

Minutes of the Huntington Park Planning Commission meeting held on March 5, 2008.

Chairman Molina called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present: Commissioners Eddie Benitez, Rosa Perez, and Chairman Andy Molina; Absent: Commissioners Marial Sanders and Veronica Lopez (both absences were declared excused by Chairman Molina). City staff members present were Director of Community Development Henry Gray, Planning Manager Gabriel Bautista, Senior Planner Eric Garcia, Assistant Planners Albert Fontanez and Gabriela Silva, Office Assistant Velvet Ruiz, Recording Secretary Genny Ochoa, and Interpreter Samantha Lubrani (City-contracted).

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Perez, seconded by Commissioner Benitez, to approve the minutes of the meeting held February 6, 2008, as submitted. Motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioner Perez and Chairman Molina; Noes: None; Absent: Commissioners Sanders and Lopez. Abstain: Commissioner Benitez.

Public Appearances

Mr. Jerry Torres (address not given) came forward and requested the cancellation of the meeting as he felt that the public was not adequately informed of the scheduled public hearing.

Continued Public Hearings

A. CASE NO. 1866-ZOA/GPA: Consideration of a resolution recommending to the City Council the adoption of Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendments to establish the Northwest Area Specific Plan for two land tracts – one at the southeast corner of Slauson Avenue and Alameda Street, and the other at the northwest corner of Slauson Avenue and Pacific Boulevard; and recommendation that the City Council certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) associated with the proposed Amendments.

Planning Manager Gabriel Bautista stated that the Public Hearing for the proposed resolution had been continued from the January 16, 2008 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Bautista gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the Administrative Report for Case No. 1866-ZOA/GPA, which included the Administrative Comments and Analysis. Mr. Bautista reviewed the Specific Plan area, which is made up of the following land use sub-districts:

Alameda/Slauson Gateway: Streetscape enhancement; commercial/retail emphasis;
Slauson/Pacific Gateway: Street-oriented, pedestrian-focused development; prominent commercial/retail district; mixed use development;
Community Commercial: Smaller-scale commercial development; street-oriented, pedestrian-focused development;
Residential/Commercial: Functional connections between residential and commercial uses; variety of residential development types.

Mr. Bautista reviewed the Required Findings for a General Plan Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Mr. Bautista stated that because of concerns expressed by property and business owners within the project area at the January 16, 2008 Public Hearing, the recommendation for the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendments had been modified. The proposed amendments, as modified, would allow current industrial, manufacturing and warehouse structures and uses to remain as conforming structures and uses with all the rights and privileges afforded under the current Industrial/Manufacturing Planned Development Land Use and Zoning designations, except for those uses which are currently non-conforming.

Mr. Bautista added that in addition to the written comments received during the Draft EIR review/circulation period and the public testimony received during the Public Hearing of January 16, 2008, written comments were received by the following:

- 1) Driscoll & Fox (legal representation of Ashley Joffe and Ply Craft Industries, 2100 Slauson Avenue), dated April [sic] 4, 2008: a formal challenge to the proposed rezoning, which “will be withdrawn when, and if, the City establishes that a viable retail/commercial development is ready to proceed on the entire property area encompassed by the proposed rezoning;” and
- 2) Peterson Law Group (legal representation of Gerald Feldman, Gloria Feldman and Feldman Properties, 1976 and 2012-20 Laura Avenue), dated March 5, 2008: challenge to the proposed rezoning due to its “premature” nature, and stating, “If and when the City and a developer can unequivocally proceed with the proposed development, this rezoning may be appropriate.”

Mr. Bautista stated that action taken by the Planning Commission action would be advisory to the City Council, recommending the approval of the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendments, as well as City Council certification of the EIR associated with the proposed amendments.

Director of Community Development Gray reiterated that the proposed revised amendments would make existing uses conforming and would enable the expansion or change of existing businesses or properties. Mr. Gray noted that commercial uses would be permitted in the affected properties. Mr. Gray stated that submitted comments would be addressed in the Final EIR, which would be made available to the public before the certification and adoption of the Final EIR at the City Council level. Mr. Gray added that the Planning Commission’s action is intended to advise the City Council on the Specific Plan elements, with the final action to approve or deny the amendments to be made by the City Council. Mr. Gray further added that noticing requirements for the proposed Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendments public hearing had been met, and that the comment period for the Draft EIR had been extended in order to provide a greater open process for the public.

Chairman Molina declared the public hearing open and called for those wishing to speak in favor of or against Case No. 1866-ZOA/GPA.

Mr. Saal Freedman (Laura Street Partners, 4300 Nogales Dr., Tarzana, CA 91356) came forward and stated that the modification to the proposed amendment did not apply to properties with change in ownership.

Mr. Kevin Cowles (1725 S. Campus Ave., Ontario, CA 91761), Cowles Family Trust/ partner in property ownership of 2001 Belgrave Avenue, came forward to speak in favor of the proposed amendments. Mr. Cowles encouraged the Commission to move forward with the proposed retail development project and stated they were willing to “help the City” in its efforts to get the project started.

The following is a list of those who came forward and spoke against the proposed Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendments Case No. 1866-ZOA/GPA. (Written comments received are included as part of the record in the City’s case file.*)

1. *Alexei Brenot (Graham Vaage & Cisneros, 500 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 1030, Glendale, CA 91203), representative for Creative Steel Treating Corporation, 2454 E. 58th St., Huntington Park, CA — expressed objection to the Draft EIR for the proposed Northwest Area Specific Plan;
2. *Melanie Doran Traxler (2701 Prospect Ave., La Crescenta, CA 91214), representative for Helen Tuppan — cited “inconsistencies, errors, and omissions that render the (EIR and Specific) Plan inadequate;”
3. Abelardo Cabrera (2567 E. 54th St., Huntington Park, CA), property owner, stated that he did not want to sell his properties;
4. *Chris Tuppan (2510 E. 52nd St., Huntington Park, CA), representing Atlas Ornamental Iron Works, Inc., 2510 E. 52nd St., Huntington Park, CA) — cited that the Draft EIR and Specific Plan are incomplete;
5. *Eugene Gleason (Gleason Law Offices, A PLC, 15651 E. Imperial Hwy., Ste. 202A, La Mirada, CA) — cited concerns which “include the failure to provide a credible Environmental Impact Report for the project;”
6. Nick Alexander (Nick Alexander Imports, 6333 S. Alameda St., Los Angeles [Huntington Park]), property owner — expressed his objection “to the idea of eminent domain” and the potential loss of high-paying jobs, as well as concerns that only three of five Commissioners were present to take action on the subject matter;
7. Michael Huerta (2475 Slauson Ave., Huntington Park), property owner — stated that he wants his business operation to remain in the City of Huntington Park; and
8. *Lee Lewis (president, Acme Castings, Inc., 2319 Randolph St., Huntington Park) (submitted written objections from Robert P. Silverstein, The Silverstein Law Firm, legal counsel) — stated his objections to the adoption of the Northwest Specific Plan.

With no one else coming forward to speak for or against Case No. 1866-ZOA/GPA, Chairman Molina declared the public hearing closed.

Mr. Gray stated that 1) it is not anticipated that high-paying industrial jobs would be dislocated by lower-paying jobs as has been expressed by a number of industrial business owners; and 2) responses to traffic impact concerns as well as any potential soil contamination

would be addressed in the Final EIR. Mr. Gray added that the Specific Plan serves as a mechanism to plan for long-term development in the City's blighted areas and encouraged public participation in the process of promoting the best interest of the City.

Commissioner Benitez stated that he was concerned with the comments made by property/business owners citing the Draft EIR's inadequacies. Commissioner Perez stated that she would like to further review the comments received as well as the City's responses in the Final EIR.

After a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Perez, seconded by Commissioner Benitez, to close the public hearing and that the item be brought back for consideration by the Planning Commission upon completion of the Final EIR. The motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioners Benitez, Perez, and Chairman Molina; Noes: None; Absent: Commissioners Sanders and Lopez.

Public Hearings

A. CASE NO. 1868-CUP: Request by Francisco Hernandez for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to establish a catering truck manufacturing, repair and sales facility at 6105 Maywood Avenue, within the Manufacturing Planned Development (MPD) Zone.

Assistant Planner Albert Fontanez presented the Administrative Report for Case No. 1868-CUP, which included the Municipal Code Requirements and Required Findings for a Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Comments and Analysis, and Recommendations. Mr. Fontanez stated that the proposed project is not expected to adversely affect or interfere with the public welfare and that staff recommended the approval of Case No. 1868-CUP, subject to Conditions Nos. 1-36, as outlined in staff's Administrative Report.

Chairman Molina declared the public hearing open and called for those wishing to speak in favor of or against Case No. 1868-CUP. Mr. Francisco Hernandez (6105 Maywood Ave., Huntington Park), applicant, came forward to speak in favor of the request. Mr. Hernandez expressed concern with staff's recommended condition that a block wall be installed at the side and rear property lines. Mr. Hernandez stated that the construction and installation of a block wall as required by Conditions No. 27 and 28 would be a financial hardship. Mr. Hernandez presented pictures of lower cost, alternate types of walls/fencing for consideration by the Commission and staff.

With no one else coming forward to speak for or against Case No. 1868-CUP, Chairman Molina declared the public hearing closed.

After a brief discussion, it was concurred by the Commission and staff that the conditions of approval be modified to allow alternate walls/fencing, as approved by the Planning Division.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benitez, seconded by Commissioner Perez, to APPROVE CASE NO. 1868-CUP, subject to Conditions Nos. 1-36, as modified. The motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioners Benitez, Perez, and Chairman Molina; Noes: None; Absent: Commissioners Sanders and Lopez.

New Business

A. Appointment of Planning Commissioner to serve on the Local Advisory Committee for the I-710 Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement.

Planning Manager Bautista stated that the I-710 Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement Community Participation Framework, called for the participation and representation of local communities. Mr. Bautista added that the City's involvement is an important part in the development of Program Documents related to the project.

After a discussion, the Commissioners concurred to recommend to the City Council the appointment of Commissioner Benitez to the Local Advisory Committee and Chairman Molina as first alternate.

Information Items

None.

Subjects Presented by the Planning Commission

None.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Molina declared the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Chair

ATTEST:

Secretary