

MINUTES
ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPING REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

A regular meeting held at the La Quinta City Hall
78-495 Calle Tampico, La Quinta, CA

April 1, 2009

10:01 a.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. This regular meeting of the Architecture and Landscaping Review Committee was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Planning Manager David Sawyer who led the Committee in the flag salute.
- B. Committee Members Present: Ronald Fitzpatrick and Ray Rooker.
Committee Member Absent: Jason Arnold
- C. Staff present: Planning Manager David Sawyer, Principal Planner Stan Sawa, and Secretary Monika Radeva.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

III. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA:

Planning Manager Sawyer requested that scheduled Business Item A (FLP 2008-047) be moved to Business Item B (SDP 2006-905) and Business Item B be moved to Business Item A. Confirmed.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR:

Staff asked if there were any changes to the Minutes of February 4, 2009. It was moved and seconded by Committee Members Rooker/Fitzpatrick to approve the minutes as submitted. AYES: Committee Members Fitzpatrick and Rooker. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Committee Member Arnold.

V. BUSINESS ITEMS:

- A. Site Development Permit 2006-905 a request submitted by Leslie Lippich Architect and Associates, Inc. for consideration of Architectural and Landscaping Plans for a 4,924 square foot Express Car Wash located on the east side of Washington Street, approximately 780 feet north of Fred Waring Drive.

Principal Planner Stan Sawa presented the information contained in the staff report, a copy of which is on file in the Planning Department.

Planning Manager Sawyer noted the staff report and presentation of this case would be slightly different when presented to the Planning Commission for review. He explained the Public Works Department had requested minor circulation revisions that would reflect on the site plans prior to the Planning Commission's review. However, there were no architectural changes that would affect the review at hand. He added some of the planters' sizes would be reduced slightly due to some driveway changes.

Planning Manager Sawyer said staff would show the Committee the site plan for the Mayer Villa Capri project located adjacent to the Express Car Wash for site orientation purposes.

Committee Member Rooker asked if there would be any mechanical equipment on the roof. Mr. Lippich replied the roof was completely clear of any equipment as it would be located inside the building. He said the roof would be curved and made out of translucent material allowing sunlight to filter into the car wash tunnel.

Committee Member Rooker said he was delighted with the unique architectural line of the building, but he found the color scheme to be very plain and simple. He referenced the Albertson's Shopping Center project across the street and its diversification of color scheme. He suggested the applicant consider using different colors other than the plain sand color to highlight the uniqueness of the architecture.

Mr. Yury Levitan, Owner of the Express Car Wash, introduced himself and said the owners of the Albertson's Shopping Center would be re-painting it in the same sand color as the car wash.

Committee Member Rooker recommended the addition of color on the stucco, to emphasize the uniqueness of the building. He noted the landscaping plans showed bougainvilleas only on some of the trellises and suggested adding bougainvilleas on all of the trellises. He commented the parking lot side of the building was very barren and devoid of planting. He said instead of using Mediterranean Fan Palms, that would only grow to be 6 to 8 feet tall, some Washingtonia Palms would more appropriate to create a landscaping

scale that would soften the impact of the building. Other than the above stated comments, Committee Member Rooker said he was very pleased with the project as it was very nice.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick complimented the architect and the designer of the project. He thanked staff for preparing a very nice presentation.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked if there would be a deceleration lane on Washington Street to turn into the car wash. Principal Planner Sawa replied the plans included the first lane as a deceleration lane immediately adjacent to the curb.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick commented on his recent visit to the site. He asked if a community meeting would be required for this project. Planning Manager Sawyer replied the limited size of the project did not require a community meeting.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked if there would be any possible nuisance issues that would be associated with the newly-generated traffic and car wash noise. He also commented on the lack of air circulation in the building. He expressed his concern of solar heat gain due to the transparent roof panels and what effect that would have on the temperatures generated inside the building during the hot summer months.

Mr. Leslie Lippich, Architect with Leslie Lippich Architect and Associates, Inc., introduced himself and explained there was no concern of solar heat gain because both ends of the tunnel would be open, the blower used to dry the cars would create air circulation, and the cars entering the building would be submerged in water for the majority of their passage through the building as they get soaked, washed, and rinsed. Mr. Levitan said the doors of the tunnel would open in the early morning hours allowing for air circulation within the tunnel before the high summer heat has a chance to build up in the building.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked about water circulation. Mr. Lippich replied the water was being circulated and re-used. Staff noted there are some State requirements that water be re-used. Mr. Levitan said there was oil sense separator equipment, in the car wash, that purified the water prior to re-use.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick commented on the temporary banner signage used in Old Town La Quinta and the negative aesthetic impact it had on the architectural appearance of the buildings. He mentioned other sites with temporary signage in the community. He asked staff if a condition could be incorporated banning the car wash from the display of temporary signs. Staff replied there was no policy in place that would justify such a condition. He explained temporary signs were covered under the City's sign code. Staff suggested he could either recommend temporary sign issues as a point of discussion for the Planning Commission or formulate a recommended condition for the Planning Commission to consider.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked if the sign for the car wash had already been designed. Mr. Lippich replied the sign had not been designed yet, as it was originally going to be placed on the building. However, since the building was set back so far from the street and surrounded by landscaping, the sign would most likely be a monument sign which would be six to seven feet high placed at the southwest corner of the site and visible from both sides of the street.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked about the building that would be adjacent to the car wash. Staff replied it was part of the Mayer Villa Capri project and it was going to be medical offices.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked if the zoning allowed for such close proximity for the car wash and medical offices. He said he viewed car washes as noisy and busy places and incompatible next to a medical building. Staff replied the primary zoning for the property was for various commercial uses such as car washes, retail shopping centers, medical office buildings, etc.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked if the owners of the Mayer Villa Capri project were aware that a car wash would be built adjacent to their project. Planning Manager Sawyer said they would be notified at the upcoming Planning Commission meeting scheduled for April 14, 2009. Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked if they had any concerns. Staff replied they did not.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick referenced condition 4 of the staff report and inquired what a "green sheet sign off" was. Staff explained the use of the green sheet and its application with the Building and Safety Department.

There being no further questions, it was moved and seconded by Committee Members Fitzpatrick/Rooker to adopt Minute Motion 2009-004, recommending approval of Site Development Permit 2006-905, with the following recommendations:

- 1). Eliminate condition of approval #3 from the staff report,
- 2). Add bougainvilleas to all of the trellises,
- 3). Replace the Mediterranean Fan Palms with Washingtonia Palms
- 4). Add the following items, as discussion topics, for the Planning Commission:
 - a) Prohibition of temporary signs, and
 - b) Building color scheme.

AYES: Committee Members Fitzpatrick and Rooker. NOES: None.
ABSTAIN: None ABSENT: Committee Member Arnold.

- B. Final Landscaping Plan 2008-047 (for Site Development Permit 2007-898) a request submitted by Milestone Management (Dan Schultz) for consideration of Final Landscaping Plans for CVS Pharmacy in Jefferson Square Shopping Center located at the southwest corner of Jefferson Street and Fred Waring Drive.

Principal Planner Stan Sawa presented the information contained in the staff report, a copy of which is on file in the Planning Department.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked if this was the last time Final Landscaping Plans would be presented to the Committee for review. Staff replied these plans were only for CVS Pharmacy and that each building, on that site, would have to submit Final Landscaping Plans individually.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick said he was very pleased with the project. He asked if one of the corners of this site was where a monument sign "Welcome to La Quinta" was to be placed. Staff replied it was, but until the monument sign was constructed the location would remain in landscaping. He asked if there was a drive-thru on site. Staff said there would be a drive-thru pharmacy window.

Committee Member Rooker said he was concerned that there was insufficient landscaping. He noted the landscaping was not high enough in proportion to the size of the building and was only four to five per cent of the site, which would make for a very hot and barren building especially in the summertime.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked if this was a preliminary approval of the landscaping plans. Staff replied these were Final Landscaping Plans submitted to the Committee to ensure that the landscaping plans were consistent with the required conditions of approval. Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked about the conditions imposed on the applicant by the preliminary review. Principal Planner Sawa said there was a condition that the applicant provide additional landscaping around the building and if the Committee felt that it was still insufficient, they could ask the applicant to increase the landscaping until they felt the condition was complied with.

Committee Member Rooker said the perimeter landscaping around the street indicated on the plans was nice, but once on site, the landscaping was very minimal in the parking areas and around the buildings.

Committee Member Fitzpatrick mentioned that his main concern was not necessarily the lack of landscaping, but rather the acres of asphalt without any shaded parking, or seating area, that would make this shopping center pedestrian-friendly and inviting. He commented that most shopping centers were not pedestrian friendly on the outside and the parking lots were designed solely for the patrons to park their cars and go inside without any attempt to create an inviting environment. He said he would love to see some covered parking. He noted trees could soften the impact of the building and make it look pretty, but they would not create an inviting environment and make the parking lot people-friendly.

Mr. David Closson, President and Landscape Architect with Closson & Closson, Inc. introduced himself and said the site plan represented the area from the back of the curb of the parking to the building which was the area that CVS had to work with. He explained the majority of the landscaping was concentrated around the center's main building. He noted additional planters and pots had been added, but there was a sidewalk stipulation that had to be met for the access from the parking into the preliminary sidewalk.

Also there was the issue of ownership and whether the landscaping could be expanded further into the parking lot because a different developer was handling the adjacent pad.

Mr. Closson commented that wherever possible, on the site, a tree or a pot had been placed.

Committee Member Rooker said on the north, south, and east sides of the building he would like to see a tree every two to three parking spaces. He also suggested putting some type of plants against the building such as bougainvilleas.

Mr. Closson expressed concern about losing parking spaces if additional trees were planted in between the parking stalls.

There was general discussion about the difference between the preliminary landscaping plans and the final landscaping plans.

Planning Manager Sawyer said the Committee would be making a recommendation to the Planning Director who would make the final decision. If the Committee felt the conditions of approval were not met and additional landscaping should be incorporated, they could make a recommendation on how that could be accomplished. They might suggest additional trees along the parking area and some planting along the wall to help break it up.

There being no further questions, it was moved and seconded by Committee Members Rooker/Fitzpatrick to adopt Minute Motion 2009-005, denying approval of Final Landscaping Plan 2008-047 (for Site Development Permit 2007-898) as submitted due to insufficient scale and quantity of planting, with the recommendation that more trees be added to the north, south, and east elevations of the building. AYES: Committee Members Fitzpatrick and Rooker. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Committee Member Arnold.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE AND WRITTEN MATERIAL:

A. Attendance Update

VII. COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS:

- A. Committee Member Rooker inquired if the issue presented by Mr. Richard Petri during the November 5, 2009, ALRC Meeting was resolved. Planning Manager Sawyer replied, during the meeting, staff had asked Mr. Petri to stop by the Planning Department counter to discuss his issue in further detail which he had not done and at this time staff did not have an update on the status of the issue.
- B. Committee Member Fitzpatrick asked about the minutes of the Joint PC and ARLC Meeting and the final outcome of the meeting. Planning Manager Sawyer replied the Commission and Staff felt the meeting was very productive and the minutes were approved by the Planning Commission during the March 24, 2009, meeting. They are available on-line on the City's website. General discussion followed regarding the meeting and the topics discussed. Planning Manager Sawyer said the outcome of the meeting was that staff was given the direction to do some preliminary work on sustainability policies for the City and they were currently working on that.
- C. Committee Member Rooker requested that staff bring up a discussion topic for the Planning Commission that sign review and approval of the projects be included with the review of the Final Landscaping Plans by the Committee. He said signs were part of a building's architecture once they were placed on a building; as were monument signs.

Planning Manager Sawyer said, in order for the Committee to be able to review signs, staff would have to require those at the time the Site Development Permit application was submitted. He explained the reason the Final Landscaping Plans were presented to the Committee was because that was part of the conditions of approval. He elaborated on different pro and con arguments requiring signs and/or sign programs to be submitted as part of the Site Development Permit application.

General discussion followed regarding existing signage within commercial developments in the community, the concept of Art In Public Places, and some sign code requirements.

- D. Committee Member Fitzpatrick stated he would not be available for the May 6, 2009, ALRC Meeting.

VIII. PLANNING STAFF ITEMS:

Planning Commission Update:

Planning Manager Sawyer said there were two Planning Commission Meetings since the last ALRC Meeting. He mentioned the Mayer Villa Capri Project was presented on March 10, 2009, and was recommended for approval to the City Council. The Planning Commission recognized the concerns brought up by the ALRC; in addition, the Commission asked that the corner fountain on Washington Street and Fred Waring Drive be replaced with an art piece and the concept for the interior circular-drive fountain be re-evaluated and modified to be pedestrian- and people-friendly. The applicant decided to completely take out the circular drive water feature and replace it with flowers. The City Council approved the project as submitted, with the suggestion that the applicant try to make that particular area more pedestrian-friendly.

Planning Manager David Sawyer said the cases presented to the Planning Commission during the March 24, 2009, meeting had not been reviewed by the ALRC since they were a couple of Sign Programs and a Code Amendment.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded by Committee Members Fitzpatrick/Rooker to adjourn this meeting of the Architecture and Landscaping Review Committee to a Regular Meeting to be held on May 6, 2009. This meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m. on April 1, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

MONIKA RADEVA
Secretary