

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES / RECORD-OF-DECISION

**THURSDAY, August 18, 2016, CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
107 NORTH NEVADA AVENUE, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO 80903
CHAIRMAN PHILLIPS CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 8:36 A.M.
THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:23 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Phillips, Henninger, Markewich, Shonkwiler, Walkowski, Smith

ABSENT:

McDonald, Gibson, Graham

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Peter Wysocki, Planning and Development Director
Mr. Marc Smith, City Senior Corporate Attorney

NEW BUSINESS CALENDAR

DATE: August 18, 2016
ITEM: 6.B.1 – 6.B.2
FILE NO.: CPC ZC 16-00082, CPC CP 16-00083
PROJECT: Watermark at Briargate
STAFF: Katie Carleo

STAFF PRESENTATION:

Katie Carleo, Principal Planner gave a Power Point presentation

APPLICANT PRESENTATION:

Jose Kreutz with Watermark Development gave a Power Point presentation about the communities they build and amenities they provide. Communities are resort like.

Questions:

None

Citizens in Support:

Joe Berkhahn with Continental 140 LLC representing the owner and in support of the project. They've tried for more than ten years to market this site out to various retailers of all different types with no takers so having Watermark have an interest in the area and the development is a positive sign.

Citizens in Opposition:

Rhonda Lott is a neighbor in the Cordera area. The apartment complex adjacent to this has a high density and with this proposal it makes this area extremely dense. Why do they need another apartment complex right next to each other when there are other locations along Powers Corridor that are already earmarked for multi-family. She isn't opposed to apartments but just not in that location. She is also concerned about the parking. She is also opposed to the height.

Dwayne Harley is concerned about parking, pets, cleaning up after pets and schools that are already at capacity. His other concern is traffic. The traffic studies have not taken into consideration those apartments and the traffic from all the ones in the area that are being built.

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Beth Hays is opposed because she and her husband believe it will hurt their home value. She's also concerned about the apartment complexes that are already being built. Apartments can be built fairly quickly which doesn't give the school district time to plan for the influx of students and all schools at all levels are already over capacity. She's also concerned about the parking and the stress it will put fire and police response.

David McCullum just moved into Cordera this week and his biggest concern is the amount of the multiple complexes in the area. The single-family homes are being built at a tremendous rate in this area and to stack multiple complexes in the area is not doing the area justice. To have multi-family complex stacked on top of one another didn't make sense.

Daniel Lee is concerned about the school capacity. If more kids come into the area they would have to overflow to one of the nearby schools and still more single-family homes to be built. Families that move into the area and have kids, cannot go to the school right in their neighborhood because of overcrowding right now.

Questions of Staff:

Commissioner Markewich stated that information in their packet says District 20 didn't have any objections to this use. Mr. Smith who's contracted with District 20 spoke in regards to when they receive buckslips they limit their comments to the direct effect on the school district. They look at the number of students to be generated by the project, traffic issues and if it is an objectionable business next to a school. This property has been vacant for a long time. This project should generate 36 students (19 would in the elementary, 5 in middle school and 9 in high school).

Commissioner Markewich asked when analysis is done did they look at the district as a whole because neighbors have mentioned the elementary school is already overcrowded. Mr. Smith said they look at the specific location where the development will occur. The east side of the district is looking at alternatives due to growth. A bond issue will be brought forward to the ballot to build two new elementary schools, additions at the high schools and a new middle school. Right now they don't have the capacity to keep up with the growth.

Commissioner Markewich said they've seen several projects in and around this area that already have land dedicated for schools. Are there areas that have been designated for elementary schools that haven't been built yet? Mr. Smith said yes they have several sites.

Commissioner Henninger asked if the number of students on the west side of Powers for District 20 has stabilized. Mr. Smith said in the existing older areas of Briargate there is some stabilization and decline. They are moving some of the modular trailers from those schools to the east side of the district. West of I-25 is stabilized and in the future they may face what D-11 is facing with declining enrollment. Commissioner Henninger said that's why he asked about the projections of when and where to build for the future.

Commissioner Shonkwiler asked if District 20 has a plan 30-40 years from now for the schools that are being built now that would have to be closed as it happens when areas are older and more established. Mr. Smith said for something that far out – no. But that issue will be there but as we will have some vacancy on the west side of I-25 but it's inefficient and costly to bus kids from the east side to the west side. Commissioner Shonkwiler asked how many of the students at Chinook Elementary are residents to that area and how many are choice students. Mr. Smith said he didn't have those exact numbers because it's outside his job description. District 20 offers a choice program so there as long as there is

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room students can move to different schools. The problem happens that students are coming in faster than seats can be made available.

Commissioner Phillips asked Kathleen Krager, Transportation Manager, what traffic will look like with the apartments and with the growth in the future. Ms. Krager said a traffic impact study was done in 2005 as part of the master plan. It looked at total development for the future as well as traffic projections. Some changes in development can cause an updated trip generation report. These apartments were compared to retail uses which is what was proposed in the concept plan and the apartments would generate about 1,600 trips per day and the shopping center would generate about 4,000 trips per day.

Commissioner Markewich asked about parking around the area and what is the situation, from an overflow standpoint. Ms. Krager said parking requirements are usually adequate for apartment buildings unless there is a specific use, like student housing, then they ask for more. When apartments have people parking on the street, it's usually because parking on the street is closer to where they're going. Commissioner Markewich asked if all the streets, with the exception of Union, would have on street parking. Ms. Krager said yes.

Commissioner Shonkwiler stated there wasn't an access point from Union into that neighborhood so it would be impossible for anyone in the apartment project to access that neighborhood without going down the street and coming back. Ms. Krager said that was correct.

Commissioner Markewich asked Ms. Carleo to describe the parking requirements. Ms. Carleo said they are meeting the requirement per the code regarding all parking.

Commissioner Smith asked about police and fire response and what their comments were about this project. Ms. Carleo said there were no concerned comments from either department.

Rebuttal:

Jose Kreutz said they have 421 parking stalls proposed, 68 of those are garages. Regarding school age children they expect 19 children from their development. Why apartments – there has been a move with people going back to live in apartments in the last 10 years. He has the data to show why people are choosing that if the Commissioners' want it.

Commissioner Smith asked what would be the demographics of people in the apartments. Mr. Kreutz said there would be a very wide demographic of all kinds. Their development is for a more established renter rather than a first time renter. Rents are \$1600-1800 a month, 82% of their units will be a 1 and 2 bedroom units divided equally and the balance being 3 bedrooms.

Commissioner Phillips asked Kyle Campbell about the value of the surrounding homes in relation to the apartments or commercial property. Mr. Campbell said he was probably not the correct person to ask that on this project. Mr. Kreutz said his information would be anecdotal. They are building units to about \$200,000 and building 240 units. So the value on a square foot basis they're high and that's how an appraiser would look at it as well.

Mr. Wysocki stated comments can be raised when there are zone changes from commercial to multi-family that the change could affect property values negatively. Literature in their profession states there is virtually no impact to property values. The north and northeast part of the city is seeing a healthy appreciation to home values and there is a mix of housing choices in this area. However what affects property values are dilapidated and underutilized vacant properties.

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DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

Commissioner Markewich said he supports the zone change. We look at the comprehensive plan and the city codes and they cannot tell the developer whether it's good to build something similar right next to each other. A large concern was the school situation and the district answered his questions regarding overcrowding. The project complies with the city code, the codes for rezoning as well as with the comprehensive plan and will be in support.

Commissioner Henninger said he looked at the benefits to the community and people; then looked at the criteria they have to review for concept plans. There are eight criteria to see if it impacts the surrounding area or not. Criteria five asks, "if the development will overburden streets, utilities, parks, schools and other public facilities." He focused on schools. District 20 is going to build additional schools due to the growth in the area and this will be on the ballot this year, so there should be relief in the near future. If it wasn't for that, he could see not supporting it, but there is relief that will happen shortly. As far as the project, overall it's a good project; it's compatible with the area, so he'll be supporting the project.

Commissioner Smith concurs with what Commissioner Henninger said. In addition to the change of zone, we're in compliance with the criteria for a zone change, therefore he will be in support of the project.

Commissioner Walkowski said he thanked everyone for coming out and voicing their concerns. They listened to all of those concerns and the testimony was that traffic will be less; schools we can't do anything about that, so he suggested talking to the school district about the overcrowding. As far as retail, retail usually follows density, and regarding fire and safety an infill site provides better support. The criteria for the zone change are met along with the criteria for concept plans, so he will be in support.

Motion by Commissioner Markewich, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to recommend approval to City Council the zone change from PBC (Planned Business Center) to OC (Office Commercial), based upon the findings that the change of zoning request complies with the three (3) criteria for granting of zone changes as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.603(B).

Aye: Phillips, Henninger, Shonkwiler, Walkowski, Smith, Markewich.

No: NONE

Excused: McDonald, Gibson, Graham

Motion Passed

Motion by Markewich, seconded by Smith, to Recommend approval to City Council the Watermark at Briargate Concept Plan, based upon the findings that the concept plan meets the review criteria for concept plans as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.501(E)..

Aye: Phillips, Henninger, Shonkwiler, Walkowski, Smith, Markewich.

No: NONE

Excused: McDonald, Gibson, Graham

Motion Passed