

MINUTES

CITY OF CARSON REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CARSON CITY HALL

701 East Carson Street, Second Floor
Carson, CA 90745

May 8, 2012 – 6:30 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Vice-Chairman Gordon called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.
 2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Commissioner Schaefer led the Salute to the Flag.
 3. **ROLL CALL**
Planning Commissioners Present: Brimmer, Gordon, Schaefer, Saenz, Verrett, Williams

Planning Commissioners Absent: Diaz, Faletogo, Goolsby (excused)

Planning Staff Present: Planning Officer Repp, Senior Planner Signo, Recording Secretary Bothe
 4. **AGENDA POSTING CERTIFICATION** Recording Secretary Bothe indicated that all posting requirements had been met.
 5. **AGENDA APPROVAL** Commissioner Saenz moved, seconded by Commissioner Brimmer, to approve the Agenda as submitted. Motion carried (absent Commissioners Diaz, Faletogo, Goolsby).
 6. **INSTRUCTIONS TO WITNESSES** Vice-Chairman Gordon requested that all persons wishing to provide testimony stand for the oath, complete the general information card at the podium, and submit it to the secretary for recordation.
 7. **SWEARING OF WITNESSES** Senior Planner Signo
 8. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** For items **NOT** on the agenda. Speakers are limited to three minutes. None.
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9. CONSENT CALENDAR

Minutes: February 28, 2012

MOTION: Commissioner Diaz moved, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to approve the February 28, 2012, Minutes as presented. Motion carried, 8-0 (absent Commissioners Diaz, Faletogo, Goolsby).

10. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING None

11. PUBLIC HEARING None

12. NEW BUSINESS DISCUSSION

A) Workshop regarding Site Plan and Design Review for properties formerly in a Redevelopment Project Area and other areas in the city

Senior Planner Signo reviewed staff report, explaining that since the elimination of the Carson Redevelopment Agency, there is no longer a requirement for site plan and design review unless a property is subject to CMC Section 9172.23 due to location within a Design Overlay designated area or a commercial zone; and advised that a result of not having site plan and design review for these properties makes the city susceptible to the development of unsatisfactory projects in terms of appearance and design, which would have a negative effect on the community. He stated that the Planning Commission is to discuss reinstating the use of site plan and design review for these areas in order to achieve a higher level of development and should also consider if other properties should be placed in a Design Overlay district by proceeding with a zone change, adding the overlay district attached to the existing zone. He commented on the history of California redevelopment law and redevelopment districts in Carson and its recent elimination; and stated that in order to effectively control design and development, the Carson Redevelopment Agency had decided it was necessary to implement site plan and design review in redevelopment areas.

Senior Planner Signo explained that for developments having a valuation of less than \$50,000, approval may be granted by the Planning Director and that developments valued at \$50,000 or more must go before the Planning Commission, which would then make a recommendation to the Carson Redevelopment Agency. He advised that the dissolution of the Carson Redevelopment Agency has led to a number of consequences, including the end of the Agency’s site plan and design review for many industrial properties in a redevelopment area; and stated that these properties can be clustered and are generally located in the following areas:

- North of Walnut St., south of Alondra Blvd., east of Figueroa, and west of Avalon Blvd.
- North of Griffith St., south of Albertoni St., east of Broadway, and west of Main St.
- North of Torrance Blvd., south of Francisco St., east of Figueroa St., and west of Main St.
- Northwest of the intersection of Main St. and Lomita Blvd.
- North of Sepulveda Blvd., south of 223rd St., east of Avalon Blvd., and west of Wilmington Ave.
- North of Sepulveda Blvd., south of 223rd St., east of the Dominguez Channel, and west of the city boundary

- North of the 405 Freeway, south of Carson St., west of Alameda St., and east of Wilmington Ave.
- North of 213th St., south of Del Amo Blvd., west of Wilmington Ave., and east of Leapwood Ave./Chico St.

Senior Planner Signo added that in terms of applying site plan and design review, the Planning Commission should be attentive to sensitive areas and priority corridors; that the city should consider the design and type of industrial uses that should be allowed on major corridors or in close proximity to residences without the benefit of site plan and design review; and he noted that in reviewing the zoning map, it is staff's opinion that certain industrial areas should be placed in a Design Overlay district, which include:

- The area between Albertoni and Victoria Streets and Broadway and Main St.
- The area west of the Boulevards at South Bay generally located along Del Amo Blvd., Main St., Broadway, and Figueroa St.
- The area east of the South Bay Pavilion
- The area east of Wilmington Ave. between Carson St. and the 405 Freeway
- Properties on the south side of 223rd Street between Avalon Blvd. and Santa Fe Ave. and the "hole" property between 223rd Street and the 405 Freeway east of the Chevrolet/Hyundai dealership
- Properties on the east side of Avalon Blvd. between 223rd St. and the Scottsdale community
- Properties on the north side of Sepulveda Blvd. between Avalon Blvd. and Wilmington Ave.
- Industrial properties along Broad Ave. south of Sepulveda Blvd.
- Properties on the west side of Main St. and north side of Lomita Blvd.

Senior Planner Signo advised that the areas described above were subject to site plan and design review prior to the dissolution of redevelopment, with the exception of properties south of 223rd Street (Watson Center South) owned by Watson Land Company, which had an Owner Participation Agreement (OPA) with the Carson Redevelopment Agency; and explained that the OPA expired with the elimination of the Carson Redevelopment Agency. He stated staff is not advising that all of Watson Center South be included in a Design Overlay district, only those properties that front 223rd Street, Avalon Boulevard, and Sepulveda Boulevard, which are major roads with residences across the street or in close proximity to industrial areas.

Senior Planner Signo concluded that the elimination of redevelopment has eliminated the city's ability to require site plan and design review for certain industrial properties; and that in order to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the community, it is in the best interest of the city to reinstate site plan and design review in certain areas by including those areas in a Design Overlay district.

Commissioner Saenz noted his support for raising the valuation threshold for developments needing either administrative approval or Planning Commission approval, suggesting it be raised to \$100,000 or more.

Commissioner Brimmer stated that the threshold should be maintained at \$50,000 in order to allow for community input.

Planning Officer Repp advised that the dollar threshold has been the same since 1984 and that staff does not want to penalize small proposals, noting her interest in raising the dollar threshold. She pointed out that the dollar is not worth as much as it was 30 years ago and that this threshold requires small projects to come before the Commission, believing this is not necessary for such small projects.

Senior Planner Signo stated that any zone change would be advertized and notices sent to property owners.

Commissioner Verrett stated that she'd like a clearer picture of which streets will be affected and stated that she'd like additional meetings to discuss this issue, suggesting the Commission take one section at a time for consideration.

Commissioner Schaefer stated that she would like this issue to go to public hearing with enough specifics to make an educated decision on this matter.

Vice-Chairman Gordon questioned the need for another workshop if a public hearing will provide the same information as another workshop.

Vice-Chairman Gordon opened the public hearing.

Pilar Hoyos, representing Watson Land Company, advised that Watson Land Company has operated under the OPA for nearly 37 years and that they adhered to those agreements. She stated that staff's proposal is a major change for Watson and that they are not in agreement with the proposal, noting that Watson has high development standards and voluntarily renovates and beautifully maintains all of its properties without the use of design review. Ms. Hoyos stated that imposing site plan and design review will hinder Watson's efforts to efficiently/quickly complete their projects, noting concern that they may lose tenants because of what they believe is a slow, burdensome and more costly bureaucratic process. She noted her support for increasing the valuation threshold for developments needing either administrative approval or Planning Commission approval over \$100,000, expressing her belief more companies would make improvements to their properties if this threshold were raised. She noted her interest in working with staff to find a way to preserve the intent of the OPA for Watson Land Company; and reiterated that this is unnecessary for Watson's master planned areas.

Planning Officer Repp advised that Watson Land Company owns half of the properties along the suggested corridors for design review, pointing out that the review process needs to be equally fair to all these property owners; expressed her belief the process will not be burdensome for Watson; and explained that the main purpose of this proposal is to obtain adherence to the goals and objectives of the General Plan. She pointed out there are more land uses along these corridors, such as the residential and pedestrian uses.

Ms. Hoyos stated that Watson Land Company has a proven track record of maintaining and upgrading their properties; and reiterated her concern that added delays creates the potential of losing clients.

Commissioner Brimmer stated that this process needs to be equally fair across the board.

In response to Vice-Chairman Gordon's inquiry, Planning Officer Repp explained that not having a design review can allow for loading docks to be facing the streets, facing residential areas, big box doors on all sides, etc; and reiterated that design review is necessary to maintain the integrity of the established goals and objectives of the city.

Senior Planner Signo highlighted the recent Trammel Crow project wherein the applicant collaborated with staff on design review, noting there are fewer truck activities on that property now than originally proposed by that applicant.

Ronald Shimokaji, resident, stated that all property owners should be subject to the same rules.

Vice-Chairman Gordon moved that staff set a public hearing to rule on this matter, stating that an additional workshop is not necessary; and that staff provide a recommendation to increase the valuation threshold for developments needing either administrative approval or Planning Commission approval. He asked that staff look into the possibility of another method that mimics Watson's OPA, if possible.

Commissioner Verrett noted her support of directing staff to proceed with a zone change to include certain properties in a Design Overlay district, but stated that she would like more clarity on what streets will be impacted; and suggested that staff work with Watson Land Company on some other type of agreement, if possible.

Commissioner Schaefer concurred with Vice-Chairman Gordon's motion to move this matter to public hearing and seconded the motion.

Commissioner Brimmer cautioned the Commission from moving too fast on this issue and questioned if another type of OPA can be put in place for Watson Land Company.

Commissioner Verrett reiterated that she would like additional workshops on this issue. Commissioner Saenz concurred.

Commissioner Schaefer expressed her belief that an additional workshop will not provide any more information than what can be presented at a public hearing. Discussion ensued with regard to the need for another workshop.

Commissioner Williams moved, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to call for the vote. The motion to call for the vote failed as follows:

AYES: Gordon, Schaefer, Williams
NOES: Brimmer, Saenz, Verrett
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Diaz, Faletogo, Goolsby

Planning Officer Repp explained that there are other means to guide design reviews for various projects, such as the one done with the specific plan for the Carson Marketplace.

Vice-Chairman Gordon's motion carried as follows:

AYES: Gordon, Saenz, Schaefer, Williams
NOES: Brimmer, Verrett
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Diaz, Faletogo, Goolsby

13. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS None

14. MANAGER'S REPORT

- Carson Harbor Village – Rehearing of Tentative Parcel Map No. 27014

Planning Officer Repp explained that City Council will re-consider this matter in the next week, noting she will advise the Planning Commission of the outcome of that meeting.

15. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS None

16. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:25 P.M. the meeting was formally adjourned to Tuesday, May 22, 2012, 6:30 P.M., City Council Chambers.

Chairman

Attest By:

Secretary