



## MINUTES

### PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

**FEBRUARY 22, 2010**

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

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

#### ROLL CALL:

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

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Barbara K. RAMIREZ, Principal Planner  
Barbara LUCK, Assistant City Attorney  
Michael GRIFFITHS, Deputy Director – Public Works  
Ron Luis VALLES, Administrative Secretary

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

**CONSENT CALENDAR:** Motion was made by BALES, seconded by CIRCO, to adopt the Planning Commission minutes of February 8, 2010; carried 5-0.

Motion was made by BALES, seconded by CIRCO, to authorize the request to add a 32-square foot sign to the Comprehensive Sign Program that governs the Boys and Girls Club on property located on the south side of East Madison Avenue, between North First and Orlando Streets, and addressed 1171 East Madison Avenue; carried 5-0.

## **PROPOSED STREET NAME CHANGE – JIMMIE JOHNSON AVENUE**

This was a public hearing on a city-initiated proposal to change the street name of that portion of North Johnson Avenue between Arnele Avenue and Fletcher Parkway to Jimmie Johnson Avenue.

Project Planner: Melissa Ayres / 619.441.1700

RAMIREZ summarized the staff report for renaming the street segment to honor Jimmie Johnson. Johnson is a local celebrity and athlete whose career success as a racecar driver and humanitarian contributions to the well-being of El Cajon residents have been acknowledged at the national level. She noted that a letter was received and distributed to Planning Commissioners objecting to the renaming of the street. The letter was from the great grand daughter of Dr. Charles M. Johnson, a prominent member of the farming and ranching community more than 100 years ago. The letter's author requested that the entire length of Johnson Avenue remain the same.

SOTTILE announced the public hearing is open and invited any speakers to the podium.

**Ms. Kristen HULBERT ARRIVEE**, 3743 Texas Street, San Diego, CA 92104, is the great grand daughter of El Cajon founding father Dr. Charles M. Johnson, for whom Johnson Avenue is named. She referenced her letter submitted to the Commission and emphasized that the City should not rename existing historical streets. Additionally, she recommended that the Commission consider North Fourth Street between East Madison Avenue and Granite Hills Drive, as it's near Granite Hills High School, which was attended by Jimmie Johnson. The second recommended location is Hillside Park on Fletcher Parkway.

**Mr. Richard HALL**, 12617 Jackson Hill Drive [P.O. Box 21177], El Cajon, CA 92021, is the great grandson of W.D. Hall, one of the founders of El Cajon. Hall is the immediate past president of the El Cajon Historical Society. He supported honoring Jimmie Johnson but does not support the current proposal. He reminded the Planning Commission that they also sit as members of the City's Historic Preservation Commission. In response to a question from Commissioner AMBROSE, HALL expressed that he likes the suggestion to rename Hillside Park in honor of Jimmie Johnson. He noted that both individuals should be honored in a stand-alone way.

**Mrs. Eldonna LAY**, 11377 Fuerte Drive, El Cajon CA 92020, is vice president of the El Cajon Historical Society and curator at the Knox Museum. She requested time and a luncheon meeting hosted by the Historical Society for Planning staff and Commissioners.

**Mrs. Chi VARNADO**, 19529 Laurel Lane, Ramona CA 92065, is the great great granddaughter of Dr. Johnson. Her family lost everything in the Cedar Fire. She wrote a book about the experience that also included history of the Johnson family. She requested that Johnson Avenue remain the same out of respect to history, family ties and community integrity.

**Mr. Ryan DUCHARME**, 772 Jamacha Road, #154, El Cajon, CA 92019, was opposed to renaming the street. He read a letter [presented to the Commission and staff before the meeting] on behalf of two business owners, Heyentah Pamela HOLZMAN and Christian GUERRERO, co-owners of Yellow Bird Scrapbooking, which is located at 700 North Johnson Avenue (fronting the area of the proposed street name change). The owners objected to changing the name of the street due to expenses in changing advertising. Additionally, he noted that his business would personally incur about \$10,000 to \$25,000 in costs plus the inconvenience with the street name change for his business. He favored honoring Jimmie Johnson, but not by the proposed request.

AMBROSE asked the speaker what type of business he owns. DUCHARME replied it was E.Z. Tattoo business at 700 North Johnson Avenue, near Boot World parking lot.

**Mrs. Linda VALDEZ**, 3625 Avocado Village Court, La Mesa, CA 91941, spoke in favor of honoring Jimmie Johnson. She recently attended the NASCAR race in Fontana, California, which Jimmie Johnson won. A Canadian family shared with her their surprise that El Cajon has not appropriately honored Jimmie Johnson. She emphasized that Jimmie Johnson has provided many funds to victims of the Cedar Fire, plus other philanthropic works in El Cajon.

No other speakers approached the podium.

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

SOTTILE noted that he was considering both [perspectives] as valid points and the Commission shouldn't slight one person over the other. He mentioned that the street name change might be confusing as motorists would exit the freeway to North Johnson Avenue, which would then change to Jimmie Johnson Way [sic; Avenue], and then back to North Johnson Avenue.

RAMIREZ recommended that the Commission continue this item to a future meeting. She noted that renaming another street would create possible confusion for emergency responders. Additionally, she noted that City Council policy prevents naming a park until someone has passed away.

AMBROSE agreed to a continuance and noted that the City needs to do more to honor Jimmie Johnson, who brings many contributions to El Cajon. BALES concurred and also welcomed the luncheon meeting with the Historical Society. CIRCO noted that even though Jimmie Johnson might be a humble person, he should be appropriately honored. He supported the continuance.

Motion was made by CIRCO, seconded by AMBROSE, to CONTINUE this request to rename a portion of Johnson Avenue to Jimmie Johnson Avenue to the Planning Commission meeting of March 22, 2010 at 7 p.m.; carried 5-0.

## **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2124 (MINOR)**

This was a public hearing on a request for a reduction in required parking for a proposed restaurant and bar with on-premise beer and wine sales. The subject property is located on the east side of North Magnolia Avenue between East Madison and Wells Avenues, and is addressed 436 North Magnolia Avenue.

APN: 488-010-27  
General Plan: General Commercial (GC) / Special Development Area No. 9 (SDA #9)  
Zoning: General Commercial (C-2)  
Applicant: Alden Alkas / 619.672.2951  
Project Planner: Noah Alvey / 619.441.1773

RAMIREZ presented the staff report and noted that staff believes that the Planning Commission can make all of the required findings supporting staff's recommendation. The applicant's scope of work includes the removal of visual obstructions from the windows oriented towards North Magnolia to allow passing motorists to see into the restaurant. The proposed hours of operation for the restaurant and bar are 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. She noted that one of the conditions recommends that the easterly doors shall remain closed at all times except to provide access for restaurant patrons into the business.

RAMIREZ also mentioned that the applicant's representative agreed with the recommended conditions of approval. She added that representatives of two adjacent motels recalled that a restaurant/ social club previously operated on the subject property and received numerous noise complaints.

She said that staff is recommending that the Commission have a six-month review of the business operation.

SOTTILE opened the public hearing and invited any speakers to address the Commission.

**Mr. Alden ALKAS**, 200 South Mollison Avenue, #7, El Cajon, CA 92020, is the applicant. In response to a question from the Chair, he agreed to conditions of approval. He deferred to his engineer for the project for additional questions.

AMBROSE mentioned that he was disappointed that the previous owners walled off the front of the building. He encouraged the applicant to make the restaurant look inviting.

**Mr. Bill KACHI**, 1010 Singing Ridge Road, El Cajon, CA 92019, is the engineer for the project. He reviewed the conditions and sought clarification on the door closure and noted the inconvenience to patrons.

RAMIREZ replied that there are other businesses that have a bar that is part of the restaurant without its own entrance.

KACHI also had concerns about the cost of over \$20,000 to meet fire sprinkler requirements from the Building & Fire Safety Division. He noted that this building has been in operation for 25 years and has gone through several types of businesses and had always been non-sprinkled.

RAMIREZ noted that without the presence of Dan PAVAO, Building & Fire Safety Official, she inferred that possible code changes might be the reason for the fire sprinkler requirement. She recommended that the speaker meet with PAVAO, who is out of the office this week.

KACHI noted that with the tough economy spending that amount of money would be a hardship. SOTTILE mentioned that the sprinkler system would possibly prevent any liability lawsuits from a fire.

No other speakers approached the podium.

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

Motion was made by AMBROSE, seconded by MROZ, to adopt the proposed Resolution No. 10605 recommending City Council approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 2124, subject to conditions; carried 5-0.

This item is tentatively scheduled for a City Council public hearing on March 23, 2010 at 7 p.m.

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

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2010-11**

Motion was made by AMBROSE, seconded by CIRCO to elect Tony SOTTILE as Chairperson for 2010-11; carried 5-0.

Motion was made by CIRCO, seconded by AMBROSE to elect Darrin MROZ as Chair Pro Tem for 2010-11; carried 5-0.

#### **STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

RAMIREZ informed that staff will check with Commissioners on their schedule availability to set a meeting with the El Cajon Historical Society. Additionally, she noted that Barbara LUCK will be on leave temporarily while representing another City and Michael REID will be the staff attorney at future Planning Commission meetings.

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

There were none.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by BALES, seconded by CIRCO, to adjourn the meeting of the El Cajon City Planning Commission at 7:56 p.m. this 22nd day of February, 2010 until March 8, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.; carried 5-0.

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Anthony SOTTILE, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Melissa AYRES, Secretary