Mr. Coleman: Terminated.

Commissioner Rentschler: Who is now responsible to meet the obligations of development?

Mr. Coleman: The Redevelopment Agency is seeking a developer.

Commissioner Rentschler: Lots (2) and (3) were included in the density calculations?

Ms. Brownfield: Correct

Commissioner Rentschler: Project for a library and Senior Center would come back as a whole or in phases?

Mr. Coleman: Phases.

Commissioner Rentschler: Studies done for the re-location of the Senior Center?

Mr. Coleman: No.

Commissioner Rentschler: What is "Blended Density?"

Ms. Brownfield: The number of proposed dwelling units divided by the acreage of all four lots.

Commissioner Rentschler: Purpose of lot three is?

Ms. Brownfield: Improvements for the bus turnout and diagonal parking are on lot 3.

Commissioner Rentschler: Removal of the center median on Dalton traffic calming?

Ms. Brownfield: Yes.

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Commissioner Rentschler: Purpose of the overlay zone?

Ms. Brownfield: To allow alternate development standards.

Chairman Dierking: The management of the proposed developer changed and there was a breach of the MOU?

Mr. Coleman: Correct.

Chairman Dierking: The city will not pursue legal remedies available in the event of a breach?

Mr. Coleman: Correct.

Chairman Dierking: There has not been a finding of General Plan conformity for the acquisition of the property located at 8608-029-909. The Government Code section 65402 applies to any public agency.

Mr. Coleman: The property that Chairman Dierking was referring to was acquired prior to the determination by the City Attorney's office that a finding of General Plan conformance needed to be made.

Mr. Torres: This is a substantial compliance argument, and that the majority of the property within the proposed project area did go through a General Plan Conformance under Govt. Code 65402.

Chairman Dierking: Addendum to the EIR is an appropriate mechanism for the project?

Ms. Brownfield: Yes.

Commissioner Rentschler: General Plan EIR analyzed this block based on a residential and mixed-use scenario?

Ms. Brownfield: General Plan EIR analyzed large areas of the city together and the EIR generally specifies the amount of residential units, retail, etc.

Commissioner Rentschler: Has blended density has ever been used in the city before?

Robert Person: In the Block 36 project.

The public hearing was opened.

Mike Lee, 636 Lee Place; Mr. Lee voiced his concern over the location of the future Senior Center parking lot, and that he does not want to see the parking lot located across the street from the existing Senior Center.

Anthony Contreras, 1133 N. Alameda Ave.; Mr. Contreras stated that he is a member of the DNAC and unanimously agreed to the project. Mr. Contreras stated that he and other community members spent many hours going over the project, and the he and many other community members feel that this is a good development for Azusa. Mr. Contreras stated that the DNAC approved of the project with the Condition of Approval for the Senior Center parking lot to be left alone until a suitable alternative is built.

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Peg Martinez, Community member; Ms. Martinez stated that she is a member of the Azusa North Committee. Ms. Martinez stated that she does not want to see the momentum of the project stopped but that the city has a project concept rather than a plan without a developer on board.

Andrea Cruz, 730 N. Azusa Ave.; Ms. Cruz stated that she felt the Planning Commissioners have done a good job asking the questions that they have asked. Ms. Cruz stated that she is concerned with the narrowing of Dalton Ave., and the entitlement to the developer to grant the portion of the right-of-way. Ms. Cruz stated that she is concerned about traffic and feels that the project density is not in compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Art Morales, city resident; Mr. Morales commented that one of the meetings held at the Senior Center gave the impression that the money the city would receive from the higher density allowance of the project would go towards the development of a combined senior center and library. Mr. Morales commented that he does not want to see this property developed like Azusa's Downtown.

Murry Herrera, city resident; Mr. Herrera voiced his concern over the Senior Center parking lot. Mr. Herrera stated that he does not want to see the Senior Center parking lot separated from the Senior Center.

Chairman Dierking closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Rosales stated that he believes that there should be some language that indicates the right-of-way property is included in the parcel assemblage.

Commissioner Rentschler stated that she feels that a condition of approval related to the 20' right-of-way needs to be included and language added related to the phase two of the project coming back to the Planning Commission for approval.

Chairman Dierking stated that his concern is for the appropriateness of approving the Vesting Tentative Tract Map with respect to parcel 8608-029-909 in the absence of any finding of General Plan conformity. Chairman Dierking stated that he would like to see a legal opinion on that, and that the acquisition of this property should be a subject of public hearing itself. Chairman Dierking stated that he would like to continue this matter to a future Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Coleman stated that the city would be more than glad to come back and explain the consistency issue, but that they would need some more legal council. Mr. Coleman stated that his recommendation is to include a table within the staff report to explain the background with regard to acquisition of properties including information on which properties went through the process of General Plan conformity finding.

Chairman Dierking stated that one issue is relating to the finding of General Plan Conformity relating to the acquisition of the property, and the second issue includes the

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issues from the project itself. Chairman Dierking stated that he would prefer to see a staff report on these issues.

Commissioner Rentschler motioned to continue this item to the next meeting on March 26, 2008, and was seconded by Commissioner Dodson.

AYES: RENTSCHLER, DODSON, DIERKING

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: ALVA (DUE TO CONFLICT)

Item continued to the next Planning Commission meeting March 26, 2008 .

Commissioner Alva re-joined the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

No unfinished business.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

1. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MARCH3, 2008- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ITEMS.

Mr. Coleman stated that some of the items included the quick claim of property from this development site to the Redevelopment Agency, there was a loan from the City to the Redevelopment Agency for land acquisition in a part of Downtown North, and some actions taken regarding the redevelopment plan amendment process.

DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

1. DRAFT ORDINANCE PROPOSING ZONE TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE AZUSA DEVELOPMENT CODE TO IMPLEMENT THE AZUSA CODE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.

Commissioner Rosales stated that he did not receive the draft ordinance attachment in his packet.

Mr. Person stated that he would like to recommend continuing this item to the March 26th meeting to hold the public hearing and discussion. The Planning commission voted to discuss the item at the March 26th Planning Commission meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.