



## MINUTES

### PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

**October 24, 2011**

*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  
Anthony AMBROSE  
Star BALES  
Paul CIRCO  
Anthony SOTTILE

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Rob TURNER, Acting City Manager  
Melissa AYRES, Director – Community Development  
Dennis DAVIES, Deputy Director – Public Works  
Manjeet RANU, Planning Manager  
Tony SHUTE, Senior 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 BALES, seconded by CIRCO, to adopt the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of September 26, 2011; carried 5-0.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

##### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2153 – WALGREEN'S**

This was a public hearing on a request to establish a 14,500 square foot pharmacy with a drive through service, and an electronic message display sign. The subject property is located on the north side of Broadway between North Second and Bostonia Streets. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). City Council approval is required at a separate, future hearing.

APNs: 484-232-17 thru 21

General Plan: General Commercial (CG)  
Zoning: C-G (General Commercial)  
Applicant: DDC El Cajon, LLC – c/o Tatum Real Estate /  
970.282.1038  
Project Planner: Anthony Shute / 619.441.1705  
Email: [tonys@cityofelcajon.us](mailto:tonys@cityofelcajon.us) and include “CUP 2153” in  
Subject Line.

In a PowerPoint presentation, SHUTE summarized the staff report. He noted the pharmacy would be open 24-hours, 7-days a week and include a take-care clinic.

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

**Mr. Dillon TIDWELL**, developer of the project, approached the podium. He was pleased the project had finally moved forward despite the economy, thanked staff for all their hard work and agreed to all the conditions of approval. He wanted to make one point regarding the elevations. They are using a new type of building elevation called “clear view” which Walgreen’s is trying to include within their design for better visibility.

**Mr. Ken PLACE**, resident at 1143 N. Third Street, spoke next. He agreed he was happy to see the project going forward. He purchased the adjacent building a few years ago and started remodeling for a proposed catering kitchen. When Walgreen’s stopped their project, it didn’t make sense for him to open a high-end wedding and catering business. In the interim, he kept the area clean of blight and graffiti. He added that the Walgreen’s improvements will have a positive impact on his business.

No other speakers approached the podium.

AMBROSE commended staff for excellent work, however was concerned about the lighting and landscaping proposed along the frontage at the west side of the building.

SHUTE advised that trees and lights might conflict once the trees mature. Therefore, the applicant was asked to provide lighting and landscaping detail that would not block the lighting which would affect the pedestrians on the sidewalk in the evening hours.

BALES added it would be nice to see a drive-through in the city and was glad the applicant had enough room to fit it in the plan.

Motion was made by CIRCO, seconded by BALES, to close the public hearing; carried 5-0.

Motion was made by CIRCO, seconded by MROZ, to adopt the proposed Resolution No. 10677 recommending City Council approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 2153, subject to conditions; carried 5-0.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2154 – VERIZON WIRELESS**

This was a public hearing on a request to establish a new wireless communications facility to consist of a 35’ faux pine tree and related equipment inside a prefabricated equipment

shelter on a concrete pad with an emergency generator. The subject property is located on the north side of Grossmont College Drive between State Route 125 and Lake Murray Boulevard, and addressed as 8800 Grossmont College Drive. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

APN: 386-071-02  
General Plan: Open Space (OS)  
Zoning: RS-6 (Residential, Single-family, 6,000 square-foot)  
Applicant: Verizon Wireless / 714.925.6487  
Project Planner: Eric Craig / 619.441.1782  
Email: [ecraig@cityofelcajon.us](mailto:ecraig@cityofelcajon.us) and include "CUP 2154" in Subject Line.

In a PowerPoint presentation, RANU summarized the staff report.

AMBROSE asked if there were any real trees at the site. RANU responded that there were a number of real trees around the ballpark.

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

**Mr. Mark LINMAN**, representing Verizon Wireless, approached the podium and advised that he was available for any questions.

MROZ confirmed with LINMAN that he was in agreement with all conditions of approval and asked when construction was scheduled to commence.

LINMAN advised, if all goes well, they hoped to start by the middle of next year.

No other speakers approached the podium.

Motion was made by AMBROSE, seconded by CIRCO, to close the public hearing; carried 5-0.

Motion was made by BALES, seconded by CIRCO, to adopt the proposed Resolution No. 10678, approving Conditional Use Permit No. 2154; carried 5-0.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2151 (MINOR) – SAN DIEGO CASH & CARRY**

This was a public hearing on a request to expand a nonconforming use through the development of additional building area and corresponding site modifications. The subject property is located on the northwest corner of East Washington Avenue and South First Street, and addressed as 1090 East Washington Avenue. This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). City Council approval is required at a separate, future hearing.

APN: 488-400-31  
General Plan: Medium Density Residential (MR)  
Zoning: C-N (Neighborhood Commercial)  
Applicant: Ayad Mansour / 619.441.9842  
Project Planner: Eric Craig / 619.441.1782

Email: [ecraig@cityofelcajon.us](mailto:ecraig@cityofelcajon.us) and include "CUP 2151" in Subject Line.

In a PowerPoint presentation, RANU summarized the staff report. He added the item was related to a code compliance action, which included the removal of an unpermitted addition and constructing in its place an approximate 2,000 square foot addition.

Additionally, each Commissioner was given a letter from SLD Properties, representing the adjacent apartment complex, requesting an eight-foot masonry wall be installed between the properties if the project was approved.

AMBROSE noted he believed the property was better suited as commercial vs. medium-residential and asked if the Planning Commission could recommend a change in a future General Plan update.

RANU advised that staff agreed with his comment.

SOTILLE asked if there were any zoning restrictions regarding the construction of an eight-foot wall.

RANU responded the Zoning Code allows for the Director of Community Development to authorize fences taller than six feet subject to an Administrative Zoning Permit (AZP). The permit can be sent to the Planning Commission for action, but the AZP would not require public notice. If the Planning Commission believes a higher wall is needed to achieve compatibility with the adjacent apartments they could recommend it to the City Council.

MROZ asked if the apartments were two-story and the width of the drainage ditch.

DAVIES was not sure of the apartment height; however, believed the drainage ditch was 20-feet wide with five foot shoulders, equating to a 30-foot easement.

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

**Dr. Sami JIHAD** spoke on his support of the project and thanked AYRES and RANU for their support in being receptive of the applicant's needs. He added the business provides a great service to other markets in the area; many Chaldean owned and this location has become a center for them. There is also the added advantage of a great tax base for the City. This business generates lots of income and is very competitive on their prices.

MROZ asked if he was speaking on behalf of the applicant.

JIHAD responded the applicant and engineer were present and would also be speaking.

**Mr. John MANSOUR**, applicant, spoke next and again thanked staff for the opportunity and the many meetings with AYRES in order to come to a conclusion on the project.

BALES asked what the hours of operation were. She was under the impression the building was closed most of the time when she drove by.

MANSOUR advised the business is open to the public 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

MROZ asked if the applicant was in agreement with all the conditions of approval.

MANSOUR was in agreement with all conditions, but had a concern relative to the wall that staff recommended they build. He noted they have never received any noise complaints in the past.

SOTILLE asked and received confirmation that the apartments are one-story.

**Mr. Jose MARTINEZ**, designer for the project spoke next. He said he measured a 45-foot distance between the apartments and the new building and discussed these findings with staff because of the condition to build the six-foot wall. He believed he could prove to staff with a noise analysis it would not be necessary to construct a wall. He recommended that as part of the conditions of approval, and since there have been no noise complaints, the applicant be requested to provide a noise analysis.

MROZ asked if the new building would increase the length past where the apartment building ends.

MARTINEZ advised the building is now three feet away from the channel boundary. The new building, in accordance with the recommendations, must be ten feet away from the property line. It will be farther away to the south and block off that whole side. On Washington Avenue there is an existing gas station which blocks most of the entire building and they have agreed to install landscaping at First Street to block the building from that side.

JIHAD wanted to make an additional point that there was no noise issue. He still does not agree the owner should construct a wall when there is no noise problem, especially due to the cost and today's economic conditions. The distance of 45' and the new building would block any potential noise in his opinion.

SOTILLE asked staff if a wall would be required when commercial property is adjacent to residential property.

RANU confirmed a wall would be required, but where the building is essentially acting as a wall, you wouldn't have the need to duplicate a wall along the back side of the building since it is so close to the property. But, wherever the building doesn't back up to that property line, a wall height of six feet would be required.

SOTILLE also inquired, when commercial and residential properties are involved, if there is a distance limitation whereby the wall would not be required.

RANU advised the Zoning Code just requires the wall along the property line unless significant changes such as slope changes or another building that would act as the noise

buffer. Staff believed that expansion of the building area by one-third triggers the wall to bring the property into conformance with the requirement.

MROZ confirmed with RANU that the applicant could start the wall where the new building ends out to the street and confirmed with the applicant that with the applicant.

MANSOUR explained, as part of applying for the conditional use permit, he tried to do his homework and met with staff in order to develop a budget. The landlord is not willing to help with the costs and the proposed wall was a new condition. He did not know what the cost would be, but if affordable, would comply and follow the rules.

BALES noticed there are some homes along the highways that don't have masonry walls. She asked if there was any other way of blocking noise that would be less costly.

RANU quoted Section 17.130.180 of the Zoning Code in that it requires a six-foot-high decorative masonry or concrete wall along any interior property line separating a non-residential development from residentially zoned or residentially developed property.

AMBROSE interjected the Planning Commission cannot waive the ordinance requirements, that only the City Council could do that. He recommended to MANSOUR to document all costs and present to the City Council who have the authority to waive the requirement.

JIHAD wanted to add he believed the proposed landscaping would lessen the noise and since the building is 45' away does not merit the wall requirement. It would be an economic disadvantage for the developer of this project.

AMBROSE reiterated the Planning Commission cannot waive the ordinance.

MROZ asked if providing a noise study would negate the requirement to construct the wall and could possibly be another option to take to the City Council.

RANU advised the applicant could provide an analysis, however the code requirement is clear on this issue.

No other speakers approached the podium.

Motion was made by MROZ, seconded by AMBROSE, to close the public hearing; carried 5-0.

Motion was made by MROZ, seconded by AMBROSE, to adopt the proposed Resolution No. 10676 recommending City Council approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 2151 (Minor), subject to conditions; carried 5-0.

MROZ moved Agenda Item No. 9 up for discussion and asked if there was any one in the audience to speak on the item. No one came forward at that time.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - MAJOR / MINOR CHANGE OF AMENDMENT OF SPECIFIC PLAN NO. 314**

This was a staff communication on a request for minor changes to a previously approved ordinance addressing the revised addition of a new two story accessory structure to an existing 40-unit apartment complex. The subject property is located on the east side of Fanita Drive between Farrington Drive and Prospect Avenue and is addressed 2525-2585 Lund Street. No action by the commission is required.

APN: 386-330-24  
General Plan: Low Density Residential (LR)  
Zoning: RM-4300 (Residential, Multi-family, 4,300 square foot)  
Applicant: Sergio Giordano, Lund Street LLC / 619.269.9204  
Project Planner: Noah Alvey / 619.441.1773  
Email: [nalvey@cityofelcajon.us](mailto:nalvey@cityofelcajon.us) and include "AM SP 314" in Subject Line.

RANU mentioned that no action was required from the Planning Commission and no public hearing or notice was necessary, that this item was a substantial conformance review only. The applicant made adjustments to the property to make it more workable and cost effective. Staff reviewed the proposal and found it to be in substantial conformance. It was presented to the Planning Commission in order to give them the opportunity for feedback or questions.

MROZ added that one of the major changes was moving the recreation room to the first floor to meet ADA compliance.

CIRCO commented the break in elevation made the building look nicer than the solid two-stories all the way across.

MROZ then read Agenda Items 5, 6 & 7 as one action item.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 - DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN, DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES AND STREET DESIGN CROSS SECTIONS**

This is a public hearing on a City-initiated proposal to adopt a new Downtown Specific Plan, new Downtown Design Guidelines and street design cross sections establishing comprehensive land use and development standards, as well as detailed design guidelines and infrastructure plan. This project will govern future development within approximately 541 acres of the downtown generally bounded by I-8 on the West and North, Ballantyne Street and Lincoln Avenue on the East, and Lexington Avenue and Grossmont Avenue on the South. Related CEQA and General Plan discretionary actions will be presented to the Planning Commission under separate reports/agenda items. No final action will occur at this meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN ASSOCIATED DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT, REPEAL OF SP 182, AMEND SP 462 AND REZONING TO M-U (MIXED USE)**

This is a public hearing on discretionary actions associated with the proposed Downtown Specific Plan (Agenda Item #5), which include a General Plan Amendment, repealing the existing Specific Plan 182, amending Specific Plan 462 and rezoning the area subject to the proposed Downtown Specific Plan to M-U (Mixed Use). No final action will occur at this meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, FINDINGS, STATEMENTS OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS AND MITIGATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM**

This is a public hearing on the Program EIR, Findings, Statements of Overriding Considerations and MMRP in compliance with CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) for all discretionary actions including and associated with the proposed Downtown Specific Plan (Agenda Items #5 and #6). No final action will occur at this meeting.

RANU advised the project was last heard before the Planning Commission on August 22, 2011 in a workshop format, continued and subsequently continued to a date uncertain which necessitated a new public hearing. He added that Melissa Ayres and Rob Turner, Acting City Manager, were in attendance to give the updates.

AYRES outlined the agenda items and mentioned the packet included a new staff report with updated table which included recommendations the Planning Commission made on the first ten items at the last meeting. The list was expanded as issues came up and now consisted of 35 items.

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

**Mr. Arkan SOMO**, Chairman for Infrastructure and Land use Committee of the San Diego East County Chamber of Commerce, approached the podium. SOMO added they were very appreciative of the progress made, especially where the City agreed to the overlay plan and looked forward to continuing the working relationship established with staff. However, he did note that they are not 100% satisfied.

AMBROSE and SOTILLE BOTH asked SOMO to elaborate as to why the committee was not satisfied.

SOMO responded that 28 items have been submitted and addressed in the overlay plan, but they needed more time to review and digest the information before returning to the Commission.

AYRES interjected and confirmed with MROZ that only the first ten items on the list have been reviewed so far and they would be addressing additional items that night.

**Mr. John GIBSON**, 1000 Pioneer Way, spoke next. He was troubled that the Planning Commission was weighing in on community concerns before consulting with the community. He felt if this plan was approved, it would be similar to what was implemented in the 1970s which created a high density and destroyed El Cajon. He recommended the Commission set benchmarks and the Council ratify the benchmarks, and then review the plan to see if this is what we really want to do in El Cajon.

AMBROSE wanted to know if the speaker's recommendation would be to table the proposal and see if redevelopment dollars would be available first; and if so, rethink the plan as far as density, size, and infrastructure all over again.

GIBSON responded that if we look at the growth over the last ten years and move forward three times to 30 years out, the City would grow by 7,500 people, not 45,000. If the City keeps growing as in the past there would be no need to widen or add new streets. He wants to wait on the State decision regarding redevelopment. He thinks the plan should be rethought completely and that the current draft won't work in the market.

MROZ asked if he believed we could fit 7,500 more people in the City.

GIBSON responded yes, that number could be easily accommodated with nice products. There is a big difference between 7,500 and 45,000 people. He did believe, though, that we would probably fill the housing up with government subsidized, high-rise, low income, Section 8 housing.

**Mr. Mario TILARO**, owner and manager of building at 338 W. Lexington Avenue spoke next. He had concerns on some of the items in SP 182 as follows and felt they would not work in El Cajon.

- 1) The assumption that an environment can be created where people will be walking and biking. He said that statistics show in large U.S. cities only about 1% of the population walks. He does not see any change in people's behavior moving forward.
- 2) The high-rise, low-income residential developments historically have not worked in the past. He gave the example of similar projects in New York, Chicago and Rochester. Within 20 years of the developments they became ungovernable, drug and crime infested, and the only solution was demolition.
- 3) The widening of Lexington and Douglas would not work in today's environment since there would only be 1,000 people using the walking paths created. It is not economic sense to spend \$20 or \$30M for 1,000 people.

In summary he believed the plan is not realistic. Private developers will not support it and the only way the high-rises will get built is with public money.

**Mr. Ron Pennock**, Chairman of East County Construction Council, spoke next and also had concerns regarding the Plan. The group he represents are mostly developers and commercial investors and their consensus is they concur with all that GIBSON had already provided previously. He asked the Planning Commission to be more proactive, not reactive in reviewing the items brought forward. The redevelopment theme should be "business friendly". He cited Santee as a business friendly city, which is where the developers and investors have been going. He reminded the Commission the City spent \$70,000 on the Buxton Report and did not get one business to locate here.

AMBROSE responded he believed El Cajon is a business friendly city and had personally performed some consulting services in Santee. He mentioned Santee has much more

vacant land than El Cajon and there is no comparison between the two cities. A comprehensive approach does need to happen and suggested that the Commission ask the City Council for a joint workshop to review what we need in El Cajon before the Commission moves too far forward with SP 182.

**Mr. Jerry TURCHIN**, owner of California Metals, 297 S. Marshall, approached the podium next. El Cajon doesn't need to plan for a larger population. He said we do have a real job to do, but what we really need is a dream. He believes the triangle at El Cajon Boulevard, Marshall Avenue and Main Street to be a magnificent area and has been a great draw for his business. We need to have a better vision when driving by on Interstate 8 and look into the valley. It would not be attractive to see high-rise buildings and only concrete.

The Commission took short break and reconvened at 8:45 p.m.

MROZ asked Rob Turner to come forward to answer any questions.

TURNER and AYRES both fielded questions from the Planning Commission. Turner also said he would recommend the City Council consider the plan, density, EIR, and financing the plan all at once and not separate the items.

The Commissioners then proceeded to review the table attached to the staff report. See Attachment "A" to these minutes for Planning Commission draft recommendations.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 – 2012 MEETINGS CALENDAR**

The 2012 regular Planning Commission meeting dates were discussed.

Motion was made by CIRCO, seconded by AMBROSE, to approve the 2012 regular Planning Commission meeting dates; carried 5-0.

#### **OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

#### **STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

RANU noted that per AMBROSE's suggestion at the previous meeting, a representative from the Airport Land Use Commission will make a presentation about the Gillespie Field Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan at the December 12, 2011 Planning Commission meeting.

#### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS/COMMENTS**

CIRCO noted that his escrow would hopefully close on a house within the next two to three weeks.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by MROZ, seconded by CIRCO, to adjourn the meeting of the El Cajon Planning Commission at 10:02 p.m. this 24th day of October, 2011 until November 7, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.; carried 5-0.

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Darrin J. MROZ, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Manjeet RANU, AICP, Secretary