

MINUTES
OJAI PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

May 2, 2007

7:30 p.m.

The Chair called the regular meeting of the Ojai Planning Commission to order on Wednesday, May 2, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Ojai City Hall, 401 S. Ventura Street, Ojai, California.

ROLL CALL, On a call of the roll, the following Planning Commissioners were present:
Blatz, Becker, Foster, Adams, Crabtree, Mirk, Weaver

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, Commissioner Mirk led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS, Scott Eicher, 501 Park Road, Ojai, is from the Ojai Valley Green Coalition. He passed out a flyer prior to the meeting inviting the Commission to attend a green coalition event scheduled for May 12th, 10-4:00 at Matilija Jr. High School.

CONSENT CALENDAR – The consent calendar is approved by a roll call vote on one motion. Should any member of the Commission wish to discuss or disapprove an item, it must be removed from the consent calendar and considered as a separate item.

1. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Planning Commission April 18, 2007

RECOMMENDATION: Approve as submitted.

MOTION

Commissioner Foster moved to **adopt** Staff recommendation for item 1, adoption of the minutes of the consent calendar as fore mentioned. Commissioner Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed as follows:

AYES: Blatz, Foster, Adams, Crabtree, Mirk, Weaver

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: Becker

ABSENT: None

2. ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT, WHICH DELETES AND REPLACES CERTAIN LANGUAGE IN TITLE 10, CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE 16 OF THE OJAI MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING SIGN REGULATIONS (TA 07-01). The Ordinance Amendment would apply citywide. A Categorical Exemption has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

MOTION

Commissioner Weaver moved to **adopt** Staff recommendation to continue item 2 of the consent calendar. Commissioner Blatz seconded the motion. The motion passed as follows:

AYES: Blatz, Becker, Foster, Adams, Crabtree, Mirk, Weaver

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL PLANNING COMMISSION LIAISON REPORT

No reported on the MAC meeting. Next MAC meeting set for May 21, 2007 and Commissioner Becker is scheduled to attend.

Chair Adams opened the:

PUBLIC HEARING

3. DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT (DRP 07-05) for the Fulton Street Extension Project. The City of Ojai proposes to extend South Fulton Street from its current terminus at Pearl Street, to connect with Bryant Circle in an existing City right-of-way. The project would entail the construction of a 40-foot curb-to-curb roadway section with 5-foot sidewalks on each side of the roadway section. The Planning Commission is being requested to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration, which has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Property Owner: City of Ojai. Representative: Doug Breeze, City of Ojai Public Works Director.

Vice Chair Crabtree recused himself because he is working on a project directly adjacent to the project.

Chair Adams turned the time over to Staff for recommendation.

Katrina Rice Schmidt, City Planner, addressed the Commission and reviewed the Staff Report.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Conduct a public hearing; and
2. Adopt Resolution No. 07-01 that adopts a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and approves Design Review Permit (DRP 07-05) subject to conditions and findings of approval.

Questions for Staff and Representative, Doug Breeze

Chair Adams asked what the obstruction is that is indicated on the map that was submitted by Michael Shields.

Ms. Schmidt stated there are more obstructions than indicated on the map submitted by Michael Shields. She stated there are many postal boxes in buckets in the middle of the walkway. She stated the situation is not good and the City will soon evaluate the safety of the situation.

Commissioner Mirk asked if it is possible to install speed pillows for safety issues on South Fulton Street.

Mr. Breeze answered that it could be discuss and yes it could be possible.

Commissioner Foster asked about the traffic trying to get o Ojai Avenue from Bryant and asked for comments regarding a Signal on Ojai Avenue.

Mr. Hawks answered the traffic does not meet the Caltrans warrants for a traffic signal. He mentioned that a round a bout is a possible option.

Ms. Schmidt added the round-a-bout and signal at Bryant and Ojai Avenue are on a menu of options for traffic improvements listed in the Bryant Industrial Area Plan. She added Pearl Street extension is also in the master plan.

Commissioner Foster asked if it is money that is keeping the City from pursuing the Pearl Street extension.

Ms. Schmidt answered yes that the City does not own the land for Pearl Street extension and in addition to the cost of the infrastructure the acquisition of land will be costly.

Mr. Hawks stated the City would be pursuing grant funding for the Pearl Street extension. Commissioner Weaver asked if the City wanted to obtain approval from Caltrans for a traffic circle does Caltrans require the City to meet warrants.

Mr. Hawks answered no they do not because Caltrans supports traffic circles.

Speaker, Pete Lafolette, Aliso Street, Ojai, was disappointed and feels there is no forward thinking on the City's part in regards to the Bryant industrial area. He says it is poor planning and feels there is way to many vacancies in the area.

Speaker, Michael Shields, 207 S. Fulton Street, Ojai, on the board of the Sycamore Homes, Home Owners Association. He reviewed the letter of concerns that was submitted prior to the meeting. Letter is on file in the Community Development Department.

Speaker, Bob Daddi, 615 Quail Oaks, Ojai, submitted photos taken during peak hours of traffic on Bryant Street. He explained his photos.

Speaker, Michael Shields, 207 S. Fulton Street, Ojai, had some additional comments.

MOTION

Commissioner Mirk moved to **close** the public hearing and Commissioner Blatz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Kersnar explained very few cities in California have resources to develop an area plan up front. He went on to state the City of Ojai would eventually accomplish the goals of the Bryant Industrial Area Plan, but does not have the money at this time.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Blatz sees it as substituting one large problem for two smaller problems.

Mr. Hawks stated it is considered better traffic engineering to disperse traffic.

Commissioner Blatz asked if it is sound planning to disperse traffic into a neighborhood.

Mr. Hawks answered the extension is in the City's Circulation Element.

Ms. Schmidt also added this is the first step in a multiple step process, Bryant Industrial Area Plan. She states with the Fulton extension the traffic problem will be diffused and as the other improvements come on line the problem will be further diffused.

Ms. Schmidt went on to address Mr. Lafolette's concerns, stating, at the central project located at 407 Bryant Circle, all the buildings are sold so there will be no vacancies. Also, at 420 Bryant Circle where the warehouse that is under construction is 100% rented out, so there will be no vacancies. She went on to address the other speaker's comments stating, "Where the juniper is in the right of way, Doug will have that removed immediately". She also explained in addressing concerns to the Fulton Street extension, the City will continue to identify and alleviate any existing encroachments in the City's right of way to help with pedestrian safety. She stated Doug has indicated he could, as a part of this project, install a ramp on the northwest corner to mirror the southwest corner, as requested by Michael Shields.

Commissioner Becker requested street stripping on Bryant Street and particularly at the corner of Bryant and Ojai Avenue as an improvement that could greatly help with safety. He feels the Fulton Street extension will not be the exit of choice for the larger trucks that use Bryant Street.

Commissioner Mirk asked what would happen if we did not do the extension at this time. He prefers doing the entire plan as a whole.

Mr. Breeze answered that this extension project has been on the books for 14 years and has been through the process two times. He went on to explain the City has spent significant funding on all the studies, (i.e., archaeological, traffic, air, noise, etc.) which are required by the State, Caltrans and environmental agencies. We would run the risk of having to start again which would use more of the City's money and grant funding.

Commissioner Weaver feels it is a good first step to building the grid. She feels it is an important alternative exit route for emergencies. She feels the stripping is a very good idea and feels traffic calming could be implemented.

Commissioner Blatz would also like to see traffic calming means added the project. The type of traffic calming left up to the discretion of the Public Works Department.

Commissioner Becker feels a stop sign at Bryant and Pearl to be a significant help with traffic calming.

Commissioner Blatz asked Mr. Hawks if there is a reason, from a engineering standpoint, why we would want a stop sign placed at Bryant and Pearl.

Mr. Hawks responded it is a belief in the traffic engineering field, that stop signs should not be installed just to try and slow traffic. It is trading one problem for another because drivers tend to run the stop sign and then it creates a safety issue.

Commissioner Foster feels this street extension sets the tone for the rest of the extensions planned for the City. He has learned from a League of City's speaker who spoke specifically on the study where the speed of cars correlates with the width of street. He would like to see the street at 36 foot wide instead of 40 feet.

Mr. Kersnar answered, that would be creating a 36-foot connector road between two 40-foot roads. He also explained the extension portion is not a straight shot to Fulton Street that it is curved. He stated this project is before the Commission to access whether the proposed design is in conformity with the plan and the plan calls for a 40-foot street.

Mr. Breeze added in order to change the street width to 36 feet wide all the studies and area plans would be required to have new studies. Ms. Schmidt added that the traffic analysis, the volume to capacity ratios, the air quality analysis would need to be done. She stated it would require three consultants to do three private studies and it would require re-circulations of the documents to State Clearinghouse and all interested parties. Also, the Bryant Industrial Area Plan would need to be amended as well as an addendum to the full EIR that was done on the BIAP.

Chair Adams clarified what the Planning Commission is approving. Chair Adams reopened the public hearing.

Speaker, Bob Daddi, 615 Quail Oaks, Ojai, spoke about a the speed control diamonds in the center of the road that were installed for a Safe Routes to School project on El Paseo Road near the intersection of Bristol Road.

Chair Adams clarified that the requirement for the installation of these speed control devices are not within the purview of the Planning Commissions approval.

MOTION

Commissioner Mirk moved to **close** the public hearing and Commissioner Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION

Commissioner Blatz moved to **adopt** Resolution 07-01 and Staff's recommendation as fore

mentioned subject to the conditions of approval with the added, including but not limited to, request that as a separate item in the future, traffic calming options for the existing northern park of south Fulton Street be brought back to the Planning Commission and the added recommendation to City Council that they require installation of traffic calming measures to the existing northern portion of South Fulton Street. Mirk seconded the motion.

Commissioner Discussion

Chair Adams recommended adding stripping of Bryant Street and Circle to the motion.

MOTION

Commissioner Mirk moved to **adopt** Staff recommendation as fore mentioned including but not limited to the added recommendation stripping of Bryant Street and Circle. Commissioner Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed as follows:

AYES: Blatz, Becker, Foster, Adams, Mirk, Weaver

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: Crabtree

ABSENT: None

DISCUSSION ITEM

4. DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT (DRP 07-04) for a 268 square foot second-story expansion to an existing two-story, 2,232 square-foot single-family residence with an attached 514 square-foot garage on a Single-Family Residential (R-1) zoned property.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Continue this item to May 16, 2007 to allow staff to re-notice the public hearing. The public hearing notice for May 2, 2007 identified an incorrect address for the subject property.

Chair Adams asked for a motion to continue this item.

MOTION

Commissioner Mirk moved to **adopt** Staff recommendation to continue this item until the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting on May 16, 2007. Commissioner Becker seconded the motion. The motion passed as follows:

AYES: Blatz, Becker, Foster, Adams, Crabtree, Mirk, Weaver

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Chair Adams opened the:

DISCUSSION ITEM

5. CONCEPT REVIEW (CR 07-02) for a tentative parcel map to subdivide one parcel of approximately 37,070 square feet to four parcels. The subject parcel is located at 310-316 East Matilija Street in Ojai, on the northwest corner of East Matilija Street and North Montgomery Street.

Chair Adams turned the time over to Staff for recommendation.

Kanika Kith, Associate Planner, addressed the Commission and reviewed the Staff Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Provide the applicant with comments and recommendations regarding the preliminary proposal (CR 07-02), based on the staff report, preliminary site plans, the applicant's presentation, and the public input received; and
2. Provide the applicant with preliminary indication of whether or not it supports the project.

Owner addressed the Commission, Jim Exon, was available for questions.

Questions for Owner and Staff

Commissioner Weaver asked Staff if the City has a policy on creating landlocked parcels.

Ms. Schmidt answered when a subdivision creates a landlocked parcel the City requires an agreement with a deed restriction for access and parking. It cannot be an easement because it is all, under one ownership at this point and you can't grant an easement to yourself, so the City requires the deed restriction to be placed on the property for any future owners to have a shared access agreement.

Commissioner Weaver asked the applicant if he would consider three lots instead of four.

Mr. Exon does not feel keeping the lots smaller means less development.

Commissioner Blatz agrees with the applicant and likes the idea of smaller parcels instead of 1 large parcel. He would like to see the proposed parcels to be less connected to one another, regarding ingress, egress and parking. He feels the uses and the parking are all intertwined together. He does not like the idea to subdivide with so much overlapping.

Mr. Exon pointed out there is an ordinance in the City that allows shared parking with any public parking lot within 500 feet of the project.

Chair Adams would the deed restriction specify that all the existing ingress, egress and parking be required to remain in a specific configuration.

Ms. Schmidt answered along with a deed restriction, a legal description required and recorded.

Commissioner Becker feels the natural split of the property is for 2 lots instead of 4 and would be more in favor of a 2 way split.

Commissioner Foster feels it is more cohesive with 2 or 3 larger lots rather than 4 smaller lots.

Commissioner Mirk likes the idea of the lot split and feels keeping the area in small lots helps to support small-scale development.

Commissioner Weaver prefers to see 3 lots instead of 4 so as not to create any land locked lots.

Chair Adams feels the idea of a 4 way split does not leave enough flexibility for development.

Vice Chair Crabtree was could see what the other Commissioners were trying to say as far as wanting to see bigger lots for more flexibility in development, but feels smaller lots is what the City typically likes to see.

Chair Adams concluded the concept review by stating she does not feel splitting this lot into 2 to 3 lots instead of 4 would result in the development of monstrous projects.

DIRECTOR REPORT

6. RECENT DIRECTOR APPROVALS

Mr. Kersnar addressed the Commission and gave his report on recent approvals.

RECEIVED PROJECT APPLICANT	PROJECT ADDRESS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS/DATE
04/23/07 T 07-12 Cecil Messer	12401 N. Ventura Ave	Remove 2 eucalyptus, prune 1 oak	A 04-18-07
04/24/07 T 07-13 Barbara Buchanan	1120 Foothill Road	Remove 1 Hazardous Oak Tree	A 04-24-07
04/17/07 T 07-09 Oscar's Tree Service	1212 Daly Road	Remove 1 Hazardous Oak Tree	A 04-17-07
03/14/07 S 07-04 Lee & Deborah Clukey	308 N. Signal St	"INN HARMONY"	A 04-10-07
04/17/07 S 07-06 Barbara	501 E. Ojai Ave	"EARTHPLAY ECOSTORE"	A 04-26-07

Chair Adams asked for an update on Pat's Liquor and the Range Rovers that are parked in the old Ford Dealership lot.

Commissioner Blatz asked about the completion of the old El Camino Hotel.

Commissioner Becker asked if it would be possible to have a report on the Public Works projects that are in process.

Mr. Kersnar answered all the questions.

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON,

Questions for Liaison, Steve Olsen was not in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business brought before the Commission, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Shari Herbruck, Planning Commission Secretary

Tucker Adams, Planning Commission Chair

Jere Kersnar, City Manager and Community Development Director