

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LANCASTER PLANNING COMMISSION

December 26, 2006

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mann called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Salazar gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Troth led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Faux, Salazar, Troth, Vice Chairman MacPherson, and Chairman Mann.

Absent: None.

Also present were the Planning Director (Brian Ludicke), Principal Civil Engineer (Carlyle Workman), Recording Secretary (Tess Epling), and an audience of approximately 15 people.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF CONCEPTUAL DESIGN LAYOUT FOR THE AMARGOSA CREEK SPECIFIC PLAN

Chairman Mann opened the public hearing at 5:05 p.m.

Brian Ludicke made the presentation to go through the options laid out before the Planning Commission. The first option is labeled 2B Alternative 4 which incorporates the design discussions the Commissioners mentioned during the last hearing on December 18, 2006. The Commission at that time reviewed Option 2B, which staff indicated was their preferred option. There were some changes that the Commission wanted effected to make it a stronger plan.

Those changes were:

1) Strengthen the north-south pedestrian access south of the main plaza area. The main plaza is located in the intersection of east-west corridor and major north-south corridor. In an attempt to strengthen this, RTKL indicated the addition of another building that would be on the west side of the access as it comes south of the pedestrian area, which gives a feeling of better feeling of enclosure and longer stretch of area outside of the plaza where it would give a main street feel.

2) Strengthen the pedestrian connection to Lancaster City Park. RTKL designers believe there ought to be some additional attention given to a connection to the south end of the project site into city park. The revised design also indicates the placement of additional buildings in an attempt to create a pathway would direct pedestrians into the major east-west main street feature.

3) Provide a design that allows for the eastward extension of the east-west “main street” feature to 5th Street West. This design incorporates that change – it shows a design that carries the street further east to 5th Street East, providing a potential for a connection to the east side of this site as well as providing a secondary effect of creating another plaza area.

4) Evaluate the potential for restricting vehicular traffic in the main plaza area and along portions of the east-west “main street.” The plan does not specifically show any areas where it is excluded. The designers have indicated that as this plan is developed, there may be areas where restricting vehicular access may be beneficial but stressed that additional study is needed.

5) Require two story buildings around the main plaza area to help provide a feeling of enclosure and generate additional activity through the provision of office or other uses on the second floor. The plan depicts buildings surrounding the plaza as 2 story-buildings now.

6) Evaluate whether a floor yield of 25% can be achieved along the properties fronting on 10th Street West. RTKL designers were concerned that it would be a difficult task to achieve, thinking that the coverage could approach 15% under optimal conditions. Two issues noted were the concern over parking demand relative to other users in the area and the concern about whether a large amount of building area on 10th Street West would, in effect, draw activity away from some pedestrian oriented areas where we are trying to generate activity. RTKL does not believe that a 25% yield is possible.

7) Optional hotel location at the south end of the main north-south axis. In the revised plan, they are now labeled as potential hotel sites. We have to be mindful, though, that the ground floor of the hotel would not be treated in such a way that it would create a negative effect on the pedestrian desirability of the area.

There was a speaker in the audience who wished to comment as follows:

Dave Owens, resident of Lancaster, California, stated that he appreciated the hard work of everyone involved in the project. The site plan's "arch" design literally embraces the park. He also liked the idea of the pedestrian area connecting to the park and ride area. The central meeting area was also incorporated in the plan. A new feature is a secondary gathering area which would add to the appeal without dominating the area. He was concerned about the wind tunnel aspect of the east-west corridor, but with the addition of buildings, it would mitigate that. The new feature that jogs towards the park embraces the park and relates well and looks more master planned.

Chairman Mann closed the public hearing at 5:20 p.m., whereby Commissioners discussion ensued.

The Planning Commissioners all concurred that the project looked achievable and commended staff and RTKL for having done a remarkable job incorporating the revisions they suggested. Chairman Mann and Commissioner Troth expressed their concern that property owner Scott Smith, who owns most of the shopping center's frontage along the east side of 10th Street West, might not participate in the project if development of his property was limited to small shops while other property owners' lands were slated for larger stores and that at least 25% of Smith's property be identified for development. Brian Ludicke responded that the City's parking requirements would probably only allow Smith to develop, at most, about 20% of his property but his participation in the center would help him draw a higher level of tenants. Vice Chairman MacPherson commented that the project appeared to be similar to Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square in London. He also expressed that three things should be considered. Firstly, that the pedestrian lane from center to main plaza should be enhanced to make it pedestrian friendly. Secondly, that the flexibility of vehicular traffic on main street should be maintained. Lastly, that alternate locations for hotels could be found where it could still be successful.

Vice Chairman MacPherson made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Troth to adopt Option 2B Alternative 4, with the following considerations:

- A target objective of 15% building square footage to be provided along 10th Street West frontage properties.
- The main plaza must be built in the first phase.

Motion carried with the following vote:

AYES: Commissioners Faux, Salazar, Troth, Vice Chairman MacPherson,
Chairman Mann.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

COMMISSION AGENDA

None.

DIRECTOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR - NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Mann declared the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. to Monday, January 8, 2007, at 5:30 p.m., in the Planning Conference Room, Lancaster City Hall.

KENNETH G. MANN, Chairman
Lancaster Planning Commission

ATTEST:

BRIAN S. LUDICKE, Planning Director
City of Lancaster