



City of Santa Barbara
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
JULY 9, 2020

1:00 P.M.

This Meeting was Conducted Electronically
SantaBarbaraCA.gov

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Deborah L. Schwartz, Chair
Lesley Wiscomb, Vice Chair
Roxana Bonderson
Gabriel Escobedo
Jay D. Higgins
Sheila Lodge
Barrett Reed

STAFF:

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Heidi Reidel, Commission Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schwartz called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Deborah L. Schwartz, Vice Chair Lesley Wiscomb, Commissioners Roxana Bonderson, Gabriel Escobedo, Jay D. Higgins, Sheila Lodge, and Barrett Reed

STAFF PRESENT

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Tony Boughman, Assistant Planner
Ellen Kokinda, Planning Analyst
Timmy Bolton, Associate Planner
Tony Ruggieri, City TV Production Supervisor
Heidi Reidel, Commission Secretary

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

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

No requests.

B. Announcements and appeals:

Ms. DeBusk announced that the Planning Commission will hold a Special Meeting on July 23, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. to discuss Storm Water Management Plan updates.

C. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda:

Public comment opened at 1:05 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

Public comment re-opened at 1:06 p.m. and the following individual spoke:

1. Suzanne Elledge

Public comment closed at 1:08 p.m.

III. **NEW ITEMS**

A. **ACTUAL TIME: 1:08 P.M.**

APPLICATION OF SUZANNE ELLEDGE, SEPPS, AGENT FOR AMERICAN TRADITION, OWNER OF 433 E. CABRILLO BLVD. & 103 S. CALLE CESAR CHAVEZ, APN: 017-680-009 & 017-113-020, ZONE: HRC-2/S-P-1/S-D-3 & OM-1/S-D-3; LAND USE DESIGNATION: HOTEL AND RELATED COMMERCE II & INDUSTRIAL; (PLN2016-00284 & PLN2016-00295)

The Waterfront Hotel Project was approved by the City Council in 1995 and Planning Commission in 2007, receiving discretionary approvals of a Development Agreement, a Coastal Development Permit, a Conditional Use Permit, a Development Plan, and a Parking Modification. The Project proposes changes including: reduction of number of hotel rooms; reduction in total floor area; consolidation of back-of-house operations in the main hotel building; reconfigured parking lot with carports, and an increase in commercial floor area for restaurant, bar, and banquet uses open to the public.

This hearing will be a Discussion Item to inform the Planning Commission of proposed changes to the approved Project, and obtain their input to the Community Development Director with regard to a request for a Substantial Conformance Determination for proposed changes. The current project proposal remains within the scope of the certified EIR analysis; all previously identified mitigation measures would continue to apply to the project; and various environmental impacts would be the same or reduced. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15164, an Addendum to the certified EIR has been prepared to document minor changes to the EIR analysis for the current project.

Tony Boughman, Associate Planner, gave the Staff presentation.

Suzanne Elledge, Applicant, SEPPS, gave the Applicant presentation, and was joined by Robert Green, The Robert Green Company; Robert Glazier, Architect; Holly Garcin, SEPPS; Martha Degasis, Landscape Architect, Arcadia Studio; Michael Caccese, Civil Engineer, MAC Design Associates; and Scott Schell, Associate Transportation Engineers.

Public comment opened at 1:56 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

Commissioner comments:

Generally, the Commission finds the project to be a great improvement and finds it to be in substantial conformance with the Approved Project.

Commissioner Wiscomb:

- Likes the openness of the footprint facing Cabrillo Blvd.
- Appreciates the increase in public space and solar.

Commissioner Escobedo:

- Appreciates the improvements to El Estero drain, the reduced massing, reduced number of rooms, restoration, and increases in public space.

Commissioner Reed:

- Agrees with the staff highlights on page 15 of the staff report in terms of improvements.
- The parking changes are positive. The requirement went down but the provided parking went up which is impressive.
- Appreciates the fewer rooms and the lower average room size.
- Increase in commercial area open to the public is a great asset.
- Excited that the bar is open to the public.
- Impressed that land development team found no problems.

Chair Schwartz:

- Concurs with staff on beneficial improvements, noted on page 15 of the staff report.
- On page 13 of the staff report in Section A, the reduction in number and square footage of guest rooms, reduction in total square footage, and overall height is still within the footprint of the prior approved project.
- It conforms to the Amended Specific Plan and the Final Environmental Impact Report.

MOTION: Wiscomb / Lodge

Recommend to the Community Development Director that the project changes are substantially consistent with the original approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 7 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

*** THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 2:27 TO 2:40 P.M. ***

B. ACTUAL TIME: 2:41 P.M.**USE DETERMINATION – HRC-II ZONE (PER SBMC §28.22.030.B.2.F)**

The Planning Commission is being asked to determine if a yacht and helicopter/plane charter business is an appropriate visitor-serving or commercial recreational use in the HRC-2 (Hotel and Related Commerce) Zone, in accordance with Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Section 28.22.030.B.2.f.

RECUSALS: To avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest, Commissioner Reed recused himself from hearing this item due to a financial interest.

Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner, gave the Staff presentation.

Kenneth Marshall, Principal, Dudek, gave the Applicant presentation, and was joined by Jason Middleton, CEO, Silver Air; and Austin Herlihy, Executive Vice President, Radius Commercial Real Estate.

Public comment opened at 3:00 p.m., and the following individual spoke:

1. Brian Cearnal

Public comment closed at 3:03 p.m.

Commissioner comments:

Commissioner Wiscomb:

- This is a commendable business plan at a time when we need diversified businesses.
- Although the business plan is developing, it is appropriate in this zone.
- Believes that retail is changing and the use is visitor serving.
- There will be a creative menu of services available to tourists and locals.
- Commendable approach to an expansion.
- Believes that the use is appropriate under Subsections B.2.a and B.2.e of Section 28.22.030.
- Supports approval of this land use.
- Subsection B.2.f could also be appropriate, but is comfortable with B.2.a and B.2.e.
- Believes asking applicant to return with floorplan is a difficult request; tying a use to a floor plan doesn't work.
- Let the applicant be flexible while they develop the business.

Commissioner Lodge:

- Finds that this proposed use is an office use, which is also demonstrated by the floor plan.
- Marine uses happen at the harbor now.
- Doesn't see this as truly being visitor serving.
- Believes it is a stretch to fit the use to anything but office space.

Commissioner Escobedo:

- Agrees with Vice Chair Wiscomb that this is visitor serving.
- Believes the business model to have a symbiotic relationship with local businesses.
- Challenges the applicant to carry on with a menu of options that serve both high-end clients and affordable options for tourists and residents.
- Supports suggestions to use Title 28.22.030 Permitted Land Uses, subsections B.2.a and B.2.e. Could also support using subsection B.2.f, if needed.
- We need to focus on flexibility.

- The Planning Commission's role is to interpret ordinances and having a vacant building is no better for the community.
- Not in favor of having applicant return with updated floor plan.
- We need to update Title 28 in the coastal zone.

Commissioner Bonderson:

- Understands that there may be a need for this business in this area and a desire by the business to be near the harbor, but does not feel comfortable supporting a business whose purpose until now has been general aviation, as the shoreline location is not essential to running the business.
- Without more data, there is no proof that the waterfront services or travel office visitor's center will become the prominent purpose of this service, especially as they've identified it as a secondary service.
- If they continue to focus on business and air travel, there's no need to be in this area.
- The office space and aviation business does not fit into the permitted use.
- Might be more comfortable if there was a more developed business plan.
- Wants to see that all types of tourists would benefit from this location, not just high end.
- Cannot support the use as currently proposed.

Commissioner Higgins:

- Very conflicted; the Coastal Commission's policies are old, he's more in favor of local control and does not want to defend outdated policies.
- The use has found a great location with parking.
- The Planning Commission is being asked to accommodate tenant objectives.
- Need to provide better clarity on this with our Coastal Land Use Plan.
- Needs more information to be convinced that this use is allowed under the Zoning Ordinance. Can't get there yet; it looks like an office.
- Applicant could come back with a more specific floor plan.
- Would like to know if other sites were considered, and if so, why they wouldn't work for the applicant.

Chair Schwartz:

- Can understand staff's conflict with how to pose an exact interpretation.
- Zoning language is antiquated; we must push ourselves to be flexible within the goals.
- Ultimately on the side of providing flexibility to the applicant.
- The project does predominately configure for visitor serving functions.
- It is a Planning Commission responsibility to step into strong leadership positions to help the community remain vibrant and diverse.
- Will support a motion to allow the applicant to move forward as an allowed use in HR-2 Zone.

MOTION: Higgins/Bonderson

Continue the item for the applicant to return in a maximum of thirty days with a more refined, visitor-serving floor plan and more information about other lease sites the applicant may have considered.

An amendment to the motion was proposed as follows:

AMENDED MOTION: Higgins/Bonderson

Continue the item for the applicant to return in a maximum of thirty days with a more refined, visitor-serving floor plan ~~and more information about other lease sites the applicant may have considered.~~

Chair Schwartz moves to accept the friendly amendment proposed by Commissioner Higgins

The Commission approved the friendly amendment with the following vote:

Ayes: 5 Noes: 1 (Wiscomb) Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Reed)

The motion was substituted as follows:

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Escobedo/Wiscomb

Approve this specific use based on Title 28.22.030 Permitted Land Use, subsection B.2.f., because marine charters, marine sales, air charters, and air sales, with inclusion of a visitor's center component, is a visitor serving use.

This motion failed by the following vote:

Ayes: 3 Noes: 3 (Lodge, Higgins, and Bonderson) Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Reed)

ORIGINAL AMENDED MOTION: Higgins/Bonderson

Continue the item for the applicant to return in a maximum of thirty days with a more refined, visitor-serving floor plan ~~and more information about other lease sites the applicant may have considered.~~

This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 Noes: 1 (Lodge) Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Reed)

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**ACTUAL TIME: 5:35 P.M.****A. Committee and Liaison Reports:****1. Staff Hearing Officer Liaison Report**

Commissioner Higgins reported that the Staff Hearing Officer meetings of July have been cancelled.

2. Other Committee and Liaison Reports

- a. Commissioner Wiscomb reported on the June 19, 2020 meeting of the Plaza De La Guerra Subcommittee.
- b. Commissioner Bonderson reported on the June 25, 2020 meeting of the Transportation and Circulation Committee.
- c. Commissioner Lodge reported on the June 24, 2020 meeting of the Historic Landmarks Commission.
- d. Commissioner Escobedo reported on the July 6, 2020 meeting of the Single Family Design Board, the July 9, 2020 meeting of the Downtown Parking Committee, and the June 24, 2020 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Submitted by,

Heidi Reidel, Commission Secretary

