



**PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 21, 2008**

6:00 P.M.
City Hall
130 Cremona Drive, Suite B
Goleta, California

Members of the Planning Commission

*Kenneth Knight, Chair
Brent Daniels, Vice Chair
Edward Easton
Doris Kavanagh
Julie Kessler Solomon*

*Patricia Miller, Secretary
Linda Gregory, Recording Clerk
Brian Pierik, Legal Counsel*

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Knight followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL OF PLANNING COMMISSION

Present: Planning Commissioners Daniels, Easton, Kavanagh, Knight, and Solomon.
Absent: None.

Staff present: Director of Planning and Environmental Services Steve Chase, Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller, Legal Counsel Brian Pierik, Director of Community Services Steve Wagner; Principal Civil Engineer Marti Schultz; Contract Planner Laura Bridley; and Recording Clerk Linda Gregory.

PUBLIC FORUM

No speakers.

AMENDMENTS OR ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

None.

A. ADMINISTRATIVE

A.1 Planning Commission Minutes for May 12, 2008.

Recommendation:

Approve the Planning Commission minutes for May 12, 2008.

MOTION: Commissioner Kavanagh moved/Vice Chair Daniels seconded to approve the Special Planning Commission Meeting minutes of May 12, 2008, as submitted.

VOTE: Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

B. PUBLIC HEARING

B.1 07-020-OA, -RZ, -DP: Rincon Palms Hotel and Restaurant; 6868 Hollister Avenue and 6878 Hollister Avenue; APN 073-140-004

Recommendation:

Adopt Planning Commission Resolution 08-____ (Attachment 1), thereby recommending to the City Council approval of Case No. 07-020-OA, -RZ, -DP.

Staff Speakers:

Director of Planning and Environmental Services Steve Chase

Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller

Legal Counsel Brian Pierik

Contract Planner Laura Bridley

Director of Community Services Steve Wagner

Site visits: Commissioner Solomon reported that she conducted a site visit. Vice Chair Daniels reported a site visit last week with Kip Bradley. Commissioner Easton reported a site visit with the property owner and Kip Bradley. Commissioner Kavanagh reported a site visit with Kip Bradley. Chair Knight reported a site visit with the property owner and Kip Bradley.

Ex-parte conversations: No other ex-parte conversations reported.

Documents: PowerPoint presentation prepared by staff entitled "Rincon Palms Hotel & Restaurant, City of Goleta Planning Commission, July 21, 2008, Case Nos: 07-020-OA, -RZ, -DP".

Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller presented general points with regard to the proposed project. She reviewed the applications requested, vicinity information, roadway improvements, and site circulation. She stated that staff did not receive any letters, e-mails or telephone communications for this hearing on the project. She clarified that letters were received with regard to the Mitigated Negative Draft document.

Chair Knight stated that he received a letter from Barbara Massey.

Contract Planner Laura Bridley discussed the project with a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Rincon Palms Hotel & Restaurant", which included visual simulations that

were provided by the applicant following the last DRB review. She provided an overview of the CEQA process, stating that the City received nine comment letters in response to the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration and that the responses are included in the text of the proposed Final Mitigated Negative Declaration which was released on July 11, 2008. She highlighted several mitigation measures for off site traffic improvements, and several General Plan policies.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 6:30 P.M.

Kip Bradley, agent, spoke on behalf of Sep Wolf (his business partner), and Cortona Opportunities Limited, stating that they are very proud to present this project. He said that the applicants think that the project will meet a large demand for hospitality and meeting rooms which they believe is grossly underserved in the community.

Richard Six, with Lenvik & Minor Architects, project architect, presented the site plan, landscape plans, and the architectural details for the hotel and restaurant. He stated that the key design element was location of the mass of the hotel building as far away from Hollister Avenue as possible. This site plan arrangement will maintain the silhouette views of the mountains from Hollister Avenue and provide landscaping in the foreground of the hotel. He pointed that the following aspects will be maximized: a) building lighting and power efficiencies; b) thermal insulation and shading; c) recycling materials and sustainable design; d) solar applications whenever possible, including heating the swimming pool; and e) permeable pavers in the parking spaces.

Laurel Perez, Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services, provided a recap of the items discussed by staff with regard to the project. She said that the applicant believes the site is an ideal location for a hotel in terms of its proximity to local industries, UCSB and the airport. Also, she noted that the project traffic patterns for a hotel will not contribute significantly to peak hour trips. She stated that the applicant has carefully read the mitigation measures and is able to accept all project Conditions of Approval. She said that this project will provide a missing component along Hollister Avenue for a bicycle and pedestrian corridor. She briefly explained the request for setback modifications along Hollister Avenue.

Kip Bradley, agent, stated that the site does not have any known documented archaeological sites, which has been verified further by a Phase I and an extended Phase II Environmental Site Assessment. He noted that the parking requirements are met and that additional parking is provided by a reciprocal parking agreement with the property next door which is also owned by the applicant. He stated that the proposed project complies with the floor area ratio guidelines, height restrictions and code requirements. He presented a 'drive-by' computer simulation of the project with views from Storke Avenue, Hollister Avenue and Cortona Drive, and also from within the project site. In conclusion, he requested support for the project.

Speakers:

Barbara Massey, representing the Land Use Committee of the Citizens Planning Association, stated that the Committee believes that the Mitigated Negative Declaration is inadequate for such an important intersection and requests that an EIR

be prepared for this project. She noted that the concerns include: a) there is no Noise Study; b) there are no Phase 1 or Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessments; and c) the Traffic Study is not adequate and the Air Quality Report is questionable. She also stated that the Committee noted a lack of adequate justification for the encroachments and believes the encroachments should be eliminated at this busy intersection.

Barbara Massey, Goleta, representing herself, requested elimination of the restaurant setback encroachments, stating that no justification has been given for not meeting setback requirements. She believes that a better Traffic Study would have pointed out the problems with left turns across Hollister Avenue at the Kmart entrance and Cortona Drive. She requested consideration of a planted center median in this area. She also stated that the towers are too tall for the location and should be lowered so they do not block views. She urged that changes be made that are necessary to improve this project which could be a great asset to the community.

William Pinner, representing the owners of Pacifica Suites Hotel, and the South Coast Inn, stated that overall the applicant has presented a very good project. As a hotel operator, he wanted to dispel the thought that Goleta is underserved with regard to hotels. He stated that the occupancy rate at his hotel is close to the 60-65 percent range, noting that there are reports from approximately three years ago when there was a peak occupancy rate of approximately 90 percent. He acknowledged that new hotels are a benefit for the City with regard to receiving the full benefit of transient occupancy tax; however he suggested that a potential downfall would be that more rooms means lower rates. He urged consideration of future issues with regard to hotels in Goleta.

Commissioner Easton commented that he believes it would be important to have information regarding how many hotels can be supported by the community in the future. He also commented that during peak hours the traffic near Cortona Drive will be complicated and there may need to be some sort of barrier to pedestrian crossing, since the plans do not provide for a crossing.

In response to questions from Commissioner Easton and Chair Knight with regard to the applicant's plans to provide for some kind of employee housing, Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller stated that there is a Housing Element Policy HE-12.3 Local Housing Impact Fees, which applies to new nonresidential development, and that staff recognizes that the policy direction would need to be provided by the City Council.

RECESS HELD FROM 7:40 P.M. TO 7:48 P.M.

Vice Chair Daniels requested information with regard to hotel demand in Goleta.

Director of Planning and Environmental Services Steve Chase provided a brief overview of the major projects that have been approved by the City, and the expansion of three businesses in Goleta that are important to the community, since the hotel overlay was initially discussed as part of the General Plan. He also noted that there are expansion plans for the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport which will

include a jet park. He commented that there is a demand and the challenge is to deliver a product that meets the hotel overlay and General Plan requirements.

Laurel Perez, agent, provided clarification with regard to the request for setback modifications at two locations in the right-of-way for the restaurant.

Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller stated that there is a possible encroachment of approximately one or two feet of the stairway at the west end of the hotel building, which will be verified by the final engineering details.

Commissioner Kavanagh commented that when she made a left-turn from Cortona Drive onto Hollister Avenue on Friday morning, there was a large amount of landscaping on the adjacent Raytheon property that blocked visibility of oncoming traffic. She also expressed concern that pedestrians may want to cross the street at Cortona Drive, rather than walking to the corner, and that visitors may not be familiar with the heavy amount of traffic on the Hollister Avenue corridor.

Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller stated that the City would have the ability to request that the landscaping on the adjacent property be either trimmed or removed because there is a requirement to maintain adequate sight distance. She clarified that there is a signalized pedestrian crossing at the Storke/Hollister intersection, and that there would be a pedestrian crosswalk across Hollister Avenue at Coromar Drive when that signal is installed.

Scott Schell, Associated Transportation Engineers, provided a picture of the proposed striping improvements for Storke Road, north of Hollister Avenue, showing that the bike lane is maintained from the Hollister Avenue intersection to Highway 101 with the addition of the third northbound lane. He stated that completion of this improvement would be required by several projects that have been looked at in the area.

Chair Knight commented with regard to traffic issues: a) the addition of the third lane is of benefit, but without any future right-of-way it would be difficult for future options to create a fourth lane; b) there may be other proposed projects, for example, the UCSB Long Range Development Plan, that could affect the potential design of the Storke/Hollister intersection; and c) for consideration, the traffic impacts for the project would be different depending on whether the access to the project is advertised as being off of Los Carneros Road or Storke Road.

Director of Community Services Steve Wagner stated that at this time, based on the City's traffic model, staff believes that with the addition of the third northbound lane there does not seem to be the need for additional right-of-way.

Commissioner Solomon requested clarification with regard to the connectivity of the bike lane from the Villages at Los Carneros through the project area and towards the Camino Real Marketplace.

Laurel Perez, of Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services, stated that the Class I Bike Path through the Villages at Los Carneros will connect to Hollister Avenue

at a Class II Bike Path which will be extended along the frontage of the project site to Storke Road towards the Camino Real Marketplace.

Chair Knight suggested that the applicant consider the concept of green rooftops, with possibly some small shade trees, that would help cool the building and assist with stormwater management, as well as provide shade for gatherings which would be more attractive than temporary canopies. He commented the applicant will need to refer to the City's current Recommended Street Tree Planting List with regard to planting palm trees in the right-of-way, which are not recommended.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 8:11 P.M.

Commissioner Easton expressed support for the project. He stated that the architecture, with the decorative metal elements, is unique and makes the corner a presence in a way it needs to be made. He hopes that the hotel design does not become more of a background building. He suggested the applicant consider adding an internal light coming up through the tower in the restaurant. He appreciates that the hotel conforms to the established floor area ratio. He hopes the mountain crests are still visible from Hollister Avenue, and not hidden.

Commissioner Kavanagh expressed support for the project. She appreciates the thought and design that went into the project and how the hotel blends in with the business park around it and does not stand out. She commented that the project site has been an unattractive vacant field for a long time.

Vice Chair Daniels complimented the applicant on the project's handsome architecture. He suggested the applicant may want to consider the incorporation of street furniture in the restaurant area, which may add to the ambience, and suggested the furniture may also be usable by passersby. He believes that it is important to itemize some of the infrastructure benefits in the Findings, for example, sidewalks, bus shelters and bike paths.

Chair Knight stated that the project is a good project although he does have some reservations that were previously stated which include issues pertaining to long-term impacts on traffic at the Storke/Hollister intersection that have not been itemized. He expressed concern regarding housing issues for potential employees and urged the City Council to consider some sort of in-lieu housing fee not only as part of this project but with other projects.

Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller stated that from the discussion during this hearing, staff recognizes that, if there is a motion to approve the recommendation to the City Council for approval of the project, the action should include the following amendments: a) clarification in the General Plan Consistency Analysis (Attachment 2) regarding the height discussion in the "good cause" finding; b) clarification in the General Plan Consistency Analysis (Attachment 2) regarding Policy VH 4.9 to indicate the removal of the olive trees on the northern property boundary and replacement with new landscaping at that location; c) clarify the number of setback modifications requested; d) the addition of the standard condition regarding bicycle parking to the project Conditions of Approval (Attachment 1, Exhibit 2); and e) response to Vice

Chair Daniels' request for itemization of public benefits, as staff determines appropriate. She stated that staff will consider Vice Chair Daniels' comment with regard to street furniture and Chair Knight's comment with regard to green rooftops as direction and not a change to a Condition of Approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Easton moved/Vice Chair Daniels seconded to approve and adopt Planning Commission Resolution No 08-06 (Attachment 1), entitled "A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Goleta Recommending to the City Council Approval of Various Actions Related to the Rincon Palms Hotel and Restaurant Project, Case No. 07-020-OA, -RZ, -DP, at the Northeast Corner of Storke Road and Hollister Avenue, 6868 and 6878 Hollister Avenue (APN 073-140-004)", with amendments as indicated by staff at the Planning Commission hearing.

VOTE: Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Current Planning Manager Patricia Miller stated that the Planning Commission - Projection Report was distributed to the Planning Commission Members which includes tentative meeting dates for upcoming projects as well as two joint meetings of the Planning Commission/Design Review Board for Building Intensity Standards Workshops.

D. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chair Knight reported on the status of the Planning Commission's direction at the last meeting for him and Commissioner Easton to attend the City Council's strategic planning workshop to discuss how the Planning Commission can provide input earlier in the review process. He stated that the strategic planning workshop has been postponed to an indefinite time. He encouraged the Planning Commissioners to attend a DRB meeting when a Conceptual review is conducted, stating that a lot of detail is discussed at the Conceptual review level.

Chair Knight suggested that it would be most efficient for the Planning Commissioners to meet with applicants for site visits after the agenda packet has been received with current data and information so the best possible input could be provided for the applicant. He requested comments from other Planning Commissioners.

Vice Chair Daniels stated that that the suggestion for Planning Commissioners to conduct site visits after the agenda materials are received may not be time effective based on the short timeframes.

E. ADJOURNMENT: 8:40 P.M.

Prepared by Linda Gregory, Recording Clerk.

GOLETA PLANNING COMMISSION