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REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CA

December 14, 2005
7:00 p.m.
Mike Balkman Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maureen Muranaka, Vice Chair
 Scott Malsin, Commissioner
 David Rockwell, Commissioner
 Marcus Tiggs, Commissioner

ADVISORY PRESENT: Todd Tipton, Redevelopment Administrator
 Sherry Jordan, Senior Planner
 Bryn Morley, Special Counsel
 Kriss Casanova, Planning Technician
 Max Pactzold, Interim Traffic Engineer

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CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Muranaka called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sherry Jordan.
Roll Call. Muranaka, Malsin, Rockwell, Tiggs present.
Chair Thomas' absence was excused.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

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ACTION ITEMS

A-1. Discussion of Draft Design for Development (DFD) for the Jefferson Boulevard Industrial Area.

Ms. Casanova gave a brief staff report that included a power point presentation explaining the main objectives of the DFD, encouraged and prohibited uses, and development standards.

Vice Chair Muranaka called for Commissioners' questions to staff.

Commissioner Rockwell:

- Overall document is very well done with the objective clearly stated.
- Looks like a good balance between residential and business uses.
- Principal challenge is working the interfaces between different land uses.
- How do you reconcile the different sets of requirements between land uses?

Todd Tipton:

Through the Planning process there would be certain mitigations through the environmental analysis that would protect the residential neighborhoods from impacts.

- Noise level by the creek is an ongoing problem and has generated many complaints from the residents in the area.
- Statements in the DFD regarding noise are not explicit.
- It is not clear in the DFD what kind of restaurants are envisioned; would this entail daytime use only since they intended to service nearby employees and residences, or evening hours to serve the residents?

Kriss Casanova:

Retail store square footage of 40,000 sq. ft. was mentioned to give businesses an option; restaurants referred to are coffee shop/café type establishments that would serve the daytime employees; no large chain-type restaurants were envisioned due to the increased traffic and noise. Further restrictions could be placed on the location and size of the restaurant.

- The DFD is a broad agency document; follow up will be done via a City document possibly in the form of a specific plan or overlay zone and at that point more specific development standards will be provided.

Commissioner Malsin

- Why are you looking at adopting a DFD for this area at this time?

Todd Tipton:

A DFD is an agency document; one objective was to be at the same level as the Expo DFD so if another agency came in and wanted to acquire the 10100 Jefferson Boulevard site (we have received interest from City of Los Angeles) we would have protection against uses that were not encouraged by the City.

- Why is this proposed DFD so restrictive?

Kriss Casanova:

With the turnover of many vacant industrial buildings in the area we wanted to make sure that new development coming in would be something the City would like to see. At these sites there has been interest for housing development.

Commissioner Tiggs

- The goals stated in the DFD appears to be creating clean industrial uses in the area.
- Would the reference to caretaker and employee housing allow a fairly decent sized housing project?
- The intent is to limit housing to one unit per development according the zoning code.
- Should change "preferred uses" to "encouraged uses".

Vice-Chair Muranaka

What is the height limitation in this area?

Todd Tipton: 43 feet

Motion to receive and file correspondence to include letter from Greg Rogers and a letter from Raintree Association in the record. Moved by Malsin; seconded by Tiggs.

Vice-Chair Muranaka invited comments from members of the public.

A.J. Jarasunas, attorney representing Moldex Corporation

- Moldex headquarters is located at 10111 Jefferson Boulevard which is within the DFD area. Moldex is a light industrial user and has been in the area for quite some time with 300 employees with high paying jobs and are a tremendous asset to the City. Moldex has interest in the DFD and its provisions; specifically they want to make sure that light industrial uses such as Moldex are afforded adequate protection by the DFD document.
- Moldex appreciated seeing that one of the general references makes mention of protection and enhancement of community assets by guiding appropriate uses adjacent to existing businesses.
- They would like to see more specific protections for existing uses.
- Would like to see added a requirement that an expressed finding of compatibility be required when a project is being reviewed for compatibility with the DFD and existing uses.
Because light industrial uses are such a value to the City with the high paying jobs they provide, Molex would like to see an expressed reference to that effect.
- Existing industrial users are a bit concerned about the theoretical potential use of eminent domain in the area by the Redevelopment Agency that could significantly affect the operations of industrial uses. It's not that they want a guarantee that eminent domain will not be used in the future or that re-zoning will not take place, but it's a concern that if residential uses come into the area, and momentum gathers against industrial users, that eminent domain will not be used.
- There is a provision in the DFD that grants the Redevelopment Agency's Executive Director broad discretion to essentially do away with any of the provisions of the DFD

should the Director so find it is appropriate in a given case. The way it is drafted right now is too broad and we would prefer that express standards be used rather than such broad discretion.

- Mr. Jarasunas will submit comments in writing this week.

Steve Sheftel, speaking on behalf of the homeowners of Jackson and Jasmine Avenues

- Main concern is with noise. Something specific needs to be addressed to protect the properties that border the creek. Restaurants, supermarkets and the like could be disastrous for homes and the lives of the residents. Homeowners want peace and quiet, not egregious noise and lights beaming into their homes.
- The homeowners would not object to custom homes at 10100 Jefferson Boulevard.

Carol Guston, representing Raintree Community

- When we looked at this DFD and saw that residential development is excluded, we were disappointed. Residential projects should not be excluded. I understand that the General Plan does not allow residential, but the General Plan can be changed to permit residential development. Residential and mixed use projects should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis at 10100 Jefferson Boulevard. Please consider Raintree as the neighbor that will have to live with whatever is developed at 10100 Jefferson Boulevard.
- They are not in favor of restaurants (because of the constant smell of food) or sound stages.

Philip Simons, representing self and Laine Urban

- I thought the preferred use for the 10100 Jefferson site was housing based on the feedback we got from staff and the General Design Review Committee.
- I have an email from Symantec stating that a number of their employees would love to be able to live close to work. There is a significant jobs/housing imbalance in the area.
- If you put industrial next to residential, you will constantly have to be mitigating the incompatible adjacencies. Studies show that the highest and best use for this site is residential, which would promote shopping and create a better neighborhood for Raintree and the other residents on Jefferson.

Vice-Chair Muranaka read a speaker card into the record from Pearl Irene Adam as follows "Does Culver City want a reputation of being another City of Industry or being a city of high quality residences like Manhattan Beach?"

Staff Responses to Public Comment

Kriss Casanova:

- *With regard to the residential uses being prohibited in the Design for Development, the DFD must be consistent with the zoning code and the General Plan, which currently prohibit residential uses on industrial zoned land.*
- *The main reason for the prohibition was that Council felt that the industrial land was very valuable; approximately 6% of the City's land is industrial and the intent was to keep that intact.*

Todd Tipton:

- *It is important to us that we maintain diversity in our land uses. I agree there needs to be measures in place regarding adjacent uses to residential that protects them.*
- *Mr. Simmons was correct in that he did meet with us but at no time did we allude that we were in support of his residential project. It is important for us as planners and redevelopment staff to recommend to the Commission what we feel is best in the long term interest of the City. We feel at this time that the industrial component designation at 10100 Jefferson Boulevard would be best.*

Vice-Chair Muranaka called for comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Malsin

- Supportive of some of the issues raised by Mr. Jarasunas. Is amenable to including a finding of compatibility with adjacent uses and a reference in the document of the significance of the industrial uses unless there is a strong argument against doing so.
- We cannot put anything in the document regarding potential for the City to use the power of eminent domain.
- There should be more discretion regarding Executive Director of the Agency; what sorts of standards could be modified is a reasonable request as well.
- The DFD amalgamates three areas that have very different natures and adjacencies and probably different futures.
- Residential development should not be precluded at 10100 Jefferson Boulevard.
- I could imagine a nice office park or a high quality residential development at 10100 Jefferson Boulevard which would be a compatible use site.
- The reference to West LA College access road should be removed.
- The DFD document extends further than it needs to; may not be in the best interest of the City to be so specific.
- Should remove the eastern portion completely (east of Duquesne) from the DFD.
- Concerned with discouraging light industrial business.
- Preventing the City of Los Angeles from putting in a transfer station is the essential goal of this document. It should be limited to serving that purpose.

Commissioner Rockwell

- Noise in the DFD area is a concern.
- The DFD document is too vague.
- Reference should be made to the noise Standards in the General Plan.
- Page 4 – add a statement about noise compatibility.
- Page 12 – add statement about quantitative noise standards.
- The DFD should define hours of operation and exact location (e.g. along Jefferson Boulevard) for restaurants; define how the noise would impact residents (Raintree); if it is along Jefferson Boulevard it probably would not be an issue for people along the creek.
- The first line on page 11 – should read “reduced to the maximum extent possible”.
- Page 11 (f) “lighting” – second sentence is a bit awkward; should start off by saying “lighting for all exterior buildings.....” take out the word “lighting” in the next line.

Commissioner Tiggs

- Does not believe that the DFD needs to be as specific as recommended by Commissioner Rockwell.
- Need to focus on what is the real intention of the DFD; the DFD may not have to deal with every possible situation.
- It is understandable why Raintree residents would prefer housing adjacent to them.
- There needs to be more review in allowing so much discretion by the Assistant Executive Director.
- Did not feel it was necessary to include residential as a permitted use.

Vice-Chair Muranaka

- ~~Opposes adding residential uses to “encouraged” use list. It is not necessary to put residential on the prohibited list as it is a prohibited use in the General Plan.~~
- There are many issues that have not been explored and have not been considered concerning the development of 10100 Jefferson Boulevard. Traffic would be much worse if this property were developed for residential use.
- The language that gives the Assistant Executive Director so much latitude and so much discretion in amending the provisions of this DFD must be revised; it literally “guts” the DFD.
- Page 12(k) states that *“establishing development standards to provide that residential neighborhoods and businesses adjacent to the DFD area shall not be adversely affected by improvements or developments”*. If this is an objective of the DFD is it worthy of being added to the General Objectives section on Page 1?
- Short term parking should be added to Paragraph K.4 on page 14.
- I don’t believe that any of the Commissioners have reached consensus on any of the points and the minutes should not characterize it as such.
- I strongly disagree with Commissioner Rockwell in being more specific with certain provisions; this is not the type of document that requires the level of detail he suggests. Impacts can be handled at the discretionary review level for a project.

- The requirement for an expressed finding of compatibility with existing uses or an expressed reference to preserve the City's existing industrial base, is unnecessary to be included in the DFD.
- An express finding of compatibility for new projects is not appropriate to incorporate into a DFD.
- Agency/City cannot comply with Mr. Jarasunas' "no eminent domain" request, particularly in light of the Kelo decision.

Commissioner Malsin

Requested input of other Commissioners regarding the "cohesiveness" of the area, feeling that the east end has a very different character and should not be subjected to the constraints of this DFD.

Commissioner Tiggs

- Based on the response that staff provided, I do not have any difficulty with the proposed boundary.

Commissioner Rockwell

- I can go along with it either way.
- There seems to be a consensus that a lot of uses will come up in connection with the DFD that can be handled at the Site Plan Review level.

Commissioner Malsin

- My concern is that industrial uses and prospective property owners may be dissuaded from investing in the area east of Duquesne Avenue because the DFD is so restrictive.

Vice-Chair Muranaka

- It is logical to include this area.

C-1. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

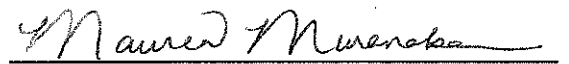
Commissioner Malsin moved, seconded by Commissioner Tiggs, to receive and file the Secretary's Report. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FROM STAFF

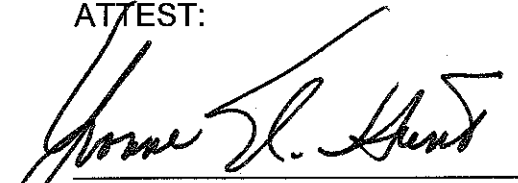
Ms. Jordan advised the Commissioners of their upcoming meetings and agenda items.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Rockwell moved, seconded by Commissioner Tiggs and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. to January 25, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mike Balkman Chambers at City Hall.


MAUREEN MURANAKA, VICE CHAIR
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

ATTEST:


YVONNE HUNT
Administrative Secretary