



## **HAWTHORNE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2010**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairperson Cole called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the City Council Chambers, Hawthorne City Hall, 4455 West 126th Street, Hawthorne, California 90250.

### **II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Commissioner Rocca led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **III. ROLL CALL:**

PRESENT: Chairperson James Cole, Jr.  
Commissioner Rula Alshanableh  
Commissioner Bernard Belonsky  
Commissioner Robert Smith  
Commissioner Jason Rocca

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT:  
Gregg McClain, Acting Director of Planning and CD  
Maria Majcherek, Planning Associate  
Robert Kim, Senior Deputy City Attorney

### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Smith made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Belonsky, approving the Planning Commission Minutes of January 20, 2010. The motion was approved with 4 yes votes with Commissioner Rocca abstaining. Commissioner Belonsky asked for a minor correction and the maker of the motion consented to the change. The Minutes were approved with one minor change.

### **V. COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54954.2:**

Chairperson Cole instructed the Secretary to enter into the Minutes the approval of compliance with Government Code Section 54954.2 regarding the February 17, 2010 meeting.

### **VI. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

As no one desired to be heard, Chairman Cole closed oral communications.

## **VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

<b>A. APPLICATION:</b>	<b>Conditional Use 2009CU10</b>
PROPOSAL:	New wireless antenna facility
LOCATION:	5250 W. El Segundo Blvd.
APPLICANT:	Milestone Wireless (Verizon)
PROPERTY OWNER:	401 S. Hoover Property, Inc.

Chairperson Cole opened the Public Hearing to consider Conditional Use 2009CU10 to consider a new wireless antenna facility on a building with existing antenna facilities. Planning Associate Majcherek was asked to present the staff report.

Planning Associate Majcherek presented the Conditional Use application. The application is a request by Matt Vigil of Milestone Wireless, representing Verizon Wireless, to build a new wireless facility on the Ramada Hotel on El Segundo Blvd. and the 405 Freeway. The antennas will be mounted to an existing hotel building in the C-3 zone. This hotel has other wireless facilities already mounted to it.

The antennas will be roof-mounted on three sides and a rooftop leased area for the equipment. Additionally, a backup generator will be located in the lower-level parking garage. All antennas associated with this application will be behind new stealth screens designed to match the building surface. This site conforms to the Wireless Telecommunication Policy Statement, so Staff recommends approval of the application.

Mr. Matt Vigil represented the applicant. He reiterated much of the staff report but added that the equipment will be screened by an 8-foot high sheet metal wall.

Commissioner Belonsky asked for clarification on the screening. Mr. Vigil explained that the antennas will only be visible to someone standing on the roof.

Chairperson Cole asked for more information about the generator. Mr. Vigil explained that Verizon is trying to get generators installed at all of their sites to keep them on-air in the event of a power outage. He added that the generators are operated about 15 minutes a week just to keep them in good working order.

Chairperson Cole asked when the generator is turned on. Mr. Vigil said it varies according to the lease and landlord, but typically in the middle of the night.

Chairperson Cole closed the public hearing and asked if the commissioners wished to discuss the item.

Commissioner Smith made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alshanableh, approving Resolution No. PC 2010-1, a Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Hawthorne approving Conditional Use 2009CU10. All present voted yes. The motion was approved.

## **B. DRAFT HOUSING ELEMENT**

PROPOSAL: New Housing Element of the General Plan  
LOCATION: Citywide  
APPLICANT: City of Hawthorne

Chairperson Cole opened the Public Hearing to consider the Draft housing Element. Consultant to the City, Veronica Tam, presented the staff report.

Ms. Tam started with an overview of Housing Elements in general. She explained that a housing element has to represent the City's strategy to meet its share of regional housing needs in the future. She explained that the State Department of Housing and Community Development reviews draft housing elements. The review process is very stringent due to a large volume of case law and regulations related to housing elements. This level of scrutiny is the reason that more than half of the southern California jurisdictions are still working on their housing elements.

Ms. Tam went on to explain that the housing element is a legal document. In the event of law suit, if the element was previously approved by the State, the burden of proof in the case rests on the litigant. If the State has determined that the housing element does not meet the requirements of State law, then it will be very difficult to defend the City's position. Additionally, having a certified housing element is necessary for certain sources of funding from the State.

The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is the most critical component of a housing element. Without compliance with the RHNA, there is virtually no chance of having the housing element approved. Ms. Tam emphasized that the City is responsible to remove barriers to develop housing to the level of the RHNA, but because the City is not a developer, it is not responsible to actually build the housing. The City's allocation is 910 units, which is about 0.3% of the County's total allocation.

Ms. Tam explained that the housing element must also address lower income housing. The State determined that a density of 30 dwelling units per acre is the appropriate threshold in this region to make affordable housing affordable to build. Currently there are no locations within the City to allow that level of density. Part of the reason for the delay to complete the draft housing element was to allow time for the city to prepare the necessary ordinances and resolutions to allow a sufficient amount of land to be developed at that density. That is being done separately by the City's staff. It is important that these actions be taken prior to the certification of the housing element.

She asked the Commission for permission to submit the document to the State for their 60-day review. The final adoption should occur in the summer of this year.

Commission Belonsky asked if she was in touch with the State office of HCD. Ms. Tam stated that she deals with this office on a regular basis, but not specifically about Hawthorne's element. She is aware of the State's concerns and what they are looking for in the housing elements and has addressed these issues in the document.

Commissioner Belonsky asked how we decided what areas of the City to allow the higher density. Ms. Tam explained that the threshold of 30 units was set by state law. Commissioner Belonsky followed up by asking what percentage of the R-4 zone had to be open to 30 dwelling units per acre. Ms. Tam explained that the minimum target was to allow enough land to build the units with some additional capacity in case the area is reduced by other types of development.

Commissioner Alshanableh noted that the data in the document is based on the 2000 Census and asked if more recent data was available. Ms. Tam explained that the 2010 Census data will not be available until 2011. Other sources are less reliable and have very large margins of error. Additionally, if one of these other estimates are used they run the risk of being proven wildly off when the 2010 Census data is released. Another reason to stick with census data is that many of the data are mandated by State law to be from the census.

Chairman Cole asked what penalties are imposed for not developing the housing as required by RHNA. Ms. Tam explained that we are only required to zone the land for density and remove barriers. If the market does not materialize to build the housing, there is no penalty if the zoning allowed it. If, on the other hand, the zoning was not changed to allow the density, the RHNA numbers become cumulative. Additionally, without the zoning, the housing element will not be approved. In that case it has to be updated every 4 years instead of the every 8 years of an adopted element.

Commissioner Alshanableh sought clarification on providing the land for higher density and rezoning. Ms. Tam explained that Staff had determined the appropriate locations and is working on the necessary text amendments to modify the density standards within the zone. Mr. McClain added that the use of the term "provide" land does not mean acquire it, it just means that the zoning and development standards have to be in place to allow that density.

Commissioner Belonsky asked if the land selected was not already developed. Mr. McClain explained how the properties were selected, working from the goal backward. He explained that the existing R-4 zone will be reduced in size to about half because the area of the mixed use and the existing R-4 exceeded the amount of land needed to accomplish the RHNA goals.

Commissioner Belonsky asked if market-rate housing can be built in the R-4 area. Ms. Tam explained that the RHNA goals are not focused on affordable housing, so even market-rate housing counts.

Commissioner Alshanableh pointed out a technological error in the report and noted that the local earthquake fault is actually active, contrary to a statement in the document.

Chairperson Cole closed the public hearing and asked if the commissioners wished to discuss the item.

Commissioner Smith made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alshanableh, approving Resolution No. PC 2010-2, a Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Hawthorne directing Staff to send the Draft housing Element to the State Office of Housing and Community Development. All present voted yes. The motion was approved.

## **VIII. MUNICIPAL PLANNING:**

Acting Director McClain introduced Carl Morabito of William Lyon Homes, who made a presentation of the background and history of the 360° at South Bay and showed a slide presentation that included actual photographs of already build elements.

Mr. Morabito explained that the current plan is to enter the market with 2 of the 5 products on the site—the motor courts and stacked flats—at a rate of 10-20 units at a time. The remaining products will be rolled out as the market improves.

Jeff Chelwick, Senior Principal Architect at William Hezmalhalch Architects, 2850 Redhill Avenue, Suite 200, Santa Ana, CA 92705 reviewed the basic design of the motor courts and went over the proposed changes. He explained that there were 3 guiding principles in the redesign process. The first was to preserve critical elements such as breakups, massing changes, and color blocking. The second thing was removal of unnecessary elements, such as fake balconies and sliding glass doors. The last was to refine the proportions to improve the elegance of the design. He also went on to explain that they took the opportunity to remove certain features that would date the buildings to the earlier part of the decade, such as the curved parapets.

Commissioner Alshanableh expressed her opinion that the added details of the original design made it more aesthetically pleasing. She asked if the redesign saved significant expense. Mr. Chelwick said that he was pleased with the remodeled design and acknowledged that the redesign offered cost saving, but that it was not the single impetus behind all the proposed changes.

Commission Belonsky asked for clarification about the “fake” nature of the balconies. Me. Chelwick explained that they were not meant to stand on but offered an opportunity to open the sliding doors for ventilation. He went on to explain that they understand that most potential buyers prefer windows instead of patio doors in these cases. Commissioner Belonsky expressed agreement with Commissioner Alshanableh’s sentiment regarding the aesthetic preference for the original design.

Mr. Morabito explained that the financial reality of the current market made it necessary to save costs to bring the cost of each unit down to a range that the market can support. He emphasized that the overall look of the project will be preserved substantially, but without making some cost savings, the units would be too pricey to bring to market. He also added that the new building codes forced some of the redesign. He explained that the models are being retrofit so that potential customers will have a realistic sense of what they may be purchasing.

Commissioner Rocca asked for clarification of the various models and asked for clarification of the retrofitting of the existing models.

Commissioner Belonsky asked if the redesign will save nearly enough money. Mr. Morabito answered that the redesign will not account for the loss of revenue so far but it does help to move it forward.

Ryan Flautz, architect with JZMK Partners, 131 Innovation Drive, #100, Irvine, CA 92617, gave the presentation on the redesign of the stacked flats model. The previous version was based on the art deco design. The main revision is to reduce the building height by 3 feet, which corresponds to a 1 foot reduction per floor. This change, he explained, reduced the scale of the building and "humanized" is.

Commissioner Belonsky asked if that meant 9 foot ceiling are becoming 8 foot ceilings. Mr. Flautz explained it is 10 foot ceilings becoming 9 foot ceilings.

Mr. Flautz went on to show how they changed the windows, removed the stone treatment at the entrance and replaced it with stucco, which is more in line with art deco design.

Commissioner Alshanableh asked why the entrance was being made a single door instead of a double door. Mr. Flautz explained that they find in residential buildings the seconds door is always locked anyway. The single door proposed is 30 inches wide, so should be so problem with furniture moving.

Commissioner Belonsky asked why the sidelights were modified at the entrance. After a bit of confusion, Mr. Morabito agreed that the removal of the larger sidelight may be an error on the plans and would either inform Staff of the error or possibly just modify the design to put the larger sidelight back.

Mr. Morabito explained that in the models of the stacked flats they built a drop ceiling to give the appropriate feel. Commissioner Belonsky asked about what happens when the dropped ceiling touches the windows. Mr. Flautz explained that the doors and windows were already 8 feet high, so there remains a foot of clearance.

Commissioner Belonsky agreed that the stone on the facade was not as appropriate as the screed stucco proposed.

Commissioner Rocca asked about the preparation to reopen the project. Mr. Morabito told the Commission that their plan was to open the models by March 27.

Commissioner Belonsky asked how many units were built and about the phasing schedule. Mr. Morabito estimated there are 45 units built and that the phasing will begin with the corner of El Segundo and Aviation with about 18 units, and the first phase of the flats will have 19 units. As the market absorbs these units they will start the subsequent phase. Mr. Belonsky asked if there was any chance of bringing all the models to market soon. Mr. Morabito said they did not feel the market was right for that, but they watch constantly and will bring other products to market when appropriate.

Commissioner Belonsky asked about residents dealing with ongoing construction. Mr. Morabito said they have a lot of experience with this and make good use of fencing and barriers to segregate the construction activities from residential activities.

The Commissioners expressed thanks to the applicant and architects for updating them on the progress of their project.

**IX. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**X. INDIVIDUAL REPORTS:**

Commissioner Belonsky brought up the previous meeting being cancelled for “lack of a quorum.” He wanted to make it known that the actual reason to cancel the meeting was that there was nothing left on the agenda after the one applicant asked to have his item continued. Mr. McClain explained that it was a very unusual case where we had only one item and the applicant asked for continuance after the agenda was already posted. If the request came before the agenda was posted, then the meeting would be cancelled for lack of agenda items. Mr. McClain went on to reiterate his commitment to not put the Commissioners in a bad light going forward, and if the situation arises again in the future, a detailed explanation will accompany the notice. Commissioner Belonsky urged the other Commissioners to show up anyway so as to avoid the whole lack of quorum issue.

The discussion diverged into talk of meetings being cancelled for lack of items, which Commissioner Belonsky said happened as many as 5 times in the previous year. Mr. McClain agreed that in such situations the notice will not state “lack of quorum,” but it was not possible in the situation of the previous meeting to avoid the quorum language unless the Commission met to open the meeting, continue the one item, then adjourn the meeting.

Chairperson Cole said he could not think of such a situation coming up in ten years so he did not have an issue with the Commission meeting to quickly continue the item and adjourn.

Mr. McClain explained that there is an advantage to using the lack of quorum option in that the item is rescheduled to the next meeting without the need to re-advertise it. He also agreed that this was a very rare occurrence.

Chairperson Cole asked if there was anything scheduled for the next meeting. Mr. McClain was unsure if there was but would inform the Commission on Thursday if the next meeting was to be cancelled.

**XI     ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

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Chairperson James Cole, Jr.  
Hawthorne Planning Commission

Date signed:\_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

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Gregg McClain  
Secretary, Hawthorne Planning Commission