

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING, HELD AT 7:00 P.M., JULY 26, 2010, 711 NORTH GALLOWAY AVENUE, MESQUITE, TEXAS

Present: Chairman Jane Ann Cruce, Vice Chairman Richard Allen, Commissioners Jack Akin, Terry Tosch, Barbara Dunn, Larry Allen, Bob Johnson, Alternates Donna Adams and Mike Potter

Absent:

Staff: Director of Community Development Richard Gertson, Manager of Planning and Zoning Jeff Armstrong, Senior Planner Garrett Langford, Planner Liz Butler, Planner Danielle Wonkovich, Assistant City Attorney Lillian Graham, Administrative Secretary Kim Attebery

Chairman Cruce called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

I. PUBLIC HEARING - ZONING

A. Consider an application for a Zoning Change from Commercial to Planned Development – Traditional Neighborhood Multifamily, submitted by Clifton Phillips, Roundstone Development, LLC, and Al Crozier, Prime Income Asset Management, Inc., on property described as The Emporium, Block A, Lot 9 and a 14.256 acre tract out of John T Nelms Abstract 1095, located at 3500 Emporium Square (Zoning File No. 1095-52-2010).

Jeff Armstrong began the presentation to brief the commission on the proposal and to address specific issues from the previous hearing. Mr. Armstrong showed photographs from a recent visit to a similar development. He noted the differences in style and design from conventional apartment communities. Mr. Armstrong also stated that this development would create approximately 3,000 trips per day which is typical for this type of development. In response to previously noted concerns about school overcrowding, Mr. Armstrong stated that other apartment communities in Mesquite listed approximately 34% of occupied units as having elementary school aged children. He reiterated that the proposed development would boast a more urban environment and would have no amenities for children and that similar urban communities typically listed only about 10% of occupied units as having children of any age. Mr. Armstrong also stated that he had received 2 additional calls in opposition but no further written response. Commissioner Johnson asked about the traffic impact from a similarly sized commercial/retail development and Mr. Gertson stated that trip numbers would be about 3 ½ to 4 times higher than with a multifamily development.

Richard Gertson addressed the Commission regarding other specific issues that had been raised. He stated that the goal of the Traditional Neighborhood Multifamily development is to integrate with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed pedestrian passages in the screening wall will provide connections and serve a practical purpose. He explained that the proposed passage on the north side would be across the street from the school and the public park. Without the passage, the vehicle drive to the school would be a 1.6 mile round trip as opposed to a walk of just a few hundred feet. Other pedestrian/cycle penetrations would provide access to the retail area and a connection to the bike trail to the east. The planned penetration to Devonshire would be a controlled, gated access solely for emergency vehicles. Commissioner Tosch asked who would be responsible for maintaining the wall, and Mr. Gertson said the Emporium Property Owners Association will continue to maintain the wall.

Chairman Cruce opened the public hearing.

Mark Grafing, 1815 Uvalde, stated concerns about school crowding and also asked if there had been a marketing study and Mr. Gertson stated that the Consolidated Housing Plan notes a lack of affordable housing in the area and that this property is not viable for additional commercial use.

Bruce Zapotocky, 1513 Culberson, is concerned about traffic.

Mona Lincoln, 3900 Shackelford, is an MISD employee and is saddened at the thought of another apartment complex in Mesquite.

Josh Sparks, 1400 Panela, is concerned about the wall penetrations causing problems for the neighborhood and not being maintained and doesn't want a parking garage due to privacy concerns.

Samantha Lynch, 3919 Farrington, repeated Mr. Sparks concerns and is also worried there will be a lot of noise from sirens trying to reach the seniors in the senior community.

Donna Grafing, 1815 Uvalde, asked about the notification process as she is just one street over and did not receive written notice.

Wayne Hanson, 3615 Parkmont, and Hayle Hullett, 1822 Robert Jones, reiterated concerns about crime and traffic with the wall penetrations.

Fred Thompson, 1419 Brazoria, is also concerned about privacy issues and property values.

An unidentified woman stated she was not convinced walkability is viable at this location.

Lily Slay, 3531 Parkmont, repeated concerns about traffic, parking garage and privacy with the multi-story buildings and suggested single-family-residential would be a better option.

Bettina Wilkerson, 1324 Devonshire, asked about getting more traffic information and whether the similar properties discussed were in a similar location with proximity to a school and a residential neighborhood, and asked if seniors would be using the parking garage stating safety concerns.

David Gould, 1412 Pecos, concerned that there are no guarantees that there will only be the 3 proposed wall penetrations.

No one else appeared and Ms. Cruce closed the public hearing.

In addressing some of the concerns, Mr. Armstrong stated again that the wall will be maintained by the owner's association. He explained the notification process noting the 200 foot notification map. He stated that additional traffic counts did not note a significant impact on the area. Mr. Armstrong stated that the parking garage would not be for the senior properties. Mr. Gertson added that the parking garage would be open to the west having no visibility into the adjoining neighborhood.

Commissioners Bob Johnson and Richard Allen had similar opinions stating they were excited about the new urban-type developments and Mr. R. Allen appreciated the City for being progressive. Neither is convinced that this location is appropriate for this development. Commissioner Terry Tosch still feels the proposed development is a viable option. The citizens in his neighborhood had similar concerns when zero lot line homes were coming into their neighborhood and their concerns turned out to be unfounded. He stated this was a good opportunity for the city. Commissioner Barbara Dunn is opposed to the location. Commissioner Jack Akin stated that change is going to come to the City of Mesquite and that he appreciates the need for change but agrees that this is not the right location for this development. Chairman Cruce stated that the resident's concerns are not central to this location and that they might not be worsened by this development but also that they might not be avoided by the lack of development.

A motion was made by Mr. Akin and seconded by Mr. L. Allen to deny the request. The motion to deny passed by a vote of 5 to 2, with Ms. Cruce and Mr. Tosch dissenting.

II. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Report on recent City Council action.

Richard Gertson reported on recent and upcoming Planning and Zoning items.

There being no further business for the Commission, Chairman Cruce adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

Jane Ann Cruce, Chairman