

**CITY OF EL MIRAGE
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2012**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Doug Doede called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge.

II. ROLL CALL

Members present were Doug Doede, Brandon Forrey, Frank Carnal, Mary Koestner, and Justin McCarty. Staff present were Deputy City Manager Bill Pupo, Senior Planner Mark Smith, and GIS Technician Jose Macias.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2011

Forrey and McCarty made a few changes and then Forrey made a motion for approval of the minutes of December 13, 2011. Carnal seconded, and the motion passed 5 to 0.

IV. CONTINUANCES [None]

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Hearing & Action on Trent CUP in UC at 12017 NW Grand Avenue

Smith stated that the property was built in 1952 & 1960 for auto repair and later used for salvage inconsistent with older B-2 zoning or the new UC zoning. The owner has applied for open storage and light manufacturing. The existing conditions include granite without plants in front, granite in the yard, and residences on adjacent properties. The front has a block wall but the sides and rear are chain link. Buildings have rusting metal. The alley is fenced on the southwest and the alley was used for parking. The property is actually cleaned up considerably from the former use. The owner wants to lease to a granite countertop maker and to store her own vehicles in the yard which are conditional uses. Staff changed the recommendation from approval to denial. Smith said the owner plans retail with a residence above consistent with the Plan on Grand. Koestner asked why staff changed their mind. Smith said the use was not consistent with what is expected in the area: retail uses on frontage with parking in the rear.

Koestner asked if it did not include retail. Smith said there was a retail component if they actually sell from the site, but if they sell at another location, this would be storage only. Pupo said it just did not fit the area. Originally we thought it might work, but it just did not get there. McCarty asked if they could get a temporary use. Pupo said it got into problems and legal issues when it was time to cease. Koestner asked about allowing just the current owners. Pupo said manufacturing was

a dramatic change to the use. Doede said there was a lot of noise associated with it also. Smith said it was the Commission's choice what to recommend to the Council and they could recommend it temporarily. Forrey asked Smith to tell them what led to this point, whether it was grandfathered or if this was a new business. Smith said it was new and vacant now. Forrey said if the land designation changes properties are grandfathered in but if new development comes in we have new opportunities to start moving in the right direction. None of us wants to squelch any kind of business but they will never see any change if we continue to allow things off the mark. Doede said they needed tremendous improvements to meet Code.

Smith said Trent was in the audience and could address them on this item. Trent said she had limited parking in front for retail and staff did not want parking in the alleys. She did not think it would matter. Mrs. Terrones has maintained the alley to the south with concrete and kept it clean for City. The City uses their alley at times. Koestner asked if the City used it for parking. Staff said the City used their alley for deliveries and that was its purpose. Doede said it was not meant for parking for 8-10 hours. They are used for service, fire lane, and trash.

Pupo said this is the gateway to the City and we want it to be attractive, warm, and friendly. Koestner asked if staff was saying it was not. Pupo said retailers create that effect but industrial use does not. Doede said it would fit in the industrial park. Koestner asked Trent if could revise it to do that. Trent said it could later when it generated money but there was no room for people to park. Doede said she would have to create that. Trent said it was like City Hall which had access to Primrose and Grand. Smith said parking on the streets is permitted and may be on Grand in the future if it becomes the City's right-of-way, but parking in unimproved alleys is entirely different. Utilities are there and deliveries should be using the rear rather than the front. Forrey said the concern was for access. Trent said parking in front would stop deliveries in the yard. Doede said everything had to be paved. Trent said that was not a problem. Doede said semis and flatbeds would be involved. As it is now, they do not have room in the yard. Trent said she wanted a block building in the rear to store vehicles in and then concrete the yard with trees to make it presentable and an apartment over the front building. Doede asked which building was built in 1952. Trent said the front block one was with the metal building added in 1960. Doede said the building was 60 years old and would not support an apartment. Trent said she would use pillars to support it and add tile to make it nice.

Forrey said there were two issues: the first was the industrial here. As he sees it, it did not fit the area. They also wanted it to have a viable

use to benefit both the City and the area. Doede said it did not fit the zone for the area which is more restaurants, arts, crafts, and general business, attorneys, doctors, that type of business. It did not fit here because of the noise and work involved. Trent said it would not make any more noise than the tire shop nearby. Doede said he had been around masonry all his life and knew what it sounds like being sawn and it takes a long time to polish a piece of stone. Koestner asked if she had worked with anyone at the City on this. Trent said she worked with Mary [Dickson, Building Official] and she was gung ho about it.

Pupo said the intentions were good, but the use eventually should not be there because there were higher and better uses than tire shops. Koestner asked if the tire shop knew that. Pupo said no one was forcing them out but as the area transitions, the tire shop would move. Doede said he could not envision bringing in large vehicles and forklifts and if she added another building there would be no room. Storage would be at a premium with no customer selection let alone room for traffic. Trent said he did business with contractors and did not want a showroom. The front building would be retail, another business not related to it. Carnal asked if she was already in agreement with this company because he saw granite on the property. She said she had a tentative agreement but she had told him he needed approval including a business license. Pupo said they were confusing issues. Mary dealt with structure, not land use. The business license allowed them to do business, but still needed zoning approval. The issue was industry in the retail corridor. Koestner said she was disappointed that someone had not talked to her before this. Doede said that's why it was here.

Pupo said staff was proactive toward business. Trent asked why she had not been shown the Plan. Staff said it has been available for a year. Pupo said Mary worked with building codes, not land uses. Pupo said this was a redirect and staff would be happy to work with her. He had a couple businesses that were looking for space now. Koestner said staff should be handing them a copy. Pupo said the Plan was just adopted last year. If she was talking to staff for three years, the plan has changed and she got caught in the process. Pupo suggested it could be continued to allow staff to work with the owner. Forrey did not want to shut down them working together, but they should address the request. Pupo said they could close the matter and look at other options. Forrey moved for denial of the request. Carnal seconded the motion for denial which passed unanimously.

2. Discussion on Recommended Architectural Design Standards

Smith said he had not had time to prepare much for this item but had taken the specific standards proposed for the Downtown Transit Oriented Development Planning Area and illustrated each of them in a PowerPoint

presentation. They are similar the “Living Streets” concepts discussed last month. He said Forrey recommended last month that we use the term “Complete Streets” for these standards, but “Living Streets” incorporates “Complete Streets” concepts and goes beyond to address the buildings and their relation to the street. “Living Streets” is the latest trend. Chair Doede asked staff to have the rest ready for their meeting next month.

VI. STAFF’S REPORT

Smith told the Commission that staff was preparing a request for a new billboard on Grand Avenue plus code amendments for limitations on billboards and limitations on livestock for their meeting in February.

VII. COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS [None]

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Mark L. Smith, Senior Planner

Doug Doede, Commission Chair