

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
January 13, 2015  
7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Benson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The Commission Secretary conducted roll call.

Present:      Chair Tom Benson  
                 Vice-Chair Jane Fallon  
                 Commissioner Devon Austin  
                 Commissioner Shannon Murphy  
                 Commissioner Rose Richárd

Staff present:

- 1)      Community Development Director Scott Charney
- 2)      Associate Planner Colleen Doan
- 3)      Assistant Planner Selena Alanis
- 4)      Assistant City Attorney David Kwon
- 5)      Sr. Engineering Technician II Anthony Caraveo

In addition, there were 15 people in attendance.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Benson led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

There was no public business.

**PRESENTATIONS**

- 1) The Planning Commission presented the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2014 Beautification Award to the owners of the residence at 2299 Molino Avenue for improvements to their property. Danny Amat attended and spoke about the improvements, and thanked the Commission for the recognition of his home.
- 2) As requested, representatives from the Islamic Center presented a status report and responded to questions regarding completion of construction at 995 E. 27<sup>th</sup> Street. Chair Benson asked for a report from the Project Manager, Joseph Khalaf.

Joseph reported that he was not an on-site project manager and requested that Tarak Mohamed provide the project status.

- Tarak reported on the progress of items completed since permits were pulled in October 2013. He reported that they had no financial problems at this time but the original design was flawed and indicated that they wanted to make changes from the approved plans.
- Chair Benson asked for confirmation that the Construction Time Limits Ordinance (CTL) gave 540 days for completion.
- Staff confirmed the CTL timeframe.
- Chair Benson strongly encouraged the completion of the project as approved and requests for cosmetic changes be brought after completion.
- Tarak stated he did not want to build as approved then remodel the new construction.
- Vice-Chair Fallon commented that expiration of the CTL would mean starting over with entitlements, plan check and permits which would be more costly than a remodel.
- Commissioner Murphy agreed that changes would be more costly.
- Staff reiterated that any requested changes would not be administratively reviewed, but would be brought to the Commission as a noticed public hearing.
- Chair Benson reiterated his recommendation that the project be completed as approved in a timely manner which would be followed in the DSR and closed the public workshop.

Chair Benson thanked the representatives for coming and concluded the presentation.

## **PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

### **1. 1500 E. Hill Street “Gundry Hill” Affordable Housing Development**

Community Development Director Scott Charney read the form of notice, and Assistant Planner Selena Alanis gave the staff report.

Chris Maffris, Senior Vice President of Meta Housing, thanked the City for opportunity to present and is excited about the prospect of working with the City on this development. He introduced the team, explained their roles and discussed the design process.

The Commission asked questions for Mr. Maffris including:

- *size of Long Beach Senior Arts Colony - 1.5 acres (similar to project site)*
- *the period of time Meta Housing controls its projects - 55 years*
- *the age of their oldest project – since 1997*

Michael Bohn, Sr. Principal with Studio 111 Architects, gave a presentation of other Meta Housing projects and discussed landscaping, variety of materials used, highlighted open spaces and their uses, the lobby area, parking and elevations of the buildings, and the unit types and size of units.

The Commission asked questions related to the following:

- *viability of palm trees* - a durable species will be planted in-ground and would be somewhat protected by the buildings
- *the length of time of the first approval until the first occupancy* – securing tax credits and financing can take 8-12 months, approximately 15 months of construction
- *parking* - street level and tuck under parking
- *number of units at Gundry Hill vs the Long Beach project* – 72 vs 200
- *if a resident becomes unemployed* – management works with residents
- *fitness center* – design includes a community room, a meeting room and police department office

Chair Benson opened the Public Workshop.

The following members of the public spoke regarding the project:

- 1) Tammy Lavelle, Principal at Signal Hill Elementary School, thanked Meta Housing for their thoughtfulness in the project design. She expressed concerns about traffic congestion, safety, limited parking, and view impacts. She stated their busy traffic time is between 7:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. and asked that consideration be given to safety at times of drop off and pick up, and limited street parking or a similar plan would be helpful.

Chair Benson advised that safety and integration of the buildings in the community are also important to the City and Meta Housing. Staff advised that a parking study was conducted which includes traffic counts while the school was in session and a parking analysis at the Las Brisas site which uses the same parking standards. The study indicated that all of the parking spaces were not being fully utilized and parking demand for this project is expected to be similar. The study will be part of the formal documentation that the Housing Authority examines. As a condition of approval, a traffic subcommittee will be created to deal with short-term and long-term issues.

- 2) Maria Harris, Signal Hill resident, had the following concerns:
  - Lack of ability to make significant changes to this project at this time including market rate housing in the project to help support increases in property values
  - the project is beautiful and well designed
  - integration of this project with the existing neighborhood
  - impact of traffic and student safety
  - impact of the overall mass of this project
  - preference for setbacks and open spaces similar to adjacent commercial office buildings
  - consideration of lowering the density of the project by decreasing the number of units
  - integration of community and suggested amenities open to public use

- what is the expected make-up of residents regarding working classes

Chair Benson asked Meta Housing and staff to address the comments:

- *income qualifications* - the income levels are set by the State and are geared toward workforce housing; an overview of the income levels was provided
  - *Regional Housing Needs Allocation breakdown* – the City is obligated to demonstrate they can accommodate the units within the city by income level
  - *building height and appearance* – on Gundry Avenue, the elevation is 10' lower than on Hill Street and continues to slope downward toward the south; the surrounding industrial zoning allows for buildings up to 6 stories
  - *landscaping* – street trees will be planted to soften the impact of the buildings
  - *setbacks on Hill Street* – approximately 51' from the property line to the row of townhouses with the exception of the 1-story community room building
  - *setbacks on Walnut Avenue* - 20' from the curb to the building with a parkway that is 5' of sidewalk to provide a traditional residential appearance
  - *community room for public use* – for organized activities such as events or neighborhood meetings, the community room is open to the public
  - *integration of neighborhood type design* – the townhouses have patios or balconies facing the front and open spaces so residents can interact with others and activate the street
- 3) Ed Parleman, Signal Hill resident, agreed with many of Ms. Harris' comments. He was concerned about parking spaces, traffic, and school safety. He asked what the plans are for the remainder of the vacant land. He was concerned about the height of the buildings.

Staff clarified parking was the lower level with 3 stories above. Current zoning for adjacent property is light industrial. At the last Land Use Element study, the feedback from the neighborhood for the adjacent property (Chemoil) was that they preferred the area to remain light industrial, not residential.

Principal Lavelle added that they have tried to alleviate traffic and parking issues and that a valet program on Walnut Avenue was implemented last year. The gate on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street is closed and only Special Education students are unloaded curbside. She asked that consideration be given due to increased congestion and the potential for more people with the development of the project.

Chair Benson closed the Workshop.

Commissioner Richard stated she was very impressed with the tour of the Long Beach Senior Arts Colony such as the color dynamics and fabricated concrete.

She thanked Principal Lavelle for sharing the school's traffic concerns. Commissioner Richárd stated she thought this was a great project and is interested to see how the project develops.

Commissioner Murphy also stated she was impressed with the tour and liked the materials and colors used, and the quality of maintenance. She was happy that this development would meet the State's allocation of the RHNA, and supported the Gundry Hill open spaces, design, colors and amenities. She was also concerned with traffic safety. She suggested parent/children safety education and meetings with parents and crossing guards.

Commissioner Austin stated the project design felt like it was high quality when compared to some other sites in Long Beach. The designers have made it look like a part of the community. She understands the school's concerns and suggested they contact Long Beach Unified's security department. She also liked the idea of safety training. She stated she was in favor of the project and the design.

Vice-Chair Fallon stated she thought this was an outstanding company and architect. The design was beautiful. She recalled traffic had always been a problem there and agreed that parent education would be beneficial.

Chair Benson commended the design and process in development of the project. He stated the workshop brought up some concerns which focused on a good quality of life for the residents and neighbors. He stated traffic issues should be looked at by the subcommittee.

Staff stated that traffic issues are a regular concern and that the City has a good track record in maintaining relations with neighbors.

The Commission requested staff give consideration to items during the administrative review of the Site Plan & Design Review, and to pass along the comments to the Housing Authority. The Commission also encouraged the public to attend the Public Hearing regarding the Development Agreement.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **2. General Plan Amendment 15-01 Amending the Official Plan Lines Map and Zoning Ordinance Amendment 15-01 Establishing Pedestrian Connection as a Designation on the Plan Lines Map**

Community Development Director Scott Charney read the form of notice, and Assistant Planner Selena Alanis gave the staff report.

Chair Benson asked for any questions from the Commission.

There being no questions from the Commission, Chair Benson opened the Public Hearing.

There being no public comments, Chair Benson closed the Public Hearing.

Vice-Chair Fallon stated she thought the General Plan Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Amendment changes were consistent with the project and was glad to be moving forward with it.

Commissioner Austin asked for clarification for the location of the electronic sign, which staff explained.

Chair Benson suggested wording in forthcoming documents to allow for flexibility of the electronic sign during emergency situations, such as allowing it to flash.

Staff noted the right of way for the proposed City View Park is currently being used by oil well operators. Landscaping there would be done on a voluntary basis by Signal Hill Petroleum and would complement the park.

It was moved by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Richard to waive further reading and adopt the following resolutions:

Resolution No. 764-01-15 (as amended) entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION OF MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION 01/09/15(2), RELATIVE TO GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 15-01 AND ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT 15-01 ASSOCIATED WITH THE FUTURE CONSTRUCTION OF A CITY VIEW PARK WITH AN ELECTRONIC SIGN

Resolution No. 765-01-15 entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 15-01 AMENDING THE OFFICIAL PLAN LINES MAP BY RECLASSIFYING AN APPROXIMATE 350-FOOT SEGMENT OF CRESTON AVENUE IMMEDIATELY WEST OF CHERRY AVENUE FROM LOCAL STREET TO PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION

Resolution No. 766-01-15 (as amended) entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT 15-01 ESTABLISHING PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION AS A DESIGNATION ON THE OFFICAL PLAN LINES MAP OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL WITHIN SECTION 20.72.085 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE



The following vote resulted:

AYES: CHAIR BENSON; VICE-CHAIR FALLON; COMMISSIONERS  
AUSTIN, MURPHY AND RICHÁRD  
NOES: NONE  
ABSENT: NONE  
ABSTAIN: NONE

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Commissioner Murphy requested that Item No. 6 be pulled for discussion.

### **Commission Received and Filed Consent Calendar Items No. 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8.**

It was moved by Vice-Chair Fallon and seconded by Commissioner Richárd to receive and file Consent Calendar Item Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8.

The motion carried 5/0.

### **Commission Receives and Files Consent Calendar Item No. 6.**

Commissioner Murphy asked if the Commission had reviewed changes to the Costco food court and hearing center expansion. Staff advised that tenant improvements are not reviewed by the Commission. A Project Update would be mailed the following week to neighbors. Commissioner Murphy advised there are noise issues, some of which were addressed by management. She had a question regarding a new entrance, and staff clarified that the only change was a new man door near the existing entrance. Commissioner Murphy was also concerned about parking for contractors and employees; staff advised we have discussed with management and will address this in the upcoming community meeting in February.

It was moved by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Richárd to receive and file Consent Calendar Item No. 6.

The motion carried 5/0.

### **COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Richárd asked about the space at the former It's A Grind location. Staff noted there had been some discussions with Waba Grill but we have not issued a business license.

Commissioner Murphy stated the Dollar Tree Store does not have enough shopping carts and the store had a very poor appearance. Staff stated they would contact the property owner, Signal Hill Petroleum, to discuss with the store manager.

Commissioner Austin had concerns about traffic circulation at the Gateway A site. Staff advised they will follow up with Signal Hill Petroleum and suggested additional stop bars for spacing and traffic control. Also, she noted the 99 Cent Store sidewalk needs steam cleaning and there is a lot of trash outside the store. Staff will discuss with management and the property owner.

Chair Benson asked if Commissioners were interested in attending the Planning Commissioners Academy. There being no immediate request to attend, staff offered to forward information for other training opportunities.

Chair Benson suggested there be a notification of projects coming within 90 days of the Construction Time Limits expiration date. Staff advised a countdown feature can be created on the Development Status Report.

Chair Benson stated parking is an issue at the 99 Cent Store and Gateway A locations. He asked if it would be possible to get a comparison of sales at the Costco before and after the opening of the gas station. Staff advised they would request this of Costco management.

Chair Benson noted that employees working at the Auto Mall are parking on the streets. He asked about the use of the vacant land next to Best Buy as a parking lot for employees. Staff advised the property management plan for that parcel is managed by the Successor Agency.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Vice-Chair Fallon and seconded by Commissioner Murphy to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015.

The motion carried 5/0.

Chair Benson adjourned the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

  
TOM BENSON  
CHAIR

ATTEST:

  
SCOTT CHARNEY  
COMMISSION SECRETARY