



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

September 2, 1999

West Hollywood Park Auditorium, 647 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Smith.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

A Pledge of Allegiance was led by Joel Polacheck.

B. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Brad Crowe, Donald DeLuccio, Harriet Segal, Steve Smith, Bradly Torgan, Liz Anderson

Staff Present:

Ray Reynolds, Community Development Director; Lisa Heep, Planning Manager; Jennifer Davis, Senior Planner; John Chase, Urban Designer; Dennis Woods, Transportation Planner; Emmeline Elzin, Planning Intern; Bruce Robertson, Staff Assistant; Tony Leyva, Administrative Staff Assistant.

Others Present:

Craig Steele, Assistant City Attorney; Richard Kaku, City Transportation Consultant; Donald A. Hilland, CSR; Laura Kaufman, Chris Joseph Associates.

C. Approval of Agenda

Action: To approve the agenda.

Motion: Anderson

Second: DeLuccio

Votes: All Ayes

Motion carried.

D. Posting of Agenda

This agenda was posted at City Hall, the Community Development Department counter, West Hollywood Library on San Vicente Boulevard, Plummer Park, and the West Hollywood Sheriff's station.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

a. **Jeanne Dobrin, West Hollywood**, commended the Commission on its

ITEM 3.A

conducting of the previous Commission meeting.

- b. **Ruth Williams, West Hollywood**, reserved comments to be sent in writing to City Hall.
- c. **Charlotte Banta, West Hollywood**, also reserved comments to be sent in writing to City Hall.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

Action: To approve the Consent Calendar.

Motion: Crowe

Second: DeLuccio

Votes: All Ayes

Motion carried.

4. EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR - None

5. COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

6. PUBLIC HEARING

- A. **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 99-02, DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 99-16 (Outdoor Dining), DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 99-17 (Outdoor Dining), DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 99-19 (Outdoor Dining), DEMOLITION PERMIT 99-01, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 99-01, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 99-14, MINOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 99-01, BILLBOARDS 99-01 and 99-02, PARKING USE PERMIT 99-05, DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT 99-01, VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP 99-01 (52656, 52779, 52657), CREATIVE SIGN PERMIT 99-03, ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 99-03:** Comprehensive development of three sites: 8474-8490 Sunset and 1234 La Cienega Boulevards will contain an office expansion and new office building, retail and restaurant uses; 8500 –8544 and 1235 La Cienega Boulevards will contain a new 371-room hotel and retail uses; 8556-8572 Sunset Boulevard and 1209-1215 Alta Loma Road will contain new retail and restaurant uses. Site 4D will contain two new billboards. A pedestrian bridge will span La Cienega Boulevard and will contain a large screen video creative sign. The entire development will contain approximately 471,770 new square feet and retain approximately 118,000 square feet of existing office square footage. The project proposes to demolish the buildings at 8500-8544, 8480, 8474 Sunset Boulevard. The project will also contain a pedestrian bridge over La Cienega Boulevard and proposes several significant traffic and circulation improvements such as a cul-de-sac on Alta Loma Road and the widening of La Cienega Boulevard. The project will contain separate commercial lots as per the Vesting Tentative Tract Map request.

Applicant:

Sunset Millennium Associates

Location:

8474-8490 Sunset Boulevard, 1234-1235 La Cienega Boulevard, 8500-8544 Sunset Boulevard, 8556-8572 Sunset Boulevard, and 1209-1215 Alta Loma Road

Planner:

Jennifer Davis

Recommendation:

To approve the request subject to the findings and conditions in the proposed resolution.

Ms. Davis presented the second staff report on the Sunset Millennium Project.

City Attorney Craig Steele - CEQA Issues

- Master EIR serves as a forecast of a broad range of future projects
- Assumptions made in Master EIR reflects worst case scenarios
- Limitations on use of master EIR
- City Council considered overriding impacts of MEIR at time it was certified
- Environmental impacts are before the Commission in a conclusively certified document and should be part of its decision making process.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

PARKING

Commissioner Crowe noted for the record that the applicant is providing 2,222 parking spaces for this project, that is 73 more spaces than is required.

Crowe

- Expressed concern regarding hotel site shared parking
- Expressed concern regarding the West parcel shared parking
- Voiced concern over administration of shared parking and off-site parking use permit program

Cindy Starrett (applicant) asked that the applicant be given the opportunity to supply the supplemental evidence necessary to support their findings. Ms. Starrett also indicated the applicant's willingness to work with the Commission on specific conditions that may be imposed.

Sam Ross (applicant) also expressed a desire to supply supplemental information that might aid the Commission in making a decision on the two parcels mentioned by Commissioner Crowe.

DeLuccio

- Directed staff and the applicant to come back to the Commission with additional information regarding shared parking

Anderson

- Expressed shared parking concerns with regard to other existing businesses
- Applicant should not be allowed full project parking allotment for parcel 5C

- Concerned that parcels not tied together could be sold to another developer who might then build a project not approved by the Commission

Ms. Starrett assured that Commission that the middle parcel would be tied (by some legal document) to ensure that parking for the middle parcel would be provided on the West.

EMERGENCY ACCESS & TRAFFIC

Dennis Woods, Transportation Planner, presented information regarding emergency access to the hills North of Sunset Boulevard.

- Los Angeles in cooperation with the City of West Hollywood could install green light preemption on Sunset within the city of Los Angeles
- Los Angeles could restrict parking on narrow streets in the hills
- Los Angeles could also install an access point via a helo pad or fire station in the hills

Anderson

- Sunset traffic, narrow streets and poor signage all contribute to hill access difficulty

Segal

- Expressed concern that the level of service (to residents in the hills) from the Fire department remains uncertain

Torgan

- Asked Staff if other cities presently use preemption systems

The applicant clarified Commissioner Torgan's question of preemption systems stating that the cities of Beverly Hills, Culver City, and Santa Monica and the City of Los Angeles all use or are in the process of developing these systems in their respective cities.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

Crowe

- Questioned staff regarding Condition 10.25, (Bus and Limousine circulation plan)
- Inquired regarding bus and limousine parking
- Asked applicant how hotel access from La Cienega has been addressed

Mr. Woods clarified the applicant's circulation plan.

- Bus and limousine parking provided in middle parcel
- Applicant submitted a plan showing busses and limousines accessing parking lot via the valet lane
- Any special events requiring more than the plans provide would require additional permits
- Bus and limousine parking to be provided on-site

In response to Commissioner Crowe's question regarding truck access from La Cienega, the applicant referred the Commission to a graphic illustrating truck access to the site from both North and South directions. The applicant assured the Commission that adequate screen and bridge clearance has been allowed for truck access to the hotel.

Anderson

- Posed the question as to when the proposed improvements to La Cienega would take place

CUL DE SAC

Anderson

- Questioned Staff regarding the loss of parking spaces on Alta Loma

Mr. Woods responded that the applicant would be financially responsible for any parking spaces lost due to the development of this project. Mr. Woods continued that most of the parking spaces lost on Sunset would be due to roadway improvements and to enhance the crosswalk for pedestrian visibility.

DeLuccio

- Cul de Sac on Alta Loma important
- Emergency access to be a part of this improvement

LA CIENEGA IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Ross presented a graphic describing improvements to be made.

- La Cienega to be widened to the South & East to allow for additional travel lanes
- Turn lanes and turning capacity to be added to this intersection
- Landscaped medians on both sides of La Cienega
- Pedestrian facilities along hotel side of the project
- Widening within the existing right of way making a continuous roadway to Fountain

DeLuccio

- Concern regarding the number of dedicated lanes into the project from La Cienega

Mr. Ross responded that at Staff's recommendation the applicant has chosen to widen La Cienega's center lane in order to provide a left turn pocket in the middle of the road.

Segal

- Raised signage concerns with regard to the dedicated lane

Mr. Ross explained to the Commission that the dedicated lane would be paved with a different surface to demark the lane. There will also be a diverter that will channel traffic into the main travel lanes.

Torgan

- Questioned staff as to why the Northbound turn lane, on La Cienega, is attach to parcel 4C rather than parcel 5C.

Dennis Woods clarified that in order to improve the La Cienega/Sunset intersection, and specifically to allow more travel lanes on La Cienega requires lane dedication on both the East and West sides of the street.

Crowe

- Expressed importance of pedestrian safety on the sidewalk
- Suggested that the applicant examine the Beverly Center's handling of public safety in this regard
- Fire Department sign off on this plan questioned

Ms. Starrett stated that the Fire Department has examined the plans and that the project has a condition of approval from them.

Ms. Davis further explained that the preliminary site plans have been reviewed extensively by the Fire Department.

DeLuccio

- Posed questions regarding semi truck access to the site from La Cienega, considering the incline

The applicant addressed disruptions to Sunset Boulevard during the construction period.

- Almost all staging will be conducted on-site
- When necessary, the applicant will coordinate with the City to do work during off peak hours

- Construction mitigation plan to be developed
- Construction will not conflict with traffic diverted from the Santa Monica Boulevard Project

CEQA

Torgan

- Project mix indicates a possible change in scope from that which was anticipated in the MEIR
- Traffic study concerns

Craig Steele clarified that the full traffic study for the Sunset Specific Plan MEIR can be found in volume 2 of the technical appendices, and assured Commissioner Torgan that Staff will provide the Commission with this additional information on both issues.

DESIGN & SIGNAGE

Applicant presented a report on the Project's design.

Smith

- Requested that Staff and the applicant work to ensure the desired patina on the roof's surface

DeLuccio

- Posed questions about glass used on the project.

SIGNAGE

Mr. Siffin presented the applicant's report on signage.

- Signage blends in and integrates with the architectural design
- Signage also integrates into the streetscape
- Opaque glass on bridge to become a projection screen at night
- Bridge glass is clear during the daylight hours

DeLuccio

- Questioned applicant regarding the bridges projection range of site

Anderson

- Asked if the bridge's projection screen's intended use is to be a public art display

The applicant responded that the SSP requires that there be a public art component to all video signs.

Ms. Heep clarified that jumbotrons are only allowed if they are regarded as an urban art element. She further stated that the only portion of time the city regulates or has any say over is that small portion of time dedicated to art or public service. The remainder of the time is dedicated to advertising.

DeLuccio

- Concerned that projection screen would not be a distraction to motorists
- Glare concerns
- Billboard esthetic concerns

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUESTED

DeLuccio

- Recommended conditions of approval

Torgan

- Public safety information on the pedestrian video (bridge) signs

Segal

- Questioned if a traffic safety study has been done with regard to the Jumbotron

Dennis Woods answered that a study will be done; the parameters being:

- Traffic delays
- Accident increases
- View distractions

ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY CRAIG STEELE

- The public comment period on the initial study will remain open until the close of business on September 15th.
- Development Agreement public hearing to be held at the September 16th meeting.

Action: To continue the hearing open to September 16, 1999.

Motion: Smith Second: Crowe

Votes: All Ayes Motion carried.

