

**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
February 15, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Highland was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Hamerly at the Donahue Council Chambers, 27215 Base Line, Highland, California.

Present:	Chair	Randall Hamerly
	Vice Chair	Chandra Thomas
	Commissioner	Edward Amaya
	Commissioner	Jarrold Miller
	Commissioner	Jessica Sutorus

Staff Present: Lawrence Mainez, Community Development Director
Kim Stater, Assistant Community Development Director
Ash Syed, Associate Planner
Carlos Zamano, City Engineer
Matt Bennett, Assistant Public Works Director
Matt Wirz, Building Official
Scott Rice, City Landscape Architect
Camille Goritz, Administrative Assistant III

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Hamerly.

COMMUNITY INPUT (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes from the February 1, 2022 Regular Meeting.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chair Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Sutorus, to approve the minutes, as amended. Motion carried, 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

A MOTION was made by Chair Hamerly, seconded by Commissioner Amaya, to present agenda item No. 3 prior to item No. 2, Motion carried, 5-0.

2. Review of the City's 2021 General Plan Implementation and Housing Element Annual Reports in accordance with Government Code Sections 65400 and 65588.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater presented the staff report.

Commissioner Amaya stated on the implementation progress that is an ongoing Airport Gateway Specific Plan, will that realistically be completed in 2022?

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated most likely for year 2022 and what will happen is the city will meet again and we will provide the remainder of our comments to make sure we're all in agreement on a unified document that is acceptable to bring to Planning Commission and City Council.

Commissioner Miller stated I had a suggestion on page 43, it states in coordination with East Valley Water District and the County of San Bernardino continue to maintain, improve the hydrology and natural quality of the watersheds of Bledsoe Creek Plunge Creek, Alder Gulch, Sand Creek, Warm Creek, and Old City Creek. That project was just completed out on Plunge Creek, and I believe San Bernardino County was involved with that. I'm not sure if that would be a project that needs to be cited.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated that is a good idea.

The Planning Commission received and filed the 2021 General Plan and Housing Element Annual Reports.

3. Design Review Application (DRA 21-021) for the construction of a 21-unit multi-family apartment complex (Town Center Apartment Homes) located on a vacant 1.72-acre site. (APN: 1200-381-05 and -43)

Associate Planner Syed presented the staff report.

Chair Hamerly opened the public hearing.

Commissioner Miller stated the grade elevations and the invert elevations that are called out, the pipe seems to be running really shallow. In some cases, it looks like 6 inches or less, so be concerned about the loading on those pipes. The underground infiltration basin that's being proposed in the park area and cross referencing that with the landscape plans, it looks like there's some overlap between the larger trees and the underground system. I'm just wondering if we're going to be able to accommodate the root systems of those trees given what depth is proposed for that underground system.

Chair Hamerly asked how close can the underground WQMP get to a sewer lateral?

Commissioner Miller stated here's a standard requirement for that, if I was guessing, I would say 3 feet.

City Landscape Architect Scott Rice stated in our preliminary review of the landscape plans, we did comment that there seemed to be some overlap and just to be cognizant of that as the plans proceeded into full working drawings.

Commissioner Miller stated for the typical root structure for those types of trees. What are we thinking there?

City Landscape Architect Scott Rice stated we're really going to need to look at the depth of the infiltration or whatever the system is and kind of evaluate that. The tree in that area is shown in a general location, and we would look at the working draft of the water quality and shift the tree accordingly or recommend that during plan check.

Commissioner Miller stated or provide some type of root barrier because once those roots get down in that system, they can really compromise the integrity.

City Architect Scott Rice stated right, it would be more effective to move the tree further away than any sort of root barrier system.

Chair Hamerly asked would it be a bigger issue because the largest specimen tree, the 36-inch box California Sycamore looks like it's sitting directly over the sewer lateral? That was the one that I was concerned about, didn't pick up on the WQMP basin, but that's also a concern. But a sewer lateral is just like inviting disaster.

City Architect Landscape Scott Rice stated that was the comment that we had made during the preliminary review is we would we look at the final location during plan check.

Commissioner Miller stated I think it's great that we're incorporating permeable paving into this project that's aligning with our city goals of reducing imperviousness throughout the city.

Chair Hamerly stated one of the concerns was that almost all the specimen trees that are at the gateway elements. The westernmost entry coming in off Foster Avenue and then you have the four large Sycamore trees that are on the parking area that's outside of the gate. The entire tree palate is deciduous, and those are the kind of the specimen accent trees, and they're all going to be bare in the winter, so it'd be nice to have some foliage that's year-round, just as kind of the background information. You have a really nice under canopy here, with the shrubs, but having some of the specimen materials, if they had a year-round cover, might be a nice contrast to the bare sycamores and crape myrtles, and the other plants that are there. I don't know if you want to add additional trees or substitute out some of the trees. The Sycamore is a nice scale tree, so something similar size that is not deciduous would be a nice accent. Those are big buildings, and so we need to do something that can kind of mask them year-round.

Steve Powell, Applicant asked is there a recommendation that that that the City Landscape Architect would be able to make to give to our landscape architect? This is because they know the climate in the zone probably better than ours.

Chair Hamerly stated yes, I am sure.

Commissioner Amaya asked Is there a reason why we can't do a playground or that wasn't part of the plan or not big enough space?

Steve Powell stated all of the above. There are two-bedroom units, so again we're trying to design this as for the young executive. They're not designed for four-bedroom units. We do have a limited amount of space, if it was a bigger complex where we could amortize some of the costs over putting a playground set in there. This is too much of a small complex to justify it.

Commissioner Amaya asked is the apartment around 1,800 square feet?

Steve Powell stated the apartments are under 1,300 square feet.

Chair Hamerly asked long term lifecycle costs wouldn't go into something like an artificial turf?

Steve Powell stated that's a recommendation too that we would certainly consider.

Commissioner Sutorus stated I did see that condition and I caution you with the fake turf because other apartment complexes in the city I work for does not wash or clean it. It causes a very hot heat island effect, and it doesn't last unless you have really expensive base several feet down.

Chair Hamerly stated if it's for a dog park, you would have to have that advanced filtration system. You wouldn't just put the steaks right into compacted dirt.

Steve Powell stated for clarity, it is not a dog park. I don't want it to be marketed as a dog park, otherwise, you'll have everybody in town coming to use the dog park and that'll become a problem. If we don't provide the receptacles, then we may have that. I am familiar with that, and the artificial turf technology has gotten a lot better. We are looking for recommendations, the intent here is to make it look more botanical and a great place to pass through.

Commissioner Miller stated it would also be good if we could add a trash receptacle in there so we could deposit the waste as well. Is maintenance going to be handled in house? Are you going to be in control of that? Not just the landscaping but the entire development.

Steven Powell stated it'll be handled by a management company.

Commissioner Miller stated so you'll be bringing a street sweeper in monthly or as needed?

Steven Powell stated as needed.

Chair Hamerly regarding the trash enclosure, is that solution illustrated on this plan, or is it not because I didn't see the opening in the wall? It looks like a 3-sided wall with the doors in the front.

Associate Planner Syed stated that's correct, it's accessible from the internal drive aisle.

Chair Hamerly stated ok, a gate that size typically is not how you would address the ADA component for that. Regarding the exhibit as presented, does it illustrate the compliance with that condition of approval?

Building Official Wirz stated it's not shown as compliance based on this plan. It's something we must look at through the plan check a little closer, but I'm looking at the rear of that.

Chair Hamerly stated ok, because the swinging doors where the trash truck would drive through that's the gate that opens in the front so if it doesn't have an opening in the back, it's not accessible if you must open that giant steel gate.

Building Official Wirz stated correct, and that is something through plan check they would have to address with detail.

Chair Hamerly stated given the options, if we get a vote in this, it'd be a much more attractive presentation from that drive aisle to have the accessible path of travel and the opening in the wall be to the north side of that enclosure.

Building Official Wirz stated regarding the door, during plan check I'll have to discuss that with Public Services as well.

Chair Hamerly stated it is gated, so that's a mitigating measure there. I have one photometrics comment on the western border I didn't see any lumens, but it looks like there is two rings that go past the property boundary on the west. So, either those fixtures need to be shielded, or we're relying on the hedge to keep the light from crossing the property line and go into the rear yard of that single family residence. It looks like we'd be over half of a footcandle there if we're into the second contour. Regarding the floor plan, it looked like there was quite a bit of discrepancy on the designations for the elevations. Most of the ones in the packet, the direction was off. Building one is the first one with the elevations. What was the overall style that you're going for on these?

Steven Powell stated I went a little bit more between the Craftsman and Midcentury modern with the sloped roofs. It was just a way to break it and give it some interest on the front instead of just doing a gable. There isn't really a specific architectural style that we can name this.

Chair Hamerly stated I was leaning towards Craftsman just based on the color palette. There is not a consistent theme in terms of how the windows are treated. Your divided light patterns and the windows styles, and some of them have a big you know it's just basically 2 x 2 grid in there and then have nothing but a horizontal grid and then others. It's smaller grids and they're busy.

Steven Powell stated we have another architect; we also have in-house design, so we debated this back and forth and our architect had a lot of these windowpanes with no grids. When we drew it out, it had such a contemporary feel to it.

Vice Chair Thomas stated I don't mind how it looks. I think it looks ok; I like the difference in the windows.

Chair Hamerly stated regarding building 2, which is the largest of the complex on the northernmost side. I wasn't as concerned with the northern elevation on that, even though it has some of the same issues as the south facade of building 3, but that is going to be visible from that entire street that is north of you. I'll leave that open because if we put in a bunch of screening against the north there, I think that most of those issues go away because that is not a dominant elevation.

Steven Powell stated ok, I understand what you are saying.

Community Development Director Mainez stated so Mr. Chair you are trying to simplify what we thought was very dramatic and it's going to be a powerful statement that it's something unique here in the town district, and so we're trying to simplify it a little bit.

Chair Hamerly stated he's talking about breaking the budget to fix an entire facade on the south.

Community Development Director Mainez stated I understand budget, but I just want to make sure there is consensus because they spent a lot of time with staff trying to make it more dramatic and I just want to make sure that as you back away and staff is going to start to back away as well, we just want to be consistent. This is dramatic, it's not one style, it's a lot of styles. If what I'm hearing that's not acceptable, I need to tell staff.

Commissioner Sutorus stated it's a nicely designed apartment complex. One of the nicest I've seen it for the front facade and stuff. I love the color schemes and it kind of reminds me a little bit of our mountains.

Vice Chair Thomas stated I appreciate what you just said right now about giving each apartment tenant something different, right?

Chair Hamerly stated if we start talking about the human scale of how do people identify with their unit, what makes it unique? Most of the interior of these buildings are going to be experienced at the ground level driving through that that common driveway and that's going up to your front door. Are there any of those Craftsman details that we can pull in just around what we'll call the covered porch areas as you approach the front door? Can you do any timber details or trick out the lighting a little bit just at the front door so that the garage is no longer the dominant theme.

Steven Powell stated corbels are knee braces. I think that those are elements that had a lot of character and personality and they don't break the bank. We did put stone on here and having all the different texture changes.

Vice Chair Thomas stated regarding the side elevations that's viewable from Foster Avenue, what is going to be added on that side elevation?

Steven Powell stated I'm so focused on the front side that one there we're going to do some additional work on that, and the texture changes the recommendations I think is important.

Chair Hamerly stated on building 2 that you'd have three gables in the middle and two sheds on the end because you said you were trying to be consistent with all your elevations.

Steven Powell stated if I take the match lines out where the match lines are I have a total of 2 gable garages that contain 4 garage slots and then I have one hybrid and 3 sheds.

Vice Chair Thomas stated I didn't want to add any more conversation to it, but if I were going to be living in one of these, I would want the horizontal type of roof, not the ones that are just straight across.

Steven Powell stated we looked at putting gables all the way along, but it just looked too consistent.

Vice Chair Thomas stated right, but the other one where you're breaking it up and it's still consistent because you have two and two right? It's just a different consistency.

Steven Powell stated the ones that are by themselves are all shed. Again, it's hard to sort of match these together and then say what do you want to put on this one? We did spend a lot of time and again, I apologize this rendering should be in one long horizontal board. It's easier to look at.

Vice Chair Thomas stated I think we're all problem solving like trying to figure out what's going to. I am leaning towards to keeping it as is.

Commissioner Miller, Sutorus, and Amaya concurred with Vice Chair Thomas.

Steven Powell stated thank you.

Chair Hamerly closed the public hearing.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Amaya, seconded by Commissioner Miller, to:

- 1) Adopt Resolution 22-004, approving Design Review Application (DRA 21-021) for the construction of a 21-unit multi-family apartment complex; and
- 2) Direct staff to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. Motion carried, 5-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 2022 - 004

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION (DRA 21-021) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 21-UNIT MULTI-FAMILY APARTMENT COMPLEX (TOWN CENTER APARTMENT HOMES) LOCATED ON A VACANT 1.72 ACRE SITE APPROXIMATELY 400 FEET EAST OF THE PALM AVENUE AND FOSTER AVENUE INTERSECTION.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled March 1, 2022.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chair Hamerly declared the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Camille Goritz, Administrative Assistant III
Community Development Department

Randall Hamerly, Chair
Planning Commission