

MEETING MINUTES

Ad-Hoc Downtown Project Advisory Committee

Thursday, September 12, 2013

6:30 p.m.

Amedee O. "Dick" Richards, Jr., Council Chambers
1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena

Attendees

Committee Members: Anita Artukovich, Frank Catania, John Fisher, Jack Pettee, Stuart Morkun, and Odom Stamps

Committee Members Absent: Ellen Daigle

Council Liaisons: Philip C. Putnam and Marina Khubesrian, M.D.

Staff: Hilary Straus, Assistant City Manager
Kimberly Hall Barlow, Assistant City Attorney
John Mayer, Senior Planner
Lucy Kbjian, Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Call to Order

The special meeting was called to order at 6:46 p.m. by Chair Catania. Executive Assistant Kbjian called the roll. Chair Catania led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Review and approve minutes of the August 21, 2013 meeting

Chair Catania announced the minutes for the August 21, 2013 meeting were not yet prepared and would be available at the next meeting.

3. Continue Discussion – Project Shaping (Design and Amenities)

Ken Hira, Kosmont & Associates, Inc., project consultant hired by the City, made a presentation outlining how projects evolve, the variables, market analysis and financial considerations.

Questions and comments from the Committee were received:

Vice Chair Artukovich asked about the market and feasibility studies, whether they would be public and the timeframes.

Committee member Fisher asked what the consultant envisioned as the catalyst for the project, tenant use, and property values.

Mayor Pro Tem Khubesrian asked how demand is assessed, with consideration to residential.

Mr. Hira responded to each.

Chair Catania asked if any member of the audience had a comment. There was no public comment.

Jonathan Genton of Genton Property Group, LLC (“Developer”), introduced David Goodale, Gonzalez Goodale Architects (“Architect”), who made a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation included iterations and variations based on the Pro Forma evaluation and comments received from the Committee at its last meeting and a further refinement of the master plan. Images of the original and revised plans were juxtaposed on the presentation slides to depict modifications.

Committee Members Fisher and Stamps asked about parking access.

The Architect continued his presentation, taking a look at architectural consideration and design details.

Committee Member Stamps thanked the Architect for taking comments from the Committee to heart, especially with the massing of the buildings. He asked about material types. The Architect responded.

Councilmember Putnam asked about tandem parking on El Centro. The Architect responded.

Committee Member Morkun said this was a substantial revision and he feared vacant and poor retail. He saw it as a diminishing of the project to save costs and said it was disappointing. The Developer responded. He discussed factors that drove the modifications.

Councilmember Putnam made comments about the public space. He asked why the courtyard was narrower in the new plan. The Developer said this was in response to a request from the property owner.

Vice Chair Artukovich asked if the Developer had spoken with the property owner recently. She said she was concerned about the 20 foot retail space in alley. She said previous public comments had safety concerns with below grade parking. The Developer responded. He said he would like to place tenant in the narrow retail space to energize the area.

Committee Member Morkun said at the last meeting a traffic study was requested for the ingress/egress at Mission Street.

Vice Chair Artukovich said she is not comfortable with the changes to the project. She envisioned the downtown square would energize the City. The new plan with residential in one building would be potential for residential noise complaints. She also commented on the parking for Bank of America. The Developer responded.

Committee Member Pettee commented on the Bank of America parking and access for trucks during the day for current properties and businesses. He also called attention to the Mission Oaks Parking District agreement with the City. He had questions about various costs for property owners. The Developer responded. Assistant City Attorney Kimberly Hall Barlow said the discussion was not within the proper scope of the agenda item.

Committee Member Fisher commented on parking issues. He asked if parking was enough and mentioned valet parking. He said traffic circulation data and study of congestion will be valuable.

Gail Maltun, resident, said she liked the two-story massing on Mission and was supportive of underground parking in order to devote surface space to something more interesting.

Diana Mahmud, resident, said the deviation is significant and takes a few steps backward from design. She suggested a subcommittee to vet issues prior to presenting to the entire Committee in order to save time and resources. She also expressed safety concerns with parking.

Becky Tompson, resident, asked for the Committee to put down the minutia and get behind the project to make it happen.

Committee Member Stamps made a motion to create a subcommittee to meet with the Developer and Architect. There was no second; the motion failed.

Committee Member Fisher made a motion to conduct a traffic study. There was no second; the motion failed.

Assistant City Manager Hilary Straus described the process and project shaping. He said staff will take input from today, continue to look at the project with the Developer and take time to prepare a viable Pro Forma.

Committee Member Stamps asked to return to previous plan and make more effort to show rationale of changes.

Vice Chair Artukovich said consensus was needed; changes should not be made just because one person doesn't like it.

Mr. Hira described issues the Developer faced, including better retail at Mission Street and parking expenses. He said the changes made the Pro Forma more viable. Though we are not there yet, this is part of the process, he said.

Chair Catania made a motion to ask the Developer to reconsider the original plan with modifications to make it economically feasible and to schedule a Committee meeting at that point, seconded by Committee Member Fisher. By roll call vote, six ayes, one absent, it was so moved.

4. Project Overview and Next Steps

Chair Catania said this was addressed with the last motion.

5. Next Meeting

Chair Catania said this was addressed with the last motion.

6. Public Comment

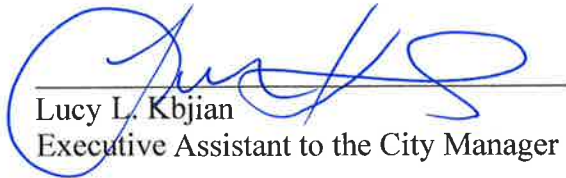
There was no public comment.

Adjournment

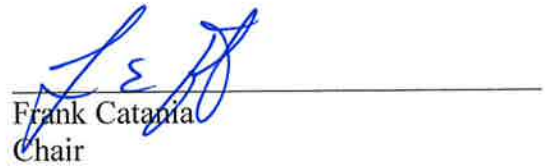
There being no further business, Chair Catania adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m. without objection.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved By:



Lucy L. Kbjian
Executive Assistant to the City Manager



Frank Catania
Chair