

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WEST COVINA
Tuesday, June 24, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by *Vice Chairman Stewart in the West Covina Council Chambers. Commissioner Sotelo led the Pledge of Allegiance and Planning Director Doug McIsaac gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Present: Sotelo, Stewart, Cervantes, Rozatti

Absent: Redholtz

City Staff Present: McIsaac, Anderson, Morales, Wong and de Zara

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular Meeting, June 10, 2008

The minutes were approved as presented.

A. OTHER MATTERS OR ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

This is the time when any member of the public may bring a matter to the attention of the Commission that is within the scope of duties assigned to the Commission. The Ralph M. Brown Act limits the Planning Commission and staff's ability to respond to comments on non-agendized matters at the time such comments are made. Thus, your comments may be agendized for a future meeting or referred to staff. The Commission may discuss or ask questions for clarification, if desired, at this time.

Joanne Wilner addressed the Commission regarding the Design Review Subcommittee and guest house requirements.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

This is the time for the public to comment on any item on the Consent Calendar. As Consent Calendar items are considered routine in nature, they are normally enacted in one motion. The Chairperson may remove a questioned Consent Calendar item for separate action.

1. FORTHCOMING PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

Receive and file.

Planning Director Doug McIsaac presented the staff report. During the presentation, Mr. McIsaac informed the Commission that a joint meeting with the Community Services Commission would be held on July 8, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the Orangewood Park Master Plan. In addition, he told the Commission that their first review of a historic home was scheduled for their regular meeting, July 8, 2008.

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to approve the items listed. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz absent).

HEARING PROCEDURE:

You are encouraged by this Commission to express your views on any matter set for public hearing. It is our procedure to first receive the report of the Planning staff, then to ask for public testimony; first from those in favor of the matter, followed by testimony from those in opposition to it, and, if there be opposition, to allow those in favor, rebuttal testimony only as to the points brought up in opposition. To testify on a matter, you need to simply come forward to the lectern at the appropriate time, give your name and address and make your statement. In addition, please sign in on the sheet provided at the podium so it will facilitate preparation of our minutes. Do not be concerned with your possible lack of experience in public hearings. We are interested in what you say, not your level of expertise as a public speaker. After a hearing has been closed, you may not further speak on the matter unless requested to do so by a member of the Commission.

C. PUBLIC HEARING

PRECISE PLAN NO. 08-02

VARIANCE NO. 08-06

ADMINISTRATIVE USE PERMIT NO. 08-18

NEGATIVE DECLARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

APPLICANT: Westfield Corporation, Inc.

LOCATION: 112 Plaza Drive (Westfield Shopping Center)

REQUEST: The applicant is requesting approval of a precise plan to demolish 144,527 square feet of retail space (formerly Macy's Department Store) and construct 113,927 square feet of retail space and 30,600 square feet of restaurant space and demolition of 125,000 square feet of the existing parking lot to reconfigure a portion of the parking lot on the north side of the shopping center. The proposal also includes the installation of four, 60-foot tall freestanding center identification signs requiring the approval of a variance from certain development standards, including sign height, size and number of freestanding signs. In addition, the proposal entails the construction of three roof signs, 37 feet in height, requiring an administrative use permit.

Vice Chairman Stewart opened the public hearing.

Senior Planner Fabiola Wong presented the staff report. During the presentation, Ms. Wong told the Commission that the proposed reconfiguration of the vacant store also involved a request for four additional freestanding signs and roof signs. In addition, she told the Commission that additional restaurant spaces would be provided, and that there would be a slight reduction in parking spaces in anticipation of the Cal Trans plan to widen the freeway in the future.

There was a short discussion regarding the reduction in parking spaces. Ms. Wong told the Commission that, even with the reduction in parking spaces, the applicant was still in compliance with parking requirements under the Municipal Code.

PROPONENTS:

Kim Brewer, representing the applicant, John Hughes, John Nuccio, Dr. Forrest Tennant, Susana Young, Carolina Chacon, Gary Lawson, President of the West Covina Chamber of Commerce, Joanne Wilner, Camille Fisher, and Paulina Morales, representing the West Covina Community Development Commission, spoke in favor of the request.

Ms. Brewer showed a power point presentation and explained what improvements the applicants had planned. In addition, she answered questions from the Commission regarding the effect the proposed Cal Trans project will have on the mall, possible tenants for the restaurant spaces, and if there are development plans for the south side of the mall.

Mr. Hughes, Mr. Nuccio and Dr. Tennant all expressed their support of the proposed plans and agreed that Westfield is a very important part of the West Covina community. Dr. Tennant also encouraged the Commission to approve the proposed project to help diversify the City's income and tax base.

Ms. Young, Ms. Chacon, Ms. Fisher and Mr. Lawson also urged approval of the project since Westfield is involved in the community's charity events and provides valuable services to the entire community. Mrs. Wilner also expressed her support of the project, but asked for clarification regarding the demolition of the vacant building in conjunction with the project. She also asked if Westfield intended to continue with the walk for health program, if Community Development would be providing funding for the project, and if any of the signs would be "moving" signs. Further, she asked if the air conditioning on the second story of the mall would be repaired, since it was sometimes too warm to walk there.

Ms. Morales, Project Manager representing the Community Development Department, also urged the Commission to approve the project to help enhance the mall and generate more sales tax revenue for the City of West Covina.

OPPONENTS:

No one spoke in opposition.

Vice Chairman Stewart closed the public hearing.

Ms. Brewer spoke again and addressed the questions asked by Ms. Wilner. Ms. Brewer stated that the Walk for Health program would remain in effect, the air conditioning on the second floor will be repaired or adjusted and the proposed signs would be static signs. In addition, she informed the Commission that Westfield would be financing the project without using City funds.

There was a discussion by the Commission regarding whether or not the reduction in parking would allow the applicant to remain in compliance with City parking requirements. Ms. Brewer told the Commission that the parking had been calculated based on the maximum use requirements and it was determined that parking would be sufficient.

Commissioner Sotelo stated his opinion that this project should be supported since the applicants were enthusiastic and willing to finance the improvements using their own funds. He added that the project would also help the City in generating sales tax revenue.

Commissioner Rozatti said she was in favor of the project and was pleased that outdoor dining would be part of the new area. She also asked if this project would fall under the Art in Public Places Ordinance.

Commissioner Cervantes expressed his support of the project but also encouraged the applicant to consider improvements on the south side of the mall property. He also asked if residents in the area would be notified of the proposed construction, since it could temporarily have an adverse effect on traffic and living conditions in the area.

Vice Chairman Stewart concurred with the comments by the other Commissioners and expressed his support of the proposed project.

Staff informed the Commission that the conditions of approval contained a condition addressing the Art in Public Places requirements. In addition, Planning Director Doug McIsaac recommended that the conditions of approval for Precise Plan No. 08-02 be amended to require that the applicant submit a phasing and construction plan to the Planning Director for approval prior to the beginning of construction.

It was the consensus of the Commission to amend the conditions of approval for the precise plan as recommended by staff. The Commission also concurred that the project would be beneficial to the community and enhance the operation of the mall.

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to adopt findings as recommended by staff. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz absent).

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to waive further reading of the body of the resolution and adopt Resolution No. 08-5275, certifying the Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact for Precise Plan No. 08-02, Variance No. 08-06 and Administrative Use Permit No. 08-18. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz absent).

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to adopt findings as recommended by staff. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz absent).

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to waive further reading of the body of the resolution and adopt Resolution No. 08-5276, approving Precise Plan No. 08-02, as amended. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz absent).

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to adopt findings as recommended by staff. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz absent).

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to waive further reading of the body of the resolution and adopt Resolution No. 08-5277, approving Variance No. 08-06. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz).

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to adopt findings as recommended by staff. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz absent).

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to waive further reading of the body of the resolution and adopt Resolution No. 08-5278, approving Administrative Use Permit No. 08-18. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz absent).

Vice Chairman Stewart stated that this action is final unless appealed to the City Council within ten days.

D. NON HEARING ITEMS

None

E. OTHER MATTERS OR ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

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None

F. COMMISSION REPORTS/COMMENTS AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

This is the time when any member of the Commission may bring a matter to the attention of the full Commission that is within the scope of duties assigned to the Commission. Any item that was considered during the public hearing portion is not appropriate for discussion in this section of the agenda. **NO COMMISSION ACTION CAN BE TAKEN AT THIS TIME.** If the Commission desires to discuss an issue raised by a resident or take an action, the Commission may vote to agendize the matter for the next meeting. The Commission may discuss or ask questions for clarification, if desired, at this time.

Commissioner Sotelo spoke regarding the Rose Float Foundation Dinner held on June 21, 2008, and West Covina Chamber of Commerce Installation of Officers and Citizen of the Year Dinner on June 26, 2008.

Commissioner Rozatti spoke regarding the Summer Concert Series, Fourth of July Celebration at Edgewood Middle School and Movies in the Park.

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

This is an oral presentation of City Council matters and actions of the listed meeting which are in the Commission's area of interest.

June 17, 2008 City Council meeting:

- 2008/2009 Budget was adopted.
- Consultant for the Housing Element Update was approved.
- Planning Commission denial for waiver of undergrounding of utilities for 1838 Workman Avenue was overturned on appeal to the City Council.

July 1, 2008 City Council meeting:

- Appeal of Planning Commission denial for waiver of street rehabilitation fees for Faith Community Church.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- a.) Summary of Subcommittee Review

G. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Sotelo, seconded by Rozatti, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. Motion carried 4-0 (Redholtz).