

**CITY OF CERES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**May 7, 2018**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Smith.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners: Del Nero, Johnson, Kachel, Condit, Chairperson Smith

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Director of Community Development Tom Westbrook, City Manager Toby Wells, City Attorney Nubia Goldstein, Senior Planner James Michaels, Administrative Secretary/Deputy City Clerk Ann Montgomery

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION:**

None

**CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

- Leonard Shepherd, 2841 Fowler Road, Space 71

Mr. Shepherd expressed his concern with the people of Ceres not having pride in their City, due to garbage along the side of the road, vacant lots overgrown with weeds and overall neglect with the appearance of their surroundings. When he moved to Ceres in 1993, Ceres looked really nice, but in the past 25 years things have gone downhill.

- Renee Ledbetter, representing the Ceres Chamber of Commerce

Mrs. Ledbetter reported that the Ceres Chamber recently picked up about 12 bags of trash along the City gateways on Mitchell Road, during the Love Ceres event. They will be having another workday in a few weeks, as Cal Trans has cut the grass on both sides of highway 99, so they're planning another cleanup of the highway. They are looking for volunteers, so if the Commission knows anyone that would like to volunteer, please direct them to the Chamber office. We would love to have them complete an application.

Mrs. Ledbetter invited the Commission and staff to attend the upcoming annual Ag Luncheon on Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup> out at Diamond Bar Arena. Tickets are available for purchase at the Chamber Office, by phone or on the website at CeresChamber.com. We'd love to have the Commission and staff all there.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

1. Clerk's Report of Posting. The Agenda for the regular meeting of the Planning Commission of May 7, 2018 was posted on May 2, 2018.

*(Removed from Consent)*

2. General Correspondence – Information only
  - a. Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Board (CDRAB) FY 2017-18 Quarterly Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Condit; seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve Item 1 on the Consent Calendar. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Johnson, Kachel, Condit, Chairperson Smith  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

**CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR**

Item No. 2.a. (Commissioner Condit)

General Correspondence – Information only

- a. Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Board (CDRAB) FY 2017-18 Quarterly Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

Commissioner Condit noted that at the last meeting, Mr. Parson spoke about safety downtown and Chairperson Smith had indicated the Ceres Downtown Revitalization Area Board should look at the budget, which is currently around \$83,000. Commissioner Condit asked staff if they had looked into what that money could be spent on.

City Manager, Toby Wells replied that staff is planning on having that discussion at the next meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Chairperson Smith thanked Commission Condit for bringing that concern up. In referencing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report, she noted that revenues seem to be doing well, which is encouraging.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Condit; seconded by Commissioner Kachel to approve Item 2.a. on the Consent Calendar. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Johnson, Kachel, Condit, Chairperson Smith  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

3. Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map (VTSM) 18-01; Proposal for a Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map to subdivide 8.26 acres into 38 single-family lots at 1200 & 1206 Hackett Road. *The project area was previously approved twice as Phase II of the Cambridge Estates subdivision project with once being in 2002 in which that approval expired in 2007; and then again in 2015 in which that approval expired in 2017. The proposed project is a re-subdivision of that expired subdivision map.*

Senior Planner, James Michaels presented the staff report.

Commissioner Kachel asked if we know why the applicants didn't submit the development plan to go along with the map.

Mr. Michaels explained at this time, they're not ready to do that. Staff's understanding is that they are working towards getting a submittal together.

### **The Public Hearing was opened at 6:12 p.m.**

- Max Garcia, GDR Engineering, Ceres, CA

Mr. Garcia shared a brief history on the project, noting that it goes back to the Brown Master Plan. The economy hasn't done much after 2007. The problem has been is that our client would like to sell the project to a home builder. At one time, he thought he was going to build homes here, but now he wants to sell. He has a couple of people very interested in buying it, but they don't want it unless the tenant map is approved, so they know exactly what the conditions are. They would then move forward with a Development Plan, bring it before the Commission to see what the homes look like, and for the Commission to look at that and review it. So, that's where we're at. It was unfortunate that we didn't ask for a time extension; it was something that got by all of us, he thinks. We're here again tonight, which will give us two years, although he asked staff if we could just skip to three years, and not worry about missing an extension. Nothing has changed; we just want to get it approved, and it's waiting for economy to get going.

Since the Chamber is here, he wanted to note that he has been involved with the Chamber and Economic Development for the City. He'd like to see the City grow, especially the commercial and industrial areas because we've got a lot of clients that build commercial. One of the thresholds that we have on the demographics that many of these companies look at, is population. One that he'll mention is In and Out Burger. They won't talk to you unless you have 50,000 people. That's the population threshold minimum for the City; then they'll get serious and talk to you. We know that because we were involved with the one in Turlock. He hears people say, let's get more commercial in here before we get more people in town. It goes hand in hand. Some will come. Some have less thresholds that they'll use; some are 25,000, some are 30,000. As soon as you hit 50,000, you'll see more people knocking on doors, coming in the City, looking for locations. We've all been kind of stagnant here for a few years; that's why we haven't seen a lot of commercial growth.

Mr. Garcia stated that he's available to answer any questions and hopefully we can get this project back on track and maybe finish the Brown Master Plan.

- Dominic Moore – Ceres resident, adjacent to the project property

Mr. Moore expressed his concern with the special treatment of the extension request for this project, noting that where he comes from, if you miss a deadline, you don't just automatically get it redone.

Mr. Moore continued, what concerns him about them building this is the congestion. There is a school right across the street. He doesn't know how they're getting in and out of the building site, but he lives on Bria Drive and he can just envision hundreds of cement trucks and all kinds of riff raff coming up and down that street, not able to get any sleep. He works swing shift, so he sleeps during the day, and he can just imagine the jack hammers and what not.

Mr. Moore noted that he knew Jack Rudd; he was his neighbor for a little bit, very nice neighbor. He had done this plan; they had talked about it a little bit. It was set to expire; the owner missed his chance. As a neighbor, he knows his values would go down and the noise would go up, the traffic would go up. There are children all around there. It's nice to have an open space. He knows that's his own vested interest, and if he were the land owner, he would have a different opinion. He's just here to express his opinion. He says no to noise, no to congestion and he doesn't get much slack from the City when he makes a mistake. He doesn't see why we should give any here, and he means no disrespect to anyone here.

Chairperson Smith asked Mr. Westbrook to explain the process of filing for an extension once the map has expired, noting that this is not a special exception. This is part of the process and she just wants to make sure that Mr. Moore understands what the process is.

Mr. Westbrook explained if the map was still valid, it would be filed for an extension, which is a little easier than this. It's the Commission's prerogative just to continue to allow the map to be alive. In this circumstance, it just had to start over, just like it did originally back in 2002 as part of the Cambridge Estates subdivision. Additionally, the same in 2015 when the applicant decided to move forward. This is nothing out of the ordinary and there is no exception being granted here at all.

Mr. Moore thanked Mr. Westbrook for clarifying that. The way he had read the item, he misunderstood. Anyways, his opinion is he doesn't like it and he's just here to express his opinion.

Mr. Moore continued, that he would like to know what is the egress in and out of the property; are they coming down Bria or are they coming off of Hackett or how are they getting in and out with all the trucks; do we know?

Chairperson Smith replied that she will ask Mr. Michaels if he can answer that question.

Mr. Michaels explained they'll be coming off Hackett, down Bria Drive.

Mr. Moore interjected, right by his house; sweet!

- Renee Ledbetter, Business Development Manager and Realtor for Exit Realty Consultants, Ceres, CA

Mrs. Ledbetter replied that this is a project that is greatly needed. We are in a housing shortage right now and we don't have properties for home owners who are ready to move up or ready to down-size to move to. She likes what Max Garcia said, that we do need business and we need residential to go hand-in-hand. This is a project that she would support as a realtor in the community, because she has clients who want to move here, and we have nothing to show them. This is certainly a project that many realtors in the community would get behind.

- Dave Pratt, Ceres citizen

Mr. Pratt asked what size are these homes.

Mr. Westbrook responded that no homes are proposed at this time. So, before the homes are constructed on the lot, there will be an application filed and before the Planning Commission with the size of the homes.

Chairperson Smith added that this is simply a subdivision map.

Mr. Pratt inquired if the homes will be affordable and what size are the homes in the area right now.

Mr. Westbrook explained that the homes in the subdivision located to the west, they are generally around 1300 square feet all the way up to around 2000 square feet.

Commissioner Kachel added that there is a proposed condition that the homes be one-story.

Mr. Westbrook confirmed that Commissioner Kachel is correct, that there is a condition that's added, that the requirement for the homes be one story, just to kind of fit into the neighborhood.

**The Public Hearing was closed at 6:24 p.m.**

Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Condit inquired if the Commission could make the three-year extension instead of two.

Mr. Westbrook explained that currently they cannot. The Municipal Code allows up to a two-year extension. As the Commission is familiar, with the General Plan Update effort, we're going to do a Zoning Code Update. As part of that we can look to modernize our Tentative Map component of the Municipal Code, where we could consider three years. But right now, we're limited to two.

Mr. Wells added, we've actually started that process of the comprehensive Municipal Code Update, doing all the legwork and the background. Our City Attorney staff is working on that with the goal of moving in a parallel process. But, once the General Plan is finished, we will move this summer into getting the Municipal Code completely updated, with hopefully getting that completed by November.

Commissioner Kachel wanted to just clarify, the reason he asked the question originally, was to get a sense of the timing of the project; is it going to proceed this time, because it has expired a couple of times. As far as the three-year extension, he thinks that's a modernization that would make sense. As you know, the State allows almost infinite extensions under the Map Act these days, so he was just looking at timing and perhaps the question that the gentleman was asking about the development standards or what we could see out there. Commissioner Kachel assumes he's okay with the condition for the one-story, which he knows had to go with the original approval. He thinks there are rural ranchettes next door that tries to minimize impacts. So he thinks that's what was meant, the way he understands that.

Commissioner Condit remarked that Mr. Garcia and his firm did a great job on putting this plan together and he commends them for trying to finish the original Brown Master Plan. But, he feels that the City at this point, with our public services, with our short falls in public safety services particularly, we can't solely rely on developer fees from housing development; we've got to go after more commercial. As Mr. Garcia said, they go hand-in-hand, and he thinks they do, but for too long we've relied on housing development and that's why we're in the situation we're in, in this City, he believes. That's why right now he can't support this project because of where we're at in our Public Safety services.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Del Nero; seconded by Commissioner Kachel to approve PC Resolutions 18-11 and 18-12. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Johnson, Kachel, Chairperson Smith  
**NOES:** Commissioner Condit  
**ABSENT:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**PUBLIC MEETING(S):**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**MATTERS INITIATED BY PLANNING COMMISSION AND STAFF**

None

**REPORTS:**

Commissioner Del Nero reported that he attended the Ceres Street Faire this past weekend, noting it was a nice time to show off the Downtown area. It looked good.

Commissioner Kachel noted that he actually received a comment from the AT&T employee that came to his home last week, stating how much better Downtown Ceres looked. Compliments to the staff and everyone else, including the Chamber that are helping make improvements to our City. A visitor from out of town saw it and liked it.

Vice-Chairperson Condit stated that Chairperson Smith and Commissioner Kachel did a great job in the parade this year.

Chairperson Smith thanked Vice-Chairperson Condit for chairing the last meeting when she was unable to attend. She also wanted to thank him for arranging for the truck again this year for the Ceres Street Faire Parade, and having his dad drive the Commissioners. She reported that she had the pleasure of having her two granddaughters join them. It was a lot of fun and she noted there were a lot of people in attendance this year and she is looking forward to next year.

Director of Community Development, Tom Westbrook announced that he also had fun at the Ceres Street Faire Parade and was lucky enough to drive the City Council. It was a good Street Faire and well attended both days.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Commission adjourned at 6:31 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled meeting of Monday, May 21, 2018.

APPROVED:



Laurie Smith, Chairperson

ATTEST:

  
Tom Westbrook, Secretary