

**Minutes of the Huntington Park Planning Commission Meeting
held on December 21, 2011**

Chairman Benitez called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Present: Commissioners Eddie Carvajal, Laura Herrera, and Chairman Eddie Benitez; Absent: Vice Chair Veronica Lopez (excused by Chairman Benitez). Also present: Planning Manager Eric Garcia, Senior Planner Albert Fontanez, and Assistant Planners Gabriela Silva and Joanna Cortez.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Carvajal, seconded by Chairman Benitez, to approve the minutes of the adjourned meeting held on November 2, 2011 as presented. The motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioner Carvajal and Chairman Benitez; Noes: None; Absent: Vice Chair Lopez, None; Abstain: Commissioner Herrera.

Public Appearances

None.

Continued Public Hearings

None.

Public Hearings

A. CASE NO. 1946-CUP: Request by Diamond Environmental Services, Inc., for a Conditional Use Permit to establish an outdoor storage yard for portable restrooms at 5925 Alameda Street, within the Industrial/Manufacturing Planned Development (MPD) Zone.

Assistant Planner Gabriela Silva reviewed the Administrative Report, which included the Municipal Code Requirements and Required Findings for a Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Comments and Analysis, and Recommendation. Ms. Silva stated that the subject site consists of four parcels, which would be consolidated into one parcel through the filing of a Tentative Parcel Map, as required by the staff's recommended Conditions of Approval. Ms. Silva added that in addition to the storage of portable restrooms, the facility would also store construction rental equipment such as temporary fencing, temporary power poles, and generators. Ms. Silva stated that the existing wrought iron surrounding the subject property would be improved with landscaping to include hedges, creeping vines on the fence, and trees in order to screen the storage area and items from public view and from adjacent properties. Ms. Silva stated that the parking stalls and circulation areas would be striped to comply with the City's municipal code requirements and added that the proposed project meets the parking requirements of 56 spaces. Ms. Silva further stated that the applicant would be required to paint the existing structures, including the wrought iron fence, within one year of the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy. Ms. Silva added that based on the evidence presented to the Commission, staff recommended the approval of Case No. 1946-CUP subject to the Conditions of Approval outlined in staff's Administrative Report.

Chairman Benitez declared the public hearing open and called for those wishing to speak in favor of/or against Case No. 1946-CUP. Mr. Eric de Jong (Diamond Environmental Services, Inc., 807 E. Mission Rd., San Marcos, CA 92069), applicant/property owner, came forward to speak in favor of Case No. 1946-CUP. Mr. de Jong stated that the proposed project would be an expansion to an existing business with facilities in the cities of San Diego, Fullerton, and Perris. Mr. de Jong further stated that (they) understood the issues associated with the proposed use and would comply

with the City's ordinance. Mr. de Jong stated that he would answer any questions the Commission might have.

Mr. Nick Alexander (Nick Alexander Imports, 6333 S. Alameda St., Los Angeles, CA 90001) came forward to speak against Case No. 1946-CUP. Mr. Alexander stated that he opposed the establishment of the proposed use directly across the street from his auto sales business. Mr. Alexander stated that he was in the process of submitting plans to the City for a proposed "state-of-the art" BMW auto body shop, which would "attract high-class, well-to-do clients" and would be a revenue/tax-generating source for the City. Mr. Alexander stated that the City Redevelopment Agency had had a plan of having a stretch of auto dealerships from Slauson Avenue to Gage Avenue and that the subject site is intended for an auto dealership. Mr. Alexander expressed his dismay at the City's consideration of the proposed use, stating that the City should consider using the site as an auto dealership, which would offer more job opportunities, rather than a storage facility for toilets. Mr. Alexander stated that he opposed the approval of Case No. 1946-CUP.

With no one else coming forward to speak for/or against Case No. 1946-CUP, Chairman Benitez declared the public hearing closed.

Mr. de Jong rebutted Mr. Alexander's comments and stated that the facility did not store only portable restrooms; that his business currently has 250 employees, and would likely add 20 to 25 at the proposed facility employees within the next three to five years; that the portable restrooms would be stored in the rear of the property and not in the front side of the building facing Alameda Street; and that the proposed use complies with the City's zoning regulations.

Planning Manager Garcia stated that the Planning Division had not received any proposals for a new auto sales business at the subject site. Mr. Garcia recommended that the Commissioners consider the following issues: 1) a Condition of Approval requires the applicant to screen the storage area from public view, and 2) Alameda Street and the Alameda Corridor serve as buffers between the subject site and the proposed BMW auto collision center on the northeast corner of Alameda Street and Randolph Street. Mr. Garcia stated that although the BMW/Mini Cooper businesses are doing well, overall many auto dealerships have closed. Mr. Garcia added that redevelopment agencies throughout the state are currently on hold due to pending state legislation which will abolish local redevelopment agencies.

The Commissioners inquired if the proposed use and/or use of chemicals would emit odors into the environment. Mr. Garcia responded that staff had toured one of the applicant's existing facilities and did not notice any odors. Mr. Garcia stated that waste disposal is not done at the site and that the cleaning process of the restroom facilities is held at another location.

Mr. de Jong briefly summarized the process utilized in the cleaning of the portable restrooms and added that the portable restrooms are returned to the site after they have been cleaned and repaired as needed.

After a discussion, Commissioner Herrera motioned, seconded by Chairman Benitez, to APPROVE CASE NO. 1946-CUP subject to Condition Nos. 1-40 outlined in staff's Administrative Report and ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 1946 granting the Conditional Use Permit. The motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioner Herrera and Chairman Benitez; Noes: Commissioner Carvajal; Absent: Vice Chair Lopez; Abstain: None.

B. CASE NO. 1947-CUP: Request by Francisco Lopez for a Conditional Use Permit to allow the expansion of an existing bona-fide public eating establishment located at 2560-2564 Gage Avenue within the Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP) District C – Neighborhood Zone.

Assistant Planner Joanna Cortez reviewed the Administrative Report, which included the Municipal Code Requirements and Required Findings for a Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Comments and Analysis, and Recommendations. Ms. Cortez stated the existing restaurant occupies one tenant space and that the owner wishes to expand its use by occupying a tenant space to the east for a take-out service. Ms. Cortez stated that the applicant would be required to replace the existing scissor gate with a grilled roll-up door. Ms. Cortez further stated that the subject project meets the City's zoning and development standards and is consistent with the General Plan and, further, that staff recommended the approval of Case No. 1947-CUP.

Chairman Benitez declared the public hearing open and called for anyone wishing to speak in favor or against Case No. 1947-CUP. With no one coming forward, and hearing no further comments, Chairman Benitez declared the public hearing closed.

Commissioner Carvajal motioned, seconded by Commissioner Herrera, to APPROVE CASE NO. 1947-CUP, subject to Condition Nos. 1-23 as outlined in staff's report. The motion carried as follows: Ayes Commissioners Carvajal, Herrera, and Chairman Benitez; Noes: None; Absent: Vice Chair Lopez.

C. CASE NO. 1948-CUP: Request by Elias Jattar for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to establish a bona fide public eating establishment (restaurant) with the on-site-sale of general alcohol at 5812 Santa Fe Avenue, within the Industrial/Manufacturing Planned Development (MPD) Zone.

Planning Manager Eric Garcia reviewed the Administrative Report, which included the Municipal Code Requirements and Required Findings for a Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Comments and Analysis, and Recommendations. Mr. Garcia stated that the proposed project meets the City's Zoning and Development standards subject to the approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Garcia added that staff recommended that the Conditions of Approval be modified by adding the following condition:

“That the applicant provide two (2) trash receptacles as approved by the Planning Division.”

Mr. Garcia further added that based on the evidence presented, staff recommended the approval of Case No. 1948-CUP subject to the modified Conditions of Approval.

Chairman Benitez inquired about the building size on record. Planning Manager explained that for staff's reporting purposes, the building records of the City take precedence over Los Angeles County Assessor's records.

Chairman Benitez declared the public hearing open and called for those wishing to speak in favor of/or against Case No. 1948-CUP. Mr. Elias Jattar (5202 Meadow Wood Ave., Lakewood, CA 90712), applicant, came forward and stated that the purpose of the proposal is to create a successful family restaurant and requested that the Commission approve Case No. 1948-CUP. Mr. Jattar indicated that he agreed to the Conditions of Approval as modified.

With no one else coming forward to speak for/or against Case No. 1948-CUP, Chairman Benitez declared the public hearing closed.

Commissioner Carvajal motioned, seconded by Commissioner Herrera, to APPROVE CASE NO. 1948-CUP, subject to the Conditions of Approval, as modified. The motion carried as follows:

Ayes: Commissioner Carvajal, Herrera, and Chairman Benitez; Noes: None; Absent: Vice Chair Lopez; Abstain: None.

Planning Manager Garcia announced that an appeal of the Commission's decision may be submitted to the City Clerk within 15 days.

D. CASE NO. 1949-CUP: Request by Angelica Jacques for a Conditional Use Permit to establish a banquet hall with full on-site alcohol service at 1940 E. 65th Street within the Industrial/Manufacturing Planned Development (MPD) Zone.

Senior Planner Albert Fontanez reviewed the Administrative Report, which included the Municipal Code Requirements and Required Findings for a Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Comments and Analysis, and Recommendation that the Planning Commission consider the request. Mr. Fontanez stated that the proposed banquet hall would be used for private parties, wedding receptions and family reunions. Mr. Fontanez reviewed staff's parking calculations for the proposed banquet hall and stated that the proposed project is deficient 17 parking spaces. Mr. Fontanez stated that the owner of the adjacent vacant lot to the south has agreed to lease the lot to the applicant for the proposed, which the applicant proposes to use to provide tandem valet parking. Mr. Fontanez further stated that because the proposed use is considered a "parking-intense use," and there are other parking-intense uses within the immediate vicinity, there is concern that the proposed use will have a negative impact to on-street parking. Mr. Fontanez added that staff a previously approved street vacation for a portion of 65th Street between Alameda Street and Wilson Avenue could also negatively affect on-street vehicle circulation within the area as expressed in correspondence from a nearby property owner. Mr. Fontanez stated that, other than the required parking, which is being proposed through valet parking, the proposed project meets the City's zoning and development standards and General Plan. Mr. Fontanez called the Commissioners attention to the recommended conditions received from the Police Department and stated that staff's recommendation was that the Planning Commission consider the applicant's request.

Chairman Benitez declared the public hearing open and called for those wishing to speak in favor of/or against Case No. 1949-CUP. Ms. Angelica Jacquez (1940 E. 65th Street, Huntington Park), applicant/property owner, came forward to speak in favor of the request. Ms. Jacquez stated that her vision is to create business opportunities for women and requested that the Commission approve Case No. 1949-CUP.

Mr. Frank Mead, project manager and applicant's representative, came forward to speak in favor and stated that only exterior aesthetic improvements would be made on the subject building which would upgrade the area. Mr. Mead requested that the proposed project be approved.

With no one else coming forward to speak for/or against Case No. 1949-CUP, Chairman Benitez declared the public hearing closed.

The Commissioners expressed their concerns with parking, including on- and off-site and valet parking for the proposed use as well as the existing nightclub and restaurant within the vicinity.

Chairman Benitez reopened the public hearing to hear the comments of Ms. Labara Vargas, plan designer for the proposed project. Ms. Vargas asked why 65th Street would be closed, and stated that its closure would affect the proposed banquet hall business. Mr. Garcia explained the City's process for the vacation of 65th Street.

Mr. Frank Mead readdressed the Commission and reiterated that the valet parking would be available at the adjacent property to the south. Mr. Mead stated that other streets in the area are not through streets, thus the vacation of 65th Street would not be abnormal. Mr. Mead added that the proposed valet parking is designed to keep vehicles off of 65th Street so they are not backing up onto Wilmington Avenue.

With no one else addressing the Commission, Chairman Benitez once more declared the public hearing closed.

After further discussion, Planning Manager recommended that the Commission require that the applicant provide a traffic study prepared by a traffic engineer.

Commissioner Carvajal motioned, seconded by Commissioner Herrera, that a traffic study be prepared before the Commissioner renders a decision. Planning Manager Garcia requested clarification from the Commission as to whether the item would be continued or pulled due to the time required for a formal traffic study to be prepared. Additionally, Mr. Garcia explained the noticing requirements associated with continuing the item to a specific time and date versus pulling the item altogether. Chairman Benitez indicated a specific time and date would be preferable, and asked the applicant if they would be agreeable to preparing a traffic study. The applicant indicated that would be an option of interest for them to explore, but that cost would be a factor. Mr. Garcia asked the Commissioners and the applicant if they would be agreeable to continuing the item for one month in order to give the applicant time to research the cost associated with a traffic study and make a decision upon that option, and come back to the Planning Commission with an update.

Commissioner Carvajal re-motioned, seconded by Commissioner Herrera, to continue CASE NO. 1949-CUP to the next regular meeting of January 18, 2012. The motion carried as follows: Ayes: Commissioners Carvajal, Herrera and Chairman Benitez; Noes: None; Absent: Vice Chair Lopez; Abstain: None.

New Business

None.

(Chairman Benitez declared a short break at 6:45 p.m.)

Closed Session

Chairman Benitez declared the meeting resolved into closed session at 7:00 p.m.

Pursuant to California Code Section 54957,
PUBLIC APPOINTMENT
Title: Planning Commissioner

Following the closed session, the meeting reconvened at 7:35 p.m. Planning Manager Garcia reported that the Planning Commission directed staff to present its recommendation to appoint Ms. Sonia Luz Chavez to the Planning Commission at the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Benitez adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Chair

ATTEST:

Secretary