

MINUTES
TRACY CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 11, 2012
7:00 P.M.
TRACY COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND CONFERENCE ROOM 203
333 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

MINUTE APPROVAL

DIRECTOR'S REPORT REGARDING THIS AGENDA:

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE

In accordance with Procedures for Preparation, Posting and Distribution of Agendas and the Conduct of Public Meetings, adopted by Resolution 2008-140 any item not on the agenda brought up by the public at a meeting, shall be automatically referred to staff. If staff is not able to resolve the matter satisfactorily, the member of the public may request a Planning Commission Member to sponsor the item for discussion at a future meeting.

1. OLD BUSINESS

A. PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A PRELIMINARY AND FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPLICATION FOR A CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL FACILITY AND A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION FOR A TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITY ON A SITE TOTALING APPROXIMATELY 4.7 ACRES ON PESCADERO AVENUE, APPROXIMATELY 2,100 FEET EAST OF MACARTHUR DRIVE, ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 213-070-75. APPLICANT IS KIER & WRIGHT CIVIL ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS AND PROPERTY OWNER IS PONY UP TRACY, LLC. APPLICATION NUMBERS D11-0007 AND CUP11-0005

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN STUDY SESSION

3. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

5. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION

6. ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Manne at 7:00 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Manne.

ROLL CALL: Roll call found Commissioner Alexander, Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Mitracos, Vice Chair Ransom, and Chair Manne present. Also present were staff members Scott Claar, Associate Planner; Bill Dean, Assistant Director of Development Services; Dan Sodergren, City Attorney; and Elizabeth Silva, Recording secretary.

MINUTES

It was moved by Vice Chair Ransom and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the minutes of December 7, 2011 as written. Voice vote found all in favor; passed 5-0-0-0.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT REGARDING THIS AGENDA

Bill Dean, Assistant Director of Development and Engineering Services stated staff would like to take a five minute recess after Item 1-A to take a head count and see how many members of the audience would be staying for the study session to determine where the session would be held.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

1. OLD BUSINESS

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The staff report was provided by Mr. Dean who stated the project planner Kimberly Matlock was ill. Mr. Dean stated the California Highway Patrol (CHP) facility item had been heard at the December 7, 2011 meeting and had been continued to allow the Commission to interact with the applicant and CHP staff and receive additional information. Mr. Dean indicated Commission was specific with what they were asking for including photo simulations and data regarding the height of the tower. Mr. Dean stated the recommendation provided by staff reflected staff's original recommendation of approval; however the Commission had options. Mr. Dean further stated due to the nature of the zoning of the site, the project would go on to City Council based on the Commission's action.

Vice Chair Ransom asked if the device summary placed on the dais was supposed to be considered by the Commission as well. Mr. Dean answered it was additional information which had come in, relating to the telecommunication facility.

Chair Manne asked if the staff's recommendation was still the same as the previous meeting. Mr. Dean answered it was.

Chair Manne opened the public hearing.

Anthony Berzinas, Facilities Project Manager with the CHP addressed the Commission. Mr. Berzinas stated the lattice structure would be 120 feet tall, with the addition of antennas that would make the total height 140 feet. Mr. Berzinas stated the CHP had worked with engineers, the Public Safety Radio Group, and the State of California to develop the statewide standard for the necessary rigidity for the microwave transmission, and the necessary separation for the multiple bandwidths for the CHP towers. Mr. Berzinas stated this was a priority and the site would not work for the CHP without the tower.

Vice Chair Ransom asked about the statewide standard, and if there were any towers across the state which did not meet the standard. Mr. Berzinas stated all future towers were being built to this standard. Mr. Berzinas further stated there were currently sites which did not meet this standard; however they are being replaced because they did not allow the separation of bandwidths sufficient enough for their needs.

Commissioner Mitracos asked for information on what guidelines were given. Mr. Berzinas stated they did not give guidelines regarding bandwidths separation; they received guidelines from the engineers. Mr. Berzinas stated they would have multiple communication devices on this tower and the separation was necessary based upon the load from the 911 dispatch centers and the multiple band frequencies that exist throughout the State. Commissioner Mitracos asked if the communication tower was primarily for communication locally and regionally. Mr. Berzinas stated that was correct, and there would also be opportunity for interagency colocation of communication devices. Commissioner Mitracos asked if that was essentially a courtesy to the other agencies. Mr. Berzinas stated that it was a courtesy however it was also standard operating procedure and is strived for in the State of California. Commissioner Mitracos asked if colocation was part of a greater communication system. Mr. Berzinas stated not at this time however it was a long time goal, and the CHP was primarily the first responder for a statewide emergency, and it does aid in that cycle.

Commissioner Alexander asked how effective the lattice-type tower compared to a monopole. Mr. Berzinas deferred to the engineers.

Jim Pratt of the California Technology Agency addressed the commission. Mr. Pratt stated his function at the agency was to manage, design, and assist with the maintenance of the statewide public safety microwave network. Mr. Pratt stated that the agencies were all connected together through the public safety microwave network. Mr. Pratt indicated the facility in Tracy would allow the state to install a relay point for the network to enhance its resiliency. Mr. Pratt stated for that reason the tower needed to be strong and sturdy enough to maintain all the microwave antennas. Mr. Pratt further stated the antennas needed to be ten feet in diameter, and a single antenna is not as reliable as two. Mr. Pratt indicated the microwave antennas need to be extremely precise and cannot wobble in the wind, move, or they would lose half of their power. Mr. Pratt stated that is the reason the lattice-type tower was necessary as opposed to a monopole was the antennas cannot maintain their bearing on a monopole. Mr. Pratt stated radio waves do not travel visible line-of-site; they must take into consideration to curvature of the earth, and other factors. Mr. Pratt stated the minimum height would be 65 feet, but with the separation requirement the second antenna needed to be 40 feet higher and for convenience

they rounded up to 70 and 120 feet. Mr. Pratt added there would also be several other types of antennas that would not function very well next to the drums of the microwave antennas. Mr. Pratt further stated that at the site, there was a trucking company in the direct line of sight, and the height of that building was 30 feet tall.

Commissioner Johnson stated he worked at a civil engineering firm that was in direct competition with the applicant Kier and Wright but he could stay fair on the item. Commissioner Johnson asked if this would be the first tower in CA that would be 120 feet tall with the antennas on top. Mr. Pratt stated there were some forestry towers were being replaced and they were considerable taller than 120 feet and the picture that had been included in the packet was of a tower on Bloomer Mountain which was 180 foot lattice tower. Mr. Pratt further stated there was a tower constructed at the CHP Headquarters in Sacramento which was the prototype for the new standard; however it was painted red and white and had beacon lights on it due to the proximity to their helipad.

Commissioner Johnson stated he had done an internet search and had found one in Inland Empire that he believed was close to the tower proposed. Mr. Pratt stated that was a very comparable tower.

Commissioner Johnson asked who had prepared the photo simulations. Ian Robertson of Henderson Architectural Group addressed the Commission and stated he was the preparer of the photos. Commissioner Johnson stated he was disappointed in the photo simulations, and the locations that were chosen. Commissioner Johnson stated that the only he felt was of any use was photo #2, on Pescadero. Commissioner Johnson state he felt this was a good project, and he felt this site would be a good location for the tower, he just didn't know if it needed to be that big.

Vice Chair Ransom asked if this standard was adopted, and stated she did not want the applicant to go ahead with the project and at a later date have it come back because it was not tall enough. Mr. Pratt stated that standards are adopted based on the statutes that are in place at the time. Mr. Pratt further stated this design had been approved by the State Architects; however the final approval was still pending the evaluation of the mounting bolts and brackets, and was expected any day.

Commissioner Mitracos stated what he knew about microwaves was they are a straight line, and asked for information regarding the microwaves. Mr. Pratt provided pictures of the line of sight and Fresnel clearance zone. Commissioner Mitracos asked if we would see more of these towers in the Central Valley. Mr. Pratt answered he imagined there would be more. Commissioner Mitracos asked if as the older facilities were replaced, they would be receiving this type of tower. Mr. Pratt answered yes. Commissioner Mitracos stated he was convinced this was necessary, and his concern was he did not want Tracy to become the Rio Vista of San Joaquin County. Mr. Pratt stated coming into town north of the freeway there was a 160 foot tower outside of the City limits.

Commissioner Alexander stated he would like to hear an independent expert on microwave towers, but short of that, he would like to have someone from the CHP tell the Commission if the 140 foot tower was really necessary in Tracy. Mr. Pratt stated his organization was created in 1948 to be the independent agency to provide the engineering services to various State agencies.

Lieutenant Jeff James, Commander of the Tracy CHP addressed the Commission. Lieutenant James stated each area communicated independently with dispatch through the towers, and the Tracy CHP needed the tower to communicate. Lieutenant James further stated that from his standpoint, in an emergency situation 280 seconds of down time was unacceptable. Lieutenant James further stated when his officers were in the field and needed to communicate with dispatch he wanted them to be able to do so quickly and effectively.

Zack Arbios, Architect with the CHP addressed the Commission. Mr. Arbios stated that the tower and its height was critical. Mr. Arbios stated he had sat on his local planning agency and he knew the Commission was weighing the increase in regional and local public safety versus the drawbacks of any tower. Mr. Arbios stated the tower was necessary. Commissioner Alexander stated that was what he wanted, for someone to tell him it was absolutely necessary. Mr. Arbios stated it was necessary and would do good things for the City and the region.

Barbara Pulliam, a citizen, addressed the Commission and asked how many cities had a tower of this size in the City limits. Mr. Arbios named several cities, and stated there were several more that have been approved but not build yet. Mrs. Pulliam asked for information regarding the antennas that would be on the tower. Mr. Berzinas stated there were 3 dishes would be at 110 feet and three more at 70 feet.

Chair Manne closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Ransom thanked the representatives for coming and answering the questions of the Commission to get the item resolved.

Commissioner Alexander stated he believed the Commission needed an independent consultant.

Vice Chair Ransom asked Mr. Pratt if he was with the CHP or a third party. Mr. Pratt stated he worked for the State of California in the Technology Agency, which provided services to all State agencies that require telecommunication services. Vice Chair Ransom asked staff if that would be considered a third party. Mr. Dean stated it was a third party but would not be considered a third party hired by the City.

Chair Manne thanked the representatives for coming before the Commission. Chair Manne indicated he felt the project was important and he welcomed the CHP in the City. Chair Manne stated the photo simulations were terrible in showing the height or depiction of the towers; however he felt that there would not be a better place for the tower. Chair Manne further stated he wanted the CHP to remain in Tracy and thought this was a good area for them.

It was moved by Vice Chair Ransom and seconded by Commissioner Johnson that the Planning Commission recommend the City Council approve the PDP/FDP for the CHP facility and telecommunication tower located on a 4.7 acre site on Pescadero Avenue, Application Number D11-0007, subject to the conditions and based on the findings contained in the Planning Commission Resolution dated January 11, 2012; and approve the CUP application for a two year period, Application Number CUP11-0005, based on the findings contained in the Planning Commission Resolution dated January 11, 2012 and subject to City Council approval of the PDP/FDP of the CHP facility. Voice vote found all in favor; passed 5-0-0-0.

The Planning Commission recessed at 7:55 for a five minute break, to reconvene to room 109 for the Downtown Specific Plan Study Session.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN STUDY SESSION

The meeting reconvened in Conference Room 109 at 8:00 pm.

Chair Manne stated for the record all Commissioners were present.


Scott Claar, Associate Planner stated the purpose of the study session was to complete the discussion on the land use portion of the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). Mr. Claar provided an electronic presentation and a brief description of the proposed land uses.

Staff and the Commission discussed the current and proposed land uses for the DSP area.

1. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None
2. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – None
3. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION – None
4. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Ransom and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to adjourn.

Time: 9:23 p.m.



CHAIR



STAFF LIAISON