

Planning and Zoning Board

Study Session Minutes

Virtual Platform

Date: March 10, 2021 Time: 3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Vice Chair Jessica Sarkissian
*Tim Boyle
*Shelly Allen
* Jeffrey Crockett
* Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo
* Ben Ayers

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chair Dane Astle

(*Boardmembers and staff participated in the meeting through the use of telephonic and audio conference equipment)

STAFF PRESENT:

Nana Appiah
Tom Ellsworth
Lesley Davis
Wahid Alam
Evan Balmer
Jennifer Gniffke
Charlotte McDermott
Rebecca Gorton

OTHERS PRESENT:

None

1. Call meeting to order.

Vice Chair Sarkissian declared a quorum present and the meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Review items on the agenda for the March 10, 2021 regular Planning and Zoning Board Hearing.

Staffmember Kellie Rorex presented case ZON20-00706 to the Board. This request before you this afternoon is for Site Plan Review and will allow for the development of a Raising Cane's restaurant with a double drive-thru. The site is located south of Red Mountain 202 freeway on the east side of Dobson Road and is on the west side of the Base Pro Shop parcel within Mesa Riverview. The General Plan Character Area is Mixed Use Activity District which contains shopping areas, power centers or lifestyle centers that are designed to attract people from a large radius. The site is also within the Regional-scale sub area of the Mixed Use Activity District and the goal of the that sub area is to provide a location for businesses and attractions that bring people to Mesa from a larger region. The proposed use on the site conforms with the goals of the General Plan Character and sub-area. This site is zoned General Commercial, and the purpose of the General Commercial District is to provide indoor retail limited outdoor display and related service oriented businesses.

The site plan shows a double drive-thru north of the site which wraps around the west side of the building parallel to Dobson Road. The Mesa Zoning Ordinance states that drive-thru lanes should not be located parallel to arterial streets. However, when there are certain site conditions that exist, then they can be screened by a 40-inch screen wall which is required adjacent to the public right of way. The driving lanes proposed are separated by the road by a large, landscaped tract which is about 30 feet.

The proposed use on the site should be parked at 37 parking spaces and the applicants are providing 14 parking spaces. However, the excess parking around Bass Pro Shop will allow customers to be able to park the site sufficiently. And lastly, the applicants are also proposing a 400 square foot outdoor eating area on the east side of the building.

The applicant went to the Design Review Board last night and the Board did not have any comments on the elevations and recommended approval. The applicants completed a Citizen Participation Plan and they mailed out notification letters to property owners within 1,000 feet, HOA's and registered neighborhoods and there were no concerns.

So, overall, the site does comply with the Mesa 2040 General Plan and the Site Plan meets the criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance. Staff does recommend approval with conditions. There were no comments or questions from the Board.

Staffmember Wahid Alam presented case ZON20-00824 to the Board. This request is for a Site Plan Review for a proposed minor automobile service and repair facility and is located on the southwest corner of Signal Butte Road and Guadalupe Road just west of the intersection.

The General Plan is Neighborhood Suburban and it contains commercial uses along arterial frontages and at major street intersections. The proposed use is in conformance with the Neighborhood Suburban character area. The Zoning is Limited Commercial (LC) and the purpose of the LC is to support the surrounding residential area within one-to-ten-mile radius. The proposed use of minor automobile/vehicle service and repair facilities are permitted use within the Zoning District.

The site plan shows orientation of the building to comply with the zoning code with the three drive-thru bay doors screened away from the road. The site has two access points from the shared common driveways. The applicant went before the Design Review Board on February 9, 2021 and received positive comments with suggestions for very minor changes. The applicant is working with staff to address the minor changes.

The applicant also completed a Citizen Participation Plan and reached out to the group commercial center, property owners within 1,000 feet, HOA's and Registered Neighborhoods. Staff findings are that the proposed development complies with the Mesa 2040 General Plan and meets the Review Criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance. Staff recommends approval with conditions. There were no comments or questions from the Board.

Staffmember Jennifer Gniffke presented case ZON20-00838 to the Board. The request is for Site Plan Review and a Special Use Permit. The existing site is developed with a restaurant and a vacant motel consisting of five buildings and the request is for the redevelopment of the motel into apartment homes. The location is east of Country Club Drive on the north side of

Main Street.

Site photos show the view of buildings four and five from Morris and the view of building two and the porte-cochere from Main Street. Site photos show the southeast corner of building one and part of the existing porte-cochere and the last photo shows the hot tub area in the interior courtyard of the site. The purpose of this Site Plan Review is for approval to establish the residential density, building area and yard regulations on the property.

Several changes are proposed to the front of this site including the removal of one of the two existing driveways off of Main Street and conversion of the porte-cochere into a covered amenity area, as well as construction of a new overhead entry feature extending out towards Main Street. The slide shows an enlarged site plan of the front of the development. The amenity area includes seating and a dog park. New accent paving and a new walkway extend through this area and out to Main Street.

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for a reduction to the number of required parking spaces. Because of the site's proximity to the Light Rail Station and other Transit Modes and its location in the downtown area with its public parking program, Staff is in support of this request.

The Design Review Board discussed this proposal yesterday evening and they had a number of comments. The Design Review Board was very supportive of the conceptual sign design and would like to see more vibrant colors continued throughout the development. The Board has concerns about the existing tile roof that is proposed to remain throughout most of the development. They suggested a condition of approval that would require the roof to be replaced with a more contemporary material whenever there is such a future need.

A Citizen Participation process was completed by the applicant and provided notification of property owners within 1,000 feet, HOA's and registered neighborhoods. A neighborhood meeting was held on February 17, 2021 and staff has not received any feedback from the neighbors regarding the proposed Site Plan.

In summary, this request complies with the 2040 Mesa General Plan as well as with the Central Main Street Area Plan. It meets the review criteria for a Special Use Permit as well as for Site Plan Review. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Boardmember Jeff Crockett inquired if the hotel rooms are going to be converted to living spaces. Ms. Gniffke confirmed that to be correct and there will be the same number of units as currently as the number of hotel rooms. Mr. Crockett inquired if each unit will be a single room as opposed to, for example, one bedroom, kitchen and living area. Ms. Gniffke confirmed that each unit will consist of a studio apartment.

Mr. Crockett asked what has the developer done to ensure quality development of the re-use and is the City satisfied about quality development of the proposed use. Staffmember Jennifer Gniffke stated the applicant has proposed the pedestrian amenities along the front of the project to ensure that it is in conformance with the General Plan and the Central Main Street Area Plan. They have also incorporated additional landscaping throughout the development, as well as hardscaping. The information from the Central Main Plan, which includes having quality construction that meets or exceeds the level of quality established by the public investment in the light rail line. Some examples of that would include the landscaping,

hardscaping, and there is some public art along the light rail line as well. For example, also there is the light rail infrastructure located to the west of this site that has some screening that is architecturally designed and similar to the screening that is proposed on the project.

The last question by Boardmember Crockett is if there has been a designated date set for the roof to be replaced and confirmed that staffmember Gniffke stated when the roof is replaced it would have contemporary roofing material used. Ms. Gniffke stated there is no date specified and staff is still drafting that condition of approval.

Mr. Crockett asked how this gets tracked by the City. Principal Planner Tom Ellsworth explained there was a discussion at last night's Design Review Board regarding the quality of the development and the proposed improvements. The Board recognized that this was an Adaptive Reuse project along the Main Street Corridor so they were focused on those improvements that were being proposed as part of the pedestrian connectivity along that Central Main Area against some of the guidelines in the Central Main Street Plan.

Planning Director Nana Appiah stated another question Boardmember Crockett had was about quality. One of the things they are doing is internal remodeling of the units. So, they are refurbishing the interior of all of the units as well and putting in new equipment in the gym as well. There are several internal refurbishments the applicant is doing in addition to the façade area, some landscaping and parking lot improvements as well.

Boardmember Allen confirmed there is quite a reduction in parking. And obviously staff is comfortable with the reduction of parking because of the light rail right next to the project. She also asked if there there been any kind of a Good Neighbor Policy submitted with the application to address any potential future offsite parking issues that may affect surrounding business. Ms. Gniffke stated she is unaware of any Good Neighbor Policy that is in place currently. Ms. Allen confirmed staff is comfortable with the reduction in parking since staff recommended approval but are there any concerns about that at all. Dr. Appiah stated staff does not have issues with the parking. Looking at the Central Main Street Plan and that this location across the street from the Light Rail, we want to encourage people to use the Light Rail. Based on our review, we did not have any issues. And as you may know, our parking standards do not consider the number of bedrooms unlike other jurisdictions, where you have number of parking spaces based on the number of bedrooms. The City's requirement is based on the number of units.

Boardmember Boyle stated his concerns are with the direction to revitalize downtown and all the effort that is being put into the ASU project. And has general concerns with the parking and the quality of the project, similar to the concerns that Boardmember Crockett and Allen discussed. He believes the City Planning staff is looking out for the City and trying to do this but is uneasy about the direction that this project is going for and what we are trying to do in the next 10 to 20 years in downtown. He would like to discuss this in more depth during the regular meeting.

Vice Chair Sarkissian stated she is not as concerned with the parking because it is a change from hotel to a residence. Whereas in a hotel, people are driving to the location versus where this one has residents and there is the light rail access directly in front of the building. There will be a lot more tenants or users, residents who want that light rail access as opposed to having more people drive to the location. If the Board wishes, we will pull this case from the

consent agenda to discuss further. Mr. Boyle would like to have this case pulled from the consent agenda.

Boardmember Ayers stated he is not necessarily as worried about this. There will be 120 studio apartments with 153 parking spaces. It is already at almost a 1.2 ratio for parking per studio unit, which is ample parking spaces and it is to be a transit oriented development with the light rail right across the street.

Staffmember Evan Balmer presented case ZON20-00846 to the Board. There are few requests associated with this case. The first portion is a rezoning of 41.7 acres of the overall 337-acre site. This request also includes two Special Use Permits and Site Plan Review. The property is currently located in Maricopa County. As part of this project, there is a companion annexation case that is moving forward with this to City Council. These requests would allow for the development of a recreation facility. The subject property is cross hatched on this map and located on the east side of Ellsworth Road north of Pecos.

The General Plan Character Area for this site is Mixed Use Community. The goals of the Mixed Use Community Character Area are a mix of uses including employment, office, open space, recreational and residential to really create a complete community with a sense of place. This is also located in the Logistics and Commerce District of the Gateway Strategic Development Plan. Per that plan, industrial uses and commercial uses would be the predominant uses in the Logistics and Commerce District. As previously mentioned, there is an annexation request as part of this project and the City would assign City of Mesa comparable zoning designation to what is currently on the property in Maricopa County.

The portion of the site that is cross hatched in black on the map is zoned Industrial-2 (IND-2) in the County and approximately 295.3 acres would get a comparable zoning of Light Industrial (LI) within the City. The portion that is cross hatched on the map in blue in the southeast portion has a Maricopa County designation of RU-43 and a comparable zoning designation in the City of Mesa would be Agriculture (AG). The rezoning request is for that 41.7 acres portion of the property in the southeast corner is being requested to rezone from Agriculture (AG) to Leisure and Recreation (LR).

There are a few major components of the Site Plan. The first part is the three buildings located in the center of this site which total approximately 477,000 square feet. They are all proposed gymnasium buildings for uses such as basketball, volleyball, gymnastics. There are also associated retail and restaurants within those buildings. There are 41 pickleball courts on this site and located just on the west side of Building A. There are 24 soccer fields on the southern portion of the site; 12 sand volleyball courts northeast of the soccer fields; eight baseball fields between the soccer fields and the buildings; eight baseball fields in the northeast corner of this site; and a large event line located just south of the buildings.

There are two Special Use Permit requests as part of this project. The first is for a parking reduction and the applicant did submit a parking study for two reasons. The first is there are uses shown on this site that do not have a parking designation in the Zoning Ordinance, primarily for the soccer, baseball fields and large outdoor uses. When we have a use that is not defined in the Zoning Ordinance for parking calculations, the applicant will submit a parking study and an engineer analyzes similar communities and projects to develop a parking count for those. Based on all the fields shown and all the indoor uses, there will be a total of 3,532 vehicular parking spaces required and the applicant is proposing 2,625 spaces. In the

event additional parking is needed, they indicated an overflow parking area on the site plan on the west side of the pickleball courts. They are also requesting a reduction in bicycle parking from the 202 spaces that would be required per code to 160 bicycle spaces.

The second Special Use Request is to exceed the maximum height within the Airfield Overflight Area (AOA). Per 11-7 of the Zoning Ordinance, the maximum height in the LI District is 40 feet. There are two areas that they are requesting to exceed that height. The first is the building height of 58 feet and that is specifically where there is an architectural tower element located on Building C, that has a maximum height of 58 feet. Additionally, the ball field lighting is proposed to be 99 feet, and all of the ball field lighting is directly across the street from the airport and would require FAA approval as this moves through the process.

The applicant is also asking for an alternative landscape plan. Section 11-33-7 of the Zoning Ordinance allows for flexibility and landscape design if there are findings of unique characteristics of the site and the property use of this site and large-scale recreation would fall under that category. There are two deviations that are being requested through the alternative landscape plan. The first is a reduction in the size of the parking lot islands and are required to be 8x15 and the applicant is doing diamonds within the parking field. The second is a relocation of the perimeter landscaping on the south side of the site. What the applicant is proposing is to add additional landscaping around the exterior of the parking field. There will be some Bioswales and enhanced landscaping that helps to screen the parking area, and additional foundation based landscaping around the buildings around the event lawn. The trees and landscaping that would have been required along the southern property line would be relocated in the areas that would be more frequented by visitors to the site.

This did go to the Design Review Board last night and overall, the Board was very appreciative of the design, they did have two kind of overarching comments. The first was to look at ways to improve the elevations, maybe through adding accent colors, some slightly different design canopies, things would add a little more visual interest. And the second was that they are also looking for some additional landscaping, maybe some larger parking lot islands and some additional trees around the event lawn and around the buildings.

They did complete their Citizen Participation Plan and notified property owners within 1,000 feet of this site, as well as Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport and have been in close contact with the airport as this moves through the process. This does comply with the Mesa 2040 General Plan, the Gateway Strategic Development Plan, and meets the criteria for Special Use Permit in Site Plan Review. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Boardmember Crockett inquired if the fields will be natural turf and Mr. Balmer responded there will be a combination of natural grass and synthetic turf with the majority of the fields would be as synthetic turf.

Mr. Crockett asked what staff knows about the water use for this project and where the water will be coming from. Mr. Balmer stated the water has been a point of discussion through all of this and their design has changed a little based on the water demands on the property, which is why the majority of the fields have gone to synthetic turf. The City of Mesa would be providing the water used on the site.

The second question by Boardmember Crockett is how much infrastructure and what type of infrastructure will the developer be bringing to this project and will Mesa be providing any.

Veronica Gonzalez, Development Services Project Manager has been working with the developer for a while on a Development Agreement (DA) for this project and does include public infrastructure. The public infrastructure for this project will actually be installed by the developer at the developer's expense. It was confirmed there is no public infrastructure that Mesa would be providing in connection with this project. Ms. Gonzalez stated the developer will be paying for the improvements, and there is a provision for a reimbursement from the 2020 Mesa Moves Bond program for Williams Field Road. Mr. Crockett asked what would happen if the annexation was not approved by City Council. Ms. Gonzalez stated the annexation is necessary for this project to receive public utility service from Mesa, mainly water and sewer. If the annexation does not proceed, it would present an unusual circumstance that we would have to deal with at that point. The developer would not have City water and sewer to service the site.

Dr. Appiah stated the annexation will be considered by the City Council before the actual project. If the Annexation fails, the case will definitely be continued for reassessment or revaluation.

Mr. Balmer responded to Boardmember Crockett question if the intent is to develop the project in phases. It is the intent of the developer to develop in a single phase. Boardmember Crockett inquired if this Sports Complex is anticipated to be a destination and kind of development or where people will be coming from out of town. Mr. Balmer stated it is intended to be a destination that would host large soccer tournaments and baseball tournaments around the valley. There are a number of accommodations in the area, and the hope is that a large facility like this would spur some additional development in the area.

3. Planning Director's Updates.

- Decisions of the City Council's March 1, 2021 land use hearings.

Planning Director Nana Appiah informed the Board of the land use decisions made by City Council decisions on March 1. There were several big projects that were on the agenda. The projects are: Eastmark Community Plan, Cadence Community Plan amendment, the addition to the Mekong Plaza and a hotel. All of these projects were recommended for approval by the City Council.

On February 25th, we did have a lengthy City Council discussion about current planning, as well as Long Range Planning goals and strategies. Staff will be having the same conversation and discussion with the Planning and Zoning Board at the study session on March 24. We are actually really looking forward to talking to you about this. As we continue to review current development, we also need to work on our Long Term Strategies and how we can continue to improve the City's urban form.

4. Adjournment.

Boardmember Villanueva-Saucedo motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:41 pm. The motion was seconded by Boardmember Allen.

Vote: 6-0 Approved (Chair Astle, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Sarkissian, Boyle, Allen, Crockett, Villanueva-Saucedo and Ayers

NAYS – None

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nana K. Appiah', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nana K. Appiah, AICP, Secretary
Planning Director

Note: Audio recordings of the Planning & Zoning Board study sessions are available in the Planning Division Office for review. The regular Planning & Zoning Board meeting is “live broadcasted” through the City of Mesa’s website at www.mesaaz.gov.