

CITY OF CERES
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

APRIL 18, 2011

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

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Del Nero, Kachel, Kline, Molina, Smith

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: City Attorney Michael Lyions, Planning, Building and Housing Division Manager Tom Westbrook, Director of Public Works Michael Brinton, Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Bryan Briggs, Associate Planner James Michaels, Secretary Ann Montgomery

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Kachel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. It was moved by Commissioner Kline; seconded by Commissioner Molina, to approve the minutes from the March 7, 2011 meeting; Carried 5/0.
2. It was moved by Commissioner Molina, seconded by Commissioner Kline, to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2011 meeting; Carried 5/0.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION:

None

CITIZEN COMMUNICATION:

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AS POSTED (OR AMENDED) AND CERTIFICATION OF POSTING:

It was moved by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Kline, to approve the agenda as posted. Carried 5/0.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC HEARING(S):

3. 10-01 ANNEX/10-02 GPA/10-13 PZ/10-04 ASPA; Reconsideration of a previously approved project involving the development of a 16,813 square foot commercial building for retail use with a drive-thru pharmacy at the northwest corner of Hatch Road and Central Avenue. The proposal requires the approval of an annexation, a general plan amendment, a rezoning, and an architectural and site plan approval. The City Council considered this item on January 24, 2011, and directed the Planning Commission to reconsider the proposal regarding traffic improvements and site access. Wildeman & Similie Development, LLC, applicant.

Associate Planner James Michaels presented the staff report.

- Conditions B7c and B7e on page 14 of the Staff Report would be eliminated as these conditions are covered under Conditions B6c and B6e on page 13.

Chairperson Kachel asked if the median along Hatch Road, is still subject to close the in-bound left turn lanes at some point.

Mr. Michaels explained the way it's designed, it will still allow a left turn into the site. The Council was more concerned about a left turn out of the site. On the approach coming in, east-bound Hatch, they didn't have a problem with it.

Chairperson Kachel stated this is the third hearing on this before us. The changes have been described. They primarily have to do with the change in the traffic pattern, along the front of the property. In essence we're creating three south bound lanes there; a left lane, a center lane and a right turn lane, and making changes on the medians.

The public hearing was opened at 6:07 p.m.

- Ryan Swehla – Benchmark Commercial Real Estate

He asked Mr. Michaels to display the aerial views of the intersection, showing Peak Hour Stacking with and without the CVS development. He reiterated that this is a bad intersection, and the question is, do the improvements we are proposing help alleviate the problem with the intersection. He pointed out that they extended the right turn lane, coming south on Central and made the left turn so it's a much more secure configuration.

- Joe Muratore - Benchmark Commercial Real Estate

One thing that was mentioned at the Council meeting was if you're in the Walgreens parking lot during peak hours and you want to turn out, there are all those cars stacked there behind it. We went out to the site and mapped it out. We actually took the Council members out there and showed them on the pavement; put a line where the cars used to stack-up and also a line to where they would stack up now. The good thing now, is that it doesn't go past the Walgreen parking lot entrance. Also, with the right turn lane, there's a merge lane now. It'll make the traffic move a lot faster.

Chairperson Kachel asked if he and his clients were still comfortable with the onsite parking arrangements as a result of these changes.

Mr. Muratore responded that yes, although we lost some parking, we'll make it work, and we'd love to see this thing happen.

- David Mendonsa – 1332 North Central Avenue, Modesto, CA 95351

He represents himself and his wife, as well as his son and his wife. They are joint property owners and residents. Their property is on the east side of Central, and they live two doors down from the project site. The new turn lane will basically be in front of their property, but that's not a problem for them. They've spoken in favor of this project at a previous Planning Commission meeting as well as at the Council meeting. It will be a good project; good for the neighborhood, good for the corner, will bring improvements to the area that otherwise may have taken years to accomplish. With the installation of the curbs and gutters, that should help with the drainage problem. Also, with the addition of curbs and gutters, it probably will alleviate the u-turn problem that they and their neighbors have been having in front of their homes. He feels that the long term gains will be worth a little inconvenience during the construction process. They are definitely in favor of the project.

The public hearing was closed at 6:14 p.m.

Commissioner Kline stated that the Developer and the City needs to be commended for coming back with a new revised traffic study. If he remembers correctly, at the original presentation, he had asked about the right hand turn lane. With all these things from the initial meeting, all sides came together and they are to be commended. If this works out

for the developer, it meets all the criteria that was first established. He likes the idea of the left-hand turn lane on Hatch Road. In the past, he has been against the project because of County pockets, as well as curbs and gutters. But with as much as this developer has gone the extra mile to answer all the questions, the traffic issues, he stated he will be in support of this project this time. He knows he was the lone “no” vote in the past. He’d still like to see curbs and gutters all the way down the block, say down to Nadine.

Commissioner Del Nero stated that he’s in support of this, but that the aerial photo is a bit misleading. It looks like a parking lot on Central. He still worries about the people leaving Walgreens, turning left, and wants that on the record.

Mr. Westbrook explained that what this is trying to illustrate, that generally in traffic analysis, the industry standard for a car is 20 feet. They are trying to represent that visually, so he thinks that why it looks so nice, neat and perfect. They just tried to follow the norm with an inclusion of the 20 foot standard for this exhibit.

Commissioner Molina is glad that the City Council and the developer came together and came up with a solution to widen Central Avenue. He commends CVS for being a good neighbor. They were willing to spend extra money; went out of their way to accommodate the neighbors. The neighbors are really appreciative of what they’ve done. He is in support of this.

Commissioner Smith stated that she supported this since the first time it came to the Commission and continues to. The enhancements, of course make it better. As a resident north of Hatch, she is going to enjoy that three lane choice when she comes to that intersection.

Chairperson Kachel stated that he too supports the project and he wants to commend the developer, the people who have expressed concern in earlier meetings, and to the City Council for picking up on some of these issues and not approving this until they got what they think is right; particularly the right turn pocket that’s being added on Hatch is going to be a real key factor to keep things moving. He agrees with Mr. Kline about the county islands. But in reality, if you add too much non-project and to try to annex a county island, it gets voted down; which is why you try to focus on what can be brought into the city. He thinks that the point made earlier by Mr. Mendonsa about getting the improvements in on this intersection is very important. He commends everybody for their efforts, including the applicant willing to go above and beyond to address the drainage issue.

Commissioner Molina motioned to adopt PC Resolution No. 11-08 per staff’s recommendation for modification of the conditions; Commissioner Smith seconded. Carried 5/0.

Chairperson Kachel announced that this will go to the City Council again, at a date to be determined. Everyone will be notified.

PUBLIC MEETING(S):

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

MATTER INITIATED BY PLANNING COMMISSION AND STAFF

None

**ADJOURN AS THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO THE CERES DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION AREA BOARD**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:23 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Del Nero, Kachel, Kline, Molina, Smith

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: City Attorney Michael Lyions, Planning, Building and Housing Division Manager Tom Westbrook, Director of Public Works Michael Brinton, Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Bryan Briggs, Associate Planner James Michaels, Secretary Ann Montgomery

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Quarterly (3rd) Report for period ending March 31, 2011.

Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Bryan Briggs presented the Quarterly (3rd) Report. This is an informational item only.

Commissioner Smith complimented Mr. Briggs on the great report and stated the financial statement and summary were well done. She inquired about the \$100,000 in the CDRAB fund balance, and if he had plans for that money.

Mr. Briggs replied that he imagines it will be used during the implementation of the Specific Plan. A real good marketing plan is going to cost a significant amount of money. In addition, if there are any of the flower boxes or street furniture, those types of items; if there's a balance, we would probably use it on that. In addition, there's probably going to be a fair number of meetings; possibly hire consultants, provide and copy flyers, (which he hand delivers). He really doesn't think that \$100,000 is a large balance, considering the type of activity we are doing now.

Commissioner Kline inquired about the difference in the second and third quarter amounts for Contract Services, Change out banners; going from \$330.00 to \$1,110.00.

Mr. Briggs explained that the replacement of one of the arms, that holds the banners, had rusted, in addition to replacement of two banners. Sierra Installations out of Fresno provides the service for us and provides an invoice which details all the charges.

Commissioner Kline asked for clarification on page 1 of the report, of the statement regarding CDRAB receiving revenue of \$4,779.32 for the third quarter; does revenue mean income plus interest.

Mr. Briggs replied that is correct.

Commissioner Molina stated that he was under the impression that the City Council had talked about renovating the water tower and doing some updates to it; i.e. painting.

Mr. Briggs explained that prior to our ability to paint the tower, we had to engineer it and determine whether it was structurally sound to withstand the sandblasting and the paint. It was determined that upgrades would need to be done in order for it to withstand that, and the grand total of the painting and the engineering upgrades was estimated at approximately \$480,000. The City Council believed that that was not a responsible expenditure of funds in these times and requested that we put that project on hold and bring it back to them at a future date.

Commissioner Molina asked about the page on the City's website with an update on what's going on in the City; to keep the citizens informed.

Mr. Briggs explained that there is a recommendation to develop a website specifically for downtown issues. That will be included in the presentation of the annual report to the City Council. It was certainly something that staff had considered as part of an ongoing marketing plan; that would begin after the adoption of the Specific Plan. We're going to have opportunities to market issues

of importance to the downtown area. Once we do that, we can include items like this.

Chairperson Kachel asked if the water tower is safe in its current condition.

Mr. Briggs replied that yes, however, they were concerned about the sandblasting, and the tower being able to withstand the updates.

Commissioner Smith motioned to accept the report; Commissioner Kline seconded; Carried 5/0.

5. Update Regarding Downtown Business Group Meetings.

Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Bryan Briggs presented the update. This is an informational item only.

Commissioner Smith expressed her concern with low attendance at meetings. As was mentioned in the Staff Report, attendance became sparse after the business owners were informed that the use of the revenue was at the direction of the City Manager after Council adopted the budget.

Mr. Briggs explained that he's been trying to organize the business owners for three years. We had great turnout in the beginning; for over a year we had in excess of 25 people attending the meetings. It seemed to him, the real concern of the business owners, was control over the CDRAB budget. It has come up on numerous occasions and he did notice that once that was directly communicated, with evidence of the municipal code; that's really when interest waned. He surmised, when business owners realized that it was truly only an advisory capacity, which he tried communicating for most of the year. From that point, it has been the same few people attending the meetings; great people and he's glad they're involved, but would like to see additional people in attendance.

Commissioner Smith motioned to accept the report; Commissioner Molina seconded; Carried 5/0.

Mr. Briggs reported that the Annual Report will be presented at the next Planning Commission meeting.

RECONVENED AS THE PLANNING COMMISSION at 6:45 P.M.

REPORTS:

Commission – Commissioner Smith apologized for not being in attendance at the last hearing, as she was extremely ill. The process we went through, while it was exhausting, complicated, and on many levels very detailed, was important. She thinks the conclusion

was correct and she is proud to be a part of a commission that went through that process. It's an honor to be a part of a commission with all of you, regardless of your vote, of how seriously we all took this and how much homework everyone did.

Staff – Mr. Westbrook handed out an invitation that was received today from the Ceres Unified School District for the Open House for Cesar Chavez Junior High School on May 14th.

On May 16th, staff is anticipating bringing to the Commission, a fairly sizeable project. This will be the third in the trio: Downtown Specific Plan, Mitchell Ranch, West Landing Specific Plan. Our goal is to get it to you two weeks in advance due to the stack of documents; the Environmental Impact Report and so forth. Mr. Westbrook asked that the Commission to let him know if they will not be able to attend the meeting on the 16th.

Mr. Westbrook reported that at 4:30 p.m. on April 14th, he was greeted with an appeal for the Mitchell Ranch project. We are hopeful to take it to the City Council meeting on the 25th to set the date for the Appeal Hearing. In the report he prepared on Friday, he recommended May 23rd. It will give them time to look at all the information that was presented to the Planning Commission before the project is presented to them.

ADJOURNMENT:

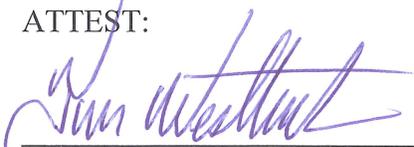
The Commission adjourned at 6:50 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled meeting of Monday, May 2, 2011.

APPROVED:



Bob Kachel, Chairperson

ATTEST:



Tom Westbrook, Secretary