

PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
September 1, 2020

This meeting was conducted as a video conference meeting in a remote location. All votes during the meeting were conducted by roll call.

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Highland was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Chair Hamerly through video conference.

Present:	Chair	Randall Hamerly
	Commissioner	Michael Hall
	Commissioner	Rich Haller
	Commissioner	Tamara Zaman

Absent:	Vice Chair	John Gamboa
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Staff Present:	Lawrence Mainez, Community Development Director
	Kim Stater, Assistant Community Development Director
	Ash Syed, Associate Planner
	Salvador Quintanilla, Associate Planner
	Camille Goritz, Administrative Assistant III
	Carlos Zamano, City Engineer
	Matt Bennett, Assistant Public Works Director
	Matt Wirz, Building Official

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Hamerly.

COMMUNITY INPUT (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes from the August 4, 2020 Regular Meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Hall, seconded by Commissioner Zaman, to approve the minutes, as submitted. Motion carried on a roll call vote, 4-0, with Vice Chair Gamboa absent.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Specific Plan Revision (SPR 20-001) proposing an amendment to the Greenspot Village and Marketplace Specific Plan (SPR 06-001) to reduce the minimum density in Planning Area 3 from a minimum of 25 dwelling units per acre to 18 dwelling units per acre and Design Review Application (DRA 20-006) proposing the construction of a 200-unit residential complex at the northwest corner of Greenspot Road and Webster Street, Highland Townhome Apartments. (APN: 1200-041-02)

Associate Planner Syed presented the staff report.

Administrative Assistant Goritz read the public comments received from Glenn Elssmann and Tom Robinson.

Chair Hamerly asked a question regarding the Building and Safety Conditions of Approval on page 41, condition number 31.

Building Official Wirz stated previous conditions were written by the prior interim Building Official. I will look into this a little further, and modify the condition if needed.

Patrick Tritz, Applicant stated REXCO Development started in 1985 which specializes in industrial and multi-family projects in Orange County and Inland Empire. It has evolved over the years and has become a large organization. We are an in house general contractor, we have our own property management, and we control the sites. We are very excited to work in the City of Highland; we see a lot of opportunity here. The staff has been great to work with and it has been an enjoyable experience for us. We are looking forward to this project moving forward.

Commissioner Haller asked what their approach to the onsite parking is to encourage the parking requirement generated by the project to use the parking spots on the site.

Patrick Tritz replied with our management we build it right into the leases for the apartments. Part of the parking is covered garages. We have garage audits conducted by the onsite managers to be sure the garages are not being used as storage facility, it is used only for the vehicles. We do not charge for parking.

Commissioner Haller asked some of the windows are aligning up with the adjacent window from an adjacent structure, are you going to be providing window coverings on all the bedroom windows?

Patrick Tritz replied absolutely. All windows have coverings.

Chair Hamerly opened up the public hearing.

Glenn Elssmann stated the amendment to the specific plan and how the rest of the housing can be created is our primary concern. The high density overlay on Planning Area 2 which is a minimum of 20-30 units per acre is difficult to get that density with how many acres in two story configurations. REXCO's gross acreage is 10.85 acres if they adjusted their parcel to exclude the roadway and exterior frontage we believe that would about a 10 acre parcel to qualify for 20 units per acre. That would be beneficial to the overall plan. If that overlay could be shifted and split up we believe it conforms to the state housing requirement and then the density on the balance of the land could be less. We do not see large 7,200 square foot detached housing, but as you know the specific plan could have a variety of housing types including lower density detached housing. We do like the idea of adding a public road because there is going to be multiple parcels to be given the access. We are not interested in doing anything that would harm the proposed plan that REXCO has made this just a boundary condition.

Chair Hamerly asked staff the recommendation for modifying the specific plan is really not the purview of what this hearing is.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated that is correct, it would not be the purview of the commission at this time to make that determination. It would come at a later date with a future application from other owners on Planning Area 2 and 3.

Chair Hamerly asked this would not change the methodology of calculating the density for the application that is before us this evening, is that correct?

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated if I understand the question correctly, you are asking if we changed the density range of Planning Area 3 to a lower threshold requested by the applicant there could be unintended consequences that we have not analyzed as it relates to our housing element.

Chair Hamerly replied it works exactly the opposite way. If the applicant tonight is requesting that the density level already be reduced to 18 acres and it is on the gross acreage then backing out the right of way and circulation to create a net acreage that is going to increase the density. This is because you are reducing the denominator in this case. I do not see that creating a conflict I would see it more how the density is going to be calculated in terms of methodology for the remainder of the residential parcels for consistency.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated the idea behind the specific plan for Planning Area 3 it is not strictly a residential planning area. There are opportunities for non-residential development. The intent for Planning Area 3 was mixed use. The vast majority of the units were to be provided within Planning Area 2, but there was not allowance for 100-300 units. What the specific plan envisioned at the time if somebody were to come in on a portion of Planning Area 3 with somewhere between 100-300 units on a portion area of Planning Area 3 that the remainder would be non-residential. This is not to spread out the net units within the remaining 20 acres that would be in this case the remainder after the REXCO project. The application before you tonight is wholly within the approval scenarios as the specific plan is today with the exception of that lower end of the density range.

Elssmann stated the applicant is amending Planning Area 3. We own more land in Planning Area 3 than REXCO does and if these suggestions are not addressed your forcing non-viable commercial retail mix use on the land that is north of REXCO's project. Since Planning Area 3 is being amended it seems like this is open to address the unintended consequences which will be left on our land holdings. Otherwise it is punitive to us to be supportive of a project that wipes out the commercial retail but, leaves it stuck on our land and that we do not support. We would like to request that be eliminated from that table as the gross square footage and suggest the minimum density be lowered to allow for those 100 units to be spread out on that land. We would like the density range go up to 40 so we are not confined to 18 because 100 units on 12 acres is 8 units per acre. We do not want to be stuck with unviable uses and that is what our concern is. So with the amendment to the specific plan we would like to remove the lack of viability like it is on REXCO's project and we would like the same consideration on the balance of Planning Area 3.

Chair Hamerly stated there is still primary frontage along Boulder and granted it is still not Greenspot but it is still arterial frontage there. The only thing that was being amended was the density and that was the proposal that is before us this evening.

Question for staff, can we entertain language that is not being proposed by the applicant if the applicant were to agree to the language?

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated it makes me uncomfortable to do so. We can ask the applicant and he can provide us with his thoughts on the topic. We did not really advertise this project as such. We advertised it as it going from 25 to 18 acres. There are implications to our housing element when we reduce that. When we looked at this project we did look at modifying this table from 25 to 18 acres. However, if you look at the project and you look at the net acreage it is close to 10 acres which brings the density of the project itself to about 20 units to the acre. This is a critical number when dealing with the state HCD and meeting the required numbers that we need to for the housing element. If Planning Commission was able to take action tonight to make a recommendation to the Council to something that could potentially be 8-10 units to the acre. We have not analyzed that in the impacts to our housing elements as it exists today.

Chair Hamerly stated that last column over where we would be eliminating the non-residential component of that which was not being proposed. There were no modifications to that table or that language. Are we at liberty to even entertain that? Staff has not had time to research that and I did not hear anything from the applicant about how this would impact the remainder of Planning Area 3.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated I am not sure why we need to eliminate the approximate gross square footage of non-residential uses. It is not a mandate, it is an option.

Chair Hamerly replied without the non-residential component the amount of units that would be able to be constructed in the northern portion of Planning Area 3 would take the density because we only have 100 units to spread out over 20 acres.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated I understand what Mr. Elssmann is saying and his preference would be to have residential due to market demands or lack of market demands for retail in this area. The intent of the specific plan when it was adopted was not to have strictly residential uses in this planning area. It would be more appropriate to have a new application not discussed this evening to make that additional change to reduce the density.

Chair Hamerly stated not seeing any provisions within the conceptual site plan for any connectivity except for the Calhoun Road element at the western perimeter. That would be specifically any pedestrian linkages that would tie this parcel or for this particular proposal into subsequent proposals. I was wondering if the applicant could address that.

Patrick Tritz replied as far as linkage we have pedestrian gates. For example, we will have gates for pedestrians to access on the Webster side. There will be another pedestrian gate by the secondary exit as well as on the Calhoun Road.

Chair Hamerly stated one of the internal linkages is the primary access point off of Calhoun Road. However, pending a future project would there be contingencies in place where some of these smaller north accesses on the property are envisioned to be those nodes that could pull into another residential neighborhood or into a non-residential

component in northern Planning Area 3. Are there provisions for that so we can get a strong pedestrian linkage where we do not have to exit primarily through the secondary egress onto Greenspot and out through the main gate on Calhoun.

Patrick Tritz replied absolutely. We have a sidewalk that runs a whole length to the northern boundary. Basically the whole sidewalk wraps all around the perimeter of the project. In terms of us being long-term holders we will monitor to review the plans to be sure we can connect it to the new projects as they come in.

Chair Hamerly stated at the north eastern corner it is basically a tubular steel fence with a hedge across there. I will be blunt and say it is not an attractive side of the project. I was wondering if there are any options to create a stronger screening element somehow at that corner. The residential component of those units above the garages are going to be looking down directly onto that site and it is a little rough. They do have some great mountain views if you ignore what is down below.

Patrick Tritz stated when we do those wrought iron fence we put vines on them to cover the fence top to bottom. I sent some photos to Ash of some typical samples of similar projects. We like that better than a block wall because of graffiti issues and it feels more closed in. We will add trees to green it up.

Chair Hamerly stated concerns for everything that is east of that secondary egress it is basically one way in and one way out. I am wondering if there are any possibilities of having at least an emergency egress since the project is immediately adjacent to a parking area.

Patrick Tritz replied we have not met with the neighbor, but we can definitely explore this and I understand your concern.

Commissioner Haller asked how you are going to handle the solid waste and the recyclables. How does that work?

Patrick Tritz replied we have a service called valet waste and so basically it's a service we provide to our tenants where the service provider empties the trash for them daily.

Chair Hamerly stated the elevations did not match up with the floor plans. There are rooms and areas within the plan that are showing no windows. The exterior elevations which are attractive they show windows where they are no windows on the plan. I guess my comment is I would ask the plans and elevations would match up as the project moves forward.

Patrick Tritz agreed with Chair Hamerly. When we did our elevations we got a little bit ahead of ourselves. We kept working on making sure we had that second floor in there for people to use the common area.

Chair Hamerly stated two of the featured windows on the south façade of the rec building look directly into the restroom and the other one may not fit because it looks like there is a door. The coworking space I am not sure what is intended for that room, but it showing a fold and stack door and on the elevation it is showing a round top metal assemblies that are centered in the arches. I am not sure the northern most door could

be centered on that arch as represented on the elevation because there is a stairway right there.

Patrick Tritz replied he hates to say it, but we threw the plan together fairly quickly. We will work on the drawings.

Chair Hamerly asked if the elevations more representative of what we are going to end up with or are the floor plans.

Patrick Tritz replied the elevations will adapt the floor plans to them. The perimeter of the building is the perimeter of the building.

Chair Hamerly stated that is what I was hoping to hear because I was a lot more comfortable with the elevations with the flooring. On the second floor is fairly a large lounge area and you also have a fitness component and the exhibits that were represented were nice. To have that entire second floor with only basically a single occupant unisex restroom might be a little bit of a stretch.

Patrick Tritz replied there is ways to fix that and we will work with building on that.

Chair Hamerly stated for the California room right now there is no direct point of access on that entire area. The only direct access or link to the pool is directly in front of the restroom. I understand you have to have the security of the pool perimeter, but it would be really nice to have the ability to get to that California room with the fireplace from somewhere at that end of the building.

Patrick Tritz stated by looking at the site plan we also have a patio outside just past the California room and there will be connectivity to it.

Chair Hamerly asked if the dimensions that are shown in each of those garages are net interior or is that center line of demise wall dimension.

Patrick Tritz replied net interior.

Chair Hamerly stated we have an alley that runs east and west on the property predominantly for access to the garage. At that level we have fairly plain elevations to deal with, but that is essentially the front door when you are coming home. Any opportunity that we have to create some additional visual interest or additional planting that has a little more substance I would encourage explore that. Those exterior access alleys are pretty stark.

Patrick Tritz replied back of the garage side as you can see has a lot of articulation on these buildings that probably does not show up very well on those small elevations.

Chair Hamerly stated I like the entry statement on the right elevation on building B. That is nice attention to detail. It would be nice to see more of the flare translated to the front side of the building, because it has that Spanish revival style. On the rec building it almost looks like two different architectural styles, it is more of a contemporary Mediterranean and I am feeling a Spanish Mediterranean flare on the residential component. So the character on this building is dramatically different than the character on the residential building. Are there any ideas that you can think of that we can

introduce whether it is more arches, pop outs, or details into this so it doesn't look quite as stark.

Patrick Tritz stated we could do a separate color inside the window to pop it out. We will come up with some ideas to add a little more pop to it.

Chair Hamerly stated my comment is more directed to it being more architectural consistent. This building looks more stark and commercial. The biggest concern I had was along Greenspot is a high speed area. This landscape plan is showing a side walk adjacent to the roadway.

Patrick Tritz replied they are ok with that and agreed.

Chair Hamerly stated I do not have any problem with the trees that have been selected, but overall the concern I have is to make sure that the landscape pallet is the streetscape for the trees both be patterning and the tree selection. I was wondering if you confirmed if that matches the streetscape to the west.

Patrick Tritz replied yes, I will have my landscape architect verify that. We actually have changed up these plans for this exhibit to make sure that we did match the streetscape.

Chair Hamerly stated I do not remember seeing fruitless olives on Greenspot so are those just feature elements at the access points?

Patrick Tritz replied correct.

Chair Hamerly stated concerns regarding the speed of the traffic that runs through Greenspot and I am thinking that the Calhoun is going to be signalized?

Patrick Tritz stated yes, it will be.

Chair Hamerly stated that presents an attractive point of egress. My main concern was that secondary egress that goes directly onto Greenspot which is going to have to a really clear line of sight that goes all the way back to the signal. People come ripping through there pretty quickly especially in the mornings when they are trying to get to the freeway as quickly as possible.

Patrick Tritz stated to have the traffic engineer verify that.

Chair Hamerly asked if the playground that is to the eastern end of the property is going to be fenced in. The other point of concern is that if the walkway is fairly small around that lot which is not a bad thing, but if vehicles are using that as a wheel stop there is no walkway essentially. My concern was the access to that might be limited if those parking spaces were all full so I was wondering if you had enough excess parking that one or more of those parking spaces could be eliminated. So there is a clean unobstructed point of access to get the playground if all those spaces are being used.

Patrick Tritz replied yes, and with the final plans we will give to the playground designer to assist us with the best way to enter the playgrounds and make sure we are outside the fall zone.

Chair Hamerly asked what the ideas are for the trash enclosures because those are right down the main access through the project.

Patrick Tritz stated typically they are made out of block with stucco and a trellis on top.

Chair Hamerly asked if it would be a planted trellis or an open trellis.

Patrick Tritz replied we will put some sort of roof with a colored metal roof or wood trellis.

Chair Hamerly stated he is not just focused on REXCO's project specifically, but also the big project. All three planning areas, this is the gateway and introduction. That whole landscape element through there should reinforce the signage that is there. The landscaping does not seem to be featuring in any special way that monumental corner right there.

Commissioner Haller stated to add one condition of approval regards to the parking.

Associate Planner Syed stated he has the wording regarding to the parking. We are going to add planning conditions and it states that garage and uncovered parking spaces shall be free of charge to tenants and guests.

Chair Hamerly replied that it will be condition 24 of planning conditions.

Scott Rice stated that he will work with building and safety to address the comment about the accessibility of the playground surface.

Chair Hamerly closed the public hearing.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Haller, seconded by Commissioner Hall, to recommend the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 2020-005, recommending the City Council:

- 1) Make a finding under Public Resources Code Section 21166 and the corresponding CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 and there are no substantial changes or new information of substantial importance that would trigger the preparation of a subsequent EIR and further finding that the project is exempt from further environmental review under Government Code Section 65457;
- 2) Adopt Ordinance No. ____, to amend the Greenspot Village and Marketplace Specific Plan (SPR 20-001);
- 3) Adopt City Council Resolution No. 2020 - ____, to approve Design Review Application (DRA 20-006), subject to the Conditions of Approval and Findings of Fact.

Motion carried on a roll call vote, 4-0, with Vice Chair Gamboa absent.

RESOLUTION NO. 2020 – 005

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO APPROVE DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION (DRA 20-006) PROPOSING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 200-UNIT MULTIFAMILY APARTMENT COMPLEX AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF GREENSPOT ROAD AND WEBSTER STREET IN PLANNING AREA 3 OF THE GREENSPOT VILLAGE & MARKETPLACE SPECIFIC PLAN (APN NO. 1200-041-02), AND MAKING A DETERMINATION THAT THE ADOPTION OF THIS RESOLUTION IS EXEMPT FROM FURTHER CEQA REVIEW UNDER CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15162, PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE SECTION 21666 AND GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 65457.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Assistant Community Development Director Stater announced we will have a Planning Commission meeting scheduled September 15, 2020.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chair Hamerly declared the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Camille Goritz, Administrative Assistant III

Randall Hamerly, Chair