CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Highland was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Chairman Hamerly, in the Donahue Council Chambers, 27215 Base Line, Highland, California.

Present: Chairman Randall Hamerly
Vice Chairman John Gamboa
Commissioners Richard Haller
Tamara Zaman

Absent: None

Staff Present: Lawrence Mainez, Community Development Director
Kim Stater, Assistant Community Development Director
Tom Thornsley, Associate Planner
Gary Gates, Building Official
Ernest Wong, Public Works Director
Matthew Bennett, Public Works Engineer
Shannon Wisniewski, Code Enforcement Admin. Assistant III

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chairman Hamerly.

COMMUNITY INPUT

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes from May 15, 2018 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Haller stated he has concern regarding the conditions of approval as transcribed in the minutes. He recalled that the conditions of approval would require the use of climbing vines as a graffiti deterrent along the West block wall.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater responded stating for the benefit of the Planning Commission she would re-read condition 48 which stated, “the applicant shall include some element of graffiti deterrent along the western portion of the block wall, specifically along the new 6-foot high block wall which may include but not limited to aerosol deterrent block wall, climbing vines, etc.”

Chairman Hamerly stated he also recalls considering open-course masonry design on this wall until the vines have actually taken hold. However, the vines have the possibility of becoming choked off between the block courses eliminating their ability to thrive.
Commissioner Haller stated he recalled from the discussion of the conditions previously, that the Planning Commission would not allow options, and climbing vines would be required.

Chairman Hamerly replied to his recollection the Commission wanted the climbing vines or a preferred alternative.

The applicant addressed the Commission stating that the intent of the condition is understood, however they requested that the graffiti deterrent options could be further explored in the plan check process.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated instead of the conditions having the option of “or” the conditions could be revised to require at a minimum: An aerosol resistant finished block wall, climbing vines, and “other” in place of an “or”, then additionally may require an added element.

Chairman Hamerly stated both aerosol deterrent block wall and climbing vines are not necessary if there is adequate coverage provided by the vines; adding the expensive option of aerosol deterrent may receive some push back from the community being that the wall covers a large stretch of property, he can agree with the City should it decide both are required, however he feels that requiring both would be taking a very expensive route.

Chairman Hamerly stated the Minutes transcribed on page 2 of 6 reflected him exiting the meeting without returning, when he in fact he returned to the meeting in time to announce the next agenda item.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater informed the Commission that the revision would be made to the May 15, 2018 Minutes.

A MOTION was made by Chairman Hamerly, seconded by Commissioner Haller to approve the May 15, 2018 Minutes as amended. Motion carried, 3-1, with Commissioner Zaman abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS

2. Consideration of a Conceptual Landscape Plan along 5th Street in connection with the project’s Design Review Application, approved in part on December 19, 2017 (Transition Properties Warehouses – Two Warehouse Buildings on two separate lots)

Associate Planner Thornsley presented the Staff Report and concluded requesting that the Commission find that the conceptual landscape complies with the intent of the conditions of approval outlined by the Planning Commission for this project.

Chairman Hamerly asked if any thought was given to the small turf areas against the building and deleting the turf in those areas and using zeroscape or turf free landscape. The applicant responded that the symbols used in the design actually indicate the use of Mya Porum against the building.

Chairman Hamerly accepted the clarification and opened the Public Hearing for any members of the public to comment. There was no comment from the public on this item.
A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Gamboa, seconded by Commissioner Haller, to approve DRA 16-014. Motion Carried 4-0.

New Business

3. A Conditional Use Permit, Two (2) Design Review Applications, and a Tentative Parcel Map application for the development of a gas station with convenience store and car wash, expansion of an existing self-storage facility (Universal Self Storage), and future development of two quick service restaurants with drive-through within the Golden Triangle Policy Area; CUP 17-003, DRA 18-004, DRA 18-005, Tentative Parcel Map 15814 (TPM 17-002, and Environmental Determination ENV 18-004

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated for the record some additional items have come up shortly before the distribution of the agenda which Staff could not move forward. Therefore more time is requested to complete additional research on the project. Staff's request is that the item can be continued to the next Planning Commission meeting on August 7, 2018.

A MOTION was made by Chairman Hamerly, seconded by Vice Chairman Gamboa to continue the item to next regularly scheduled meeting on August 7, 2018. Motion carried 4-0.

4. A Design Review Application (DRA 18-001) request for a new Food 4 Less fuel station to include: a 5,400 square foot fueling canopy, a 200 square foot kiosk with restroom, 7 dispensers (14 fueling stations), 2 underground storage tanks and associated fueling components, an air/water unit, signage on fueling canopy and kiosk, and 2 new monument signs.

Associate Planner Thornsley presented the staff report and concluded requesting that the Planning Commission approve DRA 18-001.

Vice Chairman Gamboa stated he has concerns regarding some of the details of the Staff Report. It was his understanding that Associate Planner Thornsley stated a condition does not exist, requiring the applicant to improve the landscaping along Victoria Avenue and Highland Avenue.

Associate Planner Thornsley replied stating the project was approved around the year 1991 as a Smith's Grocery Store. Upon researching the previous landscaping requirements of Smith's, he was unable to find a landscaping requirement in the conditions of approval.

Vice Chairman Gamboa clarified that he is inquiring about the landscaping requirements for the current project.

Associate Planner Thornsley replied that at this point conditions have been included for this project to improve the landscaping. Specifically, it was recommended 15-16 trees along the street frontage are replaced. Additionally, he added that if the applicant would like to contest the conditions, they have the option to present to the Planning Commission if they find the conditions too burdensome.
Chairman Hamerly added that Liquid Ambers are notoriously problematic, particularly near sidewalks.

Vice Chairman Gamboa stated that he is also concerned about the lack of architectural design on the canopy and the signage, adding that he finds it surprising that the design was presented in its current state to the Commission.

Associate Planner Thornsley clarified that this design is only a miniature of the existing pylon sign that is presently constructed and is designed to follow the character of the signage and design of the Smart and Final building, as well as the Big Lots building.

Vice Chairman Gamboa stated he feels the design is quite bland, and the Planning Commission does not approve basic design such as what was presented to the Commission.

Associate Planner Thornsley replied stating the applicant complied with the recommendations of Planning and followed their directives fully.

Chairman Hamerly inquired about the parking analysis. His understanding of the data is that the applicant is taking credit for 14 spaces under the canopy.

Associate Planner Thornsley clarified that the figure 14 parking spaces was present in the site report. However, this number was not actually included in the math calculation.

Chairman Hamerly summarized the parking analysis to emphasize that fuel island parking cannot be considered as parking, to suit the parking conditions.

Associate Planner Thornsley replied that he used the data table on page 2 of the parking analysis, which is the data table that was provided when Smith’s and Big Lots was built. He apologized for the oversight that occurred in the calculation.

Chairman Hamerly additionally stated that an additional issue is the accessible path of travel on the site plan.

Associate Planner Thornsley responded stating the applicant will be working with Building and Safety to develop an appropriate ADA path for the site.

Chairman Hamerly stated that his major concern is the path of travel through the fueling station, and the impact on traffic having an ADA path so close to the street.

Chairman Hamerly invited the applicant to make a presentation to the Commission.

Anna Olvera, representative for Food 4 Less, spoke briefly in regards to the project summarizing the intended benefit of the project to the community, which is to address redevelopment concerns in the City of Highland. Olvera then invited Ken Barton, also representing Food 4 Less, to address concerns expressed by the Commission regarding the project as well as conditions of approval outlined for the project.

Ken Barton stated that it is the goal of Food 4 Less to not only offer attractive pricing to their customers, but to maintain attractive landscaping at the site for the city and its customer base. Additionally, he gave an overview of the State of California requirement
for fuel price advertising signage.

Chairman Hamerly responding stating that the Commission is aware of the state requirement for advertising fuel pricing, but the concern is the bland architectural design and the need to improve on the direction of the style statement of the two monument signs on Victoria and Highland Avenue.

Ken Barton acknowledged the concern of the Commission and stated that Food 4 Less' intention is to provide easily visible advertising as well as a visibly appealing design. Therefore they will revisit the design of the two monument signs.

Sona Samvelian, Real Estate Manager for Food 4 Less, addressed the Planning Commission regarding the adjustment of parking ratios. The CC&R requires that if any major modification is made to the parking ratios, specifically if they adjust access to the center they will be legally obligated to seek approval from Big Lots.

Chairman Hamerly confirmed that based on the outlined CC&R that would mean the only additional requirement for ratification would be the addressing of the right of way dedication.

Sona Samvelian stated that is correct and concluded her address to the Commission.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong explained the history of impact fees in the City of Highland for residential and commercial construction.

Bob Jhawar, property owner of the AM/PM on Highland and Victoria Avenue, addressed the Commission in opposition of the project. He stated that the new Food 4 Less gas station will have a negative impact on the flow of traffic in the area, and requests that if approved, modifications are made to the traffic lanes in the area. He concluded stating that his gas station was denied the option of including pricing on their canopy; therefore Food 4 Less should be denied this option as well.

Associate Planner Thornsley noted that the conditions contained a typing error that reflected duplicate item 17’s. He would like it to be noted that the duplicated item 17 should be labeled at 17a.

Anil Kumar, owner of the service station on Highland and Palm Avenue, addressed the commission in opposition of the item. The area has increasing problem with homeless traffic in the area, which often frequents the local gas stations. He concluded expressing concern that an additional gas station will further increase the homeless foot traffic in the area.

Katie Granam, tenant of the Highland Apartments which is located behind the AM/PM gas station on Highland and Victoria Avenue. She spoke in opposition of the project. She too feels the addition of a gas station to the area will worsen the issue of homelessness due to the fact that the gas stations have become hot spots for homeless activity. She reported she has to regularly contact the Police Department regarding increasing issues with homeless persons loitering on or around the gas station. She concluded stating that if this station is built, it would be a benefit to the residents of the area if a gas station attendant or security guard is present during the hours of operation.
Anna Olvera addressed the concerns of Ms. Granam stating that unlike standalone gas stations, the common area will have a Security Guard on patrol and a gas station attendant between the hours of 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM. She assured the tenant that Food 4 Less takes its impact on the community seriously, by putting measures in place to manage and prevent crime in the area.

Anil Kumar returned to the dais to address the issue of crime and panhandling in the area. He recommends the installation of security cameras in an effort to measure the volume of panhandling, loitering, and burglary in this section of the community.

Sona Samvelian returned to the dais to add that when school begins in August 2018, the campus in the area will have 24-hour security to assist in the management of homelessness and loitering in the area. Samvelian recommended that the Commission see this project as an improvement to the development of this area.

Chairman Hamerly having no additional speaker slips closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Haller stated that he has some concerns he would like to add for the record. He would like to see upgrades to the monument signs architecturally. Additionally, lighting issues should be addressed as it may cause an increased amount of glare for the street traffic. The height of the stone base on the canopy columns appears out of proportion at about 3-feet high. He recommended that they consider adjusting the height to possibly about 8-feet high.

Chairman Hamerly issued directives for the project based on the discussion of the commission:

- The Commission requests the removal of the pricing on the canopy
- The Commission requests the increase of lighting levels under the canopy to increase security
- The Commission requests the monument design is revisited and re-submitted to the Commission
- The Commission requests the brick base of the canopy columns is increased in height to a more proportioned weight

A MOTION was made by Chairman Hamerly, seconded by Commissioner Zaman to adopt Resolution 2018-009, Approving Design Review Application (DRA 18-001, for Food-4-Less fueling station, associated with site improvements, and two monument signs, subject to the Conditions of Approval, and the Findings of Fact. Motion carried 3-1 with Vice Chairman Gamboa dissenting.

RESOLUTION NO. 2018-009
A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING THE DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION (DRA 18-001) PROPOSING A FUEL STATION FOR FOOD 4 LESS TO INCLUDE: A 5,400 SQUARE FOOT FUELING CANOPY, A 200 SQUARE FOOT KIOSK WITH RESTROOM, 7 DISPENSERS (14 FUELING STATIONS), 2 UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS AND ASSOCIATED FUELING COMPONENTS, AN AIR/WATER UNIT, SIGNAGE ON FUELING CANOPY AND KIOSK, AND 2 NEW MONUMENT SIGNS, ON A 6.3 ACRE SITE, LOCATED AT 26529 HIGHLAND AVENUE (APN NO.: 1191-241-34)
Adjourn

There being no further business, Chairman Hamerly adjourned the meeting at 8:01 PM.

Submitted By:

Nancy Stewart
Administrative Assistant III

Approved By:

Randall Hamerly, Chairman
Planning Commission