



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
154 SOUTH EIGHTH STREET
GROVER BEACH, CALIFORNIA
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2007
6:30 P.M.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in a City meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office (473-4568) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to ensure that reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility to the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE: Peter Keith

PRESENT: Commissioners: Bright, Luce, Peterson, Snow, Versaw, Vice Chair Keith, and Chair Marshall.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

- 1) **Development Permit Application No. 06-034**
Applicant –American Properties Management Company This Development Permit Application is a request for approval of a Specific Development Plan, a Coastal Development Permit, and Architectural and Site Plans to allow for the construction of a 74,732 square foot hotel development. Specifically, the application proposes a one and three-story building complex, with 134 hotel units, a guest dining area, meeting rooms, an outdoor pool area, and surface parking and landscaping. The application review also involves consideration of a Mitigated Negative Declaration to meet the project's environmental requirements. The subject property is generally located at 950 El Camino Real, on the south side of the roadway easterly of North Fourth Street, and is more specifically described as a portion of Assessor Parcel No. 060-011-036. Currently, the property is zoned Coastal Planned Commercial (C-P-C). The project planner is Ray Hetherington.

Planner Ray Hetherington presented the staff report. He stated that this site was previously approved for a bowling center. That project had a Coastal Development Permit in 1992. The project was not completed, though there was some work done on the site with retaining walls and drainage improvements and the site has remained undeveloped since that time. The hotel is proposed to be built on the area which was previously developed for the bowling alley.

There are four actions before the Planning Commission: Adoption of the mitigated negative declaration, approval of the specific development plan, granting the Coastal Development Permit and approval of architectural and site plans.

The General Development Plan for the project was reviewed by the Planning Commission and recommended to the City Council for approval. The City Council approved the General Development Plan in January, 2007.

The project density was calculated using the gross acreage of 4.87 acres. The net acreage is 4.09 acres, of which 1.82 acres are planned for development of the hotel.

The project is designed to have a drainage detention facility, with the intent to channel all of the water into a facility that will filter it and release it into the creek. There are requirements within the mitigation measures that relate to this issue.

The project has been reviewed for consistency with the General Development Plan, Local Coastal Plan, General Plan, zoning and development standards. The General Development Plan provided an overall format for development of the site. The Specific Development Plan is consistent with the General Development Plan.

Under the Local Coastal Plan, this site is located in the Coastal Zone, due to its proximity to the Meadow Creek tributary. He stated that there are areas within the Coastal Zone that are appealable and areas that are not. Based on Staff's analysis, it was determined that a portion of the site was in the appealable zone, which meant that a decision on the project could be appealed to the Coastal Commission. There was discussion with Coastal Commission staff, related to how to handle projects where only a portion of the site is in the appealable area. Based on that discussion, staff determined that the appeal zone is only within 100 feet of the creek, which differs from the information in the staff report that indicates that the creek is 300 feet from the project that was based on previous information received. The project boundary is approximately 170 feet from the creek area. In discussing this issue with the Coastal Commission, they indicated that if the distance was 170 feet, the project would not be in the appeal zone. Staff has determined that this is a non-appealable project, and the appropriate resolution should be amended to reflect that.

Staff feels that this project has been designed in conformance with the zoning regulations and fits into the area.

He stated that the project requires a total of 141 spaces. The site plan shows 135 spaces and there are six future spaces proposed. Some of the future parking may be in the right-of-way, but will not be in the street. The disposition of those spaces depends upon what happens with the roadway improvements. They may have to get an encroachment permit for some of those spaces. They do not intend to use street parking to meet the parking requirements. There is a condition that requires that they provide the required number of parking spaces on the final plans.

Commissioner Versaw asked about the mitigation measure in the initial study that indicated that a Conditional Use Permit was required for the additional six spaces. Planner Hetherington stated that to his knowledge, a Conditional Use Permit is not required. City Attorney Koczanowicz stated that it is possible that it should have stated that an encroachment permit would be required rather than a Use Permit. Planner Hetherington stated that it is easily corrected; they will either change the wording or eliminate the sentence that references the use permit.

Staff feels that the site, as designed, meets the intent of the zoning regulations as it relates to height. Heights are calculated using the average natural grade and the project is meets the 40 feet requirement. The tower feature exceeds 40 feet, but it is an architectural feature and is not included in height calculations.

The initial study suggested that water service may be taken from 4th Street. Following discussion of various options, they will be hooking accessing water via Oak Park. There will be no connection at 4th Street.

In 1992, there was an EIR done related to the proposed bowling alley. Some of the items in the EIR relate to the current development as well. The staff report and initial study make reference to the EIR. The initial study provided new analysis for the items that weren't addressed in the EIR or needed to be updated from the earlier analysis.

The initial study was distributed for State review and sent to all of relevant local and regional agencies that would be involved in this project. The public review period was completed on December 12, 2006. There were comments received from some State agencies and also the City of Pismo Beach. The comment letters were included with the initial study and are now a part of the document. They also received an additional letter from the City of Pismo Beach in response to correspondence. There are some questions that were brought up regarding traffic mitigation issues and how that is handled. Rincon Consultants is also here to answer questions related to the environmental documents that they prepared.

Planner Hetherington stated that there was a traffic consultant who analyzed traffic patterns and impacts. The study did not indicate any significant impacts to Grand Avenue, 4th Street, or Highway 1. The project itself does not create any significant impacts. However, when the impacts of this project are combined with the impacts of other new and proposed projects in the area, levels of service begin to be impacted. There would have to be certain improvements based on all of the projects in the area. The improvements involve conditions that adjusting signalization of intersections, not road widening. The traffic report indicated that the cost of improvements would be approximately \$20,000, and this project would contribute 16.4 percent of the impacts, so they would be responsible for that percentage of the required improvements, which would be \$3,280. The assumption would be that they would pay that amount to the City of Grover Beach to be placed in an interest-bearing account that would be made available when improvements are done. Since the areas needing improvement are not in the City of Grover Beach, the City cannot make the improvements. There is some issue with the City of Pismo Beach regarding that issue. One of the comments received indicated that the City of Pismo Beach would want this project to be responsible for all of the improvements, not just the percentage.

There was another question about the regular impact fees, which are paid to the City of Grover Beach. There were questions about why the report didn't analyze Hwy 101 Oak Park interchange and the Hwy 101 Southbound ramp analyzed. The traffic engineer responded that there are no existing problems for the Hwy 101 southbound ramp and the Oak Park interchange, and it was determined this project will not add significant traffic, and there are no anticipated problems. Cal Trans reviewed the traffic report, and didn't indicate any problems.

Regarding left turn lanes, the traffic engineer indicated that the need for left-turns into the project driveway will be very low, so left turn lanes are not warranted. The majority of trips would be coming from 4th Street.

Vice Chair Keith asked Planner Hetherington to address exterior lighting mitigation measures. Planner Hetherington stated that there is a requirement in the mitigation measures to submit a lighting plan prior to issuance of a building permit. The intent is to require lights that have solid sides and reflectors to control light spillage.

Vice Chair Keith stated that there was some indication in the report that one of every 10 spaces is for car pool, and there was one bike space required. Planner Hetherington clarified that the mitigation measure requires that preferential parking for car pool and van pool vehicles, and one bicycle space for every 10 parking spaces.

Trevor Keith, Rincon Consultants, stated that the impetus for that mitigation measure was to promote alternative forms of transportation, and to give preferential treatment for where they park on-site. The oversight would be handled during the final check off for the project.

Commissioner Luce asked how many rooms were in the approved hotel on the other side of the freeway. Planner Hetherington stated that he didn't know. Commissioner Luce asked when the traffic study was completed. Planner Hetherington stated that it was done in August of 2006. He stated that the traffic engineer researched what was going to be upcoming in the adjacent areas.

Commissioner Versaw asked why, if the project is over 100 feet from Meadow Creek, a stream bed alteration permit was required. Planner Hetherington responded that it is because there will be drainage going into the creek. Mr. Keith of Rincon Consultants stated that the stream bed alteration is the generic term for the permit.

Commissioner Versaw asked for clarification regarding the mitigation measures contained in the initial study. She asked if those measures automatically become conditions of approval. Planner Hetherington stated that the resolutions indicate that the mitigation measures are conditions of approval. The mitigation measures are required to be done.

Commissioner Versaw stated that many of the mitigation measures are based on monitoring by the City. She asked how the monitoring would be addressed. Planner Hetherington stated that a lot of the measures are things that occur as a result of the building permit issuance, such as the previously discussed lighting plan. A lot of them are part of the final plan review, and don't require further monitoring.

Commissioner Versaw asked about Mitigation Measure 11, having to do with trees. She asked if an arborist should be required as part of that measure to monitor the existing trees. Planner Hetherington stated that he doesn't think that there are many trees that will be disturbed as part of this project. He stated that mainly the arborists are used for oak trees. If there were an oak tree the site, then an arborist might be required. Commissioner Versaw requested that staff take a look at the issue to see if it would be appropriate to require an arborist.

Commissioner Peterson asked if the total number of parking spaces required was based on the restaurant and meeting rooms being ancillary to the hotel. Planner Hetherington stated that that was correct, and that the meeting rooms are designed for guests of the hotel. If they are used by non-guests, that will usually be during non-peak times during the day, and thus would not impact parking. The lounge and dining areas are for guests, similar to the Oxford Suites nearby. It will not be open to the public. Planner Hetherington stated that if the restaurant were open to the public, there may be a need to evaluate the parking requirements. Commissioner Peterson stated that she has concerns about the conference rooms conflicting with parking because there are times when those rooms may be used in the evening or early morning, when hotel guests are still utilizing the parking.

Commissioner Peterson stated that there were references to the Northern Hillside Neighborhood Plan area, but they didn't receive any information about that area. She asked if that area was primarily residential. Planner Hetherington stated that the Neighborhood Plan deals mostly with residential, and doesn't mention very much about commercial.

Commissioner Peterson stated she isn't comfortable stating that the project is "compatible" with the plan, since they don't have very much information regarding it. Planner Hetherington stated that it may be compatible because it is not in conflict with the plan. Generally, because it is an isolated piece, it is being looked at as how it would impact that plan area.

Commissioner Peterson asked if story poles would be erected for the project. Planner Hetherington stated that story poles are only used in residential areas. Commissioner Peterson stated that some views may be impacted and wondered how much of the hotel would be visible to the nearby

residents. Planner Hetherington stated that the part that would be visible would be the area closest to El Camino Real.

Bill Snow asked for clarification about the future parking spaces. Planner Hetherington stated that when the plans were initially submitted, they it hadn't been determined where the roadway improvements would be. Director Hansen stated that this was discussed with the City Engineer, who felt that the existing right-of-way would never be built out and that there would never be a need to utilize the area where the future parking is proposed.

Commissioner Peterson asked about the three minute limit for idling delivery truck limits but for construction trucks it was five minutes. Director Hansen stated that construction noise is temporary, where delivery truck noise is ongoing, which explains the difference in time limits.

Commissioner Versaw asked if the Fire Department had adequate equipment to access the heights of the buildings. Planner Hetherington stated that the Fire Department had reviewed the project several times, and this was not mentioned as a concern, but they did add several conditions to the project.

Vice Chair Keith brought up the fact that though some of the members of the Commissioners live within the view shed of the project, they are outside of the 500 foot limitation that would require that they recuse themselves.

Chair Marshall asked about the sign proposed on the plans. He asked if that met City requirements, since there is a condition related to it. Planner Hetherington stated that it currently meets standards. The condition was added to address any future signs that may be proposed. He stated that though a sign is shown on the plans, it has not been approved. It will have to be submitted as part of a sign program. City Attorney Koczanowicz stated that existence of the sign on the plans does not constitute approval of the sign. There is a separate permitting process related to signs.

Chair Marshall asked about the landscape plan that is included. Planner Hetherington stated that it is a preliminary landscape plan, not a final plan.

Chair Marshall asked if it has been decided how wide El Camino Real is going to be. Planner Hetherington stated that the intent is to continue the improvements that are in front of the Oxford Suites. Director Hansen stated that it will be two travel lanes and two bike lanes, and that it is a minor arterial, and for that area, the two lanes will be sufficient. Parking would be precluded on the street.

Chair Marshall asked about grading for the sidewalks. Director Hansen stated that permits would be issued to bring the improvements consistent with what has been done in the other area. In most cases, the existing oak trees are in an area that would not be improved.

Director Hansen stated that there are no improvements planned at this point for a sidewalk east of the project.

Chair Marshall stated that there are some trees that may impact sight distance issues at the driveway. Director Hansen stated that those issues will be addressed in accordance with County policies related to tree maintenance.

Chair Marshall opened the public hearing and invited the applicant to speak.

Gary White, property owner, thanked staff for their work. He stated that he would be available to answer any questions. He introduced the architect, Robert Tuttle and other people from the design team.

Vice Chair Keith asked about the parking conflicts with special events or meetings that may use the conference rooms at the facility. He asked what impact hotel vacancies would have on the issue. Mr. White stated that their occupancies are projected to be 70-75 percent, on average. Weekends would have a higher rate of occupancy, as would summer months, but those would be offset by weekdays. He stated that times where they have 100 percent occupancy would be rare, but even still, there would not be a lot of conflicts during the day time hours.

Vice Chair Keith asked about the level of service at the hotel. Robert Tuttle, project architect, stated that the Hilton Garden Inn is a 3.5 to 4-star property.

Mr. Tuttle stated that the Hilton Garden Inn is close to a full-service type of a hotel, because it has a full kitchen. It has all of the facilities to prepare full meals. They do not plan to have the public at large to eat there, but they do plan to have meetings and conventions. They also have to comply with certain things in order to be a 4-star hotel. It is a nicer property, with meeting rooms in the basement. This also is not a standard Hilton Garden Inn design. The shape of the property required them to make alterations to the standard type. The other thing that is unique about the building design is that they wanted to use a more Spanish-style, which is definitely not a Hilton standard. He then described some of the design details proposed for the project.

Regarding parking, he stated that even if the hotel is 100 percent occupied, it is very unlikely that they will need 134 spaces. Even at peak hours, the lot would not be completely filled. During the day, there will be ample parking for other events.

Commissioner Bright asked how many people the hotel will employ. Mr. Tuttle stated that there will be 2-3 employees during the night time hours, and during the day when everything is fully functioning, they estimate having 20-30 people.

Commissioner Bright asked for details about the bar/lounge facility. Mr. Tuttle stated that the lounge area will be open to guests during the evening, and have a television. Commissioner Bright asked about the restaurant, and if there was an actual dining room. Mr. Tuttle stated that there is a large dining room on the main floor where they will serve breakfast, which would be the only regularly scheduled meal. Any other luncheons would be if there was an outside group coming in.

Commissioner Versaw asked if the time schedule in the mitigation measure, related to initial ground disturbing only being allowed between September 15 and March 31, and asked if that suited the needs of the project. Planner Hetherington stated that the mitigation measure has to do with areas with trees or areas that birds may nest in. He stated that there aren't any trees or anything, so that measure may not apply. City Attorney Koczanowicz clarified that the measure, as written now, applies to any grading on the site. Planner Hetherington stated that there is also a requirement for a pre-construction survey by a qualified biologist to determine if there is anything to be disturbed.

Mr. Tuttle stated that it would be great if they could keep to that timeline, but it isn't known at this time if that will happen.

Commissioner Peterson asked for more information about the meeting rooms. Mr. Tuttle stated that there were two meeting rooms in the basement that are approximately 700 and 900 sq. ft. with a folding partition that would open up. He stated that the capacity would likely be less than 100. There is also a board room that would seat 15-20 people, and the dining room that can accommodate

about 75 people. Planner Hetherington stated that maximum occupancies are determined by the Building Code.

Commissioner Peterson stated that she would love to see the hotel capitalize on the local transportation, such as the Oceano airport and the train station. Planner Hetherington stated that there is a mitigation measure that requires a multi-modal access guide.

Chair Marshall stated that overall he is very pleased with the project. He asked about the northerly elevation, because it seemed like the wall was a little plain. Mr. Tuttle stated that there is a lot going on with the towers and the pavilion, and sometimes it is effective to have a “quiet” place where there isn’t as much going on architecturally.

Chair Marshall stated that he did not like the width of the westerly driveway and he would prefer to see an island go in about half way in between. It seems like too much pavement for the entrance. Mr. Tuttle stated that he likes the wide entrance because it is inviting. It is awkward to do it another way. Chair Marshall stated that there is also a lack of pedestrian protection, if someone were to leave the site on foot. Chair Marshall asked if the Porte Cochere (entrance) was an island and if it were landscaped. Mr. Tuttle stated that it was. Chair Marshall stated that that may provide enough visual interest.

Chair Marshall asked what sort of pavement that they would be using for the parking area. Mr. Tuttle stated that it is planned to be asphalt, other than the pavers underneath the Porte Cochere and through the entrance, which would be pavers.

Chair Marshall stated that there could be some improvement in that area, considering the Regional Water Quality Boards comment letter regarding low impact development. He stated that there are credits given for using pervious pavers to reduce the amount of underground storage. Mr. Tuttle stated that pervious paving would be more expensive than asphalt, but there may be trade-offs if they can reduce the amount of water storage needed. He stated that they would investigate that. Chair Marshall stated that he would like to push for an alternate pavement. He also stated that he prefers meandering sidewalks. He asked if they could put in some landscaping or do a meandering sidewalk in front of the project. Mr. Tuttle stated that they could look into that.

Chair Marshall invited members of the public to speak on the project; there was no one else present who wished to comment, and the public hearing was closed.

Vice Chair Keith appreciated Chair Marshall’s input and suggestions. He stated that this project coming to Grover Beach is a big deal. He stated that it will be a good revenue stream for the City, and also adds jobs. He looks forward to the vote and seeing the project move forward.

Chair Marshall asked about the logistics of the deposit for road work and how that would be transferred to Pismo Beach.

City Attorney Koczanowicz stated that since it is a proposed mitigation measure that requires the deposit, there are ways of keeping track of the money, and it will be there when the improvements are made and when the money is requested.

Vice Chair Keith made the motion to approve the project, and adopt the four resolutions, with the amendment to Finding 1 of Resolution No. 07-014 to state that the project is in a non-appealable area; Commissioner Versaw seconded the motion and it was carried with a vote of 7-0-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:21 p.m.

/s/
CHAIR MARSHALL

/s/
SECRETARY TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION
GEORGE HANSEN, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

(Approved at PC Meeting: May 8, 2007)