

**Minutes of the Huntington Park Planning Commission meeting held on
March 2, 2011**

Chairperson Sanchez called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present: Commissioners Eddie Benitez, Rosa Perez, Eddie Carvajal, and Chairperson Avygail Sanchez; Absent: Commissioner Veronica Lopez (declared excused due to illness). Also present: Planning Manager Eric Garcia, Assistant Planner Gabriela Silva, and Recording Secretary Genny Ochoa.

Reorganization of the Planning Commission

Motion by Vice Chair Perez, seconded by Commissioner Carvajal, to postpone the reorganization of the Planning Commission to the next regularly scheduled meeting of March 16, 2011. The motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioners Benitez, Perez, Carvajal, and Chairperson Sanchez; Noes: None; Absent: Commissioner Lopez.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Vice Chair Perez, seconded by Commissioner Benitez, to approve the minutes of February 16, 2011, as presented. The motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioners Benitez, Perez, Carvajal, and Chairperson Sanchez; Noes: None; Absent: Commissioner Lopez.

Public Appearances

None.

Continued Public Hearings

None.

Public Hearings

A. CASE NO. 1927-CUP: Consideration of a request by Jose L. Rosas Vargas for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to establish and operate a small recyclables collection facility at 3257 Gage Avenue, in the General-Commercial (C-G) Zone.

Assistant Planner Gabriela Silva reviewed the Administrative Report, which included the Municipal Code Requirements and Required Findings for a Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Comments and Analysis, and Recommendation. Ms. Silva stated that the existing liquor store on the subject site would continue to operate independently of the proposed recyclables collection facility. Ms. Silva added that the proposed use would include a metal container for storing the recyclable, and that the area would be shielded from public view by installing a decorative view-obscuring gate. Ms. Silva stated that among the recommended Conditions of Approval were improvement of the existing parking area, which would result in 12 off-street parking spaces, exceeding the required parking of seven spaces by five; installation of new landscaping and a decorative trash enclosure; and posting signs prohibiting loitering on the subject site.

Ms. Silva stated the proposed use meets the City's Zoning and Development Standards as conditioned, is consistent with the City's General Plan, and would not be a detriment to the surrounding area. Ms. Silva stated that the Planning Division recommended the approval of Case No. 1927-CUP, subject to Condition Nos. 1-45, as outlined in staff's Administrative Report.

Planning Manager Garcia reported that on the afternoon prior to the public hearing, staff received a letter of opposition from Mr. Larry Mitobe, property owner of 6420 Hood Avenue, in which he requests that the recycling facility be located "in a larger commercial retail area or a parking lot and away from a residential area where families and kids reside."

Chairperson Sanchez declared the public hearing open and called for anyone wishing to speak in favor of, or against Case No. 1927-CUP. Mr. Luis Martinez (1161 Marietta St., Los Angeles, CA 90023), representing the applicant and property owner, came forward to speak in favor of the request. Mr. Martinez stated that establishment of the proposed recycling facility would render the opportunity to make needed improvements to the site, such as improving the parking area, adding landscaping, and painting the existing building. Mr. Martinez added that the applicant agreed to comply with the Conditions of Approval as recommended by staff and requested approval of Case No. 1927-CUP.

A discussion was held. Chairperson Sanchez expressed concern with loitering on the subject site, which she has witnessed. In response to Commissioners' inquiries, Mr. Jose Vargas (4115 Independence Ave., South Gate, CA 90280), applicant, stated that his intention is to run a business without making judgment on potential patrons. Mr. Vargas added that he plans to work with the City in complying with the requirements as recommended by staff. Mr. Kulwinder K Saini (3856 N. Walnut Grove Ave., Rosemead, CA 91770), property owner, stated that he has not had problems during the 14 years he has owned and operated the existing liquor store.

A number of community members addressed the Commission expressing their opposition to Case No. 1927-CUP. The consensus among the community members present was that the subject site is unsuitable for the proposed use due to its proximity to a residential zone and school. They stated that the use would be a negative impact to the surrounding residential community, due to continuous criminal activity on and surrounding the subject site, including, but not limited to excessive loitering by alleged homeless people, drinking in public, drug use and sales, prostitution, and gang violence, including murder. The community members stated that the proposed recycling use would also be a health hazard to the surrounding area by generating undesirable trash and debris, rodents, and foul odor emitting from the facility. The following persons came forward to speak AGAINST Case No. 1927-CUP:

- 1) Crystal Morales (6332 Hood Avenue) – Ms. Morales presented a petition against Case No. 1927-CUP, reportedly signed by 137 residents living in close proximity to the subject site;
- 2) Maria Guerrero (6329 Newell Street) – Ms. Guerrero reported drive-by shootings, limited street parking, and stated that the use would invite rodents to the area;
- 3) Angel Arandia (resident to the rear of the subject site) – Mr. Arandia reported that "homeless" individuals are "always" on the subject site and stated that he regularly calls the Police Department, whose response time is greatly delayed;

- 4) Rosa Lopez (6336 Newell Street) – Ms. Lopez expressed concern of health hazards generated by the proposed use and that the use should be located away from family homes. Ms. Lopez added that she was fearful of the gang activity and the slow response from the Police Department;
- 5) David Delgadillo (6332 Newell Street) – Mr. Delgadillo stated that he was in favor of recycling uses, but not in residential areas. Mr. Delgadillo expressed concern with loiterers drinking in public, gang activity, and the potential foul odor and rodents created by the proposed use, especially in the summer months;
- 6) Miguel Lopez (6336 Newell Street) – Mr. Lopez expressed his concern for the on-going gang and drug-related activities and with the Police Department's slow response time.

With no one else coming forward, Chairperson Sanchez closed the public hearing. Assistant Planner Silva stated that the proposed site improvements, including the required construction of a block wall along the northerly property line, and recommended Conditions of Approval are designed to mitigate potential negative impacts created by the proposed project. Chairperson Sanchez asked if there were any mitigation measures for potential foul odor issues. Ms. Silva stated that the applicant would be required to maintain the area in an odor-free, litter-free condition and clear any loose debris daily. Ms. Silva added that any violation of the Conditions of Approval would be presented to the Planning Commission for review of the Conditional Use Permit.

Vice Chair Perez stated that the concerns presented by the community members are based on the existing liquor store business and questioned if the proposed use would increase the alleged illegal activities on the subject site. Chairperson Sanchez stated that she was concerned with the enforcement, or lack thereof, of the Conditional Use Permit requirements. Planning Manager Garcia stated that the Conditional Use Permit could be reviewed by the Commission in time intervals, including consideration of revocation if complaints are made on the operation of the recycling facility. Mr. Garcia added that the Commission may add conditions to address any potential issues the proposed use may cause. Commissioner Benitez stated that, although he is pro-business, he did not endorse the proposed project based on the strong opposition by community members.

After the discussion, Vice Chair Perez motioned, seconded by Commissioner Benitez, to DENY CASE NO. 1927-CUP. The motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioners Benitez, Perez, Carvajal, and Chairperson Sanchez; Noes: None; Absent: Commissioner Lopez.

Planning Manager Garcia announced that the applicant had 15 days to appeal the Planning Commission decision to the City Council.

New Business

None.

Information Items

Assistant Planner Silva reminded the Commissioners of the first of two community meetings on a proposed residential development project at 6100-6114 Carmelita Avenue, 6126 Bear Avenue and 3806-3828 E. 61st Street scheduled for March 5, 2011. Ms. Silva invited the Commissioners to attend to learn more about the proposed project and provide their input.

Subjects Presented by the Planning Commission

Vice Chair Perez asked who she could contact regarding public parking issues. Planning Manager Garcia advised that Police Department enforces public parking.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Chairperson

ATTEST:

Secretary