

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, August 11th, 2021

**THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE GOVERNOR'S
EXECUTIVE ORDER N-29-20**

A. PLANNING COMMISSION CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:30 P.M.

Chairperson Mark Hammerness called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

PHYSICAL ATTENDANCE: ABATTI, HARVEY, RIVERA, MENDOZA, AND HAMMERNESS

***VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE: NONE**

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

PHYSICAL ATTENDANCE: MORITA, BROWN, HOLBROOK, AND MORA.

***VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE: NONE**

OTHER PRESENT:

PHYSICAL ATTENDANCE: BRIAN BENSO AND RON TAKAKI OF GAFCON (CUP Applicant)

***VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE: NONE**

The PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner RIVERA

NO ADJUSTMENTS MADE TO THE AGENDA

B. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

There were no public appearances made, nor comments submitted to the City Clerk for matters on or off to the Planning Commission Agenda.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for June 9, 2021, June 23, 2021, and July 14, 2021.

Motioned by MENDOZA, seconded by HARVEY to approve the consent agenda as presented.

ROLL CALL VOTE

VICE CHAIR MENDOZA	YES
COMMISSIONER ABATTI	YES
COMMISSIONER HARVEY	YES
COMMISSIONER RIVERA	YES
CHAIR HAMMERNESS	YES

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0 APPROVED

D. PLANNING COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS: (DISCUSSION/ACTION –RECOMMEND/DENY)

D-1: Public Hearing, Discussion/Action: Conditional Use Permit (21-08): Conditional Use Permit request to allow for the use and operation of a 108-room hotel with indoor pool and on-site restaurant serving alcohol for on-site consumption; 1500 North Imperial Avenue, Imperial, CA 92251, APN 063-010-023.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 6:34 PM.

DISCUSSION

MORA presented the item. VICE CHAIR MENDOZA asked if the Environmental Impact Report being completed in 2013 would be an issue, and is the report still considered valid? MORA stated that in review of the document, and the lack of growth in the area, the report was found to be valid and no further update needed. RIVERA asked if the abandoned homestead to the WEST of the property line was cause for concern? BENSO (*applicant*) address RIVERA question stating that the company was in talks with that current property owner in hopes of including that site in the future of the project. MENDOZA asked if the retention basin was still a requirement of the development. MORA clarified that it is still a condition of the development. The size of which is dependent on the overall project footprint. HARVEY asked applicant what the proposed timeline for completion was. BENSO stated that they are scheduled to close escrow on the property by December 2021, pending contracts their projected opening date is Quarter 1 of 2023. BENSO stated that the approval of this CUP is a contingency in the transaction. MENDOZA asked what is the current completion percentage of the structure. BENSO stated 60% of the construction is completed and that GAFCON is working with a number of tenant representations. HARVEY asked if a restaurant is still planned for the development. HAMMERNESS asked if the letter that was sent from the IID was also sent some number of years ago. MORITA stated that he did not recall seeing anything similar with the previous CUP. HAMMERNESS asked if this was going to be a problem for GAFCON. BENSO stated there is some language that is concerning, however is used to working with utility companies.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kathy Turner of 1200 Rodeo Drive in Imperial.

TURNER stated that she was at the first meeting with the original developer. Expressed her concern that before anything is completed, she wants to see a hard timeline. She has seen the project start and stop many times. TURNER asked why it wasn't turned into a retirement home or veterans' home. She does not believe that there is a market for such a development in Imperial and doesn't want the property to stay vacant. TURNER is concerned about the condition of the property and what the status of that.

FURTHER DISCUSSION:

HAMMERNESS stated he understands the concerns and shares them himself. BENSO stated that GAFCON is not in the business of making bad decisions. Financial resources are committed and lined up for the project. MORITA clarified the limitations the City has over private development. MORITA further explained timelines associated with the conditional use permit and building permits that will keep the development moving forward. RIVERA addressed Ms. Turner's comments stating that we can have all the ideas in the world, but we must put faith in something and GAFCON is willing to make the investment in our community. MENDOZA reiterated what Morita stated regarding the limitations of private investment. TURNER stated that she had been informed that someone else made cash offers for the property but the City wouldn't consider it. BROWN addressed TURNER'S comments regarding development on the north end and the vision of the City Council. MORITA further clarified the process in which would be taken should a potential investor like a zone change. HAMMERNESS asked GAFCON representatives who owns the property at this time. BENSO stated that the company (Evergreen) that foreclosed on the property is the current owner and the CUP is a condition of that transaction. HARVEY

asked for clarification on the traffic study and impacts to the area. MORA confirmed what improvements have already been completed and improvements set to come. HAMMERNESS Closed the Public Hearing and called for a motion of the Commission.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 7:20 P.M.

ACTION:

MOTION BY MENDOZA, SECOND BY HARVEY to approve RESOLUTION NO. PC 2021-10 approving the Conditional Use Permit #21-08 allowing for the operation of a 108-room hotel with an indoor pool and on-site restaurant serving alcohol for on-site consumption, with the addition/incorporation of the comment letter received from Imperial Irrigation District as Condition #32 of the Conditions of Approval.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

COMMISSIONER HARVEY	YES
COMMISSIONER RIVERA	YES
VICE CHAIR MENDOZA	YES
COMMISSIONER ABATTI	YES
CHAIR HAMMERNESS	YES

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0

E. TRAFFIC COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS: (DISCUSSION/ACTION-RECOMMENDATION)

DISCUSSION

MORA presented the item to Planning Commission. MORITA excused himself from the room due to a conflict. MORA stated the recommendation is to red curb the area and install no parking signs. ABATTI asked if there was currently a stop sign on Mirador. ABATTI asked if what the cost to do a three way stop sign would be. MORA reviewed the costs associated. MENDOZA stated that the City has not met our burden for the MUC. MORA referenced the success of red curbing the intersection at Monterey. HAMMERNESS stated he went out to the area and is concerned about the set back for the existing stop sign. RIVERA stated his concern with the higher speeds that he observed in the area. MENDOZA requested further information regarding actual costs for the installation of stop signs. ABATTI made reference to costs only going up.

ACTION:

MOTION BY ABATTI to place a three way stop sign at the intersection of Brewer and Mirador.
NO SECOND, MOTION DIES

(2ND) MOTION BY HARVEY, SECONDED BY MENDOZA to approve the mitigation measure as recommended by City staff to place a 50ft red curb stripe and no parking signs with the condition that staff come back with a report on how it is working and include accurate costs for the installation of stop signs.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

COMMISSIONER ABATTI	NO
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COMMISSIONER RIVERA	YES
COMMISSIONER HARVEY	YES
VICE CHAIR MENDOZA	YES
CHAIR HAMMERNESS	YES

MOTION CARRIED : 4-1

F. REPORTS:

F-1: Commissioners Reports.

HARVEY: Reported on her participation in the Arts District Advisory Committee and is looking forward to the mural campaign. MENDOZA asked if the murals will be on the businesses themselves? HARVEY confirmed that yes, the business owners will donate their walls as the canvases.

RIVERA: No Report

MENDOZA: Requested information when the Friends of Parks Committee will be meeting. BROWN stated that the committee meets the second Tuesday, and she would confirm with Mr. Lopez upon his return when

HAMMERNESS: Requested an update on the crosswalk striping at the four way stop at Neckel and Cannon. MORA will review and report back. Hammerness also requested information on the next Airport Land Use Commission meeting.

F-2: Staff Reports.

MORITA: No Report

BROWN: No Report

HOLBROOK: No Report

MORA: No Report

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:51 P.M. Until the next Regularly Scheduled Planning Commission Meeting on Wednesday, August 25, 2021 at 6:30 P.M.

NOTE: Any documents produced by the City and distributed to a majority of the Planning Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available at the front counter at City Hall, located at 420 South Imperial Avenue, during normal business hours.