

Planning Commission

Regular Meeting of March 5, 2014

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Nichols at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 5, 2014, in the City Council Chambers, 25541 Barton Road, Loma Linda, California.

Commissioners Present: John Nichols, Chairman
Miguel Rojas, Vice Chairman
Carolyn Palmieri
Nikan Khatibi (arrived at 7:03p.m.)
Ryan Gallant

Staff Present: Konrad Bolowich, Assistant City Manager
Richard Holdaway, City Attorney
Guillermo Arreola, Associate Planner

Chairman Nichols led the Pledge of Allegiance. No items were added or deleted; no public participation comments were offered upon invitation of the Chairman.

PC 14-07 – PRECISE PLAN OF DESIGN NO. 13-127 - A REQUEST TO APPROVE A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT BASED UPON THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO CONSTRUCT A THREE-STORY, 345,000 GROSS SQUARE FOOT VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CLINIC ON A VACANT 36 ACRE PARCEL, LOCATED AT 26001 REDLANDS BOULEVARD, WEST OF BRYN MAWR AVENUE. THE PROJECT IS LOCATED WITHIN SPECIAL PLANNING AREA D AND WITHIN THE EAST VALLEY CORRIDOR SPECIFIC PLAN-SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE

Chairman Nichols opened the public hearing.

Assistant City Manager Bolowich indicated this item was for design review only; that the environmental studies are still pending and will be presented at the next meeting of the Planning Commission.

Contract Planner Melanie Traxler presented the staff report into evidence. She reviewed the project location, identified the Special Planning Area D site area and zone designation. She continued providing a brief history, starting with the General Plan Amendment to establish the Phase I concept area, the Zone Change to realign certain designations to meet the revised parcels, the Parcel Map process to consolidate various lots, and approval of the Bryn Mawr Avenue roadway extension. These were approved in June and became effective in July 2013. The request is for a healthcare clinic for outpatient services, is not a 24-hour hospital or resident facility, and offers medical and other care services for Veterans.

Assistant City Manager Bolowich reviewed the evolution of the plans from the first submittal by the Veterans Administration to review by the Historical Commission.

Contract Planner Traxler continued, reviewing the site plan. She indicated the two primary access points from Bryn Mawr Avenue, both gated entries open during the day and secured at night; with staff and service access points from Bryn Mawr Avenue and Redlands Boulevard. She reviewed the parking areas for staff, visitors, motorcycles, and disabled; pedestrian pathways/walkways that connect with the outer edge of the project to enhance and encourage pedestrian access to the site; water detention basins for water runoff; courtyards and outdoor usable space surrounding the building; building access from all directions; open space plan that includes the 5.5 acre linear park which includes an orchard area, passive walkways and seating areas, and active area with parking for the park.

Ms. Traxler continued, indicating the project is within the East Valley Corridor Specific Plan and within the Special Development Zone, and requires a Planned Development process to approve the overall entitlements. Planned Development is implemented through a zone change, which adds the designation PD in the zoning map, so it remains East Valley Corridor - Special Development District – Planned Development (EVC-SD (PD)). The Planned Development includes the Precise Plan of Design (PPD) on the agenda for this meeting and the environmental documents to be presented at the next Planning Commission meeting. She continued, reviewing the Design Policy and Development Standards for Special Planning Area D, the General Plan Community Design Element Policies, and the East Valley Corridor Specific Plan Community Design Standards.

Assistant City Manager Bolowich reviewed the evolution of the building elevations from the original submittal by the Veterans Administration with the split footprint, no identifying front feature, window structure, and no real visual interest/balance, to the current rendition that included revision to the window structure with more visual interest and balance, a more cohesive building footprint and coloring, enhanced identifying front features, included water features and outdoor areas.

Ms. Traxler reviewed the current rendition. The building includes four separate wings, each oriented toward the parking areas and represented by its own unique style, design and materials that bring a sense of organization to the buildings and serve as a way-finding means. Additional visual features include the use of textures, openness within the buildings and brighter colors that make the building more inviting; the green screen along the west and south borders; the north and east borders with wrought iron style fencing; the use of greenscape, water features and pedestrian walkways throughout with designated crossing areas. She reviewed the vehicular access and traffic circulation coming from Bryn Mawr Avenue with wide driveway widths and crosswalks. She indicated that the required undergrounding of utilities is proposed to be deferred, developer would pay in lieu fees and lay conduit, and as adjacent development happens, the utilities for the entire area would be undergrounded. She indicated that the applicant was available to address any concerns or questions from Commissioners.

Discussion ensued among Commissioners, staff and developer, including:

- Height of the greenscreen fencing along the west and south boundaries – Ms. Traxler indicated the mesh screening will be 6' with hedges & landscaping.
- Parking sufficient for staff and visitors – exceeds requirements; Don Wetzel, development manager for Walsh Group, indicated that parking was dictated by the VA and planned out for 20 years. 840 spaces are allocated for staff, with anticipation of approximately 500 employees. Zoning requires one space for every 250 sq. ft. which would generate 1,380 required spaces, 2,035 spaces are proposed.
- Bus stop shelters and loading docks – Ms. Traxler indicated the development standards require 5 loading areas be provided with minimum dimensions and that the proposed loading area has sufficient space to accommodate up to the 5 required. At this point, exact bus stop location has not been determined; the facility is on an existing bus route with an existing stop with shelter near the promenade from Redlands Boulevard. The request will be made to Omnitrans to move that stop closer to the promenade. The internal shuttle stops will be placed close to Omnitrans stop to minimize the walking distance for visitors to the facility.
- Natural light within the building – David Staczek, ZGF Architects indicated that the goal was to bring in lots natural light, sort of bringing the outside in and the inside out; that the corridors within each clinic lead to the outdoors, every room along the perimeter will have windows and all of the waiting spaces are across from natural light. In addition, the front lobby has the skylight that continues into the building.
- While the project meets the current design standards and maximizes the parking, given building and parking issues at the current VA facility, what guarantees are in place that these design standards will continue into the future? Assistant City Manager Bolowich indicated that this is not a federal building, it is privately owned and leased to the VA, with any future changes required to go through the regular City planning process. The Developer indicated that there is no option for the VA to purchase, however the contract does have a lease renewal option after 20 years.
- Are any provisions in place for parking structures should the need arise? – Assistant City Manager Bolowich indicated that consideration of a parking structure was addressed in the Land Use Allocation Table (2B), with discussion to locate somewhere in the south to southeast corner of the site should it become necessary.
- Bicycle access with striping for bike lanes – Assistant City Manager Bolowich indicated this was something that would be looked at; perhaps some interior striping for bike access.

Upon invitation from Chairman Nichols, Dick Wiley addressed the Commissioner regarding a possible additional turn lane turn from Redlands Boulevard to Bryn Mawr Avenue; proposed landscaping to include drought resistant options; include traveling Viet Nam Veterans wall and/or make a permanent smaller version; water features taking into account the current drought conditions.

Commissioner, staff and developer comments continued:

- In regards to the duck pond, would water be stagnant or recirculating? Trent Thelen, Landscape Architect with ZGF Architects indicated that the proposed duck pond(s) would be recirculating water and are currently contemplating whether they are feasible giving the current conditions. The main water feature at the front entrance would be recirculating water as well.
- Consideration of a traffic signal at the main entrance on Bryn Mawr Avenue – Assistant City Manager Bolowich indicated concern that it was possibly too close to the Redlands Boulevard/Bryn Mawr Avenue signal; and that once development occurs across Bryn Mawr Avenue, zoned commercial/retail, alignment of driveways would be required and any additional signalization would come back with the traffic studies. Once future development occurs, pedestrian access would be considered.
- Who owns the land currently? Ms. Traxler indicated that land was owned by Lewis Homes and confirmed the project was a build-to-suit lease with the VA as the current tenant.

- Chairman Nichols asked about the nature of the financing/grant and acceleration process. Ms. Traxler indicated that the agreement with the Veterans Affairs has already taken place and the developer has time requirements to meet. The Developer indicated there was no federal appropriation; there was a bond issuance along with multiple bank financing, and time sensitive with respect to interest rate in the market. There is a date certain delivery obligation of the end of December 2015.
- In response to a question, the Developer indicated that there is edging/small wall at the front entrance water feature to delineate it from the walkway. In addition, it will include an inspirational quote to honor the Veterans.

Commissioners thanked the development team for a great presentation and design.

Motion by Palmieri, seconded by Khatibi and carried unanimously to continue the Public Hearing for PPD No. 13-127 to the April 2, 2014 meeting of the Planning Commission.

PC 14-08 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 15, 2014

Motion by Nichols, seconded by Palmieri and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of January 15, 2014 as presented.

REPORTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Nichols inquired about the Blossom Gove Memory Care facility. Assistant City Manager Bolowich indicated they were open for business and all appeared well.

Commissioner Rojas asked about possible tenants for the Centerpoint project. Assistant City Manager indicated that the grocery store was a Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market and the additional shops to the east were in final plan check stages with possible tenants of Waba Grill, Subway, and Starbucks, but nothing confirmed. Original discussions included Native Foods; however, Native Foods felt there was insufficient demand based upon density and household income to open.

Chairman Nichols indicated he had discussed with the Mayor as to the role of the Planning Commission and the potential of a combined Planning Commission/City Council workshop in regards to City Council direction of the role of the Planning Commission. Assistant City Manager indicated he would look to coordinate possible dates.

REPORTS BY STAFF

Assistant City Manager Bolowich indicated that Chase Bank in the Centerpoint project is now open. He also asked that if there is a conflict status with Loma Linda University changed to please inform staff as plans move forward with the Campus Transformation Plan. Campus Street widening project is nearly complete; Stewart Street pedestrian bridge is a little behind, however should be done by mid-summer. Staff will look at possibility of presentation regarding the Campus Transformation Plan as an informational item only.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Minutes approved at the meeting of May 7, 2014.



Barbara Nicholson
Deputy City Clerk