MINUTES

OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE

PITTSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION

November 12, 2008

A regular meeting of the Pittsburg Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Ramirez at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2008, in the Council Chamber, City Hall, 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, California.

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager/Planning Director Marc Grisham, City Clerk Alice Evenson, Deputy City Clerk Rhonda Basore, Assistant Planner Ali Endress, Assistant Planner Leigha Schmidt, Senior Police Officer Dan Callahan, and Administrative Assistant to Director Kathy Comtois

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Commissioner Wegerbauer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

REORGANIZATION:

Oath and Seating of Newly Appointed Commissioner Committee Appointment

City Clerk Alice Evenson presented the Oath of Office to newly appointed Planning Commissioner A.J. Fardella.

Commissioners welcomed Mr. Fardella to the Planning Commission.

DELETIONS / WITHDRAWALS OR 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, October 28, 2008

Commissioner Ohlson clarified his comments in the second paragraph of Page 6, that the use of the word “palette” had not been misspelled in Use Permit Conditions, Condition 3 of Resolution No. 9777, but that the verbiage had been incorrectly used in that condition.

MOTION:

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

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

Noes: None

Abstain: Commissioner Fardella

Absent: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

There were no public hearings.

COMMISSION CONSIDERATIONS:

Item 2: Loveridge Plaza Sign Program. Modifications to AP-08-515 (SR).

An application by Keyvan Massoudi requesting modifications to approved Sign Review Application No. 08-515, in order to increase the allowable wall sign height and modify the design and size of the freestanding sign permitted by the Loveridge Plaza Master Sign Program. The Loveridge Plaza multi-tenant building is located at 1270 East Leland Road in the CO (Office Commercial) District. APN 088-161-013.

Assistant Planner Ali Endress presented the staff report dated November 12, 2008. She advised that the applicant had submitted to staff a letter of this date requesting two additional modifications to the sign program.
The applicant had asked to modify the sign program to include an off-site sign for the tenant in Suite #105. Staff determined that the request could not be discussed at this time since it would require a sign exception that had not been agendized before the Commission and since the appropriate application and fees had not been filed.

Ms. Endress advised that staff did support the applicant’s request to split the uppermost tenant sign cabinet that reads *Loveridge Dental Group* into two sign cabinets to mimic the design of the sign cabinets below it, which would reduce the dominance and repetition of the *Loveridge Dental Group* signage to be repeated directly above the freestanding sign, and which would allow for all six tenants in the building to have equal representation on the freestanding sign.

Ms. Endress recommended that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 9779, approving the applicant’s request for modifications to approved Sign Review Application No. 08-515, as conditioned, with a modification to **Section 3. Decision, Condition 2** to be revised to read:

2. *The uppermost tenant sign face on the freestanding sign shall be divided into two tenant sign faces to match the tenant sign faces below.*

**PROONENT:**

KEYVAN MASSOUDI, the property owner of 1270 East Leland Road, Pittsburg, explained that when the sign program had been discussed in the past, he misunderstood the criteria and had been informed that logos would not be permitted without an increase in the sign height. As a result, the sign criteria must be rewritten. He noted that the freestanding monument sign would be modified to allow six tenant cabinets for the six tenants in the center. In response to the staff recommendation to remove the sign copy reading *Loveridge Dental Group* from the freestanding monument sign, he pointed out that based on his tour of businesses in the City; many monument signs included the numerous tenant names along with the major tenant. He asked that all of his tenants be included on the monument sign.

Mr. Massoudi added that the entrance to Suite #105 was located at East Leland Road with all parking spaces situated at the rear, where the tenant space would not be easily identified. He asked that Suite #105 be allowed to have signage in the parking lot as well.

Mr. Grisham clarified that staff was not opposed to the sign copy reading *Loveridge Dental Group* on the freestanding monument sign. The previously approved sign involved one large box reading *Loveridge Dental Group*, which box was now proposed to be split. As to the request for off-site signage for Suite #105, he advised that was not appropriate for discussion at this time based on legal criteria as to when applications were presented to the Commission.
Commissioner Wegerbauer commented that she liked the building, which had been approved by a prior Planning Commission. She also liked the original approved signage with the copy reading Loveridge Plaza, which faced the street and which she found to be classy. She acknowledged that the City was in the process of revising its sign regulations in that there was a lot of signage in the City that was overdone and where less would be more. She questioned who would be served by the smaller tenant cabinets on the freestanding monument sign.

Mr. Massoudi suggested that passing motorists or traffic turning left would see the monument sign. The additional tenant cabinets were intended to afford an identity for all of the tenants in the building. He pointed out that new businesses along Railroad Avenue had monument signs that included cabinets for the individual tenants. He realized the cost of the new signage, although he understood that the building must have tenant identification. He emphasized that he had paid all application fees to the City. He expressed his hope to be able to move forward.

Commissioner Wegerbauer appreciated the investment into the community, although she did not see that the sign modifications would be of the same quality as the remainder of the building. She found the modifications to be overdone and tacky. She suggested the value was that the sign copy reading Loveridge Plaza was prominent and the operators could advertise their tenant spaces at Loveridge Plaza.

Commissioner Fardella commented that he loved the building. He asked whether or not the applicant had read and was in agreement with the project conditions of approval.

Mr. Massoudi again asked the Commission to consider off-site signage in the parking lot for Suite #105.

Mr. Grisham reiterated that issue could not be addressed at this time.

Mr. Massoudi otherwise agreed with the conditions of approval.

TIM BARRETT, 160 Edgewater Place, Pittsburg, Past President of the California Sign Association, suggested that most of the multi-tenant signs in the City were unattractive. He understood that drive-by traffic was sought for the center and that newspaper advertising would not be what would bring people to the center. He supported the idea of a multi-tenant sign, as proposed, as long as it was wrapped in an architectural treatment similar to the remainder of the building. He added that appropriate multi-tenant sign examples could be presented to the Commission from Sign of the Times magazine.

THOMAS UNDERWOOD, Dupedog, 1210 Central Blvd., Suite #104, Brentwood, explained that he was the designer of the new sign criteria. He clarified that the tenant cabinets would consist of aluminum panels with routed faces, with a Plexiglas push
through half an inch thick and with vinyl decoration. The tenant panels would be texture-coated with a finish similar in appearance to stucco.

Commissioner Fardella appreciated the detail provided for the signs and the submittal of complete drawings. He found the signs to have a superior appearance.

OPPONENTS: None

Commissioner Garcia clarified the staff recommendation to adopt Resolution No. 9779, as conditioned, with the modification to Section 3. Decision, Condition 2.

Commissioner Wegerbauer understood that the sign product was better than other signs in the City although she questioned whether or not the tenant cabinets would be easily readable. She asked the Commission to consider the quality of the proposed multi-tenant sign. She supported a stipulation in the sign program prohibiting blank faces in that there were some other multi-tenant signs in the City that had been approved but that were currently full of blank panels.

Commissioner Diokno commented that as he had previously stated, he found the building to have one color too many. He otherwise found the building to be well designed. He suggested that larger signs would be more visible and attractive to passing motorists than smaller signs. He expressed concern about plastering the building with signs that would obscure the building. He preferred to keep the signs at the originally approved height.

Mr. Underwood advised that the total height of the wall signs would be increased to 36 inches, although the actual sign letters would be no larger than 24 inches. The increase in size would allow for logos and a second line of text.

Commissioner Diokno suggested that the second line of text would be too much.

Commissioner Wegerbauer agreed and recommended that a logo be allowed but not the second line of text.

Ms. Endress clarified that legally the City could not differentiate between allowing a logo and allowing text.

Commissioner Diokno affirmed with staff that if the 36 inches in size was allowed, a second line of text would be a given.

Ms. Endress explained that legally the City could regulate size, placement and number of signs, but not the content. The modifications in the sign program set a maximum height for each line of text at 24 inches, and an overall maximum of 36 inches, whereby the additional 12 inches would allow a logo or a second line of text.
In response to Commissioner Diokno as to whether or not logos could be designed 24 inches in height, Mr. Underwood noted that there would be difficulties in preparing a logo 24 inches tall allowing room for the text and the lower cabinet, and the need for a lower cabinet could depend on the length of the tenant name. The name of one of the existing tenants, City Center Pharmacy, was too long to allow one line of text with a logo cabinet.

Commissioner Garcia asked the property owner whether or not the individual tenants would be charged with placing identification on the freestanding monument sign.

Mr. Massoudi advised that he had not charged his tenants for identification on the tenant cabinets.

Commissioner Wegerbauer asked if there was a way to stipulate that the content must be the company name, to which Ms. Endress again advised that legally the City could not regulate the content.

Commissioner Wegerbauer expressed concern with blank faces on the monument sign. If a tenant did not choose to renew a lease and there was a new tenant, she was concerned that a new tenant could conceivably choose not to place signage on the sign and the individual tenant cabinet could remain a blank face.

Mr. Massoudi acknowledged the concerns and explained that he intended to market the tenants for identification and was not intending to ruin the appearance of the building. He noted that his tenant Bella Salon, as an example, had building signage that was too small and not visible when he had been at the gas station located across the street from his building.

Commissioner Wegerbauer suggested that the second line of text was too much signage.

Commissioner Fardella asked if a condition could be added that the property owner would keep the signage in good appearance regardless of the tenant occupancy, and Mr. Massoudi affirmed his agreement with such a condition.

Commissioner Garcia made a motion to approve the resolution, as shown, with a modification to Condition 2 and with an additional Condition 21, to be written by staff to ensure that the sign was kept up-to-date and the property owner would not charge his tenants for any changes to tenant cabinets.

Commissioner Kelley seconded the motion.

**MOTION: AP-08-515 (SR)**

Motion by Commissioner to Garcia to adopt Resolution No. 9779, granting sign review approval of modifications to the approved Master Sign Program for the Loveridge Plaza
Multi-Tenant Building at 1270 East Leland Road for “Loveridge Plaza Sign Program. Modifications to AP-08-515,” APN 088-161-013, as conditioned, with a modification to Section 3, Decision, Condition 2, and with an additional Condition 21 under Section 3, Decision, to ensure that the sign was kept up-to-date and the property owner would not charge for any changes to the tenant cabinets. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kelley and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fardella, Garcia, Kelley, Ohlson, Ramirez
Noes: Commissioners Diokno, Wegerbauer
Abstain: None
Absent: None

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS:

There were no Zoning Administrator Reports.

PLANNING DIRECTOR / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

There were no Planning Director or Staff Communications.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Commissioner Ohlson reported that the TRANSPLAN Committee would next meet on November 13.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS:

Commissioner Wegerbauer asked who controlled the bus stops in the City, to which Mr. Grisham advised they were controlled by the local bus company. The City worked with that agency in terms of location.

Commissioner Wegerbauer reported that the bus stop in front of Starbucks at Railroad Avenue did not have a waiting area for patrons, although there was nice landscaping in that location. She also asked about the new monument sign along Railroad Avenue for the new multi-tenant building where Panda Express was located, and that currently had four empty tenant cabinets.

Ms. Endress understood that the small multi-tenant sign for the building along Railroad Avenue was consistent with the original sign program and was for the new multi-tenant building.

Commissioner Ohlson reported that the Contra Costa Countywide Bicycle Advisory Committee would meet on December 9. Since that body met once a year and since it was also the same night as a Planning Commission meeting, he asked that he be
excused from the December 9 Commission meeting for the purpose of attending that meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m. to a Regular Meeting scheduled on November 25, 2008, in the City Council Chamber at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

[Signature]

MARC S. GRISHAM, Secretary
Pittsburg Planning Commission