MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
PITTSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
February 8, 2005

A regular meeting of the Pittsburg Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Jack Garcia at 7:01 P.M. on Tuesday, February 8, 2005 in the City Council Chambers of City Hall at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Dolojan, Gordon, Ohlson, Ramirez, Tumbaga, Williams, Chairperson Garcia

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Marc Grisham, Planning Director Melissa Ayres, Economic Development Director Brad Nail, Director of Development Projects Randy Jerome, Assistant Planner Dana Hoggatt, Assistant Planner Christopher Barton, and Senior Civil Engineer Alfredo Hurtado

POSTING OF AGENDA:

The agenda was posted at City Hall on Friday, February 4, 2005.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Tom LaFleur 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:

Marc Grisham, City Manager

City Manager Marc Grisham introduced himself to the Commission and updated the Commission on a list of 34 special projects, either being worked on or conceptually to be worked on in the future. He highlighted a number of those projects which included an initial design concept for a bed and breakfast at the Marina. He stated that the City planned to start the Master Plan process for the resort portion of the Marina. The Elks Club building was in the final construction drawing phase, the Black Diamond project was in the environmental review process, the exterior design for the Jason Griego building had been approved by City staff and would be submitted to the Redevelopment Agency to address issues of planning and design, and the City had changed its Commercial Rehabilitation Program with more emphasis on upfront architectural design and complete drawings.

Mr. Grisham also reported that the Tenth Street and Cumberland project was in the construction drawing phase, staff had held a series of meetings with the Seventh Day Adventist Church on the Los Medanos property with the intent for a senior project with commercial at the front and a community center building that could be used by the church, and a 40-unit live/work project had been envisioned for property located between Cumberland Street and Los Medanos south of Tenth Street. The City was also working with the property owner to renovate the Cigar Store building in the downtown and the Redevelopment Agency would be asked very soon to allow the preparation of construction drawings for both the California and the Enea Theaters.

Further, the City Council had approved a letter to BART with copies to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), TRANSPLAN and all elected officials, emphasizing the importance of having a BART or eBART Transfer Station at State Route 4 and Railroad Avenue. A Master Plan for the Civic Center property had also been planned to consider different types of development patterns with a proposal for a five to seven story office building at the corner of State Route 4 and Railroad Avenue.

In response to inquiries from Commissioners, Mr. Grisham suggested that port activities in the City should occur from Harbor Street east. To improve access, the City was working with the purchaser of the Johns Manville property who was currently designing a mixed use project incorporating residential and commercial development. The old Johns Manville loading area had been capped and the City envisioned a park access point at that location to the river. The City was also actively working to annex the Mirant property.

Mr. Grisham explained that a number of the projects had already been funded. Staff was in the process of identifying all of the funding sources and were confident funds could be found to make all of the listed projects come to fruition.

Mr. Grisham added that the City Police Department now had a bilingual tip line and was working on wireless camera technology that could be viewed in the patrol vehicles. While
the City was currently funded at 73 officers, he preferred that 80 officers be funded. All efforts were being made to increase revenues to the City which could assist with such needed services in the City.

Mr. Grisham updated the Commission on the status of additional projects and commented that the historical society property was currently under review by an architect with the intent to open the second floor for additional gallery space and consideration of the construction of an elevator on the outside of the building by the parking lot to be designed with an old style steel open cage.

Efforts were also being pursued to provide long term parking in the downtown with an acknowledgement of the need for public transportation which served Railroad Avenue from one end to the other. It was noted that the Pittsburg Unified School District (PUDSD) was considering an elementary school on the old school site where parking could be incorporated into new development.

Mr. Grisham acknowledged the need to improve communications between the Planning Commission and the City Council and agreed to consider a suggestion by several commissioners to reestablish an Ad Hoc Subcommittee with representatives from both bodies, which had been convened in the past, to review large projects prior to a formal hearing process.

Chairperson Garcia thanked Mr. Grisham for the presentation.

CONSENT:

a. Minutes – January 11, 2005
b. Central and Solari Commercial Building Extension of Time

MOTION:

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

Ayes: Commissioner Dolojan, Gordon, Ohlson, Ramirez, Tumbaga, Williams, Garcia

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Commissioners Gordon and Tumbaga recused themselves as a result of a potential conflict of interest with the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING:
ITEM 1: Ramar Foods at Marina Skate. AP-04-164 (RZ/UP/DR)

Application by Primo Quesada of Ramar Foods International requesting approval to rezone 2.27 acres from CN (Neighborhood Commercial) to CS-O (Service Commercial with a Limited Overlay) and a study session on a request for a use permit to establish a food processing plant, and design review approval of architectural and site development plans to add approximately 11,280 square feet to an existing 18,595 square foot building located at 335 Central Avenue (old Marina Skate building), CN (Neighborhood Commercial) District, Service Commercial General Plan Land Use designation (Ordinance No. 04-1215) AON 086-132-022.

Assistant Planner Christopher Barton presented the staff report dated February 8, 2005. He recommended that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 9548 recommending City Council approval of Rezoning Application No. AP-04-164 (RZ) and move to continue the public hearing for Use Permit and Design Review Applications No. AP-04-164 to February 23, 2005.

Commissioner Williams questioned whether or not the applicant had agreed to comply with the staff recommendations as contained in the staff report, to which Mr. Barton acknowledged that some of the staff recommendations raised as a concern during a prior meeting with the applicant. He noted that some recommendations had been made by the Engineering Department, were recently added to the staff report, of which the applicant might not be aware.

Commissioner Ramirez pointed out that the resolution number in the staff report and the resolution itself did not match, to which Planning Director Melissa Ayres recommended that if the project were approved, the motion for approval should be made without recital of a resolution number which would allow staff to clarify and correct the resolution number.

Commissioner Dolojan requested clarification of the number of trees to be planted around the perimeter of the site.

Mr. Barton noted there were existing trees on Central Avenue. Staff had recommended that street trees be added along Railroad Lane and throughout the parking lot.

Commissioner Dolojan expressed concern with what he saw as an excessive number of trees being proposed since over time the trees could obstruct the front of the building.

Mr. Barton clarified that the number of trees had not been specified. He noted that as indicated in the resolution the landscaping plan, including the species and spacing of the trees, would be reviewed by the City’s Park Planner.

Commissioner Dolojan recommended that a gate be installed at the back of the building in that the Fil-American Association, Inc. building was located on the other side of the subject building and oftentimes there were problems with unauthorized people accessing the site during the evening. He recommended that the gate be placed at the back of the building at the northeast corner extending from the east wall to the north property line.
Ms. Ayres requested that the number of trees not be specified since trees have different canopy widths and that less trees would be needed if they chose trees with larger canopies.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

MICHAEL KEE, Architect, 440 Railroad Avenue, Suite 210, Pittsburg, representing the applicant, explained that freezer space would be added to either side of the building, and the front, or southern portion, would be converted to office space. The site would be reconfigured with landscaping, as shown on the submitted rendering. There would be a total of 41 trees on the site. There were currently 23 trees along Central Avenue. The proposal would add 18 trees, although based on the parking count the site would only be required to have a total of eight parking lot trees. If staff wanted more trees in the parking lot, he asked to be allowed to relocate the trees throughout the parking lot. He noted that the landscaping on the site would be 14 percent where 7 percent was (minimum) required.

Mr. Kee commented that the proposal would include an effort to remove the existing transformer in the parking lot area, although that would be a cost consideration for the project. The project would also include the replacement of the asphalt along Central Avenue. If staff required landscaping around the entry, they could work to add more landscaping in that area by pulling it elsewhere from the site. In response to the staff recommendation to reposition the bicycle racks, he acknowledged that could be done and that the racks could be moved to the front. The rationale for placing the bicycle racks near the outdoor patio area was that as a private facility, the area would be used by employees only and was located adjacent to the employee break room.

Elevations of the site were presented to illustrate an earth tone pattern similar to the church across the street, with a beige color for the body of the building and the trim on the molding. The large wall would be painted in the trim color. There would be no signage on that wall. The color was intended to break up the long horizontal dimensions of the building. Decorative metal blue tube steel elements would be placed on thefeouser units to break the wall massing. The decorative tube steel elements along the east elevation facing Moose Way would be planted with vines. A new 6-foot sidewalk would be added along the Railroad Lane frontage.

Commissioner Ohlson spoke to the bicycle parking and noted that bicycle parking was to be no farther from the front door than the closet auto parking not reserved for handicapped parking. In this instance, he recognized that the site would be primarily used by employees. He inquired whether or not the courtyard would open to the outdoors.

Mr. Kee advised that the courtyard would be surrounded by a low 3-foot concrete wall so that in the evenings police patrol cars could see into that area. The courtyard was accessible with a door from the employee break area.
Commissioner Ohlson recommended that the bike rack be located in the courtyard rather than be outside and that a tree or two with a large canopy be considered in the courtyard area to provide shade. He would also like to see street trees added to the grass strip along Railroad Lane and more trees to be planted in the east parking lot. He would like to see the entire parking lot consist of a complete canopy of trees. He added that the recommendation for a fence along the north extension of the east wall would be beneficial.

Commissioner Williams liked the design and suggested that the applicant had adequately addressed the staff recommendations.

Chairperson Garcia agreed that the applicant had more than doubled the landscaping. While the trees could be rearranged on the property, he suggested that should be left up to the discretion of the Park Planner. As to the power poles, he noted that it would be very expensive to underground those poles, which would place quite a burden on one project.

Mr. Kee explained that the electrical service at the property had not yet been evaluated, although it was the applicant’s intent to underground them since the power poles were in the way of the proposed parking and one of the freezer units.

Chairperson Garcia noted that as shown on Page 1A, 1.1 of the drawings, there were four power poles located in the middle of the sidewalk which staff also recommended be underground and which would be very costly.

Mr. Kee commented that appeared to be a miscommunication in that the applicant had not planned to underground the power poles in the middle of the sidewalk.

Mr. Barton affirmed the staff recommendation to remove the power poles on the property in order for the parking configuration to function as proposed. In addition, it had been recommended that the actual power poles along the street frontage be underground as well. He acknowledged that work would be very expensive.

Chairperson Garcia stated that since those power poles ran from Railroad Lane to Solari Street possibly a fee could be imposed on the applicant or an assessment district formed, rather than placing the entire financial burden on the one project. Potential undergrounding for the entire street could be considered, in which case a fee could be imposed on each property owner. He noted that the applicant had generated a number of jobs in the community and there had been no complaints about the business. He asked staff to take that into consideration when the use permit and design review applications were returned to the Commission.

Chairperson Garcia also advised that the Commission had been provided with copies of
correspondence from the Fil-American Association, Inc., dated February 3, 2005 in support of the project.

Economic Development Director Brad Nail advised that the City was in support of the development, which he described as a natural expansion of the business. He suggested that the landscaping being proposed would cover the facility to an adequate degree. He agreed with the concerns of the financial burden on the applicant regarding the potential requirements for undergrounding of the power poles. He noted the applicant employed over 100 people and was a good business in the City. The goal was to retain the business in the community and allow it to expand in a place that made common sense.

TOM LaFLEUR, Executive Director of the Los Medanos Fund, Pittsburg, stated that the applicant had been their client for many years and was one of the finest businesses in the City, one which was community oriented. He also expressed concern placing the burden of undergrounding on this and future applicants. He added that historically money had been collected from PG&E and had been used by the Redevelopment Agency for undergrounding work, when possible. He expressed his hope that the City would not burden individual businesses with undergrounding requirements.

Ms. Ayres requested that the public hearing for the use permit and design review be continued to the Planning Commission meeting of February 23 so that the item did not have to be renoticed.

OPPONENTS: None

MOTION: AP-04-164

Motion by Commissioner Dolojan to adopt a resolution recommending that the City Council adopt an ordinance establishing a CS-O (Service Commercial with a Limited Overlay) District on a 2.27 acre parcel located at 335 Central Avenue for “Ramar Foods at Marina Skate,” AP-04-164 (RZ,UP,DR), with the public hearing for the use permit and design review continued to the Planning Commission meeting of February 23, 2005. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Dolojan, Ohlson, Ramirez, Williams, Garcia
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Commissioners Gordon, Tumbaga [Recused]

Commissioners Gordon and Tumbaga returned to the dais at this time

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Ayres reported that the City Council had continued the recommended revisions to the Planning Commission bylaws since the Council had been concerned that all of the...
Commission bylaws were not consistent. The item had been continued for 30 days. Staff had been directed to make recommended modifications to the bylaws for consistency purposes. During the Commission meeting of February 23, Ms. Ayres stated that staff would identify the changes being recommended to the Planning Commission bylaws as an informational item.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Chairperson Garcia reported that he had attended the January 13 TRANSPLAN Committee meeting and that the Committee had elected a new Chair and Vice Chair, received a report from the CCTA to determine the remaining expenditures of Measure C monies, received a report on a new policy committee to be formed for eBART, and received a report on the status of the State Route 4 Bypass. A special meeting had also been held to discuss the financing of the State Route 4 Bypass.

**COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Gordon reported that the Presido Village Senior Housing project was now open and tenants were moving in. In the next two months it was expected that the facility would be fully occupied with 104 residents. A Grand Opening Celebration was expected to be scheduled in the near future.

Commissioner Williams stated that she had suffered a recent heart attack but was now feeling better, was out of the hospital and was glad to be back.

Commissioner Ohlson inquired of the work being done at the corner of Stoneman Avenue and Harbor Street. He was advised that work was currently in process to compact the site and install storm drains for an approved senior apartment project.

Commissioner Dolojan complimented the recent installation of the multiple speed humps on Atherton Avenue. He said it had slowed traffic in the neighborhood.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 P.M. to a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on Wednesday, February 23, 2005 at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

MELISSA AYRES, Secretary
Pittsburg Planning Commission

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