Meeting Minutes – Approved

Committee: Planning and Land Use Committee
Chairperson: Patricia Lyon
Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2018 - 6:30pm
Meeting Place: Westchester Municipal Building Community Room / 7166 W Manchester Avenue, Westchester, CA 90045

Attendance
- Present: Oliver, Hellwig, Smith, Fox, Lyon, Gerez, Trimble
- Excused Absence: Voss

Item 1: Welcome and Introduction

Item 2: Minutes Review and Approval – for meetings on 21 August 2018 & 16 October 2018
Motion to support.
M/S Hellwig/Gerez
Unanimous voice vote to support.

Item 2b: Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
None.

Item 3: Informational / LA-Area Affordable Housing Development

Background – Various affordable housing projects are moving forward in Los Angeles that deliver more than the SB1818/Density Bonus minimum number of affordable units. Presentation is a quick recap of projects, specs and developer info—for the purposes of educating our NC about models, potential partnerships, etc.

Presenter: Kimberly Fox, PLUC Committee Member

Presentation Highlights:
- PLUC chair wishes to be proactive about possible parcel/location research.
- The concern: Westchester, Playa Del Rey and Playa Vista already pretty “locked in” in terms of parcel availability.
- Using the new Metro stop near Hindry Ave as a focus, Fox conducted a ZIMAS + Google Map review of parcels the NC plus Councilman Bonin’s staff might review.
- Also reviewed major arterial roads and transit corridors.
- In total 11 parcels indentified (see XLS report presented during meeting).
- Next steps: discuss with CD11 staff, explore opening discussions on possible public-private development efforts.

Related Documents:
- Parcel Research XLS Report

Public Comment
Committee Discussion

Gerez / Does someone have a number for Westchester for affordable?
  o Fox / Don’t yet have a number; was recording from 8/2018 PLUC meeting that Hench asked the Community Plan Update staff to confirm when the NC might be informed. No response to date.
  o Lyon / City planning dept doesn’t have that info yet – we’re currently missing demographics, need for transit access, # for affordable units.
  o Gerez / the SAG numbers are based on the census; we’ve exceeded that...so we’re trying to figure out what City Planning is asking us to build to.
  o Lyon / when last Comm Plan was written, it didn’t anticipate Playa Vista. Therefore, we’re likely well over our contribution to housing units. Question is: what about the 90045 area which has roughly 4 main streets.

Committee Action:
• No motion required at this time.
• Acknowledged report and general (non-vote) agreement to continue exploring affordable housing as an element of new Community Plan Update process.

Item 4: Action / 12105 W. Waterfront Dr., Playa Vista 90094 [ZA-2018-5106-CUB]

Background – First presentation to PLUC. Applicant is requesting a conditional use permit, pursuant to 12.24-w1, to allow the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption, in conjunction with a new 1,533 square-foot restaurant with 27 interior seats, and a 328 square-foot covered outdoor patio with 24 exterior seats, having hours of operation from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., daily.

Presenter(s): Veronica Becerra, VB Commercial Services, representing applicant Briana Valdez, Homestate.

Presentation Highlights:
• Presenter has represented owner Briana Valdez for CUBs in 3 other locations
• New location next to Playa Vista Blue Bottle Coffee, which recruited Valdez to open in this location.
• First location: didn’t have beer and wine, closed by 3pm.
• This location > Becerra suggested a full line so she could sell margaritas.
• Requesting 7am to 11pm operating hours. However, doubt Valdez will be open after 7-8pm. Asking for this now, so if there’s a push to stay open later, she won’t have to go back through the approval process.

Related Documents None.

Public Comment: None.

Committee Discussion

Lyon / What’s a breakfast taco?
   Becerra / Small format, eggs and cheese.

Lyons / other restaurants in the area (Playa Vista) that sell liquor?
   Becerra / closest restaurant that sells liquor is “a ways away.”
Committee Action: Motion to Support

M/S Smith/ Trimble

Passed unanimously on roll call vote:

Quon Y    Gerez Y
Trimble Y  Oliver y
Hellwig Y  Smith Y
Lyon Y    Fox Y

Item 5: Informational / 8922 S. Reading Ave., Westchester 90045

Background - First presentation to PLUC. Applicant proposes a TOC project in tier 3 consisting of a 7-story building with 30 units, including 6 affordable units (5 very low income, and 1 low income). Requesting additional incentives:

1) increased height of 67 feet in lieu of 45 feet;
2) reduced side-yard setbacks of 7 feet in lieu of 10 feet; and
3) reduced open space of 3,769 sf in lieu of 5,025 sf.

Presenter(s): on behalf of applicant Scott Walter of 8928 Reading LLC
- Ezra Hammer, Attorney-Armbruster Goldsmith & Delvac (AGD)
- Alix Wisner, Land Use Planner-Armbruster Goldsmith & Delvac (AGD)
- John Waldron, Principal – Studio T Square (Long Beach)
- Chris Bystedt, Architect-Director of Architecture, Studio T Square (Long Beach)

Chair Introduction: Transit Corridor Project. Ezra worked with PLUC on council staff before going into private practice Land Use law.

Presentation Notes:

Regarding the project overall:
- Reviewing where housing will go, access to transit, types of units needed
- Designed to provide substantial sized units – up to 4 bedrooms – to appeal to families.
- Target demographic: working on west side, supporting families, building parking allowance to accommodate this target community.
- Not seeking parking reductions; for units of this type adequate parking is necessary.
- Within close walking distance to new Metro station.

Regarding Developer:
- Developer is small firm based out of Long Beach; projects in LA, SM and LB
- Specialty = multi-family mixed use, affordable, senior and student housing.
- Sister firm in SF area, based out of Oakland.

Regarding Status as Transit-Oriented Community project
- New station finished in 2023; well within the ½ mile walking distance, justifies the TOC incentives
- Additional Incentives (see above under “Background” for details)
- Side yard decrease (front and rear stay the same)
- Open space 25%
• Height: 2 additional stories up to 22’

**Project Details**
• 30 rental units, 20% are on-site affordable
• Mostly 4-bedroom townhomes and flats
• A few 2 and 1-bedroom units
• Subterranean parking
• 20% affordable > all but one are the larger 4 bedroom units.
• Parking: not using the lower parking incentive allowed in TOC qualifications
• All parking fully underground; also including bike parking and charging stations.
• Trash pick-up by hauling cans up the parking garage ramp to curbside.
• Set-back of top floor an additional 15’
• Balconies: glass railings
• Porcelain tile on exterior to create visual interest, connect balconies
• Wrapping the materials around the side; 4-sided architecture; avoid blank walls on the non-front sides.

**Project Amenities**
• Club, rec room on 1st floor
• Lobby and Club room open to courtyard area.
• Rear Yard – BBQ and outdoor lounge
• Side of the project: gated dog run for pets

Related Documents: 8922 Reading Ave Plan Presentation

Public Comment: None.

Committee Discussion

**Regarding TOC designation re distance from transit requirement**
• Project within 0.5 mile of transit, but no access from residential street through commercial lots between building and bus stop. So probably more like 1.25 walking distance. Presenters confirmed no public access between neighborhood and TOC-related bus stop by cutting through commercial lots behind proposed project.
• Would like a study re “as the crow files” distance from building to TOC-related bus stop and actual walking path/distance from building to TOC-related bus stop.
• Would like a drone study to better understand what tenants are looking at re commercial behind and neighbors adjacent.

**Regarding TOC designation re design/developer incentives**
• Developer confirmed Transit-Oriented Communities ordinance allows for entitlements include incentives re floor-area-ratio (FAR), overall density and parking. Confirmed project is not asking for parking incentive.
• Confirmation with developer on process for qualifying tenants for affordable units. Discussed 6 affordable, 3 are “very very low”, 2 “very Low”, 1 “low.” Individuals are pre-qualified with housing department, verify income levels, apply like any other tenant to live in the building. Annual management fee that the property owner pays to the city ensures that unit is rented to the correct income level.
• Notice to the neighbors within 500’? No; notice given to adjacent and adjoining and shared corners.

**Regarding building design details**
• Problem with transparent (glass) balcony railings creating a “junky look” for the building, neighborhood. Presenter response: storage prohibited in lease agreement. Developer business model is design, build, operate so has control of this issue. Also noted that due to developer’s “operator” role roof top open space is not in the plant, to minimize conflict with immediate surroundings.

• Noted roof top equipment should only be 10’ above height, so in reality the building has an effective total height of 77’.

• Confirmed building is not in LAWA flight path height restriction zone.

• Concern the building design and scale is “massive” and not in character for current built context.

• Confirmation the developer has acquired 2 adjacent lots. Zoning for medium residential + metro station. Existing units to be demolished = 2 buildings, 8 units total, each with 2 bedrooms.

• Confirmed load-in / load-out and pick-ups all done at curbside. No accommodation within the footprint of the property for standing vans, UPS, Uber, Lyft, etc.

• Requested the developer provide information on other properties they’ve developed and now operate in Los Angeles and Santa Monica.

• Request the developer put resources into improving adjacent alley to improve public safety.

• Developer confirmed roof-top accessory structures and mechanics will be screen. Request made that they attempt to work these add-on structures into building design, rather than just screening as a design afterthought.

• Request the developer consider privacy of both tenants and adjacent neighbors, but reviewing design to emphasize high, windows on sides of the building closest to adjacent buildings plus review window placement and privacy considerations in the direction of commercial lots East of proposed new building.

• Recommendation the developer check decibel levels on balconies re flight path noise. Developer confirmed they did an acoustical study, aware of the noise and designing to keep the noise out, including special windows. Developer has been advised to windows and doors with a Sound Transmission Glass (STC) rating of at least 43. (Typical double glassed window STC rating of 28-32.)

**Regarding larger implications of development in Ramsgate, Reading area**

• Committee comment regarding TOC designation for entire neighborhood area, and anticipation of developer move—thanks to TOC ordinance and density incentives—to upsize all new build in the area.

• Reality of this neighborhood: anticipate lots of demolition and rebuild. Temporary displacement of current residents during this transition a community challenge. Projects anticipated are By Right, so push for collaboration with developers re their impact on the area as it transitions to higher density.

• Concern that this area is an important affordable location within NCWP geography; resident displacement a hardship given restricted alternatives to current living situation.

**Regarding intended building tenant demographics & current tenant status**

• Understood that developer has family-tenant orientation. Concerns expressed that house-mate groups (e.g. LMU students) more likely to apply to rent larger units, rather than families. Developer confirmed: can’t prohibit people from renting based on age or any other aspect of fair housing act.

• Preference for open space areas and club room to be more kid-friendly. Developer agreed to review design and programming to improve kid-friendliness.

• Tenants still occupy buildings on purchased parcels. Should they wish to return, time from move out (current buildings) to move in (new buildings) to be “a few years.”

**Regarding developer’s plans for further development in the same area**

• Planning to develop 9007 Ramsgate, 8911 Ramsgate, 8716 Ramsgate

**Regarding crime in the area**
• Several committee members noted concerns re public safety, given the current record of incidents in this area, considered a higher crime zone than other areas of 90045.
• Rule of thumb in the community: the further East, the more security issues arise.
• Developer confirmed its required to deter property crime with lighting, secure access etc. Committee concern that building will be vulnerable re crime and public safety due to area’s crime track record, regardless of what’s required.
• Recommendation the developer study crime statistics, meet with LAPD officer for the area, adjust building design and security planning accordingly.

Project Application Status?
• At time of this meeting, application was on file, currently in plan check. Therefore, Developer not able to appear for review of requests by Committee from this meeting.
• Developer in process of preparing environmental report.
• Developer agreed to provide updated information on issues worked out re programming of club room, roof-top screening, etc.

Committee Chair highlights recap
• Encouraged developer to reach out to neighbors farther than the required notification zone to build relationships, prepare people for the coming change due to this developer’s projects.
• Flagged concern about 4-bedroom units becoming student group occupied rather than families.
• Flagged safety and security concerns, recommended Developer speak to area SLO from LAPD, get crime stats for the area. Review issues of weapons, substance abuse etc. Important that security systems are in place, including balconies.

Possible Committee Action
No action taken. Committee not prepared to support project without resolving discussed concerns. Developer too far along plan review to return for second presentation before anticipated approval.

Item 6: Possible Action - 9800 S Sepulveda [ENV-2018-5038-EAF]

Background – Second discussion by PLUC. Originally presented to PLUC at 2018 October 16 meeting. Applicant is requesting adaptive reuse of existing 8-story commercial office building for the conversion, use and maintenance of a 17- room hotel, located in the C2-2-CPIO zone. Also requesting an entitlement: master conditional use permit for the on-site sale of a full line of alcohol in conjunction with a hotel lobby, restaurant, basement bar and to permit live entertainment in hotel; site plan review for change of use which results in over 1,000 net increase in daily vehicle trips.

Presenter(s): Patricia Lyon, PLUC Chair.
Related Documents: None
Public Comment: None

Committee Discussion
• 4 years sent away due to insufficient parking.
• In addition to inadequate parking they felt they’d get a contract with neighboring parking garage, which they did not achieve.
• Building is riddled with asbestos and requires an abatement program.
• Newer proposal: flip building to hotel rooms, not offices.
• New land-use consultant, the hand-out was basically the same as 4 years ago
• Presenter was presenting without the owner; didn’t know the history.
• No progress on parking.
Committee asked developer rep to return when there’s a real plan.
Committee didn’t take action with motion.
The next day after meeting: Chair received commercial real estate listing that developer was selling building with parking, ready to be developed.
Proposal: deny the project per last meeting, so it goes into the Planning record.
This way any buyer will see there is lack of support, and that there are continuing.

Committee Action: Motion to deny support.
- M/S Quon/Gerz
- Voice vote: unanimous
- Motion Passed.

Item 7: Announcements
- Cancelled: PLUC regular meeting for December 18, 2018
- Next PLUC meeting: January 15, 2019 > day after MLK observation

Item 8: Meeting Adjourned

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