A regular meeting of the Pittsburg Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Holmes at 7:30 P.M. on Tuesday, April 23, 2002, in the City Council Chambers of City Hall at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Garcia, Glynn, Harris, Leonard, Ramirez, Chairperson Holmes

Absent: Commissioner Kelley

Staff: Director of Planning and Building Randy Jerome; Associate Planner Chris Bekiaris; and Civil Engineer II Alfredo Hurtado.

POSTING OF AGENDA:

Chairperson Holmes announced that Commissioner Kelley was not present at this time due to the recent passing of her mother. The Commission offered its condolences.

Chairperson Holmes advised that the agenda had been posted at City Hall on Friday, April 19, 2002.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairperson Holmes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES: April 9, 2002

MOTION:

Motion by Commissioner Leonard to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2002 meeting, as submitted.
The motion was seconded by Commissioner Glynn and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Garcia, Glynn, Harris, Leonard, Ramirez, Holmes
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Commissioner Kelley

DELETIONS/WITHDRAWALS:

Mr. Jerome reported that agenda Item No. 1, Willow Heights Residential Subdivision, would be continued to a date uncertain at the request of the applicant. Item No. 2, Pittsburg Marine Terminal Amendment, would be continued to the meeting of May 14, 2002, also at the request of the applicant.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

There were no comments from the audience.

PRESENTATIONS:

A. Wal-Mart

Mr. Jerome explained that the Planning Commission had requested that a representative from Wal-Mart appear before the Commission to address the status of the Wal-Mart site and other operations issues. He reported that two letters had been submitted to Wal-Mart management and staff had been informed that a representative would attend the current meeting, as requested, to discuss the site. At this time, no representative from Wal-Mart was present in the audience.

Mr. Jerome acknowledged that he had also spoken with Commander Bill Hendricks of the Code Enforcement Bureau who had some discussions with the Wal-Mart management.

Chairperson Holmes suggested that staff send another letter to the management of Wal-Mart to request representation to address the Commission.

B. Fort Knox Storage

DAVE FAULK, one of the property owners, was present to represent the Fort Knox Self-Storage facility, as was JOHN CAMPAGNA, another representative.

Commissioner Harris inquired of the status of the self-storage project and the estimated timeframe for the completion of the project.
Mr. Faulk explained that the long-term goal had been to build out the project area that was visible in the front of the site, which would involve another 300 units. He stated that the project was currently being built in phases as the facility was being occupied and as revenue allowed. He advised that drawings were nearing completion for the next two phases of the project, including a perimeter area around the larger area in the front of the site where units would be situated in the center portion of the site. The document storage portion of the project was also proceeding.

Mr. Faulk advised that the use of the facility had not progressed as anticipated, particularly after September 11, 2001. He reported that approximately 200 units were currently vacant. As those units were occupied, the next phase of the construction would be able to proceed.

Commissioner Harris inquired of the status of improvements that were to occur along the El Dorado Drive elevation. He also inquired whether or not the applicant had obtained approval from the City for the installation of a cloth sign that was currently being displayed on the building.

Mr. Faulk clarified that the El Dorado Drive improvements would be included in the next phase, which would involve the perimeter units. That phase would include fencing and landscaping around El Dorado Drive. The final phase would involve the build out of units in the center of the facility.

Commissioner Harris inquired of the status of the building which had formerly been occupied by a grocery store and which needed to be cleaned up and painted, to which Mr. Faulk reported that the referenced building had been painted.

Commissioner Garcia requested clarification with the statement from the applicant that drawings would be completed. He recalled that the applicant had already received City approval for one phase of the project and that no other phases were involved.

Mr. Bekiaris clarified that the project had been approved for two phases. He was unaware of a third phase for the project.

Commissioner Garcia pointed out that the applicant could not vary from drawings that had previously been submitted and approved. He requested clarification that the applicant was in the process of preparing new drawings. He noted that the Planning Commission had approved the initial drawings for the project, with which the project must conform, particularly regarding the conditions of approval that had been imposed for the project at the time of approval. He emphasized that the applicant was not abiding by those conditions and he expressed concern with the appearance of the property suggesting that it appeared worse than it had when vacant.
Mr. Faulk commented that the operation was currently experiencing a loss of $15,000 a month. He commented that they would comply with revisions to the approved plans if that were required.

Commissioner Garcia clarified that the economics of the project were not a part of the Commission's purview. He suggested that the applicant should complete the project already approved. He reiterated his concern with the condition of the property, specifically related to grass growing in the parking lot and with the condition of the alleyway along El Dorado Drive that appeared worse than when the property owner had purchased the property. In addition, he pointed out that the existing fence was in disrepair.

Mr. Faulk suggested that the use of the facility was greater than other similar facilities in the area. He reiterated that the plan was to build out as revenues allowed.

Commissioner Garcia pointed out that had not been the plan when the project had initially been presented to the Commission. He emphasized that the Planning Commission had not been advised that the project would be built as revenues allowed. He pointed out that the Commission had allowed the facility to open without the completion of the project.

Mr. Faulk explained that he had not been a part of the early negotiations for the project when the project had originally been approved. He commented that it would take some time to build out the 800 units that comprised the project.

Commissioner Garcia referenced Shurgard and Premier Self Storage facilities that had recently been constructed in the City of Oakley, which he described as two wonderful projects that had been constructed in one phase.

Mr. Faulk expressed his understanding that the referenced project did not involve a 6.5-acre facility that comprised the Fort Knox facility.

Commissioner Garcia added that a number of neighbors had expressed concern with the incompleteness of the project and with the condition of the property.

Mr. Jerome clarified that if work on the project were to cease for six weeks, the building permits would become void and the project approvals would only be valid for six months after that time. As a result, the entitlements would become null and void after that time.

Chairperson Holmes inquired when the application had been approved, to which Mr. Campagna reported that the project had been approved in 1997. He was uncertain when the Siino portion of the property had been approved for development. He acknowledged that there had been a number of comments received as to the incompleteness of the project.
Commissioner Harris acknowledged that the Commission was not involved in the economics of a proposal and that projects were approved based on their completeness. If there were changes in the project, he emphasized that those changes must be approved by the Planning Commission prior to any development. He too expressed concern with the condition of the property and questioned when the project would be completed.

Mr. Faulk explained that he was not prepared to discuss an exact schedule for the completion of the project. He advised that every dollar generated had been used to increase the exposure of the project. While he agreed that from the outside the property did not appear attractive, he noted that they were doing the best possible through their efforts to raise additional funds to conduct the necessary improvements.

Commissioner Garcia requested a promise from the applicant that he would cease purchasing more property pending the completion of the initial project.

Mr. Faulk explained that the only reason negotiations had been pursued for the purchase of an adjacent empty lot was to be able to create exposure for the main entrance to the project.

Commissioner Garcia pointed out that the Commission had offered to allow the applicant the placement of an off-site sign to direct customers to the main entrance, which sign would have been placed on Railroad Avenue, which was normally not permitted. It was his understanding that the applicant had refused to install that signage. He inquired of the status of that proposal.

Mr. Faulk acknowledged that there had been numerous meetings with staff with respect to signage. He stated that the sign on the main building was the largest sign allowed by the City.

Mr. Bekiaris clarified that he had met with Dan Schoenfeld, who had initially been involved with the project, and had discussed the potential placement of an off-site sign on Railroad Avenue. Mr. Schoenfeld had not pursued that possibility.

Mr. Bekiaris added that he had recently spoken with the sign company working with Fort Knox Storage and had again offered to work with the applicant regarding off-site signage. He stated that offer had also not been pursued. He otherwise suggested that the signage on the building was clearly visible from Railroad Avenue and was not that small. As to the existing cloth sign on the site, he clarified that signage should be removed since it had only been permitted as temporary signage to provide exposure until the permanent sign could be installed.

Commissioner Garcia suggested that the applicant be allowed another month to return to the Commission to identify a timeframe when the project would be completed. He commented that little work had occurred on the property, particularly related to cleanup.
Mr. Faulk disagreed and commented that the site had consistently been cleaned. He also commented that they had placed the largest sign possible on the building.

Mr. Bekiaris reiterated that he had spoken with Dan Schoenfeld and a representative from the applicant's sign company regarding possible off-site signage. Possible locations had included a site on the applicant's property and in the southwest corner of the Railroad Plaza shopping center. The applicant could also have shared the monument signage identifying that center. If the owner of the adjacent gas station was willing, he stated that it was also possible that signage could be placed in that location.

Mr. Faulk advised that the gas station operator was not receptive to signage on his property. He also clarified that they were not considering an expansion to additional property for future development. The only interest they had for property that was located behind the adjacent gas station had been to permit access off of El Dorado Drive in the future and to offer improved visibility to increase the exposure of the facility.

Commissioner Harris recommended that the applicants be allowed a three month period to entirely complete or complete as much work as possible on the first phase of the project and for the applicant to work to better maintain the site. He recommended that the applicant return at the end of that time to provide a status report to the Commission.

Mr. Faulk reiterated that the facility had been maintained. He commented that the owner of the lot in front of the Fort Knox facility had been contacted by letter to encourage him to better maintain his property. He added that if that property owner did not maintain the grass area, he would maintain that area within the next week. As to the ability to complete the first phase within the next three months, he was uncertain that could be done within that period of time.

ALLEN TATOMER explained that he had recently been hired to operate the document management portion of the facility. While he acknowledged that the site was not perfect, he suggested in fairness that the condition of the property was not worse than it had been in the past.

Mr. Tatomer suggested that there had been some improvements made in that the building had been repainted and other work had been conducted. He otherwise commented that it was difficult to maintain the parking lot weed free. He stated that they would make every effort to get the project up to speed.

Commissioner Garcia reiterated his concerns and pointed out again the condition of the alleyway that had been used as a construction yard where piles of dirt remained and where garbage and debris had been collecting. He also reiterated his concern with weeds growing in the parking lot.
Mr. Tatomer noted that the dirt piles had been removed and that some areas had been cleaned up some time ago.

Mr. Faulk reiterated the amount of money that had been expended on the project. He commented that there had been a previously unknown toxic situation related to the property that had taken nearly a year to resolve, which situation had delayed the construction of the project. He suggested that many of the improvements that had been completed were not clearly visible.

Based on Commissioner Harris' recommendation, Mr. Jerome suggested that the representatives from Fort Knox storage return to the Planning Commission at its July 23 meeting. He recommended that the applicants document what changes had been made to the site from this point forward, including any anticipated improvements within the next three months that could be identified to staff ahead of time. As to the availability of the applicants during the meeting of July 23, 2002, he noted that staff would work to coordinate the meeting date with the applicant.

Commissioner Leonard commented that he and some other Commissioners had not been members of the Planning Commission when the project had initially been approved. He requested that Commissioners be provided with a copy of all of the conditions of approval that had been imposed on the project. He otherwise disagreed that the applicant be allowed ninety days to clean up weeds and that such abatement on the property could be done quickly at minimal cost.

Mr. Faulk explained that the majority of the weeds being referenced were located on property in front of the facility that they did not own. He advised that their weeds would be maintained this week.

Commissioner Leonard suggested that code enforcement review the other lot that had been referenced.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING:

Item 1: Willow Heights Residential Subdivision. (Stanley Works) RZ-01-03, DR-01-42 and Subdivision 8605.

Applications by Vince Fletcher of Schuler Homes of California Inc., to amend the zoning map for approximately 17.18 acres from RS (Single-Family Residential) to PD (Planned Development) and request approval of a PD Plan and a tentative map for a 199-lot single-family residential subdivision and for design review approval of architectural plans for house plans and landscaping on the portion of the Stanley Works site located between North Parkside Drive on the north, West Seventeenth Street on the south and between Andrew Avenue on the east and the River Run residential subdivision on the west; APN 086-020-012.
As earlier reported, the applicant had requested that the Planning Commission continue the item to a date uncertain due to the applicant's reconsideration and finalization of the tentative map and house design.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

PROPONENTS: None

OPPONENTS: None

MOTION:

Motion by Commissioner Garcia to continue Willows Heights Residential Subdivision RZ-01-03, DR-01-42 and Subdivision 8605 to a date uncertain. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harris and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Garcia, Glynn, Harris, Leonard, Ramirez, Holmes
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Commissioner Kelley

PUBLIC HEARING:

Item 2: Pittsburg Marine Terminal Amendment. UP-02-03.

Application by John Bass of Isle Capitol Corporation to amend UP-95-05 to remove the truck trip limitation condition at 707 East Third Street, IG (General Industrial) zone; APNs 073-020-020 and 073-030-007.

Mr. Jerome explained that the applicant had requested that the item be continued to the meeting of May 14, 2002. He requested that the public hearing be opened and continued to that date.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

PROPONENTS: None

OPPONENTS: None

Referencing Section 3. Approval, Condition of Approval No. 3 of Resolution No. 9316, Commissioner Garcia requested the following amendments:

3. Condition No. 6 of Resolution No. 8896 shall be amended as follows:

Usage of truck routes shall be as follows:
A. Trucks shall not be restricted in the use of Route No. 1 and shall use Route No. 1 (Truck Route - Pittsburg/Antioch Highway) exclusively, except in instances of emergency, as determined by the Pittsburg Police, Engineering Departments or the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, or when Route No. 1 is unavailable or impassable, in which case trucks shall use Route No. 2 (Railroad Avenue) or Route No. 3 (Tenth Street).

B. In cases of emergency, as determined by the Pittsburg Police, Engineering Departments or Contra Costa Fire Protection District, or when Route No. 1 (Truck Bypass - Pittsburg/Antioch Highway) is unavailable or impassable and only for the duration of such emergency, unavailability or impassability of Route No. 1, trucks may use Route No. 2, (Railroad Avenue) and Route No. 3 (Tenth Street) on an unrestricted basis.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

MOTION:

Motion by Commissioner Garcia to continue UP-02-03, Pittsburg Marine Terminal Amendment, to the meeting of May 14, 2002, as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramirez and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Garcia, Glynn, Harris, Leonard, Ramirez, Holmes
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Commissioner Kelley

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Jerome reported that he had provided the Commission with a memorandum from Assistant City Engineer Wally Girard regarding the status of the State Route 4 Improvement Projects, including the status of the closure of Frontage Road and the Harbor Street overcrossing. An oral presentation regarding the status of those projects would be made to the Planning Commission during a meeting in June.

Mr. Jerome also reported that a staff meeting had been held recently on a follow-up to correspondence from Commissioner Harris relative to the City's business license review. Staff from Planning, Finance, Code Enforcement and the City Attorney’s Office had met to discuss ways to implement some of Commissioner Harris’ recommendations. Staff would also review how other cities handled their business licenses. A presentation to the Planning Commission on that subject was anticipated at the end of May.
It was also anticipated that an ordinance would be presented to the City Council in June to transfer the business license operation to the Code Enforcement Division of the Police Department, which would allow for the coordination of the review of business license applications and a potential tie-in to the City's database for follow-up inspections. Coordination through new updated databases and permit tracking for past approved projects might also be feasible.

Referencing the schedule from Assistant City Engineer Wally Girard regarding the State Route 4 Improvement Projects, Commissioner Garcia expressed concern with the closure of Harbor Street and the Pittsburg/Antioch Highway at the same time. Since he understood that the contract for the work on the Pittsburg/Antioch Highway might be awarded in the near future, he recommended that project be started as soon as possible to allow its completion as much as possible prior to the closure of Harbor Street, particularly since that closure would severely impact the residents in that area.

Mr. Jerome advised that the comments would be forwarded to the Engineering Division.

**GENERAL PLAN UPDATE REPORT:**

Mr. Jerome advised that the Alves Ranch project General Plan designation consideration would be scheduled before the City Council on May 6.

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

There was no Zoning Administrator Report.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

There were no committee reports.

**COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Glynn referenced information contained in the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce Business Today newsletter for April, which had identified the Upcoming Citywide Pavement Projects. He agreed with the concern for the impacts associated with those projects, particularly those occurring simultaneously.

Since he understood that the City's Senior Engineer had recently provided a presentation on the projects to the community, Commissioner Glynn requested that the Commission be provided with the same presentation prior to June. In particular, he expressed his hope that more informed decisions could be made as to the sequence of the closure and reopening of those identified roadways.
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:12 P.M. to a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on May 14, 2002, at 7:30 P.M. in the City Council Chambers at 65 Civic Avenue, Pittsburg, CA.

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R A N D Y  J E R O M E ,  S e c r e t a r y
Pittsburg Planning Commission