

Official Minutes of the City of Cottonwood
Planning & Zoning Commission Regular Meeting
Held, January 23, 2012, at 6:00 P.M. at the Council Chambers
826 N. Main Street – Cottonwood, Arizona

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chairman Kiyler called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

Planning & Zoning Commission Members Present

Chairman Kiyler	Vice Chair Diane Lovett	Jean Wilder
Robert Williams	Judd Wasden	Donald Speer

Commissioner Cox was absent.

Staff Members Present

George Gehlert, Community Development Director
Leslie Wager, Administrative Coordinator, Recorder
Dan Lueder, Development Services General Manager
Nichole Arbeiter, Planner, Community Development

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2012

Motion: ***To reappoint Ed Kiyler as Chairperson***

Made by: ***Vice Chair Lovett***
Second: ***Commissioner Wasden***
Vote: ***Unanimous***

Motion: ***To reappoint Diane Lovett as Vice Chairperson***

Made by: ***Commissioner Speer***
Second: ***Commissioner Wasden***
Vote: ***Unanimous***

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 24, 2011

Motion: ***To approve the minutes of October 24, 2011 as written.***

Made by: ***Vice Chair Lovett***
Second: ***Commissioner Speer***
Vote: ***Unanimous***

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (NONE)

NEW BUSINESS

1. **CUP 11-015 and DR 11-024** Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit for placement of a roof deck sign on the existing 4-story Verde Valley Medical Center building, at an elevation of approximately 75 feet above grade. The request also includes Design Review of the approximately 800 square foot illuminated sign. The site is located on 31.4 acres in a C-1 (Light Commercial) zone. Address: 269 S. Candy Lane. APN: 406-33-020E. Owner/Applicant: Verde Valley Medical Center. Agent: Dale Johnson / Signs Plus.

Director Gehlert stated this is a request for a Conditional Use permit by Verde Valley Medical Center for a rather large sign. Director Gehlert stated there is no provision within the sign code, Section 405, for the type of sign identified in the proposal. The Sign Code allows for a maximum sign size of three-hundred square feet, fifteen feet tall and building height of seventy-five feet. The proposal would place an approximately eight-hundred square foot illuminated sign on the mechanical enclosure located atop the roof of the fourth story. Director Gehlert stated the proposed sign has black letters that will turn white at night. The Verde Valley Medical Center is a campus style facility located on thirty acres in a light commercial zone surrounded by an industrial zone. Director Gehlert stated the hospital representatives suggest that the sign proposal would be a benefit to public safety as well as to help publicize the existence of a regional medical center in our community, thereby also benefitting local economic development objectives identified in the General Plan in regards to the attraction of medical support services, senior living, etc.

Director Gehlert stated the Community Development Department has the following concerns:

- The sign code (Section 405.G.4) caps the height of building mounted signs at the plate line of the roof, or fifteen feet (whichever is less). However, through the Design Review process, building mounted signs have been approved at heights above this elevation due to the increased size and proportion of the building (i.e., Home Depot, Wal-Mart, other nearby medical buildings). As these tend to be 1-2 story structures, none of the signs approaches the height suggested in this proposal. This would be the tallest in the City.
- The Commission and Council recently approved changes to the sign code to allow larger building mounted signs, based on the size of the building. Regardless, the cap would be three-hundred square feet for the entire building. The proposal is close to eight-hundred square feet.

Director Gehlert stated the Staff recommendations are as follows:

1. That the sign be developed in conformance to the proposal dated 12-13-11.
2. Any other stipulations that the Commission deems necessary.

Vice Chair Lovett expressed concern if this proposal is approved will the Commission be setting a precedent for a four story hotel, if built, to be allowed a

sign this large as well. Director Gehlert stated that could be a possibility; however it would be brought before the Commission as a Conditional Use permit or the sign code could be amended to address the issue.

Chairman Kiyler inquired if the proposed sign follows the dark sky ordinance. Director Gehlert stated the code prohibits a brightly lit background and the light will shine through the letters versus the letters themselves being white.

Rick Peterson, from the Verde Valley Medical Center, stated he believes this proposal is of special consideration. This is a community based hospital which has patients and visitors coming from quite a distance. People drive right by the facility, especially at night and the proposed sign would be a good identifier.

Dale Johnson of Signs Plus stated that the proposed sign is low voltage LED lighting and has small perforators in the vinyl that allow enough light through to make the letters look white. Johnson stated the sign will be toned down from white acrylic so the sign lumens will not be as high as acrylic.

Commissioner Williams stated he does not care for the size of the sign; however the sign itself is great. Johnson stated the location of the sign is one thousand feet from the highway, in perspective the sign looks nowhere near as large as it actually is. Peterson stated they had people on the roof with actual size lettering, some of the original choices looked too small and some too large, the final selection was in the middle of those sizes. Peterson stated that VVMC originally wanted to put signs on all sides of the building then decided on the south side being sufficient enough.

Jon Linford, Attorney, who represents the owners at 315 South Willard, stated they are in full support of the sign. The owners believe the sign is well constructed, will improve development and property value.

Commissioner Wasden expressed his concern for allowing such a big sign as there are two signs on Willard and on Candy Lane directing patrons to the hospital. Commissioner Wasden was also skeptical about the size of the letters, the fact that they are white, high up in the night sky and staying in the standards of the City's dark sky ordinance. Director Gehlert stated he believes the brightness of the letters is adjustable. Johnson stated it is possible to tone down the brightness if needed. Peterson stated Johnson feels it is possible to put different mechanism on the power supplies in order to respect the City's dark sky ordinance.

Vice Chair Lovett and Commissioner Wasden expressed their concern that if the Commission approves this sign, will they be setting a precedent to allow new big buildings to obtain signs of the same size and nature. Commissioner Wasden inquired once the sign is operational can we revisit in case the sign is too bright. Director Gehlert stated the Commission make a stipulation for Staff to conduct a follow up review on the brightness.

Motion: *To approve CUP 11-015 and DR 11-024 with the following stipulations:*

- 1. The sign be developed in conformance to the proposal dated 12-13-11 subject also to installation if dimming mechanisms.*
- 2. A follow up review of the lighting brightness be conducted by the Community Development Director after installation. Further dimming may be required.*

Made by: *Vice Chair Lovett*
Second: *Commissioner Speer*
Vote: *Unanimous*

2. **DR 11-015** Design Review for a 10,530 square foot car sales and service facility to be located on 2.43 acres in a C-2 (Heavy Commercial) zone along the east side of Rodeo Drive, approximately 500 feet north of its intersection with State Route 260. Address: 2090 E. Rodeo Drive. APN: 406-12-042D. Owner/Applicant: GRL, Inc. Agent: Robert Woods.

Director Gehlert stated this site is part of a larger heavy commercial corridor which includes Wal-Mart and the current Larry Green Chevrolet dealership and some undeveloped property to the west. A substantial wash channel is also located across the front of the property adjacent to Rodeo Drive. This lot was graded when the dealership was built. Director Gehlert presented the Commission with a slide show presentation of what the property and surrounding properties currently look like. Director Gehlert stated the Staff issues with the proposal are as follows:

- Ordinance 144 would require the development of a sidewalk across the frontage of this site, within the Rodeo Drive right-of-way. Due to the significant wash corridor which occurs in this location, Staff has suggested that instead, the applicant should provide an ADA accessible crosswalk between the access drive on Rodeo Drive and the Wal-Mart frontage.
- The submitted lumen count for the lighting proposal is in excess of the City's lighting code standard. The code provides that the submittal be certified by a lighting engineer.
- Other possible revisions might include pulling out the building's front entryway (on the south elevation) as an additional means to break up the flat building façade; adding an adjacent overhang to provide additional shade next to the front door; and moving the Cottonwood sign so that it's adjacent to the Hyundai sign (it seems out of place on the elevation). Might also reduce the size of the word "Cottonwood".

Chairman Kiyler inquired how tall the sign is going to be. Director Gehlert stated it will be fifteen feet tall. Bob Woods, Architect on the project, stated the entry signs actual size with the stone base is twenty feet tall, however, different heights can be ordered.

Woods stated on the elevations there are less metal, warmer colors and stone. Woods stated Hyundai did not like the idea of a stone on the building so the new idea is to change the stone to stucco which would create three tones on the building. Woods stated the rock dressing on the building will be the same as the Larry Green building. The retaining wall will be a natural color and four feet tall at its highest point. Woods stated all the suggestions and recommendations from City Staff will be followed. Director Gehlert inquired if that would include shading the building, more shade on the glass. Woods replied he is willing to work on that; however, Hyundai is not fond of adding canopies.

Commissioner Wasden since there is no room for a sidewalk, will they be adding landscape along the road. Woods stated they will continue the landscape design of Larry Green along the road.

Director Gehlert inquired if there was still going to be metal used on the building. Woods stated the revised plans include all stucco and no metal.

Director Gehlert stated Staff recommends approval of the project with the following stipulations:

1. That the site be developed in conformance to the Letter of Intent, site/landscaping, elevations and sign plans (all dated 1-3-12), as may be further modified by the Commission.
2. That all Code Review comments from the meeting of 11-8-11 be addressed.
3. That the grading and drainage plan be approved by Engineering prior to issuance of any permits.
4. That the applicant submit a plan for ADA accessible crosswalk improvements between the access drive and the Wal-Mart frontage on Rodeo Drive.
5. That the outdoor lighting submittal be certified by a licensed lighting engineer.
6. Anything else the Commission deems necessary.

Director Gehlert suggested the Commission add a stipulation requiring the dedication of Rodeo Drive.

Commissioner Williams stated this is an excellent project. Commissioner Wasden stated the building will be a good addition to the area; however, he would like to see the entry sign at fifteen feet instead of twenty feet.

Motion: *To approve DR 11-015 with the following stipulations:*

1. *The site be developed in conformance to the Letter of Intent, site/landscaping, elevations and sign plans dated 1-3-12.*
2. *All Code Review comments from the meeting of 11-8-11 be addressed.*
3. *The grading and drainage plan be approved by Engineering prior to issuance of any permits.*
4. *The applicant submit a plan for ADA accessible crosswalk improvements between the access drive and the Wal-Mart frontage on Rodeo Drive.*
5. *The outdoor lighting submittal be certified by a licensed lighting engineer.*
6. *The dedication of Rodeo Drive.*

Made by: *Vice Chair Lovett*
Second: *Commissioner Williams*
Vote: *Unanimous*

APPROVAL OF BY-LAWS

Motion: *To approve the By-Laws as written*

Made by: *Commissioner Wasden*
Second: *Commissioner Speer*
Vote: *Unanimous*

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND UPDATES

Director Gehlert stated there is a joint session with the City Council scheduled for March 13, 2012 at 6pm at the Cottonwood Recreation Center. Director Gehlert stated at the meeting we will be reviewing the City's General Plan, discussing electronic messaging signs and a couple other planning projects.

Development Services General Manager, Dan Lueder stated the old City Maintenance Building is cleaned out and will be burned by the Fire Department for training. Lueder stated the artist drawings for the Riverfront Plant will be ready this summer and eventually brought before the Commission for input. Lueder stated the City Council has directed the City to start designing a new City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Kiyler adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.