

February 6, 2019

THE WALNUT CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

A Regular Meeting of the Walnut City Planning Commission (PC) was held on the above-referenced date. Chairperson Perez called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE: Commissioner Fernandez

ROLL CALL: Commissioners: Perez, Dy, Fernandez, Koo, Wu

ALSO PRESENT: Assistant City Manager – Development Services Weiner; City Planner Carlson; Assistant City Attorney Mann; City Engineer Gilbertson; Senior Planner Vasquez; Associate Planner Yang; Assistant Planner Munoz; Code Enforcement Specialist Ramos; Community Development Technician Katigbak.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

C/Perez opened Oral Communications for Public Comment.

C/Perez moved to close Oral Communications. PC/Wu seconded. Without objection motion passed 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. January 16, 2019 (Regular Meeting Minutes).

C/Perez moved to approve the minutes of December 16, 2019. VC/Dy seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

2. Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) 2018-01

Tentative Tract Map (TTM) 88205 and 88206: A request to subdivide two (2) non-contiguous parcels of land totaling 3.23 acres into thirty-six (36) residential lots located at 780 and 808 Francesca Drive (APN: 8735-026-169 and 170).

Specific Plan 2018-01 (SP) and Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPC/AR) 2018-024 and 2018-025: To establish development standards and design guidelines for the construction of thirty-six (36) single-family dwelling units and related site improvements for the development of a 3.23-acre lot located at 780 and 808 Francesca Drive (APN: 8735-026-169 and 170).

AP/Yang presented the staff report.

C/Perez opened the item for Public Comment.

Architect, Feng Xiao, introduced herself and discussed that the architectural design and style was tailored to compliment the surrounding neighborhood and its current scale and massing.

C/Perez questioned AP/Yang if there were any oppositions in regards to the proposed project.

AP/Yang stated that there was no opposition to the project within the community.

PC/Fernandez recalled the previous entitlement for Senior Housing and questioned why single-family attached dwelling are being proposed.

Architect/Xiao stated that the property is under new ownership and that within the nearby area there are existing senior housing and single-family residential developments. Architect/Xiao added that after analyzing the market of the neighborhood and discussing options with the developer and property owner, the development of a duplex and/or triplex would be a better development for the community.

PC/Fernandez discussed the General Plan Update and the area being re-zoned for mixed-use. PC/Fernandez mentioned that the intention of the area was to construct development with higher density.

ACM/Weiner discussed the current General Plan and opportunities of mixed-use development(s) in the Future Specific Plan Zone. ACM/Weiner also mentioned that the main concept of the Mixed-Use SP area as indicated by the General Plan, is to focus on improvements to the area adjacent to Nogales Street.

PC/Fernandez inquired about higher density in the area.

ACM/Weiner stated that that there are opportunities for higher density, however, it must be followed with strong commercial development.

PC/Fernandez questioned if the Applicant had proposed a higher density prior to the proposed project.

ACM/Weiner stated that the first submittal of the project is different from the current proposed plan. Furthermore, that the Applicant targeted this specific density for this site. ACM/Weiner further noted the proposed project is just a small portion of a future larger SP.

VC/Dy questioned, why a common green space/central park for the community was not provided and referenced the front yard space provided on the units.

Architect/Xiao discussed the private yards fronting Francesca Drive.

VC/Dy stated that he had no issues with the street frontage along Francesca Drive and clarified that his concern is with the project not having any public amenities, such as parks within the development. VC/Dy further mentioned that the residences may cater towards younger families with children and suggested the reconfiguration of the front yards per unit and combine the unused area to create a small public park on both sites.

Architect/Xiao noted that the SP indicates common open space on each site.

ACM/Weiner clarified that if there are parks on both or one of the sites, a public dedication would have to occur and the City would be required to provide maintenance.

C/Perez further discussed the design and portions of the development that are to be maintained by the HOA. C/Perez asked if both developments would be maintained by a single HOA or will they be independent of one another.

Architect/Xiao stated that both developments will be maintained by just one HOA, however, it may be subject to change.

PC/Koo asked if the backyard fence of units one (1), two (2), and three (3) at 780 Francesca Drive are proposed at six (6') feet in height. Additionally, PC/Koo referenced the site plan and the fencing in the private yards.

Architect/Xiao confirmed that there is a proposed two (2') to three (3')-foot fence, however, the fencing plans have not yet been designed in detail.

PC/Koo and Architect/Xiao further discussed the fencing plans and common open space areas within the development.

PC/Koo addressed the revisions needed to the common open space area so that pedestrians do not walk on private property for access.

VC/Dy suggested that at 780 Francesca Drive, the location wherein unit six (6) lies would ideally be the best area for a private park. VC/Dy further discussed the importance of accessibility to parks for children and young families in the community and future connection between the two sites.

C/Perez reiterated the main concern for a private area.

PC/Koo questioned if any work will occur in regards to the sidewalk fronting Francesca Drive and if fire hydrants and street lamps nearby need to be relocated.

CE/Gilbertson stated that no change will occur and that there is proper ADA clearance around the site.

C/Perez reiterated that any six (6') foot fencing or walls that may be proposed along the rear of each unit may not be aesthetically appealing.

ACM/Weiner stated that COA number nine (#9) addresses fence issues; however, if the Commission requests that the Condition be reinforced, Staff can take that direction.

C/Perez motioned to close the item for Public Comment.

C/Perez commented that the project site has been vacant for quite some time and that the property owners of the auto shops between the two project sites no longer represent the highest and best use. C/Perez mentioned that the proposed project will produce more value to the location and its surrounding uses and the concept of the location being utilized as a commercial and residential mixed-use development was a good idea. C/Perez noted that he is inclined to approve the project as submitted with a COA to consider alternative common use locations for residents that would be maintained by the HOA. C/Perez clarified that the internal fencing shall not exceed in height to where the aesthetics would be affected.

VC/Dy further discussed alternative solutions by reconfiguring locations of the residences and trash enclosures to provide space for private parks at each of the project sites.

PC/Fernandez stated that he agrees that the proposed private front yards should be eliminated and to utilize the additional space for a more centrally located private parks.

C/Perez questioned to ACM/Weiner that by requesting said improvements, will it require an entire re-design of the project site.

ACM/Weiner stated that Valley Vista has input regarding where their vehicles can gain access in-and-out of the development. ACM/Weiner referenced 780 Francesca Drive and stated that there are opportunities to reconfigure the site layout in order to meet the Commissions requests for amenities, however, 808 Francesca Drive would be more difficult due to site limitations. ACM/Weiner stated that the decision to request a re-design is ultimately up to the PC.

C/Perez questioned ACM/Weiner if the PC may approve the project as is with the exception that the Applicant addresses the issues/concerns brought up during the meeting.

ACM/Weiner stated multiple options wherein the PC may approve the project as is and leave it up to Staff to handle that portion of the project, have the Applicant resubmit the design to the PC for review, or direct the Applicant to address the issues before the SP goes up to the City Council.

VC/Dy questioned what the timeline would be if the item was continued by the PC.

ACM/Weiner stated that the main concern would be timing in regards to placing it on the next available PC Agenda, either for March or April depending on a resubmittal made by the Applicant.

Architect/Xiao referenced 808 Francesca Drive and stated that visitor parking number nine (9) adjacent to unit fourteen (14) may be converted into a park or common space area. Architect/Xiao added that the site has sufficient amount of visitor parking.

PC/Fernandez questioned if there are any recommendations to modify 780 Francesca Drive.

Architect/Xiao agreed with the PC's suggestion to reconfigure units six (6) and thirteen (13) by shifting them South (along with the trash enclosures) in order to create ample space for a central common space area.

PC/Koo inquired about parking in the surrounding neighborhood along Francesca Drive.

ACM/Weiner stated that the auto repair shop has been notified to keep their vehicles off the street. ACM/Weiner further discussed parking issues along Francesca Drive.

PC/Koo requested more information about the proposed grading plan and retaining walls for 808 Francesca Drive.

Architect/Xiao stated that she will contact their Civil Engineer to answer questions regarding the grading plan for the project site.

CE/Gilbertson stated that the retaining wall located at the bottom of the slope varies from eight (8') to eleven (11')-feet. However, if the Applicant decides to shift the project South of the site, the height of the wall will need to be significantly higher.

VC/Dy questioned about the retaining wall located at the plaza North of 808 Francesca Drive.

CE/Gilbertson stated that the retaining wall height varies from two (2') to six (6') feet respectively.

VC/Dy further discussed options to approve the item with Conditions or to proceed with a continuance.

Architect/Xiao stated that contact will be made with the consultants and that changes will be made to the best of their ability with the direction of the PC. Architect/Xiao questioned if there would be any concerns or issues with relocating the trash enclosure to the corner at 808 Francesca Drive.

VC/Dy suggested that the item be continued in order to allow Valley Vista to review the revised plans.

C/Perez indicated that he is inclined to approve the project with Conditions and allow Staff to review the revision.

The PC deferred the project to Staff.

MOTION ON ITEM 2

C/Perez motioned to adopt PC Resolution No. 19-01 recommending City Council approval of Francesca Specific Plan 2018-01, Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) 2018-01, and Site Plan and Architectural Review 2018-024 and 025, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval (COA) in Exhibit A; and adopt PC Resolution No. 19-02 recommending City Council approval of Tentative Tract Map 88205 and 88206, subject to the Conditions of Approval (COA); applicant is to provide a central common open space area on both 780 and 808 Francesca Drive with the assistance from City Staff and to clarify the rear yard wall height along with displaying that the amount of parking will be retained and not reduced at 808 Francesca Drive.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Perez, Dy, Fernandez, Koo, Wu
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion to approve passed 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

None scheduled

NEW BUSINESS:

3. Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPC/AR) 2018-101: A request to construct a 1,607 square-foot two-story addition and other improvements to an existing residence located at 20269 Vejar Road (APN: 8720-005-026).

AP/Munoz presented the staff report.

PC/Koo asked about the concerned residents and their location to the project.

AP/Munoz stated that the reported concerns were directly West and East of the project site.

C/Perez questioned if the concerns were related to privacy or the noise of the construction.

AP/Munoz stated that the Applicant is in attendance and they could provide further clarification.

C/Perez opened the item for Public Comment.

Resident, Tom Higham, inquired whether or not the project under consideration will be required to install an emergency fire sprinkler system and a secondary exit from the second floor.

ACM/Weiner stated that a secondary exit from the second floor is more of a Building Code compliance issue. However, and under the direction of the building code, fire sprinklers may be required.

Applicant, Danny Tseng, stated he is available for any questions.

PC/Koo inquired about the balcony located on the second floor facing the neighboring property to the East.

Applicant, Danny Tseng, stated that the location of the balcony appeared to be better architecturally, moreover, if the PC has any concerns or issues with the second floor balcony it can be removed.

C/Perez motioned to close the item for Public Comment.

PC/Fernandez commented that the proposed design has utilized multiple decorative materials and building articulation. PC/Fernandez noted no objections to the balcony.

VC/Dy further discussed concerns with the balcony and privacy for the neighboring property.

C/Perez noted that the proposed design is well constructed and that there are no concerns with the proposed balcony.

PC/Wu commented that there are no concerns to highlight regarding the proposed project.

MOTION ON ITEM 3

C/Perez motioned to approve SPC/AR 2018-101. PC/Fernandez seconded.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Perez, Dy, Fernandez, Wu
NOES: Koo
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion to approve passed 4-1.

DISCUSSION/TRANSACTION:s

None scheduled

REPORTS AND COMMENTS:

- ACM/Weiner reminded the PC of the scheduled Special Meeting for the 49-acre development in the month of April. The PC meeting for the month of April is tentative.
- ACM/Weiner made note of the Study Session regarding PC items to be pulled up to City Council and stated that the City Council's final decision was to report all Planning Commission items to the City Council. ACM/Weiner, CA/Mann and the PC discussed further the process and details.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m. The next Planning Commission Meeting is set for a regular meeting on Wednesday March 6, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at Walnut City Hall (21201 La Puente Road).

Passed and Approved on the 6th day of March, 2019.



Tom Weiner, Assistant City Manager – Development Services



Chairperson, Fernando Perez