



NORTH PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE

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URBAN DESIGN/PROJECT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES: Monday, March 7, 2011 – 6:00 p.m.

North Park Recreational Center/Adult Center, 2719 Howard Ave.

I. Parliamentary Items

A. Called to order/ Roll Call: Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Seated Board Members: Robert Barry (Chair), Cheryl Dye (Vice-Chair), Lynn Elliott, Vicki Granowitz, Rob Steppke

Seated Community Voting Members*: Ernie Bonn

Board Members Attending: Kitty Callen (6:35)

B. Modifications & approval of agenda:

Motion: Approve agenda. Elliot/Granowitz 6-0-0

C. Approval of February 7, 2011 minutes:

Motion: Approve February 7 minutes with the change of the reference to the carwash and parking being located to the “north of the building” to the “north and west” of the building. Steppke/Dye 6-0-0

D. Announcements:

Bonn announced that a forum is being held on February 8 at the Hillcrest Joyce Community Center regarding solutions to the City fiscal crisis and that Walk San Diego is hosting a walk in South Park on April 16 at 8:30 a.m.

II. Non-Agenda Public Comment: None

III. Information Items: None

IV. Action Items:

A. Arco –Texas Street and El Cajon Blvd (Project No. 195449)

This item requests approval of an amendment to an existing CUP to allow construction of an 845-sf carwash and new storage space. The consultants for the applicant presented color renderings and elevations of the project showing new landscaping plan on both sides of the sidewalk and along the alley and Texas Street. Bonn asked if the applicant had met with the El Cajon BIA as recommended by the Subcommittee. They stated that they had not, but felt that they had addressed the request for a more pedestrian-friendly design. They noted that they will be the first business on El Cajon Boulevard to have landscaping lining the street and behind the sidewalk. The renderings also showed a 6-ft. high wall on the north along the alley (approximately 30 ft. from the residential building to the north), and a 3-ft. high wall on the east along Texas Street. The hours of carwash operation will be 7 am - 7 pm.

Barry stated that he had received a noise study produced by the applicant which identified project-related noise levels exceeding City regulations (62.5 decibels). Much discussion followed regarding potential noise impacts to the adjacent residences to the north. The project’s noise study recommended a 12-ft. high wall along the northern border of the parcel to mitigate the noise impacts to the existing multi-family residences directly across the alley; however, the study stated that, even with the 12-ft. high wall, the noise could not be mitigated for the

adjacent residents on the second floor. The study mentioned that an 18-ft. wall would be even more effective for sound proofing, but that it would likely be too large for the site and would still not mitigate second floor noise impacts.

The applicant indicated that the 6-ft. high wall will address noise on the building's first floor but that no wall height could satisfactorily mitigate noise impacting the second floor. The Subcommittee members agreed that an 18-ft. wall was too high for the site. Barry noted that the existing residents won't be able to leave their windows open during operation hours and that a 6-ft. wall would be inadequate according to the noise study. The applicant consultant agreed that the noise will exceed the 62.5 decibel level - i.e. the level at 5 ft from the carwash will be 64+ decibels. However he stated that the carwash would include doors that will close when washing and drying and reduce the ambient noise to City code levels. Granowitz was concerned that the noise starts before the car actually enters the carwash which opens and closes continually. Applicant indicated that the carwash doors are very expensive and are being proposed now in response to the findings of the noise study; they were not included in the initial carwash design.

Discussion followed regarding methodology of determining decibel levels, calculations based on average noise levels (meaning the noise is higher at some times), etc. Steppke would like to know how the doors have worked in the other locations. Bonn suggested investigating the possibility of installing soundproof windows in the adjacent residences. Elliott thinks a 12-ft. wall is too high and would be a fortress. She is concerned about landscaping maintenance, suggesting agave plants. Granowitz thinks the landscaping will end up uncared for and looking unattractive. She recommended that the project be conditioned to keep the doors closed the entire cycle and that the carwash require a CUP. Dye requested that the applicant bring back a new noise study that reflects installation of the doors and cite successful examples in other cities. Bonn requested applicant stamp the sidewalk concrete.

Motion: Continue project to the April 4 Subcommittee meeting, requesting applicant to address concerns raised regarding the proposed wall height, carwash door operation, and noise proofing of the neighboring residential windows; with the intent to take the project as a consent item to the full committee in April. Robert/ Kitty 7-0-0

B. AT&T - Plymouth Congregational Church (Project No. 224477)

AT&T is requesting a Neighborhood Use Permit for a wireless communication facility at 2711 University Avenue. The architect for AT&T presented floor plans and renderings. AT&T worked with the church pastor and board developing several iterations of potential designs. The local area is considered to be constrained for the placement of wireless communication sites because of the lack of existing development with the sufficient height requirements for such facilities. The church site was chosen because of the existing steeple height and ability to obtain the necessary 50+ ft. height for the wireless equipment. The project intends to construct an extended steeple to house the new wireless communication equipment and place the associated ground equipment within the church courtyard. A mature tree would be removed to accommodate the ground equipment structure.

Barry and others questioned what deviations were being requested as the subcommittee did not receive a staff cycle report prior to the meeting. The applicant's didn't have it either. Barry asked about public outreach. They were unaware of any. Elliott asked about electrical dangers. Applicant indicated that the public won't be exposed to FCC standard maximums due to the height of the facility. Barry and Dye noted major concerns that the project is extremely out of scale with the church building itself. Barry noted that the proposed tower design is not consistent with the angular design of the church building. Granowitz expressed concern that the design and size will negatively affect the entire block. (The proposed box-like design is 8'x 6'; the steeple addition would be 8'x 8'; the proposed tower would be 50' high). Applicant explained that the engineers need the height and that there was not another suitable building in

the area. Granowitz requested a simulation of the project and the entire block. Barry suggested moving the steeple to the back of the site to reduce the visual impact to the neighborhood while still achieving the desired project height. Because the project was submitted as Process 2 (staff-level decision), the Subcommittee moved to vote on the proposal in order to provide community recommendation to City staff as soon as possible.

Motion: To recommend denial due to the project's incompatibility with surrounding community character and its inappropriate scale as related to other architectural features in the community. Granowitz/Dye 7-0-0

V. Unfinished or New Business & Future Agenda Items

Next scheduled meeting date: April 4, 2011

VI. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Granowitz/Barry 7-0-0

* General Members have voting rights on the Subcommittee after attending three Subcommittee meetings; Board Members have voting rights anytime

For information about this subcommittee please contact Robert Barry at 619.954.5588 or Robert.Barry@cox.net. The next meeting of the North Park Planning Committee is April 19, 2011, 6:30 pm, at the North Park Christian Fellowship, 2901 North Park Way (at 29th Street).