CITY OF RICHARDSON CITY PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES – MAY 7, 2013

The Richardson City Plan Commission met on May 7, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall in the Council Chambers, 411 W. Arapaho Road, Richardson, Texas.

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Gantt, Chairman

Barry Hand, Vice Chair Gerald Bright, Commissioner Janet DePuy, Commissioner Marilyn Frederick, Commissioner

Eron Linn, Commissioner

Thomas Maxwell, Commissioner

Randy Roland, Alternate

MEMBER ABSENT: Don Bouvier, Alternate

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Sam Chavez, Assistant Director – Dev. Svcs - Planning

Israel Roberts, Development Review Manager Mohamed Bireima, Planning Technician

Kathy Welp, Executive Secretary

BRIEFING SESSION

Prior to the start of the regular business meeting, the City Plan Commission met with staff to receive a briefing on staff reports, and agenda items. No action was taken.

MINUTES

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular business meeting of April 17, 2013.

Motion: Commissioner Bright made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; second by Commissioner Linn. Motion passed 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. **Replat** – **Pittman and Stults Addition:** Consider and take necessary action on a request for approval of a replat of Lots 17 and 18, Block 2 into three (3) lots. The subject properties are located at 301, 305 and 309 Maple Street and zoned R-1250-M Residential.

Mr. Bireima advised that the purpose of the replat was to create three (3) lots that would reflect the current ownership, and dedicate new easements. He reminded the Commission that in April 2013, the subject properties were granted a variance from the City Council to allow a side lot line that would not be perpendicular to the front property line.

Mr. Bireima confirmed that, as required by government code, property owners within 200 feet of the subject property were notified of the replat and to date no comments in opposition had been received.

With no questions for staff, Chairman Gantt opened the public hearing. No comments were made in favor or opposed and Chairman Gantt closed the public hearing.

Motion: Commissioner Maxwell made a motion to approve Item 2 as presented; second by Commissioner Frederick. Motion approved 7-0.

3. **Replat** – **Custer Court Addition:** Consider and take necessary action on a request for approval of a replat of Lot 5, Block A of the Custer Court Addition to relocate utility easements and to dedicate access easements for emergency services. The site is located at the southeast corner of Custer Parkway and President George Bush Highway and is zoned PD Planned Development.

Mr. Roberts stated the purpose of the replat was to dedicate two emergency access easements that correspond with existing emergency access driveways, and to relocate utility easements that conform to field adjusted infrastructure (i.e., water meters or fire hydrants). He added that there were no other changes to the replat and the item did comply with City subdivision regulations.

Chairman Gantt asked to clarify that the highlighted items were where the water meters and/or fire hydrants would be located.

Mr. Roberts replied that was correct and two red lines were the emergency access easements, which were approved earlier but not dedicated on the plat.

With no further questions for staff, Chairman Gantt opened the public hearing. No comments or questions were made in favor or opposed and Chairman Gantt closed the public hearing.

Motion: Commissioner Bright made a motion to approve Item 3 as presented; second by Vice Chair Hand. Motion approved 7-0.

4. **Replat – Parkside Towns Addition:** Consider and take necessary action on a request for approval of a replat of the Parkside Towns Addition to dedicate easements and adjust lot lines. The site is located on the north side of Lake Park Way, west of Lake Park Boulevard, and is zoned PD Planned Development.

Mr. Roberts reported that the replat was requested to dedicate utility easement for an electric line, and an adjustment to the side lot lines to meet side yard setbacks required by zoning, or to meet the setback where a specific unit type was incorrectly represented on the original plat. He added that the proposed replat met the City's subdivision and design standards.

Commissioner DePuy asked if there were any changes to the elevations.

Mr. Roberts stated there were no changes to the building elevations, site plan or the landscape design.

With no further questions for staff, Chairman Gantt opened the public hearing. No comments or questions were made in favor or opposed and Chairman Gantt closed the public hearing.

Motion: Vice Chair Hand made a motion to approve Item 4 as presented; second by Commissioner DePuy. Motion approved 7-0.

5. Variance 13-06 Brick Row 7-Eleven: Consider and take necessary action on a request for a variance to the sign regulations of the Spring Valley Station District to allow a monument sign with digital display of gasoline prices. The site is located at 170 E. Spring Valley Road, the southeast corner of Spring Valley Road and Centennial Boulevard

Mr. Roberts explained that the variance had been before the Commission in April 2013; however, through an oversight, a public hearing was not held and the item was back on the agenda in order to hold the public hearing. He added that no changes had been made to the variance request since the last submittal.

Chairman Gantt reminded the Commission that the variance had passed unanimously at the previous meeting.

There were no questions for staff and Chairman Gantt opened the public hearing. No comments or questions in favor or opposed were received and Chairman Gantt closed the public hearing.

Motion: Commissioner Linn made a motion to approve Item 5 as presented; second by Vice Chair Hand. Motion approved 7-0.

6. Variances 13-07 & 13-08 Brick Row: Consider and take necessary action on a request for a variance to the sign regulations of the Spring Valley Station District to allow an off-premises monument sign. The site is located at 680 S. Greenville Avenue, on the north side of Emily Drive, west of Greenville Avenue.

Mr. Roberts advised that the developers of the Brick Row townhome area was requesting one variance to allow an off-premises neighborhood monument sign at the intersection of Greenville Avenue and Emily Lane; and a second variance to allow the sign to be five feet from the adjacent residential property. He added that the Spring Valley Station Development Regulations did not allow a sign type for either an off-premises sign or neighborhood monument sign.

Mr. Roberts pointed out that Chapter 18 of the City's regulations requires 30 feet from a sign to an adjacent residential property. He added that the proposed 4-foot by 10-foot sign would reflect the Brick Row logo, name, as well as the word "townhomes".

Chairman Gantt asked if the placement of the sign will intrude into the landscape area, and if so, would there be room to move the sign further to the south.

Mr. Roberts replied that the sign would encroach into the landscape area that has low-growth plants and seasonal color. He added that with the width of the sign (10 feet) would prevent it from being located anywhere else.

Vice Chair Hand asked if the requested variances would permanently change the Planned Development (PD), or would they be site specific.

Mr. Roberts replied it would be site specific only.

Commissioner Maxwell noted that the adjacent lot was undeveloped and wanted to know if the lot was owned by the developer or if it had been sold to CB Jeni.

Mr. Roberts replied that he did not think the lot had been purchased by CB Jeni.

Commissioner DePuy asked if the adjacent lot was designated for a townhome and Mr. Roberts replied that was correct.

Vice Chair Hand asked if the sign would be illuminated.

Mr. Roberts replied that there will be exterior illumination and suggested the applicant might be better able to answer the question.

Commissioner Linn asked if the proposed monument sign would replace the temporary promotional signage previously approved by the Commission.

Mr. Robert said he did not believe it would, but again suggested the applicant would be able to answer the question.

With no other questions for staff, Chairman Gantt opened the public hearing.

Scott Levi, L & B Realty, representing the property owner, 8750 N. Central Expressway, Suite 800, Dallas, Texas, stated the sign would have material similar to what has been used on the townhomes in the area and would be illuminated with bullet lights. In regard to ownership of the lot, he was not sure if the property had been sold to CD Jeni Homes, but the lot was intended to be used for a townhome.

Regarding the temporary sign advertising CB Jeni Homes, Mr. Levi said he thought they would be leaving the sign there until all the lots are sold.

Chairman Gantt asked if a future buyer would be notified that a monument sign would be located on the side of their property.

Mr. Levi replied that he thought the CB Jeni representatives have shown the proposed monument plan to almost everyone who has been interested in purchasing property in the townhome development. He added that the current and future homeowners were in favor of the sign and felt it would "brand" the neighborhood.

Mr. Levi noted that landscaping around the property was handled through a contract with a landscaping company and if the landscaping was impacted by construction of the sign, then those plants will be relocated.

Commissioner Frederick asked if there would be privacy fences built on the townhome end lots.

Mr. Levi replied that so far no privacy fences have been built and he did not know if the PD allowed any type of privacy fence.

Commissioner DePuy asked to clarify the statement that the other residents of the community were in favor of the sign.

Mr. Levi replied that everyone he has spoken with was in favor of the monument sign and felt it would help "brand" their community.

Chairman Gantt asked staff if the PD allowed privacy fences.

Mr. Roberts replied that the approved development plans did not allow privacy fence with the exception of the southernmost lot adjacent to undeveloped office tract. He added that the development plans only showed foundation plantings along the side of the townhomes.

Mr. Kevin Williams, 748 Matthew Place, Richardson, Texas, stated he was in favor of the proposed monument sign; however, he wanted to know if there was an option to move it further east, closer to the street, and suggested there should be landscaping underneath the sign.

No other comments were made in favor or opposed and Chairman Gantt asked the applicant if he would like to reply to Mr. Williams' comments.

Mr. Levi stated that as far as the placement of the sign, the red line on the plans indicated a 25-foot setback and if the sign would go within the setback that would mean requesting another variance from the City. He said he was not opposed to moving the sign closer and thought that would increase the visibility.

Regarding landscaping around the sign, Mr. Levi said they would keep as much of the current landscaping and add seasonal color as well.

Chairman Gantt concurred that landscaping around the monument sign would be better and asked for a response to the question about lighting on the sign.

Mr. Levi replied that there will be small, bullet lights that will focus the beam on the sign so it will not bleed over onto the homes and become a nuisance.

Commissioner Frederick asked if the applicant had considered putting the sign on an angle for better visibility and did not think another variance would be needed to make that change.

Mr. Levi replied that as long as the sign was behind the setback line he did not think a variance would be needed. In addition, the initial proposal for placement of the sign was to accommodate all directions of traffic for the highest visibility possible, particularly on Greenville Avenue, and angling the sign might not meet that goal; however, he was open to meeting with the residents to get their input.

Vice Chair Hand concurred with Ms. Frederick and the fact that an entry sign was needed for the community, but he was concerned about the style of lettering on the sign because of previous experience with this type of sign being vandalized. He asked if the applicant was open to changing to a more standardized monument sign similar to what the city used that is made of cast stone. He was also concerned that the logo might become obsolete if the community was ever rebranded.

Mr. Hand also asked staff if they had communicated with the City department in charge of approving neighborhood signs.

Mr. Levi replied that any rebranding would not be in the near future or by the current owners because so much time and money had been invested in branding Brick Row. He added that the proposed style of lettering versus a cast stone might be an option to consider and was wondering if the item would have to be tabled in order to allow a possible redesign of the sign.

Chairman Gantt stated that the Commission was voting whether or not to grant two variances and not on the design of the sign.

Mr. Levi said he would prefer not to table the item and he did not have the authority to change the design of the sign. Levi offered to discuss the recommendations with his superiors.

Vice Chair Hand acknowledged that the Commission was not an architectural committee, but felt the sustainability of the sign would affect his decision to vote in favor or not.

Chairman Gantt stated that Mr. Hand's suggestions were good points for the applicant to consider, but reminded the Commission that the approval of the variances – placement and allowing off-premises, was what was under the Commission's purview.

Mr. Levi acknowledged that constant maintenance cost on the sign would pose an issue and he would investigate further the possibility of removing the metal letters from the sign.

Commissioner DePuy asked the applicant if he felt the proposed placement of the sign was the best location for optimal visibility.

Mr. Levi replied that he had looked at angling the sign, and was not opposed to that, but he was trying to stay within the City's 25-foot setback. In addition, he had reviewed the sight visibility triangle and felt the sign would still be visible if a home was built on Lot 36A.

Commissioner Maxwell noted that the only thing the Commission was approving relative to placement was the request to have the sign 5 feet off the property line.

Chairman Gantt concurred and added that the variance for allowing an off-premises sign was also under consideration. He also wanted to know if the 25-foot setback was standard City policy.

Mr. Roberts replied that the Spring Valley Station District standards require a 25-foot setback for monument signs, and Chapter 18 has a 20-foot setback for signs.

Commissioner Roland asked if the placement would cause any problems with line-of-site for traffic and Mr. Roberts replied there would not be a problem as long as the sign is at least 12 feet from back of curb.

Commissioner Bright asked if the item would have to be renotified for a public hearing if the Commission considered something other than a 25-foot setback.

Mr. Roberts replied that it would and the notice would have to done before a separate variance was submitted. He added that the minimum setback would have to be 20 feet unless the applicant wanted to go through the Sign Board of Adjustment.

Commissioner Bright said a 20-foot setback would increase the presence and visibility and he would vote in favor.

Mr. Roberts replied that if the applicant wanted to ask for an additional five feet for a total of a 20-foot setback, then they would have to submit another variance request. He added that the Commission could approve the current request and the applicant could return with a new variance request asking for the additional five feet, or the Commission could deny the current request and the applicant could resubmit and ask for a 20-foot setback at a later date.

Commissioner Maxwell asked to confirm that the Commission was only approving a request for placement of the sign at five feet off the property line and not a 25-foot setback.

Mr. Roberts clarified that the required setback in the Spring Valley Station District was 25 feet for monument signs.

Chairman Gantt asked if the applicant was comfortable with a 25-foot setback or would they prefer to resubmit and request a 20-foot setback.

Mr. Levi replied that a 20-foot setback would be a little better, but he did want to avoid having to pay the fees involved with submitting another variance. He said he was not opposed to waiting.

Chairman Gantt said the Commission understood the need for the sign, but explained that if the Commission voted to approve the current request, the sign would have to be placed at 25 feet and not 20 feet. He added that if the applicant really wanted the sign at 20 feet, then that could have an effect on how the Commissioners voted.

Mr. Levi asked if the item was tabled and he submitted a 20-foot request would the item be placed on the next City Plan agenda.

Mr. Chavez replied that since there was no notification process, the item could be on the next agenda. However, the applicant and Commission should consider the radius on the pavement and if the sign was moved up five feet, then there could be a reduction in the side setback.

Commissioner Linn stated that if the sign was maintained at the current size, and moved forward five feet, there was a possibility of encroaching on the sidewalk. He asked if the applicant was willing to shrink the size of the sign.

Mr. Levi replied that the reason mentioned by Mr. Linn was why they originally asked for a 25-foot setback.

Commissioner Bright asked if the now vacant lot, Lot 36A was developed, would it impact the visibility of the monument sign.

Chairman Gantt replied the applicant discussed earlier his review of the site and that even with the development of Lot 36A the sign would still be visible for southbound traffic.

Mr. Williams asked to address the Commission again and requested that the sign should be visible from either direction, or an optimal spot for the sign to be visible from at least one direction. He felt the option being presented did not meet either goal and agreed with Ms. Frederick's assessment that the sign should be angled for optimal viewing.

With no further questions or comments, Chairman Gantt closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Hand asked if the both variances were approved would that be the end of any adjustments to the request.

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Chairman Gantt replied that the applicant would have the option to put a sign at the spot indicated, whether it was angled or not, as long as it was behind the 25-foot setback and five feet or more from the property line.

Vice Chair Hand stated that there seemed to be some interest on the part of the homeowners and the applicant to work together to improve the sign. He said he was willing to vote in favor of the request and suggested the two parties work together.

Chairman Gantt stated the Commission could table the item, or approve the item and give the applicant the flexibility for make different choices about the design and/or placement. In addition, if the variance was approved, the applicant could submit another variance asking for a 20-foot setback. Gantt also suggested the applicant work with the homeowners for the best possible outcome.

Motion: Vice Chair Hand made a motion to approve Variance 13-07 as presented; second

by Commissioner DePuy. Motion approved 7-0.

Motion: Commissioner Maxwell made a motion to approve Variance 13-08 as presented;

second by Commissioner Linn. Motion approved 7-0.

ADJOURN

With no further business before the Commission, Chairman Gantt adjourned the regular business meeting at 7:58 p.m.

David Gantt, Chairman
City Plan Commission