



Planning and Zoning Board

Study Session Minutes

Virtual Platform

Date: September 9, 2020 Time: 3:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Chair Dane Astle
*Tim Boyle
*Shelly Allen
*Jeffrey Crockett
*Ben Ayers

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Vice Chair Jessica Sarkissian
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo

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

STAFF PRESENT:

Nana Appiah
Tom Ellsworth
Lesley Davis
Ryan McCann
Kellie Rorex
Charlotte McDermott
Rachel Prelog
Rebecca Gorton

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeff McVay

1. Call meeting to order.

Chair Astle declared a quorum present and the meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m.

2. Review items on the agenda for the September 9, 2020 Zoning Board Hearing.
Staffmember Ryan McCann, Planner II, presented case ZON20-00283 to the Board. Mr. McCann introduced the request to rezone the subject property from Agricultural (AG) to RM-2-PAD and Site Plan Review to allow for the development of attached, single-family residence townhome product intended for individual ownership. The property to the west of the site is zoned PEP; the property south of the location site (across Baseline Road) is within the Town of Gilbert; east of the site is an existing industrial development zoned LI; and to the north of the subject site are existing single-family residences. The General Plan Character Area Designation is Neighborhood with a Suburban Subtype. Mr. McCann explained that the character area allows for a diversity of housing types and encourages higher densities along arterial street frontages and major intersections.

Mr. McCann explained that as part of the PAD request, the applicant is proposing several deviations from the Mesa Zoning Ordinance. The proposed deviations included: 1) A 10-foot reduction in the minimum building and landscape setback along an arterial road (Baseline

Road) from 30 feet to 20 feet; 2) A five-foot reduction in the minimum building and landscape setback along the collector road (Recker Road) from 25 feet to 20 feet; 3) A 10-foot reduction to the interior side setback (along the east side property) to be reduced from 30 feet to 20 feet; 4) A 15-foot one inch reduction to the building separation requirement from 30 feet to 14 feet 11 inches; and 5) A three-foot reduction in the garage doors recess requirement, for the garage door to be recessed from the façade of the upper livable area, from the required 3 feet to 0 feet.

The application included a site plan showing 76 townhomes and a centrally located amenity space. Mr. McCann explained that the proposed development exhibited superior design by exceeding the private and public open space requirements and provided a well-designed street frontage, which included a unique perimeter wall design and additional landscaping.

Mr. McCann stated that the applicant completed a Citizen Participation Plan and held two neighborhood meetings. The first meeting was an in-person meeting held in March and the second meeting was held in June via WebEx. Both meetings were well attended; the neighbors voiced concerns about the potential for increased traffic on Recker Road, the potential for diminishing property values, a decline in the neighborhood atmosphere, and the overall development layout. Mr. McCann stated that Staff received several letters of opposition that were provided to the Board with the staff report.

In summary, Mr. McCann stated that the request complied with the 2040 General Plan, met the MZO review criteria for both Planned Area Development and Site Plan Review, and that staff is recommending approval with conditions.

Boardmember Allen asked what the City will receive in exchange for the deviations the applicant requested. Staff member McCann responded that in return for the requested deviations, the applicant is proposing increased shrubbery and ground covering along the of Baseline and Recker Road street frontages, enhanced amenities in the center of the development, and public and private open space in excess of what is required by the Code.

Boardmember Ayers stated that his question was along the same line; with neighborhood opposition, is it appropriate for the required setbacks to remain in place to provide more separation to the surrounding neighbors to provide a little more buffer. Mr. McCann responded that the applicant did not ask for any deviations along the north property line, which is adjacent to the residential properties. The site plan showed that the proposed development met or in some cases exceeded the required setback along the northern property line.

Boardmember Crockett inquired if staff heard anything about this project supporting the housing for the nearby school, AT Still. Mr. McCann responded he has not been informed if this was the purpose of the project and would need to ask the applicant for clarification. Mr. Crockett stated that there is a fair amount of opposition by the neighbors and he is wondering what the City will get in return for the approval of the requested deviations.

Dr. Appiah responded the zoning designation for the property to the east is LI (Light Industrial) zoning and the zoning across Recker Road is Planned Employment Park (PEP). Given the opportunity, residents typically like to live near their employment and this type of residential development provides a different type of housing for those looking to live close to their jobs. Dr. Appiah explained that the General Plan Character Area Designation encourages this type of housing at the corner of an intersection of arterial streets and that the development provides

a buffer on the corner to the single-family homes. Single-family development would not be appropriate at this location which is why staff is recommending approval.

Staff member Kellie Rorex, Planner I, presented case ZON20-00377 to the Board. Ms. Rorex introduced the request to rezone the subject site from Agricultural (AG) to OC-BIZ and Site Plan Review to allow for an office development. There was no discussion by the Board.

3. Receive and discuss a presentation on proposed text amendments to Chapters 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 31, 33, 86, and 87 of Title 11 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance including, but not limited to:
 - Modifying certain development standards for assisted living facilities, including distance separation from major roadway intersections;
 - Refining text related to development standards for residential uses in commercial districts to remove ambiguity;
 - Adding definitions for mixed-use developments, and boat and recreational vehicle storage;
 - Modifying the land use process required for mini-storage facilities; and
 - Addressing minor scrivener's errors in the Code.

Dr. Appiah explained that part of the General Plan comprehensive review is to evaluate implementation tools and make recommendations on items that could be refined or changed to better implement the goals of the General Plan. Dr. Appiah further stated that over time, we find that some Codes need clarification and updating.

Senior Planner, Rachel Prelog presented the proposed text amendments to the Board. Mrs. Prelog stated that city staff is working on several Code amendments that are smaller in scale than those presented to the Board previously. The first of these amendments was encouraged by Council and entails modifying assisted living standards. The goal of the amendments is to ensure that assisted living facilities are located in context appropriate areas and not on busy intersections. The proposed amendment would change the land use process that assisted living facilities go through. Currently, they are required to receive approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP); staff is proposing to change that requirement to a Council Use Permit (CUP). The proposed amendments would also create performance standards specific to assisted living facilities which include: 1) A 600-foot separation from major intersections; and 2) A 1,200-foot separation from another facility. These performance standards are intended to prevent an over concentration of uses in the area and keep facilities off busy intersections.

Boardmember Boyle asked for a clarification between assisted living facilities and group homes. Dr. Appiah stated the proposed amendment is specifically for assisted living facilities which are larger facilities for the aged. A group home would be a different use category such as sober living homes and would not be a part of this use type.

Mrs. Prelog introduced the next amendment as refinements the provisions for residential uses within commercial districts. Mrs. Prelog explained that the amendments do not propose changes to the current standards and are rather a clarification of existing provisions. Table 11-6-2 and Section 11-31-31 provide provisions for residential uses in commercial districts. Table 11-6-2 contains a footnote and specific standards are outlined in Section 11-31-31. The language between the two sections is ambiguous and can be confusing. The proposed

amendment would clarify the language to make it clearer when the use is allowed and when a CUP is required.

Mrs. Prelog introduced the next amendment as the addition of a unique and separate classification for Boat and RV Storage and changes to Mini Storage standards. Mrs. Prelog stated that staff is proposing that Boat and RV Storage require a CUP in the General Commercial (GC) District and that mini-storage require a CUP in the Limited Commercial (LC), General Commercial (GC), and Mixed-Use (MX) Districts.

Mrs. Prelog closed out the presentation by providing the outline for public outreach and informed the Board that there is a Special Projects website on the Planning Division webpage containing further information. Dr. Appiah stated the majority of the changes are coming from Council directives based on some of the challenges they have faced in their specific districts. They have specifically requested staff look into these items and to refine some of the policies.

4. Receive and discuss a presentation on current land use development activities within the Downtown Area.

Jeff McVay, Downtown Transformation Manager, made a presentation to the Board updating them on current development activities underway in the downtown area. The presentation included updates on the ASU project, the Plaza at Mesa City Center, the Studios at Mesa City Center, Co-Hoots at Benedictive University, renovation to the Historic Post Office, the Grove on Main Street, the Grid, Eco Mesa, and the Mesa Arts District Lofts. Mr. McVay concluded his presentation by informing the Board of several smaller business additions to the downtown area.

Boardmember Allen thanked Mr. McVay for taking the time to update the Board on the projects that are coming to the downtown area.

5. Planning Director's Updates.
 - a. Status of on-going staff review of text amendments to the 2040 Mesa General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

There are no updates at this time.

- b. Land use decisions from August 31st City Council hearing.

There are no updates at this time.

6. Adjournment.

Boardmember Boyle motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:08 p.m. The motion was seconded by Boardmember Ayers.

Vote: 5-0 Approved (Vice Chair Sarkissian and Boardmember Villanueva-Saucedo, absent)

Upon tabulation of vote, it showed:

AYES – Astle, Boyle, Allen, Crockett, and Ayers

NAYS – None

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of vertical strokes followed by a horizontal line and a final vertical stroke.

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.*