



CITY OF FOWLER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
June 7, 2012
MINUTES

Chairman Mukai called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Gary Mukai, Craig Mellon and Henry Fernandez

Commissioners Absent: Sandie Monis and Mark Rodriguez

City Staff Present: City Manager, David Elias, City Attorney, Scott Cross, Planning Consultant, Bruce O'Neal, and Planning Secretary Corina Burrola

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Fernandez moved to approve the minutes for March 1, 2012 and was second by Vice Chair Mellon and passed by a roll call vote of 3-0-0-2.

Public Presentation:

James Sherwood, Vice-President of Bee Sweet Citrus located at 416 E. South Avenue, approached the podium. Mr. Sherwood assisted in developing the Starbucks and Carl's Jr Restaurant located on 10th Street. Mr. Sherwood expressed his concerns regarding the large vehicles such as big rigs parking on the pad in-between Carl's Jr. and the La Quinta Hotel. Mr. Sherwood suggests that the City plan a designated place for these large vehicles to park.

Roman Mata, Fowler resident who lives on 10th Street agrees agrees Mr. Sherwood regarding the issues with trucks parking in and around 10th & Merced Street and the routing of trucks in and around the main streets of Fowler.

City Manager, David Elias stated that the City Engineer is in the process of revamping the entire truck route system by designating five point truck routes, which the city currently has 23. Trucks have a right to route / travel on any road as long as it's a shortest course of action for delivery purposes anywhere.

(Public Presentation closed at 6:44 p.m.).

Agenda Item No. 5:

Public Hearing to Consider Site Plan Review Application No. 12-02, A proposal filed by Fowler Development, LLC, to construct a Motel 6 on property located at 210 S. 10th Street (APN No. 343-201-05). Planning Consultant, Bruce O' Neal went over a brief history of the proposed project. In January the Site Plan was approved by the Commission for an 81-unit Motel 6 on the subject site. In March City Council denied the Site Plans with reason as followed:

1. Project is located in the Form Based Code District, the site plan does not conform with several provisions of the Form Base Code District; specifically, the buildings are aligned and close to the street
2. The one-acre site appears too small for the proposed three story 81-room Motel, resulting in lack of adequate on-site parking.
3. Height, bulk and design of the structure are not in keeping with what is primarily a residential neighborhood.
4. Project will generate traffic affecting the neighborhood on 10th and Merced Streets

5. Truck parking on 10th street is not permitted but is an enforcement issue; the motel will increase truck parking problems.
6. There is concern about additional crime resulting in the presence of the Motel in the City based on a new 81-room motel with its accompanying transient population.

In response to the Council's decision, Fowler Development, LLC has submitted a new Site Plan the number of rooms has been reduced from 81 to 63, the structure has been moved to the frontage of 10th Street which is one of the requirements of the Form Base Code District, and the architecture has been articulated including entrances from the structure directly onto 10th Street. The Revised Site Plan is much more consistent with the Form Base Code Area, parking is accommodated on site, and there are 66 parking spaces on the property for the 63 rooms. In response to neighborhood concerns, the applicant held a public meeting on May 9, 2012, Council expanded the notification to 1000 feet from 300 feet which is required for the Zoning Ordinance.

Richard Barrett resides in Castro Valley California, who is one of the owner's of Fowler Development LLC. The Motel 6, Franchise Zone, was present at the March 5th meeting and could not attend this evening's meeting. Mr. Barrett can only address this particular project but cannot address Motel 6 corporate issues. Mr. Barrett's partner Manu Naran has been extensively corresponding with the corporation since the Blackstone acquisition. Mr. Manu Naran approached the podium to provide further information on the Motel 6 project and the Phoenix prototype. Intentions are to produce more Phoenix prototypes throughout the United States and revamp all existing motel corridors. Cesar Rodriguez, GR Consulting, representing Fowler Development LLC, designed the Motel 6 and feels the first design was the best but unfortunately the City Council denied it 3 to 1 and was asked to design the Motel according to the Form Base Code. The motel now is designed to have less rooms and no pool will be added. The decision of the council is only a recommendation of the revised Site Plan.

Kevin Wilkins, Fresno resident, who grew up in Fowler feels that the project would give the City of Fowler a bad reputation being that Fowler's a small town with good moral values.

Ernest Mata, who resides across the street from the proposed project, feels the structure is going to be offset from curb and gutter approximately 10-feet from the residences on 10th street in which he is concerned about the situation where people can come in and out of the motel and no discretion as to what type of people will be staying at the motel and feels that his will be a stake out area for the wrong type of people. Traffic is also an issue in the area let alone putting in a motel where more congestion will occur. Amount of activity was provided to the Council regarding police activity from a motel 6 located on Tulare and Blackstone, the amount of reports and calls per month were provided for viewing in comparison from another franchise motel just a few blocks away showing a slight lower rate of calls.

Cesar Rodriguez, local resident and designer of the Motel 6, took the podium in defense of the Motel 6 project. Motel 6 is changing their look of the building hoping it will change the reputation people have for the franchise.

Murray McManus, a Fowler resident opposed of the project feels the City of Fowler should put in a grocery store something for the people of the City of Fowler.

(Public hearing closed at 7:56 pm).

Chairman Mukai asked what type of plans is set to mitigate traffic in that area. Mr. O'Neal explained that a Condition of Approval which requires the payment of a fee towards the future either signals at 10th & Merced or another alternative which the council talked about at Tuesday's meeting. Funds will be used by Motel 6 as well as new businesses.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fernandez to recommend to City Council approval of Site Plan Review 12-02, there was no second motion. Motion dies for lack of a second.

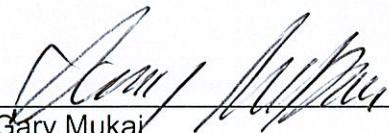
Chairman Mukai made his observation regarding the vacant property that hasn't been very well maintained and feels this has been a tremendous eye sore to the Community. The moving of the building to the street side does create more of a security risk to the residences. No alternative plan has been created

Chairman Mukai moved to not recommend approval of Site Plan Review 12-02; this was second by Vice-Chair Mellon, the motion is to include the process of rezoning the site, this was passed with a 3-0-0-2 vote.

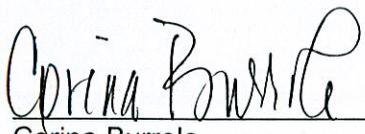
Communications:

Chairman Mukai mentioned the Planning Institute that was held in San Jose, CA. Chairman Mukai recommends that the Commissioners submit a written report of the Planning Institutes attended to be submitted to the City of Fowler.

No other business was discussed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm.



Gary Mukai
Chairman



Corina Burrola
Planning Secretary