CITY OF DUARTE
PLANNING COMMISSION
M I N U T E S
November 18, 2019

1. CALL TO ORDER AND NOTATION OF ANY ABSENCES:

Chairperson Watson-Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The following were in attendance:

PRESENT: Watson-Gardner, Heany, Farra and Vasquez
ABSENT: Wolff
STAFF: Hensley, Golding, Galeazzi, Hernandez
CITY ATTORNEY: Phan

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Heany led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 21, 2019

Heany moved to approve the minutes of October 21, 2019. Seconded by Vasquez. Motion was approved 2-0-2-1. (Vote: Yes: Heany, Vasquez; No: None; Abstain: Watson-Gardner, Farra; Absent: Wolff;).

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Chairperson Watson-Gardner opened Oral Communications for items not on the Agenda. Seeing none the item was closed.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Conditional Use Permit 19-04 and Site Plan and Design Review 19-41: A request to construct and operate a five-story, 178 room hotel and associated uses at 1230 Huntington Drive

Attachments: Staff Report CUP 19-04, SPDR 19-41, PC Resolution 19-13 & 19-14

Jason Golding, Planning Division Manager presented a staff report and a PowerPoint presentation. He indicated that the Applicant and their team were present and available for questions.

Hensley indicated that the City Attorney will be addressing the letter received from Lozeau-Drury law firm after the Public Hearing.

Golding responded to Commissioners questions regarding the project.

Hany Malak, Mckently Malak Architects from Pasadena California thanked Staff for the well-presented project and addressed Commissioners' concerns regarding the project.

Farra requested that the following comments be reflected in the records: He asked for confirmation that the Applicant and Owner are aware that the City of Hope is constructing their own hotel and that there are no problems or issues as stated by the Applicant and Owner in the previous meeting. Mr. Malak stated that they are aware of the City of Hope hotel and discussed the intentions of their hotel that will be servicing not only the City of Hope but a wider audience in the City of Duarte and the residents.

Farra clarified that the City of Hope did not restrict itself to its own visitors or staff and the possibility of providing rooms to the public is still available, therefore asked Mr. Malak if his statement was still adequate. Mr. Malak responded absolutely, discussing the different dynamics of the hotels.

Chairperson Watson-Gardner opened Public Comments.

Steve Hernandez spoke in support of the project and stated concern regarding proposal.

David Jiang spoke in support of the project.

Octavio Lopez, son of parents that live at the condos spoke regarding unaddressed concerns of the distance between the hotel and condominiums, corridor traffic increase and mitigation, privacy issues, ungated parking and easy access.

Mr. Malak addressed concerns regarding the wall in the east side of the development, and how traffic circulation is directed towards a one-way exit onto Huntington Drive at the east side of the project.

Marla Lopez spoke regarding the concern of the homeless. She requested a barrier to be install between the condominium and entrance to the facility.

Chairperson closed the Public Hearing.

Hensley introduced Deputy City Attorney Thai Phan to address the letter received from the Lozeau-Drury Law Firm.

Deputy City Attorney Phan responded to the letter that was submitted by the law firm Lozeau-Drury representing Supporters Alliance for Environmental Responsibility (SAFER) opposing the determination that the project is exempt under CEQA. Phan explained that the infill exception in CEQA does apply in this situation and that the comment letter was incomplete, and the analysis of the complaint was incomplete. There is no substantial evidence demonstrating that there is unusual circumstance in this case. This type of hotel is exactly what was envisioned in the Town Center Specific Plan. Phan also gave additional detail on the adequacy of the CEQA exemption.

Farra inquired about the author of the letter. Phan stated the letter is from Lozeau-Drury, the law firm representing the Supporters Alliance for Environmental Responsibility (SAFER).

Chairperson Watson-Gardner asked for a motion on the CUP 19-04 and SPDR 19-41. Farra made a motion to approve the item. Seconded by Heany.

Golding asked for clarification if the motion included conditions recommended/suggested by Heany regarding the tinting or other window covering in the westerly hallway facing residential condominium and the delivery hours 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Chairperson Watson-Gardner concurred to the amendment. Hensley asked if it was part of the motion, Farra stated it was not part of his motion, but had no objection on the amendment.

Chairperson Watson-Gardner asked for a motion with the amendment on the project. Farra made a motion and Seconded by Heany. Chairperson Watson-Gardner asked for a roll call vote.

Ayes: Watson-Gardner, Farra, Heany and Vasquez. The vote carried 4-0-0-1 (Absent: Wolff)

B. Conditional Use Permit 19-06: A request to operate a Kumon Tutoring Studio within an existing tenant suite located at 1026 Huntington Drive

Attachments: Staff Report CUP 19-06 and PC Resolution 19-15

Hensley introduced and welcomed new Planner Ivan Galeazzi.

Galeazzi presented staff report and answered questions from the Commission.

Chairperson opened Public comments.

Chairperson Watson-Gardner asked the Applicant Mr. Chen, about the number of Kumon centers that he operates. Mr. Chen responded that this will be his first operational center and provided background information of himself, discussed benefits and low- cost fees that would be provided to the students.

Chairperson Watson-Gardner closed the Public Hearing.

Chairperson Watson-Gardner called for a motion to approve CUP 19-06 and PC Resolution 19-15. Farra made a motion to approve the item. Seconded by Watson-Gardner. The motion was approved 4-0-0-1. (Absent Wolff)

6. ITEMS FROM DIRECTOR:

Hensley provided information on the approval of the Duarte Station Specific Plan & EIR and answer questions from the Commissioners.

Vasquez inquired about the closure of the Duarte Pizza business. Hensley and Golding provided information.

7. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Vasquez suggested creating a practice for a roll call for each propose project. Chairperson Watson-Gardner and Hensley commented on the matter.

8. ADJOURNMENT: Monday, December 16, 2019

Chairperson Watson-Gardner adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

____

Craig Hensley, Secretary