



CITY OF MONTCLAIR
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

REGULAR ADJOURNED MEETING
Monday, January 24, 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER
5111 Benito Street, Montclair, California 91763

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Flores called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Johnson led those present in the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Flores, Vice Chairman Sahagun, Commissioners Johnson, Lenhart, and Vodvarka, Community Development Director Lustro, City Planner Diaz, Assistant Planner Gutierrez, and Deputy City Attorney Holdaway.

MINUTES

The minutes of the January 10, 2011 regular meeting were presented for approval. Commissioner Johnson moved, Vice Chairman Sahagun seconded, and the minutes were approved 5-0.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

AGENDA ITEMS

- 6.a CASE NUMBER 2010-22
- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Project Address: | 9177, 9197, and 9201 Central Avenue |
| Project Applicant: | Chavin Family Limited Partnership |
| Project Planner: | Steve Lustro, Community Development Director |
| Request: | Precise Plan of Design (PPD) for a master sign program amendment |

Director Lustro reviewed the staff report. The applicant was requesting Precise Plan of Design approval for an amendment to the existing multi-tenant sign program for the westerly portion of the Montclair East retail center at the northeast quadrant of Central Avenue and I-10. The sign program encompassed the following components: two monument signs along Central Avenue, identified on the plans as Sign G-1 (the sign in front of El Pollo Loco) and G-5 (immediately south in front of the Firestone Auto Service Center); building-mounted signs on the building referred to as the 9177 building (Men's Warehouse and the former Jennifer Convertibles); building-mounted signs on the L-shaped, multi-tenant building at 9197 Central Avenue (the building that extends east of Firestone) and also the building-mounted signs on the Firestone building at 9201 Central Avenue; lastly, the signs that are on the freeway tower to the rear of the Firestone building, along the south side of the property. Most of the current sign program was proposed to remain intact, but the changes proposed by the applicant are outlined on Page 1 of the report with references to the corresponding pages in the sign program. On Page 8, it refers to the addition of the building-mounted signs on the rear entrances of Units A thru F of 9197 Central Avenue, addition of a building-mounted sign on the rear elevation of Unit G at 9197 Central Avenue; on Page 11, an increase in the height of the building-mounted sign on the north elevation of Unit B at 9177 Central, on the north side of the former Jennifer Convertibles; addition of a new building-mounted sign for Unit B on the northwest facing tower elevation immediately adjacent to the sign previously described; addition of a fifth tenant panel on monument signs G-1 and G-5, as previously described and on pages 15 and 16 of the staff report. Further, addition of one tenant sign band below the Montclair East copy on the north elevation of the freeway tower; the addition of two tenant sign bands below the Montclair East copy on the south elevation of the freeway tower; and the addition of a fifth tenant sign band on the west elevation of the freeway tower. All are illustrated on page 17 of the sign program. The building-mounted and freeway tower signs shall be required to be individually illuminated channel letters and signature cabinets or logos would continue to be allowed to constitute a minimal portion of the overall sign area, subject to landlord and City approval. The bottom portion of the two monument signs, where a fifth tenant panel is proposed to be added, would be modified to accommodate a fifth tenant panel

and that is illustrated on Pages 15 and 16 of the sign program. In the photos of the existing signs there is a gable-shaped opening in the bottom that would be squared off a bit to accommodate that fifth sign. The signs on the monuments would continue to be routed letters on a stucco face and the applicant is also proposing to update the appearance of each sign by replacing the teal colored Montclair East copy in the sign cap with a more contemporary red color and the addition of a red LED band at the base of the sign cap. Lastly, as a point of information, monument sign G-2, which was not in the packets, is the third monument sign along Central Avenue in front of the former Jennifer Convertibles. It is on the applicant's property, but is not owned or maintained by the applicant. The owner of the easterly portion of the center has an easement for that sign and they are the ones responsible for maintaining that particular sign. It's the northernmost monument sign along Central Avenue. As it states in the staff report, staff provided the master sign criteria as proposed by the applicant for the Commission's reference. As it is currently configured, the center is demised into a total of 36 tenant spaces. This takes in the entire center, not just the applicant's portion. Staff believes the center's sign program offers excellent exposure to motorists traveling along I-10, along Central Avenue and also along Moreno Street. Each of the inline tenants is entitled to at least one building-mounted sign and then there are selected tenant spaces that back to the freeway that are allowed a second building-mounted sign. In addition to that, there are currently five monument signs around the perimeter of the property; three on Central Avenue and two on Moreno Street. They currently contain a total of 38 tenant panels. The pylon sign that is on the adjacent property has a total of 12 sign panels and the tower, which is on the applicant's property, currently can accommodate eight additional tenant signs. So, all told, there are well over 100 tenant signs throughout the Montclair East center. The pad tenants are allowed multiple signs. El Pollo Loco has four and Men's Wearhouse and the former Jennifer Convertibles space each had three. So there is a significant amount of signage on the property. On Page 3 of the staff report, we indicate that staff is supportive of recommending to the Planning Commission an approval of the bulleted items in the middle of the page:

- ❑ The addition of a building-mounted sign on the rear elevation of Unit G at 9197 Central Avenue (the former Petco space). It's a 12,000 square-foot tenant space and staff believes it would be appropriate for that tenant space to have freeway-visible signage.
- ❑ Addition of a fifth tenant panel on the two monument signs along Central Avenue. It has been staff's policy to limit monument signs in the City to a maximum of four tenant panels per side so the addition of one sign panel to each of the monuments would result in the ability to identify a maximum of four additional tenants, although it is certainly very possible that if a tenant went on one side of a monument sign, the landlord might allow them to go on the other side as well. Nevertheless, four additional tenants could be identified if desired. He noted the height of the signs would not change, they will remain at ten feet, which is the maximum allowed per the sign code.
- ❑ Staff is also recommending allowing the addition of one tenant sign band below the Montclair East copy on the north elevation of the freeway tower. Staff believes that would improve the visual balance of the tower.

- ❑ The addition of one tenant sign band rather than the two tenant sign bands requested below the Montclair East copy on the south elevation of the freeway tower.

The components of the sign program that staff is not recommending for approval start on Page 3 and finish on Page 4. However, Director Lustro called the Commission's attention to the last bullet point, which is about one-third of the way down on Page 6.a-4 of the staff report. As originally proposed on Page 17 of the sign program, the additional tenant signs on the tower would be placed below an existing belt course toward the middle of the tower. Staff reviewed this and believed that the extra signs looked out of place below that belt course. That is why staff is recommending against adding the sign on the west elevation and also against adding the second sign on the south elevation. What the applicant provided to staff earlier today, and was placed at each Commissioner's place prior to the meeting, are what are indicated as Option #2 and Option #3. The consistent part about these options is that the applicant is proposing to relocate the belt course with the diamond design in it a little bit lower on the tower, where it would actually be more in line with the parapet wall of the adjacent building and would look more appropriate than it does now. Then, a fifth sign would be added on the west elevation and a second sign would be added on the south elevation, both above the relocated belt course. Where the two options differ, Option #2 proposes to leave the east elevation with four tenant signs and Option #3 proposes to have five signs on the east elevation. Staff feels that by moving the belt course down, adding the fifth sign to just the west elevation or both the east and west elevations would provide some balance for the upper part of that tower. The same would apply to the south elevation. Moving the belt course down and placing a second sign below the Montclair East copy would actually read well and architecturally look correct. Given what was presented today, if the Commission is supportive of either of the options, staff would recommend the Commission choose Option #3. What that would do is provide the same number of tenant signs on both the west and east elevations of the tower and it would provide a second tenant sign on the south side. There would remain a single sign on the north elevation of the tower, which has limited visibility across the parking lot. So, having reviewed all that, the recommendation was to give the Commission the two options, but it has the third option as well, to either approve the recommendation that is in the staff report as it is written, or to approve the recommendation, but incorporating Option #3, which would necessitate staff re-writing Condition No. 1.e on the third page of Resolution No. 11-1736. Staff would incorporate new language that would basically say that five tenant signs would be allowed on the east and west elevations of the tower, two tenant signs would be allowed on the south, and that the applicant would be required to move the belt course down as it is shown on the plan so there is visual balance. He noted the applicant was in attendance for any questions.

Commissioner Johnson wanted to clarify the applicant wanted more signage than what currently exists and does Option #3 provide what the applicant is asking for. Director Lustro replied it generally does. The applicant is interested in having the fifth sign on the east and west elevations of the tower and also the second sign on the freeway elevation of the tower. The second sign on the north elevation was not as important.

Chairman Flores stated the item was not a public hearing and invited those in attendance to speak if they so desired.

Henry Chavin, 8939 Vernon Avenue, Montclair, the applicant and property owner, stated it has been quite a while since he has been before the Commission on any particular project. He thanked City Planner Diaz and Director Lustro for the work they have provided over the last six months trying to get to this point. He has tenants that psychologically feel they need additional signage in order to do business. Fortunately, they have been able to lease some space subject to the sign approval. One of the new tenants is Dr. Tattoff, which has a large billboard on the 57 Freeway advertising their services. They do laser removal of tattoos and other types of skin work, but a person who goes there might come back for eight or nine treatments, meaning we have more of a chance for customers to spend their dollars here. They also have a new tenant that is going into the 9197 Central building and one of the things important to them was the identification on the south side of the tower. Director Lustro and he looked at that sign numerous times and only today they decided they could lower the belt course there and make it work and it would hopefully be satisfactory to the Commission and bring new business into Montclair. He thanked the Commission.

Vice Chairman Sahagun asked if all the monument signs would get a fresh coat of paint. Mr. Chavin responded they would.

Commissioner Lenhert stated the way businesses are today, they need all the exposure they can get and this sign program is a good clean way to do it.

Commissioner Lenhert moved that, based on the evidence submitted, a finding is made that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11(a), in that the project involves the approval of a master sign program to govern the installation of on-premise signs, seconded by Commissioner Vodvarka, there being no opposition to the motion, the motion passed 5-0.

Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the Precise Plan of Design for a master sign program amendment for the westerly portion of the Montclair East retail center under Case No. 2010-22, subject to the conditions of approval in Resolution No. 11-1736, with a revision to Condition No. 1.e and accepting Option #3, seconded by Vice Chairman Sahagun, there being no opposition to the motion, the motion passed 5-0.

6.b Annual Planning Commission reorganization

Director Lustro explained the process of the annual reorganization. The Chairman takes nominations from the floor for the positions of Vice Chair and Chairman and then the Commission votes.

Chairman Flores asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Johnson nominated Sergio Sahagun, Commissioner Sahagun nominated Luis Flores. After several minutes of discussion on how each felt about being nominated, Commissioner Johnson withdrew her nomination of Sergio Sahagun. Chairman Flores asked for a vote for the position of Vice Chairman. Luis Flores was unanimously elected Vice Chairman by acclamation of the Commission.

Chairman Flores asked for nominations for Chairman. Commissioner Lenhert nominated Sergio Sahagun. Commissioner Vodvarka nominated Tenice Johnson, but she declined. Chairman Flores asked for a vote for the position of Chairman. Sergio Sahagun was unanimously elected Chairman by acclamation of the Commission.

Deputy City Attorney Holdaway congratulated Chairman Sahagun and Vice Chairman Flores.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Director Lustro stated the applicant for the first item, Mr. Chavin, had alluded to the fact that staff has been working very diligently on an application for a new tenant. Assistant Planner Gutierrez has been working for quite some time with a new tenant for the former Jennifer Convertibles space and staff hopes to bring that to the Commission in February for consideration.

Director Lustro stated that on Tuesday, February 15, 2011, the City will be conducting its mid-year budget hearing in the Chamber and invited the Commission to attend at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioner Lenhert stated that Barbara Watson had passed away. Commissioner Vodvarka stated he was sad to hear that, she was a lovely lady and he would light a candle for her at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Vice Chairman Sahagun thanked the Commission for his nomination and election as Chairman for the 2011 calendar year. He commented he will try to do as good a job as Luis Flores.

Vice Chairman Sahagun commented about receiving the handout regarding the Gold Line and mentioned that two projects within the North Montclair Downtown Specific Plan have been approved and he read in the newspaper that they are moving forward so there is a lot of positive news not only for the City but for construction. He asked that in the future there be discussion regarding our North Montclair area.

Commissioner Vodvarka commented in the City Manager's Weekly report, there was an item in there regarding washing paint down the gutter and picking up pet waste, etc. There was a door hanger distributed that contains a lot of information regarding water quality issues. He questioned if he paints his house and uses water-based paint, can

he wash the brushes and rollers out in the sink into the sewer system? Director Lustro replied yes, you can put it in the sewer but not the storm drain.

Commissioner Vodvarka asked about pet waste and what the city could do about a woman who feeds stray animals. She puts out food for cats and the cats pass through his yard and leave pet waste in his yard and his gardener complains about it. Who would he contact? Director Lustro replied that he should call Inland Valley Humane Society.

Commissioner Vodvarka commented that he heard good news that a Volkswagen dealer wanted to relocate to Montclair and he asked where. Director Lustro replied to not get too excited. Volkswagen of America has expressed a desire to come to Montclair but there has been some objection raised by another local dealer. There was a hearing in Sacramento last week that the City Manager and Redevelopment Director attended and testified at – from what he understood, the state agency that oversees these matters will be issuing some type of ruling within the next week or two to let VW know whether they can locate here.

Commissioner Johnson asked staff when their Form 700 would be distributed. She said that in past years, they received it in their packets in January. Director Lustro stated he believed they were not due until April, but we distribute them early. He believed that because City Clerk Donna Jackson is retiring, many of the responsibilities are being transferred to other staff and that may be why they have not been distributed. You may see it in your packets in the next few weeks.

Chairman Flores, in order to assist the new Chairman with future meetings, asked the Commission to remember not go off on tangents and to stay on the subject at hand.

Chairman Flores commented that he has read several conflicting reports regarding the Gold Line and asked for clarification. Director Lustro replied the initial phase of the Gold Line extends from Los Angeles' Union Station to Sierra Madre Villa Avenue in east Pasadena. The second phase of the Gold Line, called Phase 2A, will extend the Gold Line to Citrus Avenue in Azusa, near Azusa Pacific University. That phase is fully funded, under construction, and expected to be completed in 2014. The extension from Azusa to Montclair is referred to as Phase 2B. It is not funded at this particular time; however, there are positive indications that funding will be forthcoming at some point in the near future. The meetings that are currently taking place deal with the environmental review related to Phase 2B. A series of scoping meetings were conducted over the last couple weeks and comments on the scoping meetings are due to the Gold Line Authority by February 2. They are pushing forward on the environmental aspect of Phase 2B because it is a lengthy process and they want to have their ducks in a row by the time funding is obtained. If all goes well, the Gold Line will be to the Transcenter in 2017.

Chairman Flores adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Berke
Recording Secretary