

MINUTES
SPECIAL
JOINT CITY COUNCIL
AND
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2004

A special meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission of the City of Rolling Hills Estates was called to order at 9:20 a.m. at the Norris Pavilion, 501 Indian Peak Road, by MAYOR MITCHELL.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Addleman, Mitchell, Seamans, Zerunyan, Zuckerman

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bayer, Conway, O'Day, Rein, Vanden Bos

COMMISSIONER ABSENT: Somers

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Doug Prichard, City Manager

David Wahba, Planning Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Stefanos Polyzoides

Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists

Vinayak Bharne

Moule & Polyzoides Architect and Urbanists

INTRODUCTIONS

The CITY COUNCIL and Planning Commission introduced themselves to the audience.

Planning Director Wahba stated the purpose of this meeting is to introduce the proposed Deep Valley Drive Master Plan to the business community. He indicated that, while there are several projects currently being considered, it is the City's desire to present the proposed master plan at this time.

BUSINESS ITEMS

A. PRESENTATION OF DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN BY MOULE & POLYZOIDES

Mr. Polyzoides thanked everyone for attending and commented that he would like to present a "town center" to the community. He provided an extensive power point presentation of the proposed master plan.

Mr. Polyzoides noted that buildings are being built based on their use rather than quality. He believed that the City would not want to have "throw away" buildings, but rather permanent structures that will last for many years.

Commissioner Conway inquired as to the reduced capacity of traffic lanes if density is being increased.

Mr. Polyzoides responded that the lanes should be 10-11 feet wide with ample parking on all streets. He noted that parking spaces are precious throughout the nation as they attract people to come and shop and that flexibility must prevail.

In regards to Little Silver Spur Road, Mr. Polyzoides noted that under the COUNCIL'S direction, this street is considered very important, and it is the City's desire is to boost the economic value of the downtown area.

Commissioner Conway inquired as to a project being brought to the City with administrative approvals. Mr. Polyzoides noted that, subject to design review, this would be preferable.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Ted Wynne, Palos Verdes Professional Center, noted he has been undergoing the lengthy process for the 41 unit senior condominium project. He provided a history of the application for his project and hoped to be ready to present an application to the Planning Commission in two months. Additionally, he anticipated construction to begin in the fall. He then discussed the parking requirements for his property which would have two spaces per unit; one each for the resident and guest.

Aaron Swerdlow, Environmental Investments, 9841 Airport Blvd., #700, Los Angeles, noted he owns the former Arco site at 828 Silver Spur Road. He noted that his proposal will entail mixed use as well, but is in the early stages of determining style and size of the building as well as parking. In regards to contamination on this site, he noted that Arco is poised to handle any complications that might arise.

Greg Brown, former McDonald's site, P.O. Box 10755, Newport Beach, commented that his property is the first building seen when entering the commercial district. He noted that Mr. Polyzoides created a superior design for this entryway to the village as it accomplishes several important objectives as well as camouflages the Post Office.

Mr. Polyzoides noted that Mr. Brown is proposing an 18 unit, flex-space that fronts Silver Spur Road. He indicated that the plan was presented to the Mixed Use Subcommittee and will be submitted to the City within two weeks.

MAYOR MITCHELL mentioned another project located at 627 Deep Valley Drive. She indicated that the property owner is considering a mixed use design as well which will include condominiums and retail space.

DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

Craig Knickerbocker, Knickerbocker & Associates, 1218 El Prado, #128, Torrance, inquired as to the flex-space concept and if it is subjectively decided upon. Mr. Polyzoides noted that he hopes the code remains open-ended and reiterated that the flexibility aspect is essential. Mr. Knickerbocker stated that success of a development would depend on that component.

Jack Pharris, 5066 Rolling Meadows Road, commended the COUNCIL and Planning Commission for their efforts on moving this plan along. He noted that he is one of many active seniors who are looking to downsize their homes and believed this type of housing is ideal. Additionally, he asked that consideration be made to eliminating stairs as it may become problematic as the younger seniors age, and suggested larger bathrooms, elevators, etc. As far as parking requirements, he noted that there should be at least two spaces per unit on a single level.

Kurt Kanolian, stated that he has been involved with several pedestrian-oriented developments. He noted his concurrence with Mr. Pharris in that older seniors (63 years and up) should be taken into account as they may not need as many parking spaces. He also noted that an elevator is preferable to stairs and commended Mr. Polyzoides on a wonderful presentation. Additionally, he commented that there will not be much pedestrian traffic if the storefront has nothing to offer. He reminded the COUNCIL that

oftentimes cities provide substantial assistance.

Rick Elder, 608 Silver Spur Road, also commended everyone who participated in the master plan. He noted that the existing buildings are not worth retaining. He requested clarification of the process.

MAYOR MITCHELL responded that the Mixed Use Subcommittee has reviewed individual projects. She stated that the developer will typically bring in a conceptual plan for review by the subcommittee which will make suggestions as the developer moves through the project.

COUNCILMAN ZERUNYAN noted that the business community can obtain expertise from other property owners in the audience that might be of assistance as well.

Peggy Herrera, 725 Deep Valley Drive, commented that she was pleased with the presentation, but was concerned about her veterinary business. She noted that this type of enterprise would not fit in with mixed use and wondered if this would negatively impact her.

COUNCILMAN ZUCKERMAN addressed Dr. Herrera stating that existing businesses do need to be protected noting that residential use is very profitable for the surrounding businesses. Additionally, he noted that the neighborhood retail services still exist and cautioned the COUNCIL to be mindful of that with respect to any transition.

Jane Jones, Palos Verdes Library District, concurred with other comments praising the master plan. She noted that the Library is looking forward to this change and believed it could contribute greatly to the commercial district as it draws hundreds of individuals everyday. She expressed her concern that eliminating a parking structure would remove spaces from the area and urged the COUNCIL to consider their needs as well.

Marilyn Long, P.O. Box 3068, Palos Verdes Peninsula, noted she is representing the owner of the Village Shoe Repair and that he is concerned about what would happen to his business. COUNCILWOMAN SEAMANS noted that there are no plans to eliminate the Brickwalk or any other storefronts along that section of the Drive.

Planning Director Wahba thanked the audience for participating and stated that any written comments, e-mails, or anyone wishing to contact City Hall can address their comments to him. He noted that this item will be discussed at the Policy Development Session with possible workshops to be held in the future. Additionally, he noted that environmental issues will be reviewed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as well.

Planning Director Wahba went on to comment that it is the City's intention to have projects blend in with the master plan.

An inquiry was made regarding who would be responsible for providing a park as shown on the rendering. Planning Director Wahba indicated that the City is not in a position to purchase open space and that this decision would be left up to the developer.

COUNCILMAN ZUCKERMAN asked the audience to bear in mind that there is no single element in this plan that is absolutely required, but provides a vision against which future applications will be considered.

COUNCILWOMAN SEAMANS noted that the City has most of the commercial district within its boundaries which does not qualify for redevelopment or any type of funding assistance so creativity is needed to find other ways to provide incentives, along with assistance from developers. Additionally, she noted that the City must take hard look at preserving the facilities as well as protecting existing businesses.

COUNCILMAN ZERUNYAN commented that financial numbers will drive much of the development. He noted that the City understands this aspect very well and will look to accomplish this vision over time.

A question was raised regarding surrounding cities' participation in addressing the traffic. Planning Director Wahba noted that this will be considered as part of the environmental review process.

Kit Fox, City of Rancho Palos Verdes, noted that his city does not have a position, but was interested in what is being proposed on Little Silver Spur Road as it directly affects his city's residents from behind.

Joyce Crump, 5030 Golden Arrow Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, commented that she overlooks the commercial district, and they are concerned with the proposed condominium project at the Arco Station with regards to digging, parking, etc., and how that will affect the stability of the hillside.

Mr. Swerdlow addressed the audience stating that they have retained qualified geo-technical engineers who are aware of these issues and will take any precautions needed.

COUNCILWOMAN SEAMANS reiterated that the COUNCIL is not looking to eliminate commercial uses as it affects the sales tax base. She encouraged the business or property owners to contact the City to possibly form some type of community committee and emphasized that it is not the desire of the COUNCIL to turn this area into a massive development as in other cities.

COUNCILMAN ZUCKERMAN commented that sales tax revenue is not the main purpose of the master plan. He noted that the City must follow the General Plan rather than focusing on financial interests only in order to provide services to the community.

MAYOR MITCHELL again thanked everyone for attending and expressing their interest in the community. She reiterated that the COUNCIL will discuss this item at their Policy Development Session and welcomed all comments as this plan moves through this cooperative process. She noted that the City does not have the resources to carry this project on its own. She expressed her appreciation to Moule & Polyzoides as they are well-known experts in their field. Additionally, she noted she is looking forward to working with the business community over the next several years.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m. to a special meeting of the City Council Policy Development Session on Wednesday, February 25, 2004 at 12:30 p.m. at the Norris Pavilion, 501 Indian Peak Road.

Respectfully submitted, Approved,

Hope J. Nolan Douglas R. Prichard

Deputy City Clerk City Clerk