

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the
Huntington Park Planning Commission held on November 14, 2012**

Chairman Carvajal called the meeting to order at 6:42 p.m. Present: Commissioners Juan Anaya, Eddie Benitez, Laura Herrera, Veronica Lopez, and Chairman Eddie Carvajal; Absent: None. Also present: Senior Planner Albert Fontanez and Recording Secretary Genny Ochoa.

Public Appearances

None.

Public Hearings

A. CASE NO. 1956-CUP: Request by Maria Teresa Kowal (on behalf of "Ministerios Mahanaim") for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow the expansion of an existing church located at 2563 Clarendon Avenue, within the Downtown Huntington Park "Specific Plan (DTSP) District C – Neighborhood Zone."

Senior Planner Albert Fontanez reviewed staff's report, which included the Administrative Comments and Analysis, and Recommendations. Mr. Fontanez stated that the two-story building was originally an apartment building and had been legally converted to a church use and added that the building has no significant architectural characteristics to the building. Mr. Fontanez stated that the applicant proposes to expand only the administrative offices and classrooms on the first and second floors, with no expansion to the main assembly area, and to add a kitchen on the first floor. In addition, the applicant proposes to convert the existing parking lot into an enclosed parking garage with 10 parking spaces. Based on the current standards, the church use would require 44 parking spaces, however, staff has determined that the proposed expansion will not need additional parking given that the assembly area will not be expanded.

Mr. Fontanez stated that in addition to the building expansion, the applicant is proposing major façade improvements by installing opaque, silver-colored metal panels that span the entire width of the building with a curved design imitating the biblical "Noah's Ark." The building height will be 50 feet, with the second floor to cantilever three feet over the first floor, and will include a 13-foot high, LED-lighted cross perched on top of the building. Mr. Fontanez stated that the applicant had indicated that the proposed metal panels were rustproof and required minimal maintenance. Mr. Fontanez added that the applicant feels that the church would be an asset to the community. Mr. Fontanez stated that staff recommended that the Planning Commission make the required findings for a Conditional Use Permit and approve Case No. 1956-CUP subject to the conditions outlined in staff's report.

A discussion was held. Commissioner Lopez asked what type of maintenance would be performed on the metal panels and expressed concern that the panels would rust after a period of time.

Commissioner Anaya asked if sufficient parking would be provided. Senior Planner Fontanez stated that the church assembly area would not be expanded, therefore, additional parking would not be required.

Chairman Carvajal declared the public hearing open and called for those wishing to speak for or against Case No. 1956-CUP.

Pastor Concepcion Roque (“Ministerios Mahanaim,” 2563 Clarendon Avenue, Huntington Park), applicant, came forward to speak in favor of Case No. 1956-CUP. Mr. Roque stated that the project architect had indicated to him that the metal panels are rust-proof and that adequate maintenance would be done every six months and that restoration of the panels would be done as needed. Pastor Roque added that he would do research on buildings in the downtown Los Angeles area having similar materials. Pastor Roque stated that he wanted to work with the City and comply with building codes in improving the subject property and was willing to consider alternative material, such as wood, for the façade. Pastor Roque stated that in addition to providing a place of worship, the church had been helping community families for the past six years by offering citizenship and English as a Second Language classes. Pastor Roque added that the church wished to continue offering “food giveaways” to the families it serves. Pastor Roque thanked the Commission for its support of the church and requested the approval of Case No. 1956-CUP.

Commissioner Benitez stated that he had concerns with the building’s compatibility with surrounding buildings and potential negative effects from the sunlight glare reflected off the metal panels, and suggested that the applicant use wood for the façade instead of the proposed metal panels.

Commissioner Lopez stated that wood would likely deteriorate quickly and would be difficult to maintain; and, further, requested information on the type of lighting for the proposed cross at the top of the building.

Chairman Carvajal stated that the glare from the metal panels might be problematic and possibly hazardous to the neighbors near the subject site.

After a discussion, the Commission requested that staff provide addresses of buildings in the downtown Los Angeles area which use similar material so that they and/or staff could visit and examine, and further, to do additional research on the recommended maintenance and durability of the metal panels, as well as on the proposed lighting for the cross.

Senior Planner Fontanez requested that Pastor Roque share the proposed church design with the surrounding neighbors of the church building so that they are well informed of the proposed project in order to address any potential concerns.

Pastor Roque agreed to follow up on the items of concern addressed by the Commission and staff. Pastor Roque added that church parishioners were concerned with the slow progress of the project and that he hoped for a prompt resolution to Case No. 1956-CUP.

With no one else coming forward to speak, it was so ordered by Commissioner Carvajal to continue the public hearing for Case No. 1956-CUP to an Adjourned Meeting on December 12, 2012.

New Business

None.

Information Items

None.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Carvajal adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m. to Wednesday, December 12, 2012, at 6:30 p.m.

Chairman

ATTEST:

Secretary