



City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

September 3, 2015

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Addison Thompson, Vice-Chair John P. Campanella, Commissioners Jay D. Higgins, Mike Jordan, Sheila Lodge, June Pujo, and Deborah L. Schwartz.

STAFF PRESENT:

Beatriz Gularte, Senior Planner
Allison De Busk, Project Planner
Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner
George Johnson, Parks and Recreation Senior Planner
N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney
Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

A. Requests for continuances, withdrawals, postponements, or addition of ex-agenda items.

None.

B. Announcements and appeals.

None.

C. Review, consideration and action on the following draft Planning Commission Minutes and Resolutions:

1. Minutes of August 13, 2015

MOTION: Schwartz/Jordan

Approve the minutes.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 1 (Higgins). Absent: 0

2. Minutes of August 20, 2015
3. Resolution No. 014-15
1118 E. Cabrillo Boulevard
4. Resolution No. 015-15
236 E. Cabrillo Boulevard

MOTION: Lodge/Scwhartz

Approve the minutes and resolutions as corrected.

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Abstain: 2 (Jordan, Schwartz) Absent: 0

- D. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda.

Chair Thompson opened the public hearing at 1:02 P.M. and, with no one wishing to speak, closed the hearing.

III. CONCEPT REVIEW:

ACTUAL TIME: 1:02 P.M.

APPLICATION OF TRISH ALLEN, SUZANNE ELLEDGE PLANNING AND PERMITTING SERVICES, APPLICANT FOR WRIGHT PARTNERS, 301 E. YANONALI STREET, APN 017-630-005, M-1//SP-2/SD-3 (INDUSTRIAL/CABRILLO PLAZA SPECIFIC PLAN/COASTAL OVERLAY) ZONES, GENERAL PLAN / LOCAL COASTAL PLAN DESIGNATION: INDUSTRIAL (MST2012-00494)

The proposed project involves the construction of a new 44,398 net square foot two-story commercial building at the northeast corner of Garden and Yanonali Streets. Proposed use of the building would be retail on the first floor (7,050 net square feet) and a market on the second floor (37,348 net square feet). A total of 193 parking spaces are proposed, along with two driveways accessing the site from Yanonali Street. The project includes a 25-foot setback from the top-of-bank of Laguna Channel.

The purpose of the concept review was to allow the Planning Commission and the public an opportunity to review the proposed project design at a conceptual level and provide the Applicant and Staff with feedback and direction regarding the proposed land use and design. The opinions of the Planning Commission may change or there may be ordinance or policy changes that could affect the project that would result in requests for project design changes. **No formal action on the development proposal was taken at the concept review, nor was any determination made regarding environmental review of the proposed project.**

The discretionary applications required for this project would be:

1. A Coastal Development Permit to allow the proposed development in the Appealable Jurisdiction of the City's Coastal Zone (SBMC § 28.44.060);

2. A Development Plan to allow the construction of approximately 44,398 square feet of nonresidential floor area (SBMC §28.85.030); and
3. Historic Landmarks Commission review and approval of the project design (SBMC §22.22.130).

Contact: Allison DeBusk, Project Planner

Email: ADeBusk@SantaBarbaraCA.gov Phone: (805) 564-5470, extension 4552

Allison De Busk, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation. George Johnson, Parks and Recreation Senior Planner, was available to answer any of the Commission's questions.

Trish Allen, Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services, Inc., gave the Applicant presentation, joined by Brian Cearnal, Architect, Cearnal Andrulaitis; Greg McGowan, Principal Ecologist and Mary Carroll Senior Ecologist, Arcadis.

Commissioner Schwartz left the dais at 2:51 P.M. and returned at 2:54 P.M.

Chair Thompson opened the public hearing at 3:12P.M.

Hillary Hauser, Heal the Ocean, submitted written documents. Heal the Ocean has been reviewing the site for 15 years and sees this as an opportunity to clean up the site. This site was once used by Caltrans, and then used by the City as a dump before moving to Elings Park. She encourages project support and would like to help in the clean up.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 3:17 P.M.

Planning Commission's Comments:

Commissioner Schwartz:

- Regarding the site plan, what's under the site will be as important as what's on the site. How this property has been used and how the adjacent City property has been used need to be addressed. Need to address the nexus between how the land has been used and how they will continue to be used between both property owners. Can't separate this property and its impact on the creek from the adjacent City property's impact. Impact on the channel and restoration to be considered. Questioned adjacent city pipe on the property. Asks that Staff utilize research that Heal the Ocean has done.
- Is not concerned about the height. Does ask that consideration be given to what else is in the view shed looking up at the Riviera that is already impacting unimpeded views of the mountains.
- Encourages Staff and the Applicant to determine the acceptable number of parking spaces required and make them as wide as possible.
- Unsure as to why underground parking could not be considered, has seen it work in San Francisco.

- Urged the Applicant buy the newest state-of-the-art shopping carts that have built in technology that restrains the carts and prohibits them from leaving the perimeter of the property. This would prevent an eyesore of abandoned carts left elsewhere in the Coastal Zone.
- Supports shared parking for fluidity and flexibility. Parking signage will also be very important for egress and ingress in the lot and indication of overflow parking for smooth traffic flow.
- Recommended working with staff to build bicycle parking that is actually used; suggested building an open bicycle cage like the one at the County and noted the cage at Ralphs as an example of one that isn't used.
- The challenge for this project will be in handling traffic circulation and impacts related to the Highway 101 interchange. There is potential for significant back-up on Yanonali and Garden Streets and this will need to be addressed.
- Likes the roof deck as a way to have multiple uses of scarce land. Suggested making the roof deck available for non-profit use. Find a way to maximize the use of the rooftop to benefit as many users as possible.
- She looks beyond the creek setback and asks that the City conduct its own study, as an adjacent property owner, of the soil quality and outflow to the Laguna Channel, in conjunction with the Applicant before a finalized habitat restoration process is agreed upon with the Applicant. Would hope that a joint agreement could be drawn for restoration of the Channel, otherwise all we are doing is bandaiding an environmental degradation issue by only looking at 301 E. Yanonali Street
- Struggling with an actual creek setback number and does not know how far beyond 25 feet is reasonable or necessary. Part of this should come out of her recommended joint study between the City and the Applicant on the actual quality of the soil and the water. The full set of environmental issues are not known today so it is premature to offer a number.
- Appreciates that the backside of the project is streamlined and softened to look more like the traditional Spanish Colonial architectural style seen around town. Finds the proposed Mission Hacienda architectural style to be a good contrast in that it does not look like the residential condominiums across the street. There could be an aesthetic improvement to the area in not having identical architectural styles in the same area. Supports the architectural style.

Commissioner Pujo:

- Appreciated the Applicant requesting a concept review and for the information presented.
- Finds the rooftop deck to be a great idea and is consistent with policy. There may be additional parking requirements or study needed to address its use.
- Still has reservation about the Monterey architectural style and looks forward to hearing what the Historic Landmarks Commission has to say.
- Does not have a problem with the height per se. It will all depend on what impact it has on the views.

- Does not have any issue with the podium design of the building, with the building over parking, as long as the design makes sense.
- Would like to see the internal circulation (loading docks, parking layout, etc) addressed after bigger issues; doesn't think it's the key issue. Thinks this can be worked out with staff.
- We need to consider the flexibility of the space and site plan regardless of the currently anticipated tenant in order to address future changes in market needs and desires.
- Has concern with the project's consistency with policies related to street presence and the vitality of the commercial areas in the city. For example, General Plan Policy LG-4 about principles for development which includes phrases like "strengthen mobility options" and "promote healthy active living." "Promote active living by encouraging compact vibrant walkable spaces." She wants to see more of that in the project. She does see that while the project does incorporate some elements, what has been presented is just a start. She sees that that there is substantial room for improvement.
- Circulation for all modes of transportation needs to be looked at. Consider how are people going to get from point A to point B without a car. The Applicant is drawing from a large area and Highway 101 will be an important part of that. But the site is also in a part of the City and coastal zone where we are trying to improve and enhance in regards to pedestrian, residential, and community activity. This is a large site with opportunity for improvement.
- Anticipates that environmental impacts and mitigations may be substantial and will lead to changes in the project.
- The biology impacts will help determine what the creek setback should be. But, this setback determination should not just be dictated by policy or by the state of Laguna Channel. That's important, but it's not the whole picture. There are other aspects that will dovetail with policy and biology and are important in determining what the setback will be. There is the challenge of sea level rise, flooding, high groundwater. If there is a need to plan for adaptive change for this area, that in itself will impact the amount of the buffer that will be needed for the amount of the creek setback. Infiltration is a good solution for dealing with sea level rise. She would like to see the sea level information before making a decision on the creek setback. For now, a 25-foot setback seems pretty minimal, for this size lot especially given the flexibility you have with design. Doesn't know if the number needs to be 50 feet or more than 50 feet, but there's an opportunity to do something more than 25 feet if our goal is to increase setbacks.
- Appreciates the work that has gone into protecting and minimizing the blocking of views. She defers further comments until the environmental review is complete, but doesn't have overarching concerns about views at this time.

Campanella:

- Hopes that the environmental review will help Staff and the Applicant determine an appropriate creek setback number. He does not feel that 25 feet is a fixed number,

nor is 100 feet and it should not be. It depends on the use, size, constraints, etc. However, this is a large site and is unconstrained. Loss of square footage would be the trade-off. There are a number of situations that the Commission has reviewed and circumstances should be considered. He does not want to set a precedent, but wants flexibility in reviewing projects as they come forward.

- Stated that visual resources from a pedestrian level are not a big issue here. This project is not blocking views from where people congregate. This is a corner with little pedestrian traffic.
- When reviewing traffic, vehicle miles traveled will need to be looked at when evaluating this project's impact on greenhouse gases, in addition to intersection impacts. If this is contributory, the Commission could make a finding for overriding consideration and would need to look at what benefit is provided, such as when looking at multi-use development. If there was a housing component to this project, it would help with making an overriding consideration.

Commissioner Lodge:

- Stated that the architecture and use are appropriate.
- Would like to see a minimum of a 35-foot creek setback and less building. The building appears massive for that site.
- What Heal the Ocean found oozing under the site is ugly and needs to be cleaned up. Would like to see the City and the Property Owner work to clean up the site.

Commissioner Higgins:

- Agrees with Commissioner Pujo on the site plan in encouraging more vitality at the street; more retail at the street would be consistent with City development policies and design guidelines. Understands that this could affect mountain views, but feels it's worth that compromise.
- Supports a larger creek setback.
- Supports the roof deck becoming more permanent and conditioned space being added to the square footage. If you need to lose building square footage by increasing the creek setback, then perhaps there is a trade off to making it happen on the roof with a more permanent space. A benefit of adding more of a retail component to the street allows the roof deck to be closer to Yanonali Street and farther away from the highway.
- The corner of Garden and Yanonalli Streets seems like an island. It's a long stretch for pedestrians to get all the way to the other side where the entrance is. Perhaps a breezeway, elevator, or escalator could be considered for pedestrians to create a more inviting entrance at the corner.
- Supports additional parking, even if it is more than required by Ordinance and even if it compromises the creek setback.
- This is in the Historic Landmark's Zone and the building may be too large for the proposed architectural style.

Commissioner Jordan:

- Stated that this is a great site for what is planned. Supports the site entirely for the proposed use.
- Supports the proposed entry and exit to the site and building as typical for a market.
- He is less concerned with circulation because there is a lot more to be considered with issues that already inherently exist and will never be resolved. If there are Class 1 traffic impacts found, then he will definitely be vocal on areas that could be considered for overriding considerations.
- This area is underserved by grocery stores.
- Finds the visual massing simulation most disturbing standing south on Garden looking north from the right-hand side of the street because it obliterates the entire mountain range. The most encouraging simulation is the one shown from across the street looking northeast that looks similar to the previously submitted project. Suggested that perhaps the simulation on Garden Street looking north could carve out a second floor niche to see more of the mountains, or perhaps reduce the height in particular places so that mountain views aren't obliterated.
- Given the geographic constraints of the location, even a high one story building could have as much of a view impact as a two-story building.
- When considering the creek setback, he is more focused on what is in the setback area, rather than the number. He agrees with George Johnson that more of a setback is better, but also agrees with the Applicant's consultant that what is put in the setback could improve on the more is better concept.
- Is concerned that work is not being done to reduce the steepness of the bank because for him the assumption is that creek restoration on a creek with vertical banks always includes reducing the verticality of that bank.
- With a top notch restoration program, one that includes a way to help endangered turtles get out of the water reasonably, he might be okay with the 25-foot creek setback. .
- As you go further south in that corridor, it becomes clear that the burden is on any developer to squeeze out any setback square footage possible. What is important will be what is placed in that setback area, what restoration is done.
- Is not convinced that anyone has the answer on whether retention and infiltration or treatment and conveyance is a better idea when the site has ground contamination. He would like that answer addressed when the project returns. Infiltration may not be a benefit if there's contamination below.
- Would like to see more permeable paving in the project and sees that as a benefit.
- Is not inclined to support access to whatever creek restoration area is determined. The existing fence is there for a reason, it is to keep people out of the watershed, and having a smaller restoration area makes it even more important to limit access.
- Suggested talking with the City to expand the restoration area farther to the east, possibly on City property, so that both sides of the creek are benefitted and adequate creek side restoration is done. This may help off-set the width of the setback on the west side.

- Is not a proponent of landscaped parkways. He would like to see low impact development practices along the curb where they serve as detention basins or trees that are staggered on a sidewalk with tree grates.
- The bike room isn't adequate. He suggested looking at vertical bicycle racks. They take up more room but blend in more with the building. Also suggested making it scalable so that more bike spaces can be added if needed, or it can scaled back if not fully used.
- Asked that consideration be given for views from Highway 101. Would like to see how that part of the Highway 101 corridor will look after the building is there, as the view gets eroded with every new multi-story building with regard to the eroded impact of the open space looking toward the ocean.
- Would support the conditions of approval including a one-year-post-occupancy report that looks at the assumptions that were made and what transpired in areas such as parking, etc. Including any unforeseen consequences due to development on adjoining lots.

Commissioner Thompson

- Thinks there still might be room to reduce the overall height of the project to bring it more to human scale. There are high-end markets that have more human scale interiors. Give this consideration as a way to reduce the overall height of the building and reduce some of the visual impacts as seen from Yanonali and Garden Streets.
- Agrees with Commissioners Pujo and Higgins that the retail presence on Yanonali Street could be improved, although he recognizes that this is a very constrained site. Site circulation might not be improved much more than what is currently proposed, but there are opportunities to look at additional site layouts to improve presence on Yanonali Street.
- Acknowledges the issue raised by Heal the Ocean and sees underground contaminates as a valid and important point that will be reviewed when we do an environmental review of the project. It cannot be ignored, and it will be expensive for the Applicant. How the Applicant deals with Tier 3 Storm Water Management will be impacted by what can and cannot be done with buried contaminants.
- Agrees with Commissioner Jordan on creek setbacks that it is not so much the dimension of the setback, but what you do in the setback that makes the difference. He believes that a 25-footcreek setback in this location is adequate because to the north, there is Highway 101 and a big culvert which will never change. The south side has another bridge and that, too, will never change. Downstream there are other properties that are not going to be moved back any more than they are now. The Planning Commission also recently approved the City doing maintenance in the channel with zero setbacks. Overall, it is more important what is done within the setback.

Bill Wright, owner, addressed the Commission and noted the Wright Family's commitment to doing the right thing with their properties and noted they will not sell out.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

ACTUAL TIME: 4:30 P.M.

E. Committee and Liaison Reports

1. Staff Hearing Officer Liaison Report

Commissioner Jordan reported on the Staff Hearing Officer meeting of September 2, 2015.

2. Other Committee and Liaison Reports

a. Commissioner Campanella reported on the Architectural Board of Review meeting of August 31, 2015.

b. Commissioner Schwartz reported on Desalination.

c. Commissioner Thompson announced that the next Planning Commission meeting will be October 1, 2015.

d. Ms. Gularte announced the Planning Commission meetings of September 10 and 17, 2015 have been cancelled. The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be October 1, 2015.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 4:33 P.M.

Submitted by,

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary