



## MINUTES

### PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

**May 7, 2012**

*The meeting of the El Cajon Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m.*

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Darrin J. MROZ, Chairman  
Paul CIRCO, Vice Chairman  
Star BALES  
Anthony SOTTILE

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Vacant

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dennis DAVIES, Deputy Director – Public Works  
Manjeet RANU, Planning Manager / Planning  
Commission Secretary  
Eric CRAIG, Assistant Planner  
Michael REID, Staff Attorney  
Ron Luis VALLES, Administrative Secretary

MROZ explained the mission of the Planning Commission and welcomed comments under Public Comments. No one came forward.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:** Motion was made by MROZ, seconded by CIRCO, to adopt the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held on April 9, 2012; carried 4-0.

#### PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

##### AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2164 – GARCO INVESTMENTS USED AUTO SALES

This was a public hearing on a request to conduct used auto sales. The subject property is addressed as 711 El Cajon Boulevard. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

APN: 492-641-09  
General Plan: General Commercial (GC)  
Zoning: General Commercial (GC)  
Applicant: Garco Investments Inc. (Shawn Sagart) /  
619.508.6000  
Project Planner: Eric Craig / 619.441.1782  
Email: [ecraig@cityofelcajon.us](mailto:ecraig@cityofelcajon.us) and include "CUP 2164" in  
Subject Line.

In a PowerPoint presentation, CRAIG summarized the staff report.

MROZ asked if there were any questions from the Commissioners and there were none.

MROZ then opened the public hearing and invited any speakers to the podium.

Shawn SAGART, applicant and property owner approached the podium and asked the Commissioners to consider increasing the amount of display parking spaces to sixteen. He noted the church has only three designated spaces and the 7-Eleven Store has seven. The church is open only on Wednesday evenings and Sundays with mostly drop off and pick up activity. This leaves 32 unassigned spaces. SAGART also advised he is seeking to attract a franchise restaurant for the old Allen's Flowers store.

SOTTILE asked if the church had been approached to possibly give up some spaces.

CRAIG explained the parking requirement for a church is based on the square footage of the church and a conditional use permit was required in the past in order to locate in a commercial zone. Currently, churches are a permitted use in commercial zones if they can meet the parking requirements, however, balance would be required between other uses on site for parking.

BALES asked staff if the church has no need for as much parking then is there a way to convert part of the building into storage to free up some parking spaces.

CRAIG responded the zoning ordinance does allow for reduction of parking for storage areas with a conditional use permit, but is not part of this request. He added, if the church were to vacate this location, a retail use could arrive in the future that would trigger more parking.

SAGART interjected that the 7-Eleven Store is on a 30 year lease and he would not want to jeopardize this lease by revamping the parking. He added that the used car lot is only a temporary situation and his goal would be to eventually locate a franchise restaurant at the site.

RANU suggested that a way to reduce parking requirements would be to draft a joint use parking agreement with specified uses and hours of operation. He recommended staff work with the applicant and continue the project to the Planning Commission meeting of June 11, 2012.

SAGART and the Commissioners all agreed to the continuance.

No other speakers approached the podium.

Motion was made by MROZ, seconded by CIRCO, to continue the public hearing; carried 4-0.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2155 – MILLER’S TOWING**

This was a public hearing on a request for auto dismantling, vehicle impound, towing services and auctions. The subject property is addressed as 301 Cypress Lane. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

APN:	483-022-11
General Plan:	Industrial Park (IP)
Zoning:	Manufacturing (M)
Applicant:	Miller’s Towing (Daniel S. Miller) / 619.279.0519
Project Planner:	Tony Shute / 619.441.1705
Email:	tonys@cityofelcajon.us and include “CUP 2155” in Subject Line.

In a PowerPoint presentation, RANU summarized the staff report.

MROZ asked if there were any questions from the Commissioners. He then clarified with staff that the gaps on either side of the rolling gate required screening.

SOTTILE asked if cloth material would suffice for screening.

RANU responded the screening material would need to be architecturally integrated, such as a metal siding type of material. He also noted the proposed resolution included such language.

MROZ opened the public hearing and invited any speakers to the podium.

Daniel MILLER, applicant, approached the podium and thanked staff for all their help in the processing of his application. He added that he had made improvements to the property, especially by replacing a dilapidated chain link fence with a six-foot-high masonry wall and was open to suggestions from staff on the type of screening material they would recommend. As far as the lighting concerns, he noted the adjoining concrete batch plant had provided sufficient lighting for the area due to the close proximity to the airport. MILLER did add that he would be receptive to adding more lighting if required.

MROZ agreed there was adequate lighting on site.

BALES added she was pleased to see the recommendation for architecturally integrated decorative screening on the gate with the use of metal for durability.

MILLER added he could meet the requirement and would be using a thin sheet metal with architectural images either drawn or painted on instead of corrugated metal. He was also in agreement with all other conditions of approval.

No other speakers approached the podium.

Motion was made by SOTTILE, seconded by BALES, to close the public hearing; carried 4-0.

Motion was made by BALES, seconded by CIRCO, to adopt the proposed Resolution No. 10690, approving Conditional Use Permit No. 2155; subject to conditions; carried 4-0.

The appeal for this item ends at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, May 17, 2012.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 – AMENDMENT OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 303 – ST. MICHAEL CHALDEAN CHURCH**

This was a public hearing on a request for a minor addition to an existing religious facility. The subject property is addressed as 799 East Washington Avenue. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

APN:	493-104-58
General Plan:	Medium Density Residential (MR) / Low Medium Density
Zoning:	Residential, Multi-family, 2,500 square-foot (RM-2500)
Applicant:	St. Michael Chaldean Church / 619.444.9911
Project Planner:	Noah Alvey / 619.441.1773
Email:	nalvey@cityofelcajon.us and include “AM CUP 303” in Subject Line.

In a PowerPoint presentation, RANU summarized the staff report.

MROZ asked if there were any questions from the Commissioners.

BALES sought clarification from staff on the variance process, how long it would take, and what would be required of the applicant.

RANU explained there is a \$750 filing fee which would encompass researching and finding criteria for discussion with the applicant on the issue. The project would also require re-noticing for comments with the joint filing of the conditional use permit and variance. It could easily be completed and back before the Commission by the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

SOTTILE asked if the applicant applied for a variance if this would become an exception to the code. Also, if it was approved, would it set a precedent for future properties.

RANU responded that in this situation it would not set a precedent and would only be unique to this circumstance.

SOTTILE then asked if this project were approved by the Planning Commission, would it set a precedent.

RANU answered that it would. Staff would apply the interpretation to future projects equally. No variance would be required as well for future projects.

MROZ opened the public hearing and invited any speakers to the podium.

Humbert CABRERA, project architect approached the podium. He provided a handout to the Commissioners and spoke with the assistance of a PowerPoint presentation. He asserted that the columns were indeed buttresses, which allowed these features to encroach into the setback area and that a variance would therefore not be necessary.

SOTTILE asked if consideration was made to put one-half of the column in the wall with the other one-half extending out to provide support at the same time.

CABRERA advised this procedure would decrease the height-to-width ratio of the sheer panel, thus creating additional rattling in case of an earthquake.

SOTTILE confirmed with CABRERA that the applicant was not willing to neither move forward up to the sidewalk and increase the square footage of the church, nor push the wall back. They wanted to keep the 20' front yard setback with the architecturally designed front as proposed.

SOTTILE sought clarification from staff as to why the church had a 20' front yard setback requirement.

RANU explained the property is zoned for multi-family use, therefore the 20' setback applies. He confirmed that the conditional use permit is required because the church is located in a residential area, even though it is surrounded by commercial zoned properties.

BALES did not see a need for the applicant to obtain a variance, but had concerns that approval of the project might appear to be making an exception for the church.

SOTTILE also expressed concern that the applicant was applying commercial standards to a residential area and that this created the dilemma with the 20' setback. He added that if the project is approved as/is it would change the code for others in the residential area, or it could supersede the 20' clearance.

RANU explained that this section of the code is city-wide and architectural projections are allowed in any zone. He added it is common that eaves on residential homes often project out three feet from the wall of a house. The code allows for these architectural projections that are both functional and architecturally pleasing. The difference with this application from what staff sees versus the code section is that the columns are no longer just projecting. They go from the ground to the top of the structure. If the structure did not have columns this feature could project and not touch the ground. The issue is when the columns are attached to the ground. He added staff is pleased with the effect of the columns presented by this application, and the Planning Commission could go either way with their decision.

SOTTILE again asked CABRERA that after staff's explanation would the applicant be more open to obtaining the variance.

CABRARA again answered in the negative and added, if obtaining a variance would become a requirement, they would remove the buttresses and make the façade a plain wall.

CIRCO thanked the applicant for defining the columns as buttresses and added the zoning ordinance says buttresses may extend or project and they must touch the ground. Therefore, the code already exists to make the allowance in this case.

Sami JIHAD spoke next on behalf of the church with ten parishioners in attendance and thanked staff for their support of the project.

Mr. HANO, representing the church council, thanked staff and the Commissioners for all their work on this project.

No other speakers approached the podium.

Motion was made by MROZ, seconded by BALES, to close the public hearing; carried 4-0.

CIRCO confirmed with staff that an adjustment would be required to the alternate resolution to change columns shown on the project to buttresses per their discussion.

BALES thanked the church for making a difference in the community; especially their open door policy to the new incoming immigrants to El Cajon.

Motion was made by CIRCO, seconded by BALES, to adopt the alternate proposed Resolution No. 10691 as amended in Section C to change columns to buttresses, approving Amendment of Conditional Use Permit No. 303; subject to conditions; carried 4-0.

The appeal for this item ends at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, May 17, 2012.

### **OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There were none.

### **STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

RANU informed the Commission that applicants for the vacant Commission seat would be interviewed and chosen at the City Council meeting on Tuesday, May 8, 2012.

He also informed that the City Council chose not to initiate a request to change the zoning code to allow chickens broadly in residential areas of El Cajon.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS/COMMENTS**

BALES reminded staff about her previous suggestion of having a beautification project in the City.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by SOTTILE, seconded by CIRCO, to adjourn the meeting of the El Cajon Planning Commission at 8:46 p.m. this 7th day of May, 2012 until May 21, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.; carried 4-0.

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Darrin J. MROZ, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Manjeet RANU, AICP, Secretary