

**STUDY SESSION OF THE FOSTER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Council Chambers – 620 Foster City Boulevard -- Foster City

**MINUTES**

**April 3, 2014**

1. CALL TO ORDER

**At 7:36 p.m. by Chairman Dyckman**

2. ROLL CALL

**Present: Commissioners Pattum, Werden, Williams and Chairman Dyckman**

**Absent: Commissioner Avram**

**Staff Present: Curtis Banks, Community Development Director; Jean Eisberg, Consultant Planner**

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE LANDSCAPING, PARKING, AND CIRCULATION PLANS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN/USE PERMIT FOR THE FOSTER SQUARE PROJECT'S PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS. THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS LOCATED BETWEEN SHELL DRIVE, CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, BALCLUTHA DRIVE, AND FOSTER CITY BOULEVARD –APN: 094-471-100 – THE NEW HOME COMPANY – UP-14-005

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the Use Permit/Specific Development Plan for the Public Realm component of the Foster Square project. The consulting planner presented the landscaping and public realm plans, and staff comments. The applicant and design team then highlighted key aspects to the plans. No community members spoke at the meeting.

Below is a summary of the discussion.

**DISCUSSION**

- Commissioners generally agreed that the gateways to the Foster Square project—at Shell Boulevard/Central Street and at the roundabouts near Foster City Boulevard, Balclutha Drive, and Civic Center Drive—and the node at the Town Square, are the most important entrances to the project, and agreed that the public realm improvements should be designed to highlight these entrances and to express the identity of the development. Specific suggestions included:

- Pulling back trees at Central Street to highlight the street and development within, and encourage passersby to travel into the development.
- Designing the Town Square Plaza to be inviting to passersby and visually reduce the distance between Foster City Boulevard and the Plaza.
- Commissioners suggested a range of design improvements, including:
  - Adding more artwork throughout the project site
  - Installing “nub” fixtures on seating and landscaping forms to discourage skateboarders from using benches and other street infrastructure as skateboard facilities.
  - Including a combination of seating without backs (e.g., concrete) and with backs (e.g., quality wood or wood-like slatted benches that will be durable and long-lasting)
  - Ensuring that plants on Central Street are as thoughtful and prominent—in terms of quantity, color, and identity—as those on the paseos, to soften the lobbies, blank walls, and utilities fronting the proposed condominiums.
- At least one Commissioner expressed concern about water quality and the runoff of water from roofs into flow-through planters during storm events.
- At least one Commissioner expressed concern that the landscaping plan showed too many trees, as alluded to in the Fire Department’s IDEC meeting comments, while another Commissioner recommended that the applicant consider the right species and height so as not to block sunlight from entering into the internal streets and individual units.
- At least one Commissioner expressed a preference for accent walls made of water-cut metal, perforated metal, or trellis structure with plantings, and discouraged the use of cinder block.

## REQUESTS

- Planning Commissioners requested that the applicant show adjacent developments (e.g. Civic Center, North Peninsula Jewish Campus, planned/approved Foster Square projects) in future drawings to demonstrate how the proposed project relates to the surrounding context.
2. REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE SITE AND ARCHITECTURAL PLANS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN/USE PERMIT FOR 200 RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUMS IN 14 BUILDINGS, THE FOR-SALE COMPONENT OF THE FOSTER SQUARE PROJECT. THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS LOCATED ON PARCELS 1 THROUGH 9 AND 11 THROUGH 14 OF THE FOSTER SQUARE SITE (APPROXIMATELY 5 ACRES, EXCLUDING ROW, OF THE TOTAL 15-ACRE FOSTER SQUARE SITE), BETWEEN SHELL DRIVE, CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, AND

BALCLUTHA DRIVE – PORTION OF APN: 094-471-100 – THE NEW HOME COMPANY – UP-14-004

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Commenter expressed that elevations facing Shell Boulevard are too repetitive and boring, and that the façade colors should be richer and more saturated. Service doors should be well-landscaped and in a manner consistent with the residential-nature of the project to soften service uses. Commenter stated that the working revisions shown by the applicant during the Study Session were on the right track in terms of colors and architectural detail.

DISCUSSION

- Commissioners generally agreed that the design of the 14 buildings was too repetitive and that the massing needed to be refined to reduce the blocky nature of the buildings and to modulate the massing when viewed alongside the approved MidPen building and the proposed Atria building. Commissioners offered the following suggestions:
  - Step back upper floors, similar to the massing employed on the Balclutha Drive-facing elevation.
  - Utilize the 65-foot height limit in select locations to create more visual interest and depth in the massing.
  - Focus efforts on Shell Boulevard and Central Street, the most prominent elevations in the development.
  - Commissioners generally expressed concern about the lack of architectural detail at the ground-level and would like to see more screening of service uses, highlighting of lobbies and entrances, and use of color, materials, and landscaping to soften ground-level façades.
- Commissioners expressed mixed perspectives about whether the proposed setbacks to Balclutha Drive should adhere more closely to the setbacks defined in the General Development Plan, and ultimately suggested that the applicant balance the setbacks delineated in the General Development Plan, with the need for safe access along and across Balclutha Drive and consider if the sidewalk on the north side of the street from the artwalk to Shell Boulevard can be replaced with landscaping

REQUESTS

- Planning Commissioners requested that the applicant show adjacent developments (e.g. Civic Center, North Peninsula Jewish Campus, planned/approved Foster Square projects) in future drawings to demonstrate how the proposed project relates to the surrounding context.

- Planning Commissioners requested that the applicant show the range of setbacks and average setback on the site plan.

4. STATEMENTS AND REQUESTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 9:38 p.m. to a Regular Meeting, April 17, 2014, Council Chambers, 620 Foster City Boulevard, Foster City, California.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of Foster City at a Regular Meeting thereof held on April 17, 2014 by the following vote:

AYES, COMMISSIONERS: Werden, Williams and Chair Dyckman

NOES, COMMISSIONERS:

ABSTAIN, COMMISSIONERS: Avram

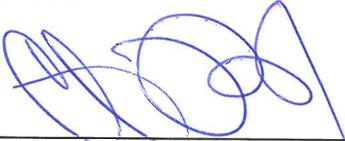
ABSENT, COMMISSIONERS: Pattum



---

DAN DYCKMAN, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:



---

CURTIS BANKS, SECRETARY