

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY OF CONCORD PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1950 PARKSIDE DRIVE
CONCORD, CALIFORNIA

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2014

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission, City of Concord, was called to order by Chair Tim McGallian at 7:00 P.M., Wednesday, January 15, 2014, in the City of Council Chamber.

I. ROLL CALL

All were present except Commissioner Avila who had an excused absence

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chair, Tim McGallian
Vice Chair, Carlyn Obringer
Commissioner, Robert Hoag
Commissioner, John Mercurio

STAFF PRESENT:

Carol Johnson, Planning Manager
G. Ryan Lenhardt, Senior Planner
Joan Ryan, Senior Planner
Susanne Brown, Senior Assistant City Attorney

II. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Cub Scouts Troop 444 led the pledge.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No public comments received.

IV. ADDITIONS / CONTINUANCES / WITHDRAWALS

Staff requested the minutes from December 4, 2014 be withdrawn and brought back with corrections on February 5, 2014.

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner Mercurio, and seconded by Vice Chair Obringer to withdraw the meeting minutes of December 4, and to bring them back on February 5, 2014. The motion was passed by the following vote:

AYES: Hoag, Mercurio, Obringer, McGallian
 NOES: None
 ABSTAIN: None
 ABSENT: Avila

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

The notice of this public hearing was published in the Contra Costa Times and posted in the City’s posting cabinet on January 10, 2014.

1. PARKHAVEN HEAD START (PL131343 – UP, DR)

G. Ryan Lenhardt, Senior Planner, presented the staff report. Planner Lenhardt stated that for over 30 years the city has issued a variety of permit approvals for the installation of modular buildings as well as minor site upgrades at this location. A neighborhood meeting was conducted and 50 people attended and asked questions. Planner Lenhardt stated that the project has a Categorical Exemption; therefore no environmental analysis is required nor provided in the staff report. There are five buildings on the site. The project complies with the development standards for the Residential Medium zoning district. The new modular building will be on the vacant southwest corner of the property where Head Start will operate its childcare program. This program provides low income families with early childhood development services. The new building would accommodate 41 children between the hours of 8 AM to 5 PM. The project is consistent with policies contained in the General Plan. Site circulation will remain unchanged. The applicant is proposing to upgrade the site parking. Staff has determined the applicant qualifies for a reduction in the required number of parking spaces because each of the non-residential uses has distinct and different peak hours of operation. Staff is not recommending the fence be changed to an eight foot wall because the adjacent use is a garage with no windows or openings along the shared property line. Staff believes the proposed Head Start project will improve the vacant portion of the site with the addition of a modular building that will be compatible with the existing buildings. Staff recommends approval of this project.

The following are comments by the Commissioners and clarifications by Project Planner Lenhardt.

Commissioner Hoag stated his concerns with additional traffic. Planner Lenhardt stated that the Transportation Division has reviewed the proposed drop off and pick up schedule and has not identified any potential conflict.

Vice Chair Obringer inquired if the notification about the project was sent out in Spanish and if there were going to be any bike racks for parking. Planner

Lenhardt responded by affirming the notification was sent out in Spanish and there were no proposed plans for bike racks.

Commissioner Mercurio noticed that this project did not go to the Design Review Board. Planner Lenhardt stated minor applications such as this can be reviewed by staff. Commissioner Mercurio wanted confirmation that this change was the result of the new Development Code. He also stated his concern over the lack of a colored elevation. Planner Lenhardt stated this was a change from the prior development code. He also indicated, there were notes on the elevation that stated the colors of the buildings and staff was satisfied with those notes.

Vice Chair Obringer requested in the future with items that do not go through the Design Review Board if colored elevations could be included in the packets. Commissioner Mercurio was in agreement with Vice Chair Obringer's suggestion for future projects that do not go through the Design Review Board.

The applicant appeared to address any questions from the commissioners.

Applicant Elizabeth Crocker of the Unity Council stated the Council has provided Early Head start programs for over 25 years in Oakland and now they are serving Concord. She spoke of the great need in the Monument Corridor which is why they need the additional modular.

Commissioner Hoag had a question about sharing the existing outdoor playground. The Commissioner was concerned with staffing and making sure no child was lost in the shuffle. The applicant stated the playground would be shared though scheduling and the children would be watched by the care givers that know them.

Vice Chair Obringer asked what type and how many jobs would be created as a result of this project. The applicant responded with approximately eight teaching jobs, eight home-based servicers, managers, social workers, health care, and administration staff for a total of 25 five jobs of which most are full time. Vice Chair Obringer inquired about the construction schedule. Applicant Crocker replied with they hope to open in a few months if they pass tonight. Chairman McGallian thanked the applicant.

Chairman McGallian opened for public comments. There were no public comments.

Commissioner Mercurio stated that the new service is great and needed; he is in favor of the project. Commissioner Hoag thanked the applicant. Vice Chair Obringer believes the project is valuable to the community.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Obringer and seconded by Commissioner Mercurio to adopt Resolution No. 14-01PC approving Head Start Use Permit and Administrative Design Review (PL131343-UP, DR) subject to the conditions of approval set forth in attachment A to Resolution 14-01PC. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES:	Hoag, Mercurio, Obringer, McGallian
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
ABSENT:	Avila

VII. COMMISSON CONSIDERATIONS

There were no items to be considered.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Downtown Steering Committee Update – Project Planner: Joan Ryan

Vice Chair Obringer read a statement explaining that she must recuse herself from participating in the Downtown Concord Specific Plan matter due to the fact that she has an economic interest in real property within the project area, namely her primary residence.

Planner Ryan presented an update on the project. The city initiated the project in January 2013. Since January the staff has completed tasks one through six. No rezoning is being recommended as part of the plan, but rather it focuses on implementation strategies to encourage the full potential of growth possible within the PDA. Key strategies include: Providing a stronger connection along Grant Street between Todos Santos Plaza and BART; and offering a looping shuttle to transport residents through the major interests and destinations within Downtown. The plan will provide a greenway link under the BART tracks to connect existing trails and walkways. In terms of community outreach, an Ideas Fair was held, Four Technical Advisory Committee meetings and nine Downtown Steering Committees to date. Two Community Workshops and another scheduled for January 27, 2014 at Salvio Pacheco building. Planner Ryan concluded her presentation and invited any comments.

The following are comments by the Commissioners and clarifications by Senior Planner Ryan.

Commissioner Mercurio probed about having an architecture theme running through downtown, which indicates a preference for early California architectural design. How rigid will the requirement be and how will it be dealt with? Planner Ryan responded by stating the design guidelines are directed toward the early California architecture; however staff wanted to stay clear of being too

prescriptive with design guidelines. Instead, they focus more towards massing, providing direction in terms of form, setbacks from the street, and balconies which will still allow the Design Review Board to provide guidance. These guiding principles will allow them to still have flexibility and have developers meet their needs as well.

Commissioner Hoag stated his concerns about BART, and that the City does not have a lot of leverage and will not get any cooperation from them. The dismal condition of the BART station does not give him a high degree of confidence in BART's ability to maintain anything in a pristine condition. He wants to make sure we do not have high expectations of cooperation from BART. Planner Ryan responded by saying that BART has been on the Technical Advisory Committee. In regards to station improvement, BART has recognized that the station needs sprucing up and they do have funds and the talks will continue toward those station improvements.

Chairman McGallian had a question about measure J funds that were set aside for BART improvements.

Planning Manager Johnson stated that BART has been pursuing several projects for our station. The first phase is to do some quick wins. Cleaning is one of the first projects on the to-do list. BART has hired a landscape design team to improve the entry area and the southwest side of the station. They will be moving the bike lockers and replacing them with a secure bike cage facility. BART will be improving the drop off experience. In addition to the physical improvements they are doing some new way-finding signage, as the current signs are very aged and in poor condition. BART has been a very good partner and they have stepped up and we have a good working agreement with them.

Commissioner Mercurio hopes that BART keeps in mind the bike circulation through the station. Planning Manager Johnson replied that staff has gone out and conducted a field visit and identified areas that really need to be fixed. Staff is awaiting a response from the design consultants. Commissioner Mercurio noted this plan, if implemented would result in 7,700 more jobs and 10,000 more residences and make it a more viable place, even more than it is now.

Vice Chairman Obringer returned to the meeting.

IX. COMMISSION REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice Chair Obringer announced the Second Annual Concord Art and Wine Walk will be held on Saturday May 10, 2014 from 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM

X. FUTURE PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Planning Manager Carol Johnson announced the next Planning Commission meeting for February 5, 2014, which will include the annual reorganization. At the meeting of February 19, 2014, Senior Planner Frank Abejo will be sitting in for Planning Manager Carol Johnson. Meetings will be held on March 5, 2014 and March 19, 2014. In late April, the draft Specific Plan for Downtown will be presented for recommendation from the Planning Commission.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Mercurio moved to adjourn at 7:46 P.M. Commissioner Hoag seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote of the Commission.

APPROVED:



Carol Johnson
Planning Commission Secretary

Transcribed by Toi Wells