

**CITY OF CERES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 6, 2023**

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Kachel.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners: Del Nero, Jammu, Johnson, Otero, Chairperson Kachel

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Director of Community Development Christopher Hoem, Director of Engineering Services, City Engineer Kevin Waugh, Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Tamra Spade, City Attorney Christian Smit, Administrative Secretary Ann Montgomery

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION:**

None

**CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

1. Clerk's Report of Posting. The Agenda for the regular meeting of the Planning Commission of March 6, 2023 was posted on March 3, 2023.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Del Nero; seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Jammu, Johnson, Otero, Chairperson Kachel  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

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

None

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

2. Tentative Parcel Map (TPM) 23-01; Proposal for a Tentative Parcel Map to subdivide an existing 2.59-acre parcel into a 1.29-acre and a 1.30-acre parcel located at 948 Richland Avenue. Robert Smith, applicant.

Director of Community Development, Christopher Hoem presented the staff report.

Brief Commission discussion ensued.

**The Public Hearing was opened at 6:05 p.m.**

**There being no comments, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:06 p.m.**

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Del Nero; seconded by Commissioner Johnson to make the determination that this project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15315, and approve 23-01 TPM, subject to the findings and conditions contained in Resolution PC 23-07. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Jammu, Johnson, Otero, Chairperson Kachel  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

3. Tentative Parcel Map (TPM) 23-04; Proposal for a Tentative Parcel Map to subdivide an existing 4.61-acre remainder parcel of the Ceres Gateway Center project into a 3-acre commercial zoned lot and a 1.61-acre remainder parcel located at 4217 Mitchell Road. Hawkins & Associates Engineering, Inc., applicant.

Director of Community Development, Christopher Hoem presented the staff report.

Brief Commission discussion ensued.

**The Public Hearing was opened at 6:11 p.m.**

- Rod Hawkins, Hawkins & Associates Engineering, Inc.

Mr. Hawkins stated that he is available to answer any questions and thanked staff and everyone for all their efforts with this project, noting it's been a nice project, for him, to work on the last 12-14 years.

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

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Del Nero; seconded by Commissioner Jammu to accept that the proposed Tentative Parcel Map is found to be consistent with the original mitigated negative declaration approved for the Ceres Gateway Center project and that approval of the Tentative Parcel Map is not subject to further environmental review, and approve 23-04 TPM, subject to the findings and conditions contained in Resolution PC 23-08. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Jammu, Johnson, Otero, Chairperson Kachel  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

4. Specific Plan Site Plan (SPSP) 22-22; Proposal for a Specific Plan Site Plan to construct a 21,702 square foot retail building at the Ceres Gateway Center, located at 4217 Mitchell Road. Ceres Gateway Center, LLC., applicant.

Director of Community Development, Christopher Hoem presented the staff report.

Chairperson Kachel inquired about the nature of the business, Tractor Supply.

Mr. Hoem explained it's a country store that sells a variety of things, some clothing, some tools, pet supplies and agricultural items.

**The Public Hearing was opened at 6:18 p.m.**

- Dave Pratt, Ceres citizen

Mr. Pratt informed the Commission that there's a Tractor Supply in Turlock and explained that they carried farming supplies.

- Robert Toro, Development Product Manager, California Gold Development Corporation

Mr. Toro explained that this is the 25<sup>th</sup> Tractor Supply store they've developed in the state of California. It's an agricultural retailer, as they cater to rural areas, but they don't actually sell tractors. They provide farming equipment and feed, things for rural and agricultural areas, so that's why they feel that Ceres is a good fit for this concept.

**The Public Hearing was closed at 6:19 p.m.**

Brief Commission discussion ensued.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Del Nero; seconded by Commissioner Otero to accept that the proposed entitlement is found to be consistent with the original mitigated negative declaration approved for the Ceres Gateway Center project, and that the approval of this entitlement is not subject to further environmental review, and approve 22-22 SPSP, subject to the findings and conditions contained in Resolution PC 23-09. Motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioners Del Nero, Jammu, Johnson, Otero, Chairperson Kachel  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None

5. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment (ZOTA) 23-03; Proposal to consider a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to the Off-street Parking Standards in Chapter 18.25 of the Ceres Municipal Code to allow excess vehicular parking area, beyond the minimum required, to be gravel surfaces with certain conditions.

Director of Community Development, Christopher Hoem presented the staff report.

Commission discussion ensued.

**The Public Hearing was opened at 6:39 p.m.**

- Nelson Gomez, representing El Rematito, Pedro and Candida Marquez

Mr. Gomez provided a brief history on the parking area at El Rematito and explained how we've come to this proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance. He noted that there are other entities, St. Jude's Church and the soccer fields that have the same problems. Mr. Gomez believes this amendment is an agreeable solution and his clients are in support of the addition to the amendment.

Chairperson Kachel asked Mr. Gomez if he had any thoughts on the "dust" topic.

Mr. Gomez replied his client, the Marquez's have asked for bids on a gravel parking lot that would, in fact, provide the greatest protection against dust. They do not want to have dust; neither for the clients, El Rematito nor for adjacent properties. We're trying to better a situation that has come up; that's the goal of this and he believes that Mr. Hoem would agree, that's what we're trying to do. They would encourage the Planning Commission to approve this particular solution so that we can hopefully have additional parking that would be able to prevent the problem.

Commissioner Otero inquired how many parking spaces are allowed in that paved area.

Mr. Gomez explained that in the fenced area, when they originally started, the area had about 700 parking spaces. It went up to 1100 parking spaces, when the latest expansion was done in the late 2010's when Pedro Marquez Avenue was developed. At that point, the City had about 1500 spaces indicated; however, our engineers tell us it's 1,866 parking spaces that are paved. This proposal will be in addition to the 1,866 parking spaces that would be used.

Commissioner Otero asked with the excess parking, how many more cars will that hold.

Mr. Gomez responded that they do not know how many more it will hold, as they haven't done a study for that, but he would say it would probably hold about half of that number. It's seven acres. Their goal is not to use it as primary parking, but rather as overflow parking.

Chairperson Kachel inquired, assuming the gravel isn't marked for parking, the parking is just open, would there be somebody there to park cars on days when it's used.

Mr. Gomez replied, it is our goal, that everybody would comply. They already have at the entrance of the main parking lot, some attendants that guide the cars in. He would say that his client is being an extremely responsible property and business owner, that he would encourage and have folks to help with parking in that area so that it would be an orderly parking area.

- Dave Pratt, Ceres citizen

Mr. Pratt commented that this is a popular place and compared it to the Flea Market in downtown Modesto. They had to make changes, as they were parking everywhere, causing a lot of traffic hazards. He expressed his concerns with the dust, believes the gravel will be a good solution, and hopes that they will have somebody manage the overflow parking area because people don't park straight.

**The Public Hearing was closed at 6:50 p.m.**

Commissioner Del Nero reminded the Commissioners that they will be recommending this amendment to the City Council, who will make the final decision.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Del Nero; seconded by Commissioner Otero to accept that this proposal is consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b-3) and recommend the City Council approve the proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment (ZOTA 23-03) per the findings listed in PC Resolution 22-05. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Jammu, Johnson, Otero, Chairperson Kachel  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**PUBLIC MEETING(S):**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**MATTERS INITIATED BY PLANNING COMMISSION AND STAFF**

None


**REPORTS:**

- Commissioner Johnson reported that he attended the Lions Club Crab Feed recently. There was a great turn out and the food was phenomenal.
- Chairperson Kachel stated that he attended the Mayor's State of the City Address last week. He learned a lot and noted that there is a lot going on in the City. It was very informative, and time well spent.
- City Attorney, Christian Smit remarked that he had nothing to report, but appreciated the clear audio on the zoom feed and thanked City staff and the Commission for an excellent meeting tonight.
- Director of Community Development, Christopher Hoem announced that we have a new Building Permit Technician, Rhonda Rose and he hopes to have some additional very good news at our next meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Director of Engineering Services, City Engineer, Kevin Waugh stated that he is supporting the Planning Commission tonight and has nothing to report.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Commission adjourned at 6:54 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled meeting of Monday, March 20, 2023.

APPROVED:

  
Robert Kachel, Chairperson

ATTEST:

  
Christopher Hoem, Secretary