MINUTES
OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
PITTSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
May 27, 2008

A regular meeting of the Pittsburg Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Ohlson at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27, 2008, in the Council Chamber, City Hall, 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, California.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Diokno, Garcia, Harris, Kelley, Ramirez, Wegerbauer, Chairperson Ohlson

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Marc Grisham, Senior Planner Dana Hoggatt, Assistant Planner Leigha Schmidt, Senior Civil Engineer Alfredo Hurtado

POSTING OF AGENDA:
The agenda was posted at City Hall on Thursday, May 22, 2008.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:
A.J. Fardella led the Pledge of Allegiance.

DELETIONS/WITHDRAWALS/CONTINUANCES:
There were no deletions, withdrawals or continuances.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:
There were no comments from the audience.

PRESENTATIONS:
There were no presentations.
CONSENT:

Item 1: Minutes of Meeting, May 13, 2008

MOTION:

Motion by Commissioner Garcia to adopt the Consent Calendar, as shown. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kelley and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Diokno, Garcia, Harris, Kelley, Ramirez, Wegerbauer, Ohlson

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Item 2: Pittsburg Civic Tower. AP-07-476 (MS, DR).

An application by Dave Johnson representing Garaventa Enterprises requesting: 1) approval of a minor subdivision to create two parcels measuring approximately 39,238 square feet and 11,966 square feet from a larger eight-acre site to accommodate the footprints and the surrounding pavement walkways of the Civic Tower and a future restaurant; and 2) design review approval for construction of a 133,400 square foot, six-story mid-rise office building (Civic Tower) and related parking and site improvements. Civic Tower land uses would include the public library, public meeting room and retail on the ground floor and offices on the remaining five floors. The 8.03-acre site is located on the southeastern corner of the Civic Center block at the corner of State Route 4 and Railroad Avenue in the GQ (Governmental Quasipublic) District. APNs 086-100-024, 086-100-026, 086-100-026, 086-100-028, and 086-100-025.

Assistant Planner Leigha Schmidt presented the staff report dated May 27, 2008. She recommended that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 9758 approving AP-07-476 (MS, DR), subject to conditions.

Commissioner Diokno affirmed with staff that the Pittsburg Library had been consulted on the design and that the floor space would meet the Library's needs. Staff affirmed that the Library staff had been part of the process from the start.

Kerry Lyman, Project Manager, Redevelopment Agency of the City of Pittsburg (RDA), also acknowledged that Library staff had been involved in the design process. A meeting had been scheduled for Friday, May 30. The RDA was also in negotiations with the Pittsburg Unified School District (PUSD) as to its use of tenant space in the building.

Mr. Lyman clarified, when asked by Commissioner Wegerbauer, that additional bathrooms would be added for the Library use. He also clarified that the outside seating
area with umbrellas could be used by the Library, although he was uncertain whether that space would be used for an outdoor café eating area, as an example, other than a possible coffee kiosk. The RDA would be working with the Library on what was desired to meet its needs.

Commissioner Wegerbauer expressed a preference that the Library have use of the outdoor area. She also asked staff to clarify the location of the trash enclosures.

Ms. Schmidt identified the location of the roofed trash enclosures and advised that the transformers would be screened from view behind a masonry wall to be covered with stucco. The trash enclosure for the restaurant was also identified on the plans. She acknowledged the staff discussions with the architect and the developer regarding the need for a recycling facility given the size of the building and the need to appropriately size the trash enclosures.

Chairperson Ohlson spoke to Page 8 of 12 of the May 27 staff report and the discussion of the 10-foot wide pedestrian path. Although staff had indicated that the pathway would be 10 to 12 feet in width, he noted that the Caltrans Highway Design Manual had identified a standard width for a pedestrian/bicycle multi-use path at 12 feet in width, and the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) had also identified a standard width for a paved multi-use path at 12 feet. He was concerned that the City path would be substandard at 10 feet in width.

Ms. Schmidt noted that the pathway had originally been designed at 12 feet in width per the Caltrans and EBRPD standards; however, Caltrans had required that the City and the project maintain a certain distance from the freeway, which limited the width of the pathway to 10 feet in some areas. She explained that the pathway would meander between 10 and 12 feet wide.

Chairperson Ohlson referenced Resolution No. 9758, Section 3. Decision, Condition No. 2, regarding changing the chain link fence to a wrought iron fence. He expressed a preference for a fence that would be substantial enough to provide the needed safety since it was adjacent to the freeway.

Ms. Schmidt suggested that such language could be added to the condition.

Chairperson Ohlson also spoke to the multi-use path and asked for an opening in the middle of the path with a sidewalk directly to the main entrance to the Library, which would showcase the Library and welcome those using the path to the Library.

Ms. Schmidt commented that the fence would be located outside of the path between the freeway and the path, with landscaping between the parking lot and the path. Adding bark or gravel to allow people to go from the middle of the path to the parking lot to access the Library would not be an issue.
Chairperson Ohlson further spoke to Resolution No. 9758, Section 3. Decision, Condition No. 3 and suggested that covered bicycle parking should be encouraged as other developers had been encouraged to provide for specific projects.

Ms. Schmidt explained that she had assumed one of the bicycle racks would be extended and be uncovered. Staff would support the developer’s installation of covered bicycle parking.

Commissioner Diokno pointed out that the trail had been sealed off from the entire site with no openings in the landscaping for footpaths connecting to the building. He suggested that the Chair’s suggestion to add an opening close to the Library entrance would be beneficial for pedestrians. He also suggested that there should be openings towards the Armory as the pathway continued all the way to Davi Avenue.

Ms. Schmidt understood that Power Avenue would remain paved from Davi Avenue to the western boundary of the site in order to allow cars to access the Armory from the driveways along Power Avenue. An opening with concrete bollards would be provided between the project site and the terminus of Power Avenue to allow pedestrian and bicycle access.

Mr. Grisham advised that there was no access to the rear of the Armory for security reasons. The front entrance to the Armory would be accessible from the Class I multi-use trail. The trail would come out at the end of Power Avenue where the trail was paved and would dead end at the front of the Armory site.

Commissioner Diokno commented that since the Armory was used for other events, an opening would provide another pedestrian access to the Armory site, and the security of the site would not be impacted by the lack of landscaping.

Ms. Schmidt identified on the Tentative Parcel Map a clear opening between the roadway in front of the armory and the multi-use trail.

Commissioner Garcia pointed out that the City did not intend to run any trucks over the pathway. The reason that Caltrans and EBRPD wanted 12-foot wide pathways was to provide vehicular access to the pathways for clean up and maintenance. In this case, a 10-foot wide pathway would be more than sufficient.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

PROONENT:

DAVE JOHNSON, Johnson and Lyman Architects, introduced the project team present in the audience. He described the project site as a prominent location with the intent to create and design a building with a graceful curve on the south façade inviting one into the downtown along Railroad Avenue. The curve would offer a prominent and dramatic feature to the building. In contrast to rectilinear elements of the building, there would be
square forms to the curve and a round tower element located on the northwest side playing off of a subtle curve on the south side. The round tower would be a landmark feature for the building and be prominent from every location and play off of the building masses of City Hall.

The round tower element would also have a prominent cap feature with a five-foot deep overhang to accentuate the curve. There would be a diversity of building materials with the use of curtain walls, and strips of gray anodized metal would wrap around the entire building and accentuate the curve. Plaster materials with a smooth finish would contrast with the glass elements, and a strong black granite material at the base would extend up two stories and wrap into the lobbies as the interior was developed.

Mr. Johnson reported that the landscaping plan was densely planted with trees and shrubs in context with the other landscaping in the City Hall parking lot. Pedestrian amenities would include pedestrian lighting, planters at the pedestrian level and a paving surface along the retail level, which would offer a nice pedestrian experience as one walked along the building.

Mr. Johnson advised that efforts had been made with the Library on the interior plan. The Library exterior was planned to include a canopy with the Library sign to be featured on the curved round tower and which would curve with the façade. The children’s reading room would be located in that interior space.

In response to Commissioner Garcia, Mr. Johnson affirmed that the applicant had read and was in agreement with the conditions of approval. He also commended the efforts of Ms. Schmidt in working with the applicants.

Commissioner Dickno complimented the appearance of the building, which would be one of the stand-out buildings in the City. Noting that the prominent portion of City Hall was hot during the summer because of the glass material in that portion of the building, he questioned whether or not special insulating glass would be used as part of the building design to reduce heat during the summer months.

Mr. Johnson advised that a smoked glass material would be used and would be required to meet all Title 24 requirements. The project’s mechanical engineer was also reviewing the energy calculations for the building. He recognized that heat gain was a critical factor to consider in ensuring a comfortable environment.

Commissioner Garcia pointed out that the new building would have ceilings and would be easier to cool than the City Hall design.

Commissioner Ramirez spoke to the landscaping at the southeast corner of the site, a crucial point with traffic coming into the City off of the freeway. He suggested that the plant material stand out along that corner with a possible fountain or waterfall feature.
Mr. Johnson acknowledged that the prominent corner had been discussed with City staff. He reported that in working with RDA staff, it had been determined that that corner would be downplayed. He expressed the willingness to continue to work with staff for a more unique statement at that corner.

Commissioner Wegerbauer was pleased with the development. As to the ground floor and the potential retail uses, she questioned whether or not an additional food use would be considered in addition to the restaurant pad. She also questioned the reason for locating the restaurant pad at the northeast corner of the site.

Mr. Johnson commented that a café had been considered at one time, but they were now considering support office uses. As to the pad site for the restaurant, he explained that it made sense on the corner to address a busy corner and to provide a nice building mass to introduce the project as opposed to placing that use to the rear of the project. Any design would be in keeping with the office building.

Commissioner Wegerbauer was uncertain the restaurant would be easily accessible from City Hall and the courthouse area. She questioned the proposed location of the restaurant as the best and most accessible location.

Mr. Johnson suggested that if the restaurant were placed in the middle of the site, there would likely be more competition for parking, and a restaurant user typically would like to see a dedicated area for the parking.

Mr. Grisham reported that studies had been prepared to show that government employees typically brown-bagged rather than dine out for lunch. He noted that the location of the restaurant would be closer to the office building, which would have more restaurant users, and not far from the main entrance of the courthouse, tying in with the walkway activity.

Mr. Grisham added that the restaurant would also be a freeway use. He expected there would be business to the restaurant during the day from the courthouse and office building, but that the prominent location would allow business to bleed in. Additionally, the restaurant would be the first thing visible as one headed into Old Town and would bring in patrons in that way as well.

Commissioner Kelley wanted assurance that the noise impacts to the Library had been taken into consideration.

In response, Mr. Johnson explained that the central lobby extending from the north to the south side of the building would act as a buffer between the Library and the retail businesses. They would also be working with an acoustical engineer to ensure that there were no noise-related issues.

Commissioner Wegerbauer questioned whether or not there would be enough sidewalk space or the opportunity for outdoor seating for the restaurant use.
Ms. Schmidt stated that the actual site plan for the restaurant would come in under a separate planning application and any outdoor dining would be shown on the site plan.

Mr. Johnson stated that there would be flexibility for outdoor seating.

In response to the Chair, Mr. Grisham advised that RDA staff had been working with and had commissioned a sculptor for a 20-foot tall anchor designed for the Civic Center area as a monumental sculpture.

Chairperson Ohlson asked to see a water feature with possibly a light spray incorporated into the project at the southeastern corner, since it would tie in with the water features at City Hall.

Mr. Grisham noted that any water feature would have to be a zero water feature given the costs and required maintenance.

Chairperson Ohlson also commented on the placement of the pad for the restaurant and questioned whether or not the Civic Center Master Plan had dictated the location of the restaurant.

Mr. Grisham explained that the Civic Center Master Plan had showed the restaurant use at the corner.

Chairperson Ohlson asked for a 10-foot wide sidewalk along the west side of Railroad Avenue, to which Mr. Grisham advised that a good sized sidewalk along Railroad Avenue could be considered as part of the design of the school district property. The width of that sidewalk would be part of that discussion process.

Chairperson Ohlson spoke to Resolution No. 9758, Section 3. Decision. General Engineering Conditions Regarding Utilities, Condition No. 33, and asked for clarification of that condition. He also affirmed with the architect that the building would be sprinklered.

Mr. Grisham advised that Condition No. 33, as shown, afforded the City Engineer the flexibility to work with what PG&E desired for a specific location for transformers and whether underground or pad mounted transformers would be used. He noted that pad mounted transformers were the more common method.

Ms. Schmidt explained that the applicant had proposed to place the transformers adjacent to the trash enclosure and to screen them from view with a masonry wall to be stuccoed, plastered, trimmed and painted to match the building, as described in the staff report. Imposition of Condition No. 33 would be at the discretion of the City Engineer. Engineering Department staff had reviewed the plans and was aware of that condition.
Chairperson Ohlson further spoke to Resolution No. 9758, Section 3. Decision, General Engineering Conditions Regarding Utilities, Condition No. 35, and questioned how that condition would be imposed.

Senior Civil Engineer Alfredo Hurtado clarified that the condition was from the Public Works Department to ensure that the controllers for the irrigation worked and functioned properly.

A.J. FARDELLA, Director of the Oak Hills Community Group, 209 Havenwood Circle, Pittsburg, expressed his support for the project and his belief that it would integrate well with the future transit village envisioned for the area. He suggested that the building would be a landmark in the area. He asked about the energy use classification of the building given the amount of glass material. He also asked whether or not green construction methods would be used.

Mr. Johnson explained that the building would not be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified, although they would work with recycled materials in the demolition process. He noted that based on the stormwater and Title 24 requirements, many of the LEED issues would be addressed by law. He added that the building would be as green as possible, to the extent the owner would like to do that.

Commissioner Diokno commented that the construction techniques described would fit in and the level of green building would be up to the discretion of the property owner. There were many green applications that could be used in the construction of the building and a wide range of issues involved. He was confident the architect was thinking along those lines.

OPPONENTS: None

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Commissioner Diokno suggested that the building would be a showpiece for the City. His main concern was that they were going through a public process with input on what the citizens wanted in the eBART Specific Plan and Civic Center areas with a stated desire for a pedestrian environment, although the building as designed would have no relationship to other buildings in the Civic Center area, with acres of parking, and with a building in the middle of the lot. He found the building site plan to be no different than a hodgepodge of unrelated buildings.

Mr. Grisham explained that based on the economics and financial realities of building in East County, the Civic Center Master Plan had to start with the surface parking that had been shown in the current design. As the market changed and matured, structured parking had been identified in future phases. The idea of creating a strong pedestrian corridor along Railroad Avenue had also been identified in the Civic Center Master Plan. He acknowledged that converting surface parking to structured parking was a future goal, which was one of the reasons the building pad had been designed to be transferred to the
developer while the remainder of the site would remain in public parking to provide the
ability to re-configure it as time went on. He explained that the cost of structured parking
was approximately $50,000 a stall and was very expensive.

Commissioner Diokno commented that he had seen more and more people using
bicycles and the City had to advocate in that direction. He did not see the building
entrance as welcoming to pedestrians given that they would have to go through rows of
cars to reach the entrance. He suggested that the building should be moved two rows of
parking towards Center Drive, where it would alleviate the distance between the street
and the entrance to the building. The building would still be a landmark building in the
Civic Center.

Mr. Grisham explained that urban design had been considered. Lobbies from the north
and the south would be accessible from the Class I trail, which had been designed only
for pedestrians and bicyclists. The only area where one would interact with vehicles
would be at one of the driveways. To the left, there was a sidewalk into the main lobby.
The building itself had been designed with eBART considerations. The building had been
designed in response to the reality of suburbia. The side closest to eBART would have a
Class I multi-use path and a connection point as close to the building as possible that
would lead directly to a sidewalk and into the main lobby.

Commissioner Diokno supported a focal point entrance from the eBART Station. He also
expressed concern with how the building would relate to the remainder of the Civic Center
in terms of the potential design for the courthouse and associated parking. He had hoped
that a complete Civic Center vision would have been designed, rather than one building at
a time.

Chairperson Ohlson suggested that Railroad Avenue be moved to the east into the green
space along Railroad Avenue, with green space on the west side of the street to offer a
continuous green space possibly all the way down to City Park. He recognized that
request would be unlikely, although he noted that the National Safety Council
discouraged pedestrians from crossing streets. He suggested that there should
eventually be a continuous greenway from Alvarado Avenue and the Delta DeAnza Trail
down to City Park, but that the current location of a portion of the greenbelt on the east
side of the street would require crossing Railroad Avenue once at Highway 4 and again at
Civic Avenue to access the City Park.

Chairperson Ohlson otherwise questioned whether the interior stairs of the building would
be accessible from one floor to the next or whether a safety or security issue would exist
such that everyone must use the elevator.

Mr. Grisham advised that the stairs would be accessible, although there would be some
areas where one would not be able to access one floor to another, particularly for the
PUSD offices for security purposes but possibly for some of the other office uses as well.
Commissioner Garcia made a motion to adopt the staff recommendation to adopt Resolution No. 9758, as shown, subject to conditions. Commissioner Ramirez seconded the motion.

Chairperson Ohlson offered an amendment to the motion and asked that a sidewalk be added from the pedestrian door of the building over to the Class I trail. The maker and second to the motion accepted the amendment.

**MOTION: AP-07-476 (MS, DR)**

Motion by Commissioner Garcia to adopt Resolution No. 9758, approving AP-07-476 (MS, DR), granting Tentative Parcel Map and Design Review approval for the Pittsburg Civic Tower and future restaurant pad at the northwestern corner of Railroad Avenue and State Route 4 for “Pittsburg Civic Tower, AP-07-476 (MS, DR),” as conditioned and with the following additional condition:

- A sidewalk shall be added from the pedestrian door of the building over to the Class I Trail (at a right angle from the front door out to the path, similar to the sidewalks as described in the staff report.)

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramirez and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Diokno, Garcia, Harris, Kelley, Ramirez, Wegerbauer, Ohlson

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Chairperson Ohlson identified the process to appeal a decision of the Planning Commission within 10 days by submitting a written appeal to the Planning Department for a hearing before the City Council.

**COMMISSION CONSIDERATION:**

There were no Commission Consideration items.

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS:**

The Planning Commission acknowledged receipt of the following:

3. **Notice of Intent to Exercise Delegated Design Review Authority:**
   7-Eleven/Citgo E.V.R. System Installation. AP-08-531 (DR).
STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Harris left the dais at this time due to a potential conflict of interest with the following discussion.

   El Matador Restaurant Plan Revision

Mr. Grisham reported that the trash enclosure for the El Matador Restaurant had been moved to the other side of the property farther away from the future eBART Station. Also, the porte-cochere design element located on the side of the building had been eliminated from the design. Staff had determined that the changes were in substantial conformity with the original design. The façade facing the street remained the same.

Commissioner Harris returned to the dais at this time.

   Procedures Discussion

Mr. Grisham explained that it was important not to discuss the merits of a project until the public hearing was closed and that only clarification questions should be asked prior to the opening of the public hearing.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Chairperson Ohlson reported that the TRANSPLAN Committee had not met due to a lack of business.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

In response to the Chair, Mr. Grisham reported that he expected the work along Davi Avenue to be completed by the end of the summer. He acknowledged that the work would have to be done prior to the commencement of the Civic Tower project. He added that bicyclists could use the future Davi Avenue frontage road and there should be adequate width for the bicycles.

Chairperson Ohlson recommended the consideration of tree planting in the area along the greenway on the east side of Railroad Avenue. He also provided staff with modifications he would like to see made to the agenda script.

Mr. Grisham stated that staff could work with the Chair to make the script more user-friendly.
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m. to a Regular Meeting scheduled on June 10, 2008, in the City Council Chamber at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

MARC S. GRISHAM, Secretary
Pittsburg Planning Commission