

FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2014

AGENDA ITEMS

4. (14-0769) Hearing to consider the following: (1) General Plan Amendment increasing the maximum residential density to 55 dwelling units/acre; (2) El Dorado Hills Specific Plan Amendment incorporating multifamily residential use, density, and related standards; (3) Rezone from General Commercial-Planned Development (CG-PD) to Multifamily Residential-Planned Development (RM-PD); and (4) Revision to the approved Town Center East Development Plan incorporating multifamily residential use, density, and related design and development standards for the proposed 250-unit apartment complex [General Plan Amendment A14-0001/Rezone Z14-0001/Specific Plan Revision SP86-0002-R/Planned Development Revision PD94-0004-R-2/El Dorado Hills Apartments]* on property identified by Assessor's Parcel Numbers 121-290-60, 121-290-61, 121-290-62, consisting of 4.56 acres, within the Town Center East Commercial Center in El Dorado Hills, submitted by Alexandro Economou/Spanos Corporation; and staff recommending the Planning Commission forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to take the following actions:

- 1) Adopt the Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration based on the Initial Study;
 - 2) Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(d), incorporated as Conditions of Approval;
 - 3) Approve General Plan Amendment A14-0001 based on the Findings;
 - 4) Approve amendments to the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan SP86-0002-R based on the Findings;
 - 5) Approve Rezone Z14-0004 based on the Findings; and
 - 6) Approve Revisions to the Town Center East Planned Development PD94-0004R-2 based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval.
- (Supervisory District 1)

Mel Pabalinas presented the item to the Commission with a recommendation for approval. He conducted a PowerPoint presentation and referenced the Staff Memo dated June 25, 2014 which contained information on the public outreach, public comments received, and a recommendation for a new condition regarding cultural resources.

Alexandro Economou, applicant, provided a brief history of the company and project. He stated that this was an infill development that would provide a sensible way to grow and would contribute to community revitalization. He, along with John Binder, applicant's agent, conducted a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Binder made the following comments during the presentation:

- Would be a walkable residential community;
- Unique opportunity as infrastructure was already in place;
- Providing a maintenance-free, socially active lifestyle;
- Existing architecture in Town Center was marvelous;
- Parking would be within a parking garage;

- Building was designed to enliven and activate the street; and
- Strong vertical elements would be used.

Dave Robbins, applicant's agent, stated that he had prepared the transportation study and responded to various questions from the Commission regarding residential vs retail use, traffic impact, and peak hour numbers.

Chris Schulze, applicant's agent, responded to inquiries on anticipated water use. He also stated that recycled water would be used for landscaping and water efficient appliances would be used in the units.

Ellen Van Dyke made the following comments:

- Project has been rushed through;
- Fiscal analysis, sewer capacity, and aesthetics were all incomplete;
- Height limits was a concern and where was the quantitative analysis;
- Questioned analysis of response to comments; and
- More discussion was needed at the Planning Commission level (i.e., density too high, impact of removing commercial).

Sam Parlin read into the record Sue Taylor's comments as she was unable to attend:

- Opposed project;
- Project is a slap in the face to County standards;
- Is an intrusion of what El Dorado County stands for;
- Oversized;
- El Dorado Hills needs more water as it is an arid area;
- Violates the existing Specific Plan; and
- For the Planning Commission to be credible, project must be sent back to developers or a full EIR is needed.

Ed (?), manager of local mobile home park, made the following comments:

- There was already traffic issues in area;
- Water is an issue and the County can't be developed without resolving this;
- Section 8 residents live behind mobile home park and crime has since increased; and
- Applicant does very good projects but this area isn't ready for this right now.

Patrick (?), resident, made the following comments:

- Very excited about project as this is the missing piece for Town Center;
- He would be the type of resident that this project would be targeting;
- Transit stop is nearby;
- Attractive design; and
- Urged Commission to approve the project.

Lori Parlin made the following comments:

- Heart of the discussion is what does El Dorado County want to be;
- People chose this County for open space but the project's maps don't show a lot of open space;
- Inquired if this project was needed to accommodate the Housing Element in the General Plan;
- Project won't help put students in schools which are anticipating a decline in attendance;
- Should be sent back to see if the project meets current policies and it shouldn't be forwarded to the Board in its current form; and
- An EIR is needed.

Lenny Patane, 10-year El Dorado Hills resident, made the following comments:

- Area is not rural;
- Against project as it doesn't fit with the Town Center;
- No transparency in project;
- General Plan is in place;
- Density is too big;
- Not aesthetically pleasing;
- Increase in noise;
- Setting a precedent for large density projects in El Dorado County;
- Increase in traffic and area on Hwy 50 is already at Level of Service F per CalTrans;
- Area is being told to cut 30% of water usage but yet a large project is being proposed;
- Schools would be impacted;
- Recent El Dorado Hills survey had 2,200 people respond and read into the record the responses received on housing; and
- El Dorado Hills residents are tired of being held hostage by large developers.

Gay Willyard, manager of local mobile home park, made the following comments:

- Inquired where the guests were going to park;
- Inquired if pets would be allowed;
- Spoke on the current issue with Carson Creek;
- Stop sign is needed at Lone Oak by Target; and
- Beautiful project but needs to be someplace else.

Chris Berry, 7-year El Dorado Hills resident, made the following comments:

- Beautiful project, but concerned that it won't be built according to the renderings;
- Wants an EIR;
- Project appears to be towering over the other buildings; and
- Spoke on traffic.

Don Van Dyke made the following comments:

- Doesn't agree with the Mitigated Negative Declaration analysis;
- Surprised at how fast staff moved on this project;
- Inquired on the need to move the project through the process so fast;

- Project doesn't meet current standards;
- Real traffic, water and noise studies are needed; and
- EIR is needed.

Chair Mathews closed public comment.

Commissioner Stewart made the following comments:

- Too many unanswered questions to go forward;
- Needs more time to digest the response to comments that was just provided; and
- Five areas need to be addressed:
 - Aesthetics: Wants photo sims;
 - Water: Questions the numbers being presented;
 - Traffic: More detail is needed on how those numbers were reached;
 - Economic Analysis: Wants to see back-ups to statements and wants a side by side analysis of what was proposed for this site vs the project; and
 - Precedence: Need to be aware that policy precedence would be set.

Commissioner Pratt made the following comments:

- Inquired on the breakdown of units (i.e., studio/1 bedroom vs 2 bedroom);
- Commented that price points lead to what income levels would be able to afford to live there;
- Inquired on anticipated water use;
- Inquired on impacts to schools;
- In response to public concern on transparency, noted that the project had a conceptual review with the Board of Supervisors in December 2013, was reviewed at three different El Dorado Hills APAC meetings, and an informational Open House was held recently;
- Information that was provided was somewhat muddled;
- Comparison to similar projects is needed to determine if a Mitigated Negative Declaration or an EIR is needed;
- Didn't hear anything on the Buxton report which states El Dorado Hills area has a lot of commercial;
- Need more on the economic development side;
- Sewer piece needs to be resolved; and
- Aesthetics overview from various vantage points is needed.

Commissioner Heflin made the following comments:

- Too much density for a Negative Declaration and would need an EIR; and
- Too many questions and a lot more study is needed.

Commissioner Shinault made the following comments:

- Overall, the project is good for the area, but the density is too great and doesn't fit in;
- Architecture is good;
- Not happy that design guidelines are having to be changed; and

- Doesn't like all of the apartment walls being on the outside view as it creates a tunnel with the other buildings.

Chair Mathews made the following comments:

- Likes the look and idea of the project;
- Had hoped to see commercial activity on the bottom level of the building;
- Concerned on height;
- Project would cause a tunneling effect;
- Not opposed to apartments and increasing density;
- Concerned on all the revisions and amendments that need to be made in order to make this project happen; and
- This is a pretty dramatic change that needs to have detailed analysis.

Chair Mathews asked the applicant how they would like to proceed based on the Commission's comments as the options were to call for a vote or continue the item to either a date specific or off-calendar. Mr. Economou requested that the item be continued to the July 24, 2014 meeting.

There was no further discussion.

Motion: Commissioner Pratt moved, seconded by Commissioner Shinault, and carried (5-0), to continue the item to the July 24, 2014 meeting.

AYES: Stewart, Heflin, Shinault, Pratt, Mathews
NOES: None