

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
October 08, 2014
Council Chamber, City Hall
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Hudson called the meeting to order at 1:31 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioner Calerdine, Commissioner Lowe, Commissioner Middleton, Commissioner Roberts, Commissioner Weremiuk, Vice-Chair Klatchko and Chair Hudson

Absent: None.

Also Present: Planning Director Fagg, Associate Planner Lyon, Assistant Director of Public Works Khamphou and Administrative Coordinator Hintz

REPORT OF POSTING OF AGENDA:

The agenda was available for public access at the City Hall exterior bulletin board (west side of Council Chamber) and the Planning Services counter by 4:00 pm on Thursday, October 2, 2014.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:

Vice-Chair Klatchko noted his abstention on the minutes of September 24, 2014 due to his absence.

The agenda was accepted, as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chair Hudson opened public comments and with no appearances coming forward public comments was closed.

1. CONSENT CALENDAR:

1A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 24, 2014

ACTION: Approved, as submitted (Vice-Chair Klatchko abstained).

Motion: Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Calerdine and carried 6-0-1 on a roll call vote.

AYES: Commissioner Calerdine, Commissioner Lowe, Commissioner Middleton,
Commissioner Roberts, Commissioner Weremiuk, Chair Hudson
ABSTAIN: Vice-Chair Klatchko

2. PUBLIC HEARING:

2A. WEST COAST HOUSING PARTNERS ON BEHALF OF THE PROPERTY OWNER, THE ERIC BRANDENBERG SEPARATE PROPERTY TRUST, FOR APPROVAL OF A PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT IN LIEU OF A CHANGE OF ZONE, A MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION, AND A TENTATIVE TRACT MAP PROPOSING A DEVELOPMENT OF 46 SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED UNITS ON INDIVIDUAL LOTS, COMMON PRIVATE STREETS AND OPEN SPACE ON A ROUGHLY 5.23 ACRE SITE LOCATED AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF NORTH PALM CANYON DRIVE AND ALVARADO (CASE 5.1340 PDD 370, 3.3742 MAJ, TTM36725). (KL)

Associate Planner Lyon presented the proposed project as outlined in the staff report. Mr. Lyon pointed out that the applicant is seeking approval of both the preliminary and final PDD with this submittal. He noted that the applicant has reviewed this project with the neighborhood association.

Vice-Chair Klatchko asked staff to clarify the applicant's responses/comments to the staff report. Associate Planner Lyon provided a summary of staff's responses.

Commissioner Middleton asked where the existing and future planned bike lanes are in this area. Assistant Director of Public Works Khamphou responded that bike lanes are planned for Racquet Club and North Palm Canyon (Tramway Road connecting to downtown) will tie-in to the Coachella Valley Link. He described the Class 2 and 3 bike routes.

Chair Hudson opened the public hearing:

WHITT HOLLIS, West Coast Housing Partners, LLC, commented that staff's response to their comments was submitted at this meeting and they have not had time to review

it. Mr. Hollis spoke about their work on the analysis of the market, design team and communication with staff.

KRYSTAL NAVAR, Modative (project architect), spoke about history of architecture in the city and they have applied the principles of mid-century architecture to the project. She commented that they considered the many physical factors of the site including solar orientation, access to views, noise, privacy concerns, vehicular and pedestrian access, building separation, side-yards, wall articulation, driveways and desert landscaping.

ROB PARKER, RGA Landscape Architects, provided details on the proposed bike oasis, available space for dog park, open space and the Palm Canyon Drive frontage.

MARVIN ROOS, MSA Consulting, Inc., commented that did not agree with the staff report and stated that a PDD is necessary to conform to the General Plan. He noted that this site is an intense Palm Canyon frontage and provided further explanation to their responses/comments to the staff report.

GARY LEE SMITH, resides at 43 @ Racquet Club, spoke in favor of the project; noting that it will eliminate the blight in this area. He does not find the building separation as problematic (project similar to 43 @ Racquet Club) and prefers a gated community.

RANDY SMITH, spoke in opposition of the 2-story building height and driveway entrance directly in front of his house.

MARVIN ROOS, applicant response, stated that both zones and the multi-use allow for 2 story buildings and addressed the driveway entrance.

There being no further appearances the public hearing was closed.

Vice-Chair Klatchko made the following comments:

- Likes many aspects of the project - such as the angular placement of the buildings and the entrance on Alvarado.
- Concern with the lack of sidewalks - although the wide paseos allow pedestrian friendly pathways.
- Lack of guest parking.
- No concern with zero lot line development.

Commissioner Middleton concurred with Vice-Chair Klatchko and appreciated the neighborhood outreach. She made the following comments:

- Concern with the density of the project.
- Units are too close together.

- Likes the colors.
- A few more windows are needed; particularly above the garage area.
- Additional space may be needed for bike lanes on Palm Canyon.
- Lack of guest parking.
- Additional shade trees.

Commissioner Weremiuk made the following comments:

- Lack of guest parking.
- Project is too dense.
- Building separation is not sufficient and should be a minimum of 10 feet for side-yards.
- Applicant's opposition to install smart water controllers.

Commissioner Roberts made the following comments:

- Project has good qualities - the accessory structures on the Palm Canyon elevation work aesthetically.
- Project is requesting too much deviation with minimum public benefit.
- Project too dense.
- Lack of guest parking spaces.
- Insufficient building separation - minimum of 10 ft. side-yard setbacks.
- Insufficient parking for service trucks etc.
- Gated development should be more open and accessible.

Commissioner Calderine commented that he is not opposed to the density of this project. He said that there are several developments that are similar to this project and would like to see a comparison. He noted that this is not the typical multi-family development and the variety on Palm Canyon is acceptable. Commissioner Calderine suggested adding direct access from the interior street to the pedestrian plaza to compromise for vehicular gates.

Commissioner Roberts commented that the repetition of the garage doors feels like a back alley and the 2nd floor is repetitive. Staff has an on-going list of public benefits for the community and encouraged the applicant to take a look at this.

Chair Hudson made the following comments:

- The site has two different zones.
- Concern with the row of 14 houses along North Palm Canyon; and the two-car garage doors house on the interior street with 6 ft. separations - a larger space is needed between houses.
- Flexibility for the one-story accessory units along North Palm Canyon.

- Landscape design is the better aspect of the project.
- As a community amenity the plaza becomes more developed.
- Prefers shade trees instead of a shade structure.
- Encourage the applicant to provide a few more boulders for seating.
- Building separation is too close.
- Concern with gated communities.
- A controlled vehicular access makes sense.
- More use of speed bumps and articulation of the interior streets to slow down traffic.
- Increase permeable surfacing for paving.
- Increase more shared parking.
- The architecture does not respond to the site. (Roofs not oriented for solar collectors).

ACTION: Table with specific direction to the applicant to revise the project and re-submit.

Motion: Commissioner Weremiuk, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and unanimously carried on a roll call vote.

AYES: Commissioner Calderine, Commissioner Lowe, Commissioner Middleton, Commissioner Roberts, Commissioner Weremiuk, Vice-Chair Klatchko, Chair Hudson

The Commission provided the following direction for the applicant make revisions to the project:

- Item 1: Provide at least 10 feet between units for more usable open space and less density. (This was noted as both an open space issue and a density issue).
- Item 2: Revise the site concept to provide better accommodation for pedestrian circulation within the project to provide sidewalks along 1 side of the streets or by other creative means, taking into consideration workmen and guests as well as residents. [Staff Note: Reference PSZC 94.04 Architectural Review guideline D.1 which notes, "...Definition of pedestrian and vehicular areas; i.e. sidewalks as distinct from parking lot areas;" (e.g. vehicular travel ways) and note additional PC comment #14 below on paving differentiation].
- Item 3. If sidewalks are not provided along streets, then revise widths of private streets to conform to General Plan, (especially in lieu of sidewalks, must have one or the other).
- Item 4. Provide live/work as proposed by the applicant on the site plan, allow for variety in the architectural composition of these units, without kitchens (do not allow them to become rental units).

- Item 5. Provide 48 inch minimum box size for shade trees as shown on the landscape plan at the corner oasis. Select species suitable for the windy conditions at the site in lieu of structures for shade at that corner and provide more individual seating.
- Item 6. Reduce the monotony of the wall of garage doors by either turning the corner unit garage doors to the sides or revise the site plan in some other way to eliminate the repetitive monotonous nature of the row of garage doors along the interior streets.
- Item 7. Provide perimeter pedestrian gates at all units backing onto the public streets and also provide doorbell systems to allow visitors to access units from these gates.
- Item 8. Provide optional back yard shade structures for prospective buyers that complement the architecture of the homes.
- Item 9. Utilize angling or other design solutions to relieve the long planar walls of the garage doors along the interior streets.
- Item 10. Create a better solution to reduce noise dramatically from the pool and HVAC units or move these mechanical units away from the back yards to eliminate noise impacts on those yards.
- Item 11. Provide more guest parking within the project (no specific quantity was stated). Also, regarding guest access, provide means at the main entry gates and along the perimeter public streets for open pedestrian access (i.e. vehicular gates may be retained, but allow open pedestrian access from the perimeter of the project for guest/neighborhood connectivity that does not require keys or controlled access intercom, etc.).
- Item 12. Provide active gathering amenities in the common open space (i.e. development has central open space for gathering, community interaction etc.).

Other specific requests/direction for design revision made as a part of the Planning Commission motion includes:

- A.) Orient roof slopes to make future installation of solar feasible (i.e. roof slopes should face south);
- B.) Provide prewire for photovoltaic solar panels.
- C.) Enhanced interior pavement – no asphalt, integrate pavers at private streets to perhaps aid in demarcating separation of pedestrian way from vehicular travel way.
- D.) Pedestrian open access if there is to be vehicular gates. Research new technology entry gate systems with second arms, camera systems, no-back up systems, etc. that allows controlled vehicular access but free pedestrian access.
- E.) Propose additional public benefits (review suggestions from staff or other; see comment below).

- F.) Provide at least the hand tire pump and water bottle filling as a minimum set of amenities at the corner oasis.
- G.) Wash down of the amenities at the corner is not required.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS, REQUESTS AND COMMENTS:

Commissioner Roberts wanted to make sure that the City Council is clear on their recommendations beyond the action minutes on the Lawrence Rael project which is on appeal and other large projects.

Director Fagg responded that the City Attorney attorney's response was that the action by the Planning Commission is the record on the item. Mr. Fagg indicated that the summary and findings provided to the City Council give a basis for the way the Planning Commission voted on the item.

Commissioner Roberts requested a study session for the aforementioned item and also to discuss with staff how to better provide information to the applicants when seeking relief from the Zoning Code and General Plan such as Variances and PDD's.

Commissioner Weremiuk noted that a subcommittee (Calerdine, Roberts and Weremiuk) previously worked on establishing small lot subdivision guidelines. Director Fagg recommend that this subcommittee could start up again to continue their work. The subcommittee members agreed.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Fagg commented that a study session will be held next month to discuss the items requested by the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Planning Commission adjourned at 3:24 pm to Wednesday, October 22, 2014, at 1:30 pm, City Hall, Council Chamber, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way.

Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Planning Services