CITY OF DUARTE
PLANNING COMMISSION
M I N U T E S
September 18, 2017

Planning Commission
Commissioners
Paula Watson-Gardner, Chair
Sara Vasquez, Vice-Chair
George K. Farra
Shauna Pierce

1. CALL TO ORDER AND NOTATION OF ABSENCES

Chairperson Watson-Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

The following were in attendance:

PRESENT:	Watson-Gardner, Vasquez, Farra, Pierce
ABSENT:	None
STAFF:	Hensley, Golding, Eoff IV, Hernandez
DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY:	Alisha Patterson

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Pierce led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 21, 2017

Deputy City Attorney Patterson advised the Commission to move the approval of minutes to the next month's meeting, due to a lack of quorum from the August 21, 2017 meeting,

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Chairperson Watson-Gardner opened the Oral Communications item.

Sheryl Lefmann expressed her gratitude to the Commission and Staff after serving 8 years on the commission. Lefmann stated that she accepted the position as the new President of the Chamber of Commerce.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. ARB Site Plan & Design Review Case 17-15: A new mixed-use development containing 3,440 square feet of ground-floor commercial space, 2,122 square feet of ground-floor live/work space, and 161 market-rate residential apartments, constructed around a multi-level parking garage located at 1405-1437 Huntington Drive

Hensley, prior to introducing Planning Staff, familiarized the commission with the project by letting them know that it is a partnership project between The Richman Group of California, MJW Investments and the City of Duarte and that the project is the first to be implemented under the Town Center Specific Plan.

Eoff IV provided the background of the project and the Disposition and Development Agreement details between the City, MJW Investments and the Richman Group of California. He added that there were 46 notices mailed with no correspondence received as of this evening and noted that the project was presented to the Architectural Review Board on September 5, 2017 where it was recommended for approval.

Eoff IV described the property by use of a power point and provided development and architectural details of the project, including: location of the 161 market-rate apartments that are comprised of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom options; commercial/retail space located along the ground-floor of the south elevation of the project designed to serve one to four tenants; live/work space located along the ground-floor of the south elevation at east end of the project, designed to provide commercial opportunities to all apartment residents; multi-level parking garage located within the center of the project that will be fully screened by the apartment building and accessible from Huntington Drive; and a new driveway and traffic signal at the intersection of Huntington Drive and Brycedale Avenue.

Eoff IV also provided details of the surface parking along the west side of the property line, public amenities provided, and additional site improvements that include open areas such as courtyards, public seating, parklets, public art piece, widened sidewalk, new landscaping, pedestrian lighting, full phase traffic signal, crosswalks, and ADA accessible ramps.

Eoff IV ended his presentation and indicated that the representatives from the Richman Group, MGW Investments and Architects Orange were present.

Hensley pointed out to the letter from the City of Hope that was provided to the Commission expressing a positive impression of additional residential choices in the community.

Commissioner Farra inquired about the additional parking on the west side of the project property line, the easement at that location and asked to clarify the live/work space. Eoff IV clarified the location of the additional parking, the easement and explained the live/work space concept and how it may function within the apartment community.

Commissioner Vasquez inquired about trash pick-up logistics and the impacts on Huntington Drive. Hensley and Eoff IV explained the use of smaller vehicles to collect bins from within the project, pick-up frequency based on coordination between Burrtec and the apartment owners, and that trash impacts will not be more than what is existing at other apartments fronting Huntington Drive.

Luke Daniels, president of The Richman Group of California, gave a background and provided details of the company on how they self-manage the communities they build, and thanked the planning staff for the collaborative efforts to make this project. Mr. Daniels also gave a detailed description how the project was designed using sound mixed-use and urban planning principles and commented on the work they have done to communicate with the community adjacent to the proposed project.
Chairperson Watson-Gardner Open Public Hearing:

Manoj Patel, previous Committee Member of the Down Town Task Force, and Town Center Task Force, commended Staff for the updates and process of this project. He provided information of the Town Center Specific Plan development and stated that there is demand for more residential space in the City and supports the project.

Nathan Kirschenbaum, 1416 Third Street, resident, previous member of the EDC and the Ad Hoc Committee applauded the relationship of the project with the Town Center Specific Plan and appreciated the developer's communication with the community.

Steve Hernandez stated the project not only took into consideration the needs of the community but the City as a whole and will provide an amazing place to live with all the new amenities. He also commented on the School of the Arts families that are moving into town that will need appealing housing. He asked for the support of the project.

Rana Madain, 3232 Shadylawn Drive, local realtor, and previous member of the Town Center Ad Hoc Committee stated she supports the project considering the lack of inventory of residential properties available in the community.

Jim Kirchner, Chamber of Commerce previous President, and Sheryl Lefmann, Chamber of Commerce current President, mentioned that the project meets and exceeds the desires of the City and are pleased to see the project come into fruition to boost and help the businesses thrive.

Lidia Silonie, Duarte Resident, inquired about a traffic analysis for the project and how will the new traffic impact the current traffic on Huntington Drive.

Ivonne Bonadilla, Property Owner, stated she is concerned about the traffic on Huntington Drive and existing business vacancies; and inquired about additional egress/ingress for vehicles in case of an emergency.

Aaron Saenz, 1388 Third Street, stated he is also concerned about traffic on Huntington Drive and inquired about any changes to speed limits. He also stated that he is concerned that the new building will block visibility from housing to the north.

Chairperson Watson-Gardner closed Public Hearing and opened Commissioners Comments.

Staff addressed concerns of residents as follow:

Hensley explained that there is a project condition to fill commercial/retail spaces; if spaces become vacant for long periods of time the owner/developer will create a plan to reduce lease rates.

Eoff explained that there was an Environmental Impact Report produced for a complete buildout, which was done prior to the existing project, where it demonstrated no significant traffic impact. Eoff added that an additional analysis for air quality and vehicles miles traveled/trips on Huntington was conducted and there were no significant impacts.

Chairperson Watson-Gardner opened Commissioner's Discussion.

Farra stated that with the proposed installation of a traffic signal the traffic volumes may be reduced, therefore, he is not concerned with traffic impacts on Huntington Drive; he is concerned about the added water and power usage and how it will impact the current systems; and inquired if the project must be certified as LEED.

Pierce expressed that school district enrollment is up after multiple years and mentioned this kind of development may assist with improvements.

Vasquez shared her concerns about vacant retail/commercial buildings and stated that she is glad that there is a condition to mitigate this concern. She also mentioned that solar panels should be implemented for this project.

Chair stated she is excited about the project and the growth it will bring with it.

Pierce motioned to adopt PC Resolution 17-11, approving Site Plan and Design Review Case 2017-15. Seconded by Vasquez. Motion was approved 4-0-0-0 (Vote: Yes: Watson-Gardner, Vasquez, Farra, Pierce; No: None; Absent: None; Abstain: None).

B. ARB Site Plan & Design Review Case 17-05; and Conditional Use Permit 17-01: Demolition of the existing McDonald's restaurant and construction of a new 3,827 square-foot McDonald's restaurant with a new double-lane drive-thru, outdoor dining area, and late-night/twenty-four hour operation.

Item to be continued to next meeting

6. ITEMS FROM DIRECTOR

Hensley provided update on the Third Street and Oak project, the old Sparr Liquor site, and stated that The Habit will be pulling permits to occupy the old Starbucks and Curves sites.

7. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Farra reiterated that the new mixed-use development should contain sustainability and quality.

Pierce stated that there much need to support the Duarte High choir whom are going to New York to perform.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Watson-Gardner adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

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Craig Hensley, Secretary