



CITY OF MONTCLAIR
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR ADJOURNED MEETING
March 28, 2016

COUNCIL CHAMBER
5111 Benito Street, Montclair, California 91763

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Flores, Commissioners Martinez, Sahagun and Vodvarka, Community Development Director Lustro, City Planner Diaz, Associate Planner Gutiérrez, and City Attorney Robbins

MINUTES

The minutes from the February 22, 2016 meeting were presented for approval. Vice Chair Flores moved, Commissioner Sahagun seconded, Chair Johnson abstained, and the minutes were approved 4-0.

ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

AGENDA ITEMS

- a. PUBLIC HEARING - CASE NUMBER 2015-20
- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Project Address: | SEC Ramona Avenue and Dale Street |
| Project Applicant: | Davis Family Trust |
| Project Planner: | Silvia Gutiérrez, Associate Planner |
| Request: | Conditional Use Permit and Precise Plan of Design for a car wash |
| CEQA Assessment: | Categorically Exempt (Section 15332) |

Associate Planner Gutiérrez reviewed the staff report.

Vice Chair Flores asked if staff had received any questions or comments from the public. Associate Planner Gutiérrez replied that no comments have been received.

Commissioner Martinez asked how many legal-nonconforming residences exist south of the site. Associate Planner Gutiérrez stated there are four residences, about 900 square feet each. Commissioner Martinez asked if staff knew who was living in the four homes; are they owners or renters? Associate Planner Gutiérrez replied we do not know who lives in the four homes. Commissioner Martinez asked if the four homes were legal-nonconforming because they asked for permission or were they grandfathered in? City Planner Diaz replied that they are legal non-conforming because they were a legal use at the time they were constructed but have become nonconforming because of a subsequent change in zoning. Commissioner Martinez said the reason he is asking is because this is a new business that will be creating some noise close to residences and that was a concern of his, but it sounds like it was addressed in the staff report. He also asked if the noise level would be similar to that generated by the other adjacent commercial and industrial uses. City Planner Diaz explained it is expected to be similar because there is a steel manufacturing business to the east; an electrical contractor to the northeast that has regular truck traffic during the day; and the ambient noise from traffic on Ramona Avenue and on Mission Boulevard, a few hundred feet to the south.

Commissioner Vodvarka commented that he visited the site and did not think there would be enough noise to cause a negative impact because to the north you also have the railroad tracks and trains make more noise than the car wash will. He felt the City needs another car wash and imagined this one would operate about the same way as the one at the Honda dealership.

Chair Johnson opened the public hearing.

Ulises Araujo, 10373 Los Alamitos Boulevard, Los Alamitos, represented the applicant, is the senior designer and was glad to be working with the City of Montclair. He felt they got extraordinary feedback from Associate Planner Gutiérrez and City Planner Diaz. Compared to other projects, this one went kind of easy. He said he and the owner were available for any questions and hoped for the Commission's approval.

Commissioner Martinez asked if the Fullerton-based car wash discussed by staff is the same company. Associate Planner Gutiérrez replied that it's the same building configuration, the same size, also on a corner lot, and is bordered on two sides by an established single-family residential neighborhood. She and Director Lustro visited the site and it was very similar to the subject site, so a valuable anecdotal experience to apply here as it had similar site conditions with respect to the proximity of residential.

Chair Johnson asked about what actually rubs against the car? There are some car washes that use rubber and some use some kind of cloth. Mr. Araujo replied that it is lamb's cloth. He stated his clients (the applicant) have researched all the technologies and chose the best material available, and that is the lamb's cloth.

Kevin Davis, one of the owners of the car wash, commented that the car wash will use lamb's cloth at a slow speed. They have attended car wash shows, researched all the systems and feel they have picked the "Mercedes" or "Cadillac" of the systems. Sammy Sousa, a partner and employee, is the one heading up this project. It is all stainless steel equipment; not made of things that will rust. Use of the vacuums will be at no charge; you will just push a button to use them. Commissioner Johnson asked if there would be options for customers; can you go and just get a quickie car wash or a wash, wax and Armor All the tires? Mr. Davis responded you can either get a basic wash or upgrade. There will be a kiosk with a person who will show you how to get a basic \$7.00 car wash or a \$12.00 high-end wash that includes Armor All on the tires and the whole deal. We realize sometimes customers may just want a quick wash, other times they may want to do the complete job including the inside. Another available option will be to pay a monthly fee and get an unlimited number of washes.

Hearing no other comments and no one else being present, Chair Johnson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Vodvarka moved that, based upon evidence submitted, the project is deemed exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project qualifies as a Class 32 exemption under State CEQA Guidelines in that the project is consistent with the applicable policies of the General Plan, the development policies and criteria of the "C-3" (General Commercial) zone, is less than five acres in size, has utilities present in the area to serve the development, and is similar to other existing commercial developments and uses in the vicinity. As such, there is no substantial evidence the project will pose a potential significant impact to the environment, seconded by Commissioner Sahagun, there being no opposition to the motion, the motion passed 5-0.

Vice Chair Flores moved to approve the Conditional Use Permit and Precise Plan of Design request for the site plan, floor plan, elevations, colors, materials, conceptual landscape plan, and use of a new 3,635 square-foot car wash on a 0.88-acre site at the southeast corner of Ramona Avenue and Dale Street, in the "C-3" (General Commercial) zone, by adopting the 94 Conditions of Approval under Resolution No. 16-1854, seconded by Commissioner Vodvarka, there being no opposition to the motion, the motion passed 5-0.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Commissioner Sahagun commented that he and Chair Johnson attended the Planning Commissioners Academy several weeks ago. One of the things he heard was that Commission meetings in some cities are really terrible and based on what he heard, we do very well in Montclair. One of the interesting things he heard was that over the next 10-20 years many vehicles will be driverless. It's incredible what they're proposing; instead of concentrating the Planning Commission on livable, walkable communities, we should be thinking about these driverless vehicles. The technology, the phones, the amount of data generated on every driver, every corner is going to get information on you and recognize you. Toyota, Google, and other companies had representatives there to talk about this technology.

Vice Chair Flores observed the construction around the City seems to be going very well. The only thing that bothered him was shops near Gold's Gym (the dental office and woman's shop) have been vacant for several years and it is not looking good. He wasn't sure what happened to the windows, at first he thought they were all cracked, but he wasn't sure if they have a film on the back and that got scratched but it looks awful.

Commissioner Vodvarka commented that he finds it interesting that there was a conference and he didn't know anything about it because he did not get any paperwork on it. Director Lustro stated that we had a short timeframe to find out who was interested in attending and the Planning Division secretary (Laura) called each of the Commissioners and was not able to reach all of them.

Commissioner Vodvarka commented that if any of the other Commissioners wanted to know how these car washes work, it would pay them to drive through the Honda car wash because it is the same thing. Chair Johnson stated she uses it all the time, but it closes early a lot, but it's wonderful when it's open. Commissioner Vodvarka stated that he uses the Honda car wash on occasion, but the downfall is you have to do your own vacuuming. That will be the same as the new one, but if there is new equipment, it shouldn't be too much of a strain.

Chair Johnson commented about attending the Planning Commissioners Academy. She always expects it to be the same but she always ends up learning that we are doing something well or something that we should do different. For example, she has always had an issue about the houses being so close together that you can reach out the window and get your newspaper from your neighbor, but what we heard from Peter Calthorpe, who was the opening keynote speaker, is that the buyers have changed over the last few decades. In 1970, over 70% of the buyers were married people who either had children or were thinking of having children. That number has decreased by almost 30%; now it's mostly single people who are buying and, unlike us old folks, they don't really want the big yards so it made her feel like we've been on track for quite some time. There was a lot of talk about infill projects, which to her, looks very dense and tight with no space. But Mr. Calthorpe explained that we really need to be lowering our carbon emissions (SB 535) and there are less carbon emissions in a denser space. When we think about North Montclair and its proximity to rail, the whole point is to get people out of their cars. We are doing things that are pretty on-point.

Another panel discussed the future of water and on-site stormwater capture. She realizes that on-site capture has been required on recent projects and that's what we should be doing. The other focus should be drought tolerant plants. The one presentation she had trouble with was by Jennifer West of Water Reuse Water California. Ms. West described how they are working on "sewer to the faucet" but she was not ready for that. There was also an excellent presentation about public engagement. Larry Patterson, the City Manager of San Mateo, spoke about not letting the Planning Commission or City Council meeting be the first opportunity for residents to get information. He gave some examples of things that worked well in San Mateo, including conducting meetings in the community and scheduling workshops where it is easy for residents and other stakeholders to get involved. His main message was you can't let the Planning Commission or City Council meetings be the first time to get information to the residents, you have to create opportunities. She felt that might be one of the things we might be able to do a little bit better. She knows we advertise in the paper, but with public engagement, we might be able to stretch it a little bit, but the rest of it, she felt we were right on point.

Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Embree
Planning Commission Secretary