



City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Minutes - Final Planning Commission

Monday, March 29, 2021

6:00 PM

Telepresence Meeting: City Web Stream |
Comcast Channel 15 | AT&T Channel 99

Special Meeting: Study Session - 6:00 PM | Special Meeting: Public Hearing - 8:00 PM

TELECONFERENCE NOTICE

6:00 PM STUDY SESSION

Call to Order via Teleconference

Roll Call

Study Session

A. [21-0449](#) Moffett Park Specific Plan Land Use Concepts

Adjourn Study Session

8:00 PM PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Howard called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Chair Daniel Howard
Vice Chair David Simons
Commissioner Sue Harrison
Commissioner John Howe
Commissioner Ken Olevson
Commissioner Ken Rheaume
Commissioner Carol Weiss

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

CONSENT CALENDAR

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS

1. [21-0409](#) **Proposed Project:**
SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT to allow two seven-story office buildings with approximately 499,800 square feet and ground floor retail space with approximately 50,900 square feet of retail, 22,105 square feet of flex space and 37,415 square feet of shared services and two levels of below grade parking, and
VESTING TENTATIVE MAP to allow modifications to lot line locations and the creation of commercial condominium spaces.
Location: 200 W. Washington Avenue (APNs: 209-35-023 & 022)
File #: 2020-7110
Zoning: DSP (Downtown Specific Plan)/Block 18
General Plan: Downtown Specific Plan
Applicant / Owner: STC Ventures LLC (applicant and owner)
Environmental Review: No additional review required as per CEQA Guidelines 15168(c)(2) and (4) - environmental impacts of the project are addressed in the Downtown Specific Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse #2018052020).
Project Planner: Shaunn Mendrin, (408) 730-7431, smendrin@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Principal Planner Shaunn Mendrin presented the staff report with a slide presentation.

Commissioner Weiss asked why South Frances Street would be open to vehicles. Principal Planner Mendrin and Assistant Director Andrew Miner answered that it is intended to function as a one-way pick-up and drop-off road, a pedestrian and bicycle connection between West Washington Avenue and Redwood Square, and an area that can easily be closed to traffic for special uses. Commissioner Weiss stated that most drop-offs and pick-ups can be done on the other sides of the buildings and closing the street would energize that area. Principal Planner Mendrin stated that the applicant can provide more information about the frequency of the intended street closures.

Commissioner Rheume disclosed that he had a teleconference meeting with the applicant about the proposed project and asked if elements such as the planters, concrete seating edges and trellises are preliminary designs. Assistant Director Miner confirmed that they are preliminary designs and welcomed any input from the Commissioners. Commissioner Rheume commented that he likes the design and added that native trees with significant canopies and as much green landscaping as possible are important. Commissioner Rheume asked about the requirements for the terrace trees and if they are a part of this application. Principal Planner Mendrin responded that 15 terrace trees would be installed prior to building occupancy and

the remaining terrace trees would be reviewed at the time of the tenant improvements. Principal Planner Mendrin confirmed that the terrace trees are part of this application and added that the applicant is also required to submit a Miscellaneous Plan Permit to include the landscaping plan for the entire site that staff would review for consistency with the Planning application.

Commissioner Harrison confirmed with Principal Planner Mendrin that the 434 tenant parking spaces in adjacent garages would be assigned to the office tenants and located on the upper garage floors and that 786 parking spaces would become available to anyone on evenings and weekends belowground on the site. Commissioner Harrison asked if since the Study Session one of the terraces is now longer and more continuous and if there are fewer independent terraces. Principal Planner Mendrin answered that the terraces were modified on Building B's north elevation to accommodate additional setbacks to consider nearby historic South Murphy Avenue which generally consists of two-story structures. Commissioner Harrison confirmed with Principal Planner Mendrin that the pick-up and drop-off road on South Frances Street is intended to be a part of the parking management plan.

Vice Chair Simons and Principal Planner Mendrin discussed the fact that setbacks are measured from the face of curb because Block 18's property lines are generally at the face of curb. Principal Planner Mendrin added that the Downtown Specific Plan requires different width sidewalks depending on street frontage activity level. Vice Chair Simons confirmed with Principal Planner Mendrin that the proposed project's required parking is lower considering its proximity to public transit and Vice Chair Simons stated his concern that the applicant has requested a parking deviation considering single vehicle usage might increase in the future. Vice Chair Simons also stated his interest in defining the required sizes for the terrace trees in Recommended Condition of Approval BP-17. Chrissy Mancini Nichols, City-hired consultant representing Walker Consultants, explained the parking analysis for downtown and Block 18. Vice Chair Simons confirmed with Ms. Nichols that the tenant parking spaces located in adjacent garages would be assigned to the upper floors and Vice Chair Simons confirmed with Principal Planner that the parking management plan requires staff approval prior to building permit issuance. Assistant Director Miner stated that the parking management plan would be reviewed to consider the parking for other surrounding projects.

Commissioner Howe disclosed that he spoke with a member of the applicant team over the telephone about the proposed project. Commissioner Howe confirmed with

Principal Planner Mendrin that there would be a dedicated sidewalk of adequate size for pedestrians on South Frances Street to guarantee access between West Washington Avenue and Redwood Square.

Chair Howard asked why mechanical equipment cannot cover more than 25% of a rooftop and if street vendors can have access to electricity from light poles to avoid using gas-powered generators. Assistant Director Miner stated that the light poles are City-owned and that mechanical equipment on rooftops can be a massing concern, explaining that the applicant has requested to cover more than 25% of the rooftop but limit the height of the mechanical equipment.

Chair Howard opened the Public Hearing.

Deke Hunter and Josh Rupert, representing applicant Hunter Properties; Sean Gallivan, Design Architect representing Gensler; and Marcel Wilson, Landscape Architect representing Bionic, presented images and information about the proposed project.

Commissioner Weiss confirmed with Mr. Hunter that there are designated zones in front of the lobbies of both buildings on South Frances Street where vehicles can pull over without blocking traffic. Commissioner Weiss asked if the vehicles conducting pick-ups and drop-offs on South Frances Street would create traffic that would back up onto West Washington Avenue in the early morning and evening hours and Mr. Hunter stated that Walker Consultants' parking analysis did not indicate that it would be an issue. Commissioner Weiss and Mr. Hunter discussed creative ways for naming the new street.

Commissioner Olevson asked the applicant team to explain Recommended Condition of Approval GC-13 regarding the dropped ceilings for the ground floor tenant spaces. Mr. Hunter explained that the dropped ceilings would be recessed 3 to 4 feet from the front façade so that the exterior glass can extend to the top of the storefront elevation to provide as much visibility into the space as possible. Commissioner Olevson asked how far the ceiling would drop down and Mr. Hunter answered that it could drop down between 5 and 7 feet.

Vice Chair Simons asked the applicant team how the height of the terrace trees would be measured. Gary Laymon, Landscape Architect representing TGP Landscape Architects, stated that the trees on the corner terraces would be 48-inch box trees with a canopy width of 12 to 14 feet and a height of 16 to 18 feet

measured from the finished floor. Vice Chair Simons asked what types of trees are planned for West Washington Avenue and if using expandable tree grates is possible. Mr. Laymon responded that Red Maple trees would be planted along West Washington Avenue and the City-standard tree grates are expandable. Vice Chair Simons asked if the tenant space frontages that fully open are still a part of the proposed project and if the entryways are modifiable for new tenants. Mr. Hunter responded that the frontages that open up would be located along South Frances Street and there would be 3 to 4 different frontage types available along South Taaffe Street, West Washington Avenue and South Murphy Avenue. He and Mr. Rupert explained that the frontages along South Frances Street are more long term and less modifiable because of their unique width and elements, adding that the goal is to be as flexible as possible with the tenant spaces. Vice Chair Simons asked Mr. Hunter about possible attachment points to hang banners between buildings. Mr. Hunter discussed the applicant team's prospective ideas for hanging signs and commented on the uniqueness of CityLine's developments that make the area special. He further remarked that the buildings would structurally accommodate the weight of the terrace trees in fixed, key locations and the landscaping plan would request flexibility for the locations of the other terrace trees to best serve future tenants.

Chair Howard asked if tenants along South Taaffe Street, West Washington Avenue and South Murphy Avenue would have the option to install a frontage that fully opens, and Mr. Hunter responded that it is possible on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Rheaume expressed concern that the ground floor frontages on South Taaffe Street, West Washington Avenue, and South Murphy Avenue would be too similar and all made of glass. He stated his interest in frontages made of different types of materials such as brick or combinations of glass and other materials such as tile, and canopies or trellises to help provide tenants with unique spaces for their businesses. Mr. Hunter replied that the plan is for all the storefronts to be glass initially and then modifiable based on the tenants' needs but that it is possible to begin with storefronts with varied materials. Assistant Director Miner stated that Recommended Condition of Approval PS-2 which requires the applicant to submit a Miscellaneous Plan Permit for Tenant Design Guidelines is modifiable to specify the types of materials required for the ground floor frontages along those three streets.

Commissioner Weiss and Mr. Rupert discussed opportunities for a gourmet ice cream retailer as a possible tenant.

Mike Serrone stated his overall support for the proposed project with concerns about the generic rectangular shape and glass construction and lack of pedestrian experience on South Frances Street.

Gavin Lohry, representing Catalyze SV, voiced support for the proposed project and the vibrancy it would bring to downtown.

Olivia Navarro, speaking on behalf of Enrique Arguello, Business Manager with LIUNA Laborers Local 270, expressed support for the proposed project.

Dawn Maher, CEO of Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce, voiced support and excitement for the proposed project.

Chad Dutton, Marketing Representative for Carpenters Local 405 for Santa Clara County, stated support for the proposed project.

Mike Johnson, Executive Director of the Sunnyvale Downtown Association, communicated support for the proposed project.

Mr. Hunter presented additional information about the proposed project.

Chair Howard closed the Public Hearing.

Assistant Director Miner stated that the Sunnyvale Municipal Code outlines the process for naming new streets.

Principal Planner Mendrin noted that Recommended Condition of Approval BP-24 should reference 434 tenant parking spaces located in adjacent garages instead of 222 and that the Commission could choose to modify Recommended Condition of Approval BP-17 to specify a requirement of 48-inch box trees as the applicant team referenced during discussion.

MOTION: Commissioner Howe moved and Vice Chair Simons seconded the motion for Alternative 2 - Make the required Findings required to approve the CEQA determination that the project is consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan's Program Environmental Impact Report and no additional environmental review is required, and approve the Special Development Permit and Vesting Tentative Map based on Findings in Attachment 3 of the report and Recommended Conditions of

Approval in Attachment 4 of the report subject to modified Conditions of Approval.

The modified Conditions of Approval are as follows:

1. Revise Recommended Condition of Approval BP-24 to correct the number of tenant parking locations located in adjacent garages from 222 to 434 spaces. BP-24 revised reads as follows:

BP-24 PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Parking Management Plan is subject to review and approval by the Director of Community Development prior to occupancy. The Parking Management Plan shall include the following:

- a. The parking garage shall include signage which identifies Public Parking days and hours.
- b. The additional Tenant parking locations located in adjacent garages (approximately 434 spaces) shall be identified through permitting and/or specific time limits within the existing and available structured parking. The goal would be to preserve the most convenient parking for patrons throughout the Downtown Parking district, with adequate long-term parking for employees and office tenants.

Tentatively, employees and office tenants should be parking below the ground level or the top level of the parking structures. This effort shall be coordinated with Community Development and Public Works Departments.

The Parking Management Plan may require revisions or modifications in the future due to other transit options or trends. This plan shall be reviewed through a Miscellaneous Plan Permit, or staff level review equivalent, and shall be coordinated with Community Development, Public Works and the City Attorney. [PLANNING]
[COA]

2. Revise Recommended Condition of Approval BP-17 to include a size requirement of 48-inch box for the terrace trees. BP-17 revised reads as follows:

BP-17 TERRACE LANDSCAPING:

Planting on the terraces shall include a minimum of 6 large trees in key locations on Building A and 9 large trees in key locations on Building B as indicated on the landscape plans and shall be installed prior to occupancy. Large trees shall be 48-inch box trees. These plantings shall be included on the final landscape plans and are subject to review and approval by the Director of Community Development, through a Miscellaneous Plan Permit, prior to issuance of building permit. [COA]
[PLANNING]

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Vice Chair Simons offered a friendly amendment to specify that BP-17 also require the terrace trees to be 16 to 18 feet tall measured from the finished floor with a width of 12 to 15 feet. Commissioner Howe accepted the friendly amendment. BP-17 revised reads as follows:

BP-17 TERRACE LANDSCAPING:

Planting on the terraces shall include a minimum of 6 large trees in key locations on Building A and 9 large trees in key locations on Building B as indicated on the landscape plans and shall be installed prior to occupancy. Large trees shall be 48-inch box trees with a height of 16 to 18 feet measured from the finished floor and width of 12 to 15 feet. These plantings shall be included on the final landscape plans and are subject to review and approval by the Director of Community Development, through a Miscellaneous Plan Permit, prior to issuance of building permit. [COA] [PLANNING]

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Commissioner Rheume offered a friendly amendment to revise Recommended Condition of Approval PS-2 with specifications for storefront variation. Commissioner Howe and Vice Chair Simons accepted the friendly amendment. PS-2 revised reads as follows:

PS-2 TENANT DESIGN GUIDELINES:

Applicant shall submit a Miscellaneous Plan Permit for Tenant Design Guidelines for retail and commercial tenant space to ensure final design includes uniqueness between tenants, addition of canopies and recessed entries including different types of storefronts with natural materials other than glass such as brick, ceramic artwork, high gloss painted surfaces with exterior lighting, other materials to complement terracotta in the upper floors or other material for a base, opportunities for variations in the awning materials, and different textures and opportunities for varied sign types, including projecting signs, subject to review and approval by the Director of Community Development. [COA] [PLANNING]

Commissioner Howe stated his appreciation for the applicant's responsiveness to the Commissioners' feedback from the Study Sessions and noted his pleasure with the green space on South Frances Street and the overall improvements made to it. He noted his happiness with the terraces and stated that the proposed project would make the city proud once built.

Vice Chair Simons appreciated the applicant's improvements to the proposed

project based on the Commissioners' feedback which have resulted in a better design benefitting both the applicant and the City. He recognized the inset ground level tenant spaces that would provide a better connection between the indoors and outdoors and the variation in storefront facades that would create a more useable, desirable and inviting place for customers and help the tenants market their businesses. He stated that although he would have preferred different trees with taller heights and bigger canopies, the landscaping would be an improvement for downtown that needs more trees to balance all the big buildings. He further remarked that he will support the proposed project and appreciated the process that it has undergone.

Commissioner Rheume complimented the applicant team on the proposed project's design and the extension of South Frances Street that enables one to walk from the Caltrain station to Redwood Square. He stated that the proposed project has everything desired in a downtown project and that it flows and works well. He noted that the South Frances Street design has improved with the addition of more green, landscaped area and less concrete and appreciated the buildings' varying heights that help to break up their mass. He further remarked that he has a lingering concern that the buildings are too modern to connect to South Murphy Avenue and hoped that they appear timeless. He stated that he can make findings, the proposed project would help Sunnyvale and downtown, and he urged the Commissioners to support the motion.

Commissioner Olevson stated his excitement for the proposed project and the prospect of it transforming the Caltrain station into a significant stop along the line. He thanked the applicant team for responding to the Commissioners' input and modifying the project accordingly, the results of which he attributed to a partnership. He stated that he can make all the findings, noted that the proposed project has met all the requirements, wished the applicant team well, and added that he will approve the proposed project.

Commissioner Weiss stated that Sunnyvale deserves this proposed project and the overall downtown character that is developing. She appreciated the architecture and how each façade would meet a different type of demand, emphasizing that the plaza at West Washington Avenue and South Murphy Avenue would provide one with a feeling of connection to the historic district. She also appreciated the applicant team's responsiveness to the Commissioners' questions and concerns and stated that she can make the findings and the few deviations requested are acceptable considering the scope of the proposed project. She added that she will

support the proposed project and looks forward to its completion.

Commissioner Harrison stated she will support the motion and agreed with all the Commissioners' comments, particularly Commissioner Olevson's statement about his ability to make all the findings. She noted her appreciation for the rhythm between the glass and terracotta panels, how the terracotta panels' shapes are echoed in the shape of the prefabricated concrete on the ground floor, and how the glass and terracotta panels decrease in size as the buildings extend upwards. She also admired the improvements to South Frances Street including the addition of more greenery and the distinguishing of the makerspaces from the retail spaces.

Chair Howard stated that he will support the motion and that it is a beautiful proposed project. He noted the importance of the union support and hoped that the proposed project would help jumpstart Sunnyvale's post-pandemic economy. He shared information that he has read that trees are better enjoyed at ground level instead of up high which requires more concrete reinforcement which can therefore create more of a carbon emissions impact.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Chair Howard
Vice Chair Simons
Commissioner Harrison
Commissioner Howe
Commissioner Olevson
Commissioner Rheume
Commissioner Weiss

No: 0

Assistant Director Miner stated that this decision is final unless appealed or called up for review by the City Council by Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

STANDING ITEM: CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL STUDY ISSUES

2. [21-0461](#) Planning Commission Proposed Study Issues, Calendar Year: 2022

Assistant Director Miner stated that staff has tentatively scheduled Commissioner Howe and Commissioner Weiss's revised Village Centers Re: Aging in Place proposed study issue for 2022 for discussion in April 2021.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS**-Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Harrison stated that regarding the Moffett Park Specific Plan Update, she would like more information since a levee would be installed but she understands that levees are being torn down in areas.

Commissioner Howe asked for a timeline update on the 200 W. Washington Avenue project. Assistant Director Andrew Miner stated that the applicant hopes to demolish the Macy's building and start working on the underground parking garage before next year's rainy season and added that he will update the Commissioners as he receives more information.

Commissioner Weiss requested staff share with her and Commissioner Harrison technical levee studies. Assistant Director Miner stated that staff will provide as much information as possible and cautioned that the issue might need to be studied as part of the Environmental Impact Report.

-Staff Comments

Assistant Director Andrew Miner stated that the same Moffett Park Specific Plan Study Session presentation and the Commissioners' comments will be shared with the City Council tomorrow at the March 30, 2021 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Howard adjourned the meeting at 10:36 PM.