CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Highland was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chairman Hamerly, in the Donahue Council Chambers, 27215 Base Line, Highland, California.

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

Absent: None

Staff Present: Lawrence Mainez, Community Development Director
Kim Stater, Assistant Community Development Director
Ernest Wong, Public Works Director/City Engineer
Matthew Bennett, Project Manager
Nancy Stewart, Administrative Assistant III

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Hamerly.
City Clerk Hughes swore in newly appointed Commissioner, Michael Hall.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes from August 7, 2018, Regular Meeting

A MOTION was made by Vice Chair Gamboa, seconded by Commissioner Zaman, to approve the Minutes as amended. Motion carried, 4-1, with Commissioner Haller abstaining.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. A Conditional Use Permit, Design Review Application and Tentative Parcel Map to allow a 33,775 square foot expansion of an existing self-storage facility and subdivision of property from two to four parcels; CUP-17-003, DRA-18-005, TPM 15814.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater gave a brief description of the staff report, additionally stating there have been some modifications to the engineering conditions of approval. Those have been placed on the desk before you when you arrived this evening and copies have been provided for the public. Those changes have been highlighted. Staff also received today a comment from the adjacent property owner requesting clarification that the project before you this evening does not include the previously submitted gas station and fast food restaurants that did require reciprocal access between the properties, like In n Out and those to the west. Staff did clarify
these are not before you this evening, and you will not be taking any action that requires reciprocal access between the projects.

Chair Hamerly stated on the modified engineering condition that requests internal circulation between the mini storage and parcels two, three and four, that seems to work at odds with the security system that most mini storage facilities require, so he would have reservation about that. Could staff explain the thinking behind opening up between fast food and/or a gas station and the mini storage unit?

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated at one time we had seen a fast food proposal and it did not share access with the mini storage which we thought at the time would be to the benefit of both projects. She will let Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong answer the question.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated this project has a special condition of approval that he thinks is worthwhile to explain. This shows the Golden Triangle area between the freeway here and Boulder Avenue here on Greenspot Road. The City of Highland has adopted a Master Plan for the improvement of Greenspot Road and also access layout at various locations. Right here at the freeway we have a signal here, and then in front of Lowes we have a signal, and then in front of the driveway to Staples there is another traffic signal. In the future there is going to be a traffic signal constructed at this location. This is right in the middle of the Golden Triangle. This location is the main entrance to this area, including commercial and residential areas. Similarly this traffic signal is going to provide full access to this development. The Master Plan shows that this big area is to get its full access way at this point, enter right at this location into the project or out of the project. As you can tell across the street, this intersection is already built. The City of Highland built the entire three quarter mile of Greenspot Road, the full width, everything was built including all the traffic signal conduit underneath the roadway; it is ready. So we anticipate that when either this property develops or some property up here develops and when they need this access they will build a traffic signal to control this intersection. As you can see on the north side, there is already a right-turn pocket built that would lead you to the property on the north side of the street. Similarly in the future there is going to be a right-turn pocket built in front of the signal to allow traffic to move into this parcel. What we anticipate to happen is, when this property sells, they will install a right turn pocket, put in a traffic signal, and install a driveway similar to what is on the north side. Whenever this driveway is available in the future, then we would anticipate that the driveway access would be removed by the new development. The existing development here will have to construct something inside to make a connection so they can utilize this signal light intersection to make a left turn out or in to the project. If you don’t what will happen is this driveway is going to end up in the future a right turn pocket right in front of a signal. So this driveway would really not be a good location for access. When the signal is built, it would be difficult to get in and out of this driveway because you will have cars waiting in line for the green light, so this driveway would be blocked all the time. It is not going to be in the right location anymore. So as a part of this conditional approval, you see that this project now is required to do several things. One, blend a reciprocal easement among themselves so that parcels two, three and four and the parcel down here, and the existing mini storage will all be interconnected. They can all go to this future connection. Number two is, this project is now required to rent to the City a reciprocal offer of dedication to allow future construction of the right-turn pocket, so the future development here doesn’t have to go get the dedication from them anymore because the City would already have that dedication. Thirdly, this project is required to make the physical connection to this
driveway. We think this would be a good arrangement to allow all the development of both this project and the project to the east. He wants to emphasize though, there is no need for any construction at this point to be done by the expansion of the self-storage facility. They don’t need to do anything yet, at this time. They don’t even need to do anything in the future. They don’t need to worry about removing the driveway because the new development would take care of it at that time.

Chair Hamerly stated so in combination with the three actions that would be required to develop parcels two, three and four, there would also need to be a reciprocal parking arrangement between those three parcels and the existing mini storage because that would leave them without any parking whatsoever, because the only point of access would take out three or four existing parking spaces that they have outside the gate.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated yes but they are going to gain parking space in here when this driveway is closed; they can park against the street too. So they can make arrangements internally to still make their site plan work.

Chair Hamerly stated the other point is that the southbound drive aisle that comes into that future parcel to the east, is it anticipated that would have a median? Because the drive aisle that was going northbound, that at one point was a prominent gateway into that parcel and they were proposing a median. If a median is in fact there, that would cut off any access to come out of the mini storage and go westbound on Greenspot.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated of course we will not let that happen. Whatever median design would be subject to City review and approval, and we will make sure that there is a break in the median.

Chair Hamerly stated or they could make a southbound turn coming out of the mini storage, go to the circulation route that allows them to do a u-turn, then go northbound and then go westbound.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated that could be an alternative, but that can be evaluated in the future when we have development.

Chair Hamerly stated he is leery of any cross-traffic solutions within the first 100 to 150 feet of an intersection, especially when it is signalized because of the queues. That can create a bunch of problems for circulation, that would essentially lock the people into the mini storage parcel unable to get out if either the signal is active and allowing people to go southbound, or if the queue is extensive coming out of that center going northbound they wouldn’t be able to cross.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated when we have a proposal on the Walmart parcel, then we will make sure that proposal will accommodate this movement for the self-storage.

Chair Hamerly stated he understands the explanation, but do we need to add any clarifying language for future participants in this development proposal so that we are only talking about the drive aisle outside the gate; we are not talking about full access between parcels two, three and four and the mini storage. The cross lot access is not for the purpose of gaining access to the mini storage from parcels two, three and four directly. It is to access the drive aisle at the eastern side of the property.
Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated he thinks we have conditioned that language to do two things. One is to require that internally command one, two, three and four that they have reciprocal access. Number two we have other language that requires this future connection to the property adjoining to the east.

Chair Hamerly stated his question was regarding Condition 48. It just says accommodate internal circulation. It is not specific to the existing drive aisle or any ingress/egress out of the site. It just says internal circulation.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated Condition 48 says that parcels two, three and four and the existing self-storage will have internal circulation. And we have Condition Number 10 in Item 3 that says future development in the Walmart parcel will reserve a private easement in favor of self-storage and all of these parcels within the parcel map here. So he thinks between the two it is clear that they are internally interconnected, and they are also connected to the parcel on the east.

Commissioner Haller asked parcels 2, 3 and 4 can develop prior to the parcel to the east with no requirements to where these two driveways exist?

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated correct. The parcels within this project here can all develop and use this access, because they don’t have a driveway right next to them to connect to. However, once that driveway is constructed by the Walmart parcel development, then they would need to make that connection.

Chair Hamerly they would almost have to make a U-turn to get back to that.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated but they have another driveway here that they can use.

Chair Hamerly stated but it is still a U-turn. To access either of those two driveways would require a U-turn at some point on Greenspot.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated that is true. Eastbound traffic wanting to go into this project, without this signal would have to go there and make a U-turn. That is why this signal is really good for this business.

Kal Farah, Redlands Consultants & Associates, stated there is one condition they did not know how to resolve with regard to landscaping in front of one of the buildings facing northerly on the self-storage. That building sits 317 feet away from the street, and they don’t see the need to put in landscaping on vacant land that will be their property line. That was the process they had worked on by sub-dividing all of those properties. None of the surrounding properties were required to landscape vacant land. They could break that building’s frontage towards Greenspot putting some columns every 40 feet just to break the monotony of the flat or horizontal split-faced block.

Chair Hamerly inquired which particular Condition he was referring to so we can note it in any Motion if we choose to agree with that, regarding the landscape that would be on the north façade of the addendum parcel?

Kal Farah stated the north façade of the proposed addition to the self-storage.
Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated it is Planning Condition Number 21 on page 102 of your packet.

Chair Hamerly stated to clarify your point, when the parcels to the west of you were developed, there was also a Landscape Master Plan and as part of the Conditions of Approval those projects were conditioned that they had to implement the full scope of their Landscape Master Plan. If you were submitting an entire Master Planned Development for parcels two, three and four there would be similar conditions about the right-of-way, the parkway and the internal landscaping as a percentage of the total development. The concern is that this project could be there for five or ten years before the parcels to the north are developed. To mitigate the risk of the blank wall being an attractive nuisance, we either say clinging vines of some sort to be a deterrent for graffiti, or we say put a fence, some trees or some sort of vegetation. We will leave the option up to you, but in general we would tend to agree with the City's Landscape Architect in that regard.

Kal Farah reiterated concerns about the landscaping Condition on a vacant property.

Chair Hamerly asked what is the anticipated time frame for development of parcels 2, 3 and 4?

Kal Farah stated he could not say. The proposal was for this application to go through together, however they did have issues with the properties to the west. There was a Condition of Approval on their CUP to share reciprocal access easement just like they are requiring now, and they deny that it was one of their conditions. If we want to follow through with reciprocal access on those front properties, then we have to go through their property. They pulled those out so they could give the City and the developers more time to communicate together to find out whether that requirement on the adjacent westerly property was really a reciprocal access easement or not. On their parcel map it named this specific parcel that it had reciprocal access and now they deny it. So we had pull that away, but we were hoping that we can go ahead and do the development together.

Vice Chair Gamboa stated this is the only wall that will be facing northerly, and that is why we are asking for landscape along that edge.

Kal Farah restated his position.

Chair Hamerly stated regarding the Tentative Tract Map that proposes to subdivide the northerly parcel into three, are we locking ourselves into an arrangement where there is going to be three separate pads as opposed to one larger facility? Or is it anticipated that there would be one facility on one of the parcels, say the westernmost parcel, and then the other two parcels, 3 and 4, could potentially be developed to a larger scale building per the original proposal?

Kal Farah stated he is not sure. When he first came to this project, they had projects coming, two drive-thrus, and the gas station. They had people interested. Some of them moved away because it has been three years of trying to facilitate.

Chair Hamerly stated that is one of his chief concerns is that by putting traffic intensive or internally intensive circulation towards the front of these parcels we create more circulation problems within the overall development or fabric of the Greenspot Corridor.
He knows in looking at the proposal to the north there were gas stations there. There were a bunch of smaller independent parcels that were developed or proposed for development there, which puts all of the circulation, especially for drive-thrus, the queues and all of that, it puts it towards the front of the parcel which can create some additional problems. Not to fault In n Out, because they are very popular, but frequently their queues extend all the way back through that internal drive aisle because they have so many customers. That is a concern for him, in that if we start having a lot of drive-thru restaurants that are very successful, some of those queues, especially given how shallow this particular parcel is at the northern edge, if those queues start disrupting circulation coming in off of Greenspot, could you address those concerns?

Kal Farah stated all the front parcels that are empty he believes were within the City’s Retail Commercial from the initial start, that they were required to be retail and commercial. He believes when the traffic study was done on Greenspot Road that was taken into consideration. He believes that Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong had proposed and conditioned this project for the circulation; they had drawn some proposals of where their driveways would go to the proposed traffic signal. When those projects do come, circulation will be addressed by engineering. It does take into consideration all of those items once the project is designed. In this case, the project is designed as a self-storage facility with very little traffic count. If a drive-thru comes in, maybe the City would require a traffic study and at that time all of these items would be addressed.

Chair Hamerly stated his concern is not with the circulation and/or the site plan for the mini storage, but the fact that it is bundled with a tract map that is subdividing the northern parcels and the point of concern is whether we are locking ourselves into three independent uses when the whole purpose of the PD within the Greenspot Corridor was to promote a cohesive master plan type retail commercial establishment that reads over the entire length of the corridor from the freeway all the way to Boulder. If we start breaking those parcels up, especially the street frontage parcels, we are encouraging more disjointed, spot development that breaks apart the cohesiveness of the PD which was the original vision for that corridor.

Kal Farah stated he believes that is why Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong requested they have this reciprocal access and the cohesiveness between all the parcels. They are taking two acres to the south and making it self-storage which makes the traffic count much reduced which should alleviate whatever additional retail comes up from the front properties. When development comes in, the City will require most probably a traffic study at that time when those front parcels come in for their own development.

Chair Hamerly stated this is a public hearing and asked if anyone wished to participate.

David Gandolfi spoke in favor of the project, citing concern about trees on the west side of property potentially allowing people to climb up and into the facility.

Paul DiMarino spoke in favor of the project.

Commissioner Haller stated he shares concern about subdivision or creating three parcels from one winding up with three small projects versus the one large project that was envisioned. He thinks this is a good use for the land. He initially had concerns about fire safety, but the fire department was okay with it. He supports this concept.
Chair Hamerly stated his concern was that they did bundle the application for the tentative tract map with this application, and this is the only time they get to consider whether should it be three parcels or should it remain one parcel, possibly two parcels. In general he believes there is only one suitable development option for this long parcel and that was to basically annex it to the mini storage. He has no reservations with the mini storage portion of the project; it is mainly what is going to happen to the north end of the parcel.

Chair Hamerly asked if there were any additional comments or concerns. Seeing none, the public hearing is closed.

Discussion ensued by the Commission regarding whether they were considering the applicant’s suggestion for the deletion of or alternative solutions for the northern extremity landscaping condition along the wall on the main storage parcel.

Scott Rice, City Landscape Architect, stated the setback from Greenspot is pretty significant, which wasn’t the primary concern. The distance between the internal driveways is considerably closer than the distance from Greenspot. It is probably within about a hundred feet of that wall. So the visibility of that wall came into question and that is why we flagged that item.

Chair Hamerly asked is it your anticipation that the landscape would be temporary pending development of the northern parcel, or would become a permanent part of the fabric of the northern parcels?

Scott Rice stated the northern parcels, once they are developed, would serve the same purpose as that temporary landscape buffer would be. They envisioned it as not having a blank wall face in such a highly visible location, not knowing the exact timeline of the development of the parcel to the north.

Commissioner Haller stated it was suggested that the trees on the west side might be a climbing ladder to get on to the roof. What is the anticipated height of those trees?

Scott Rice stated there are some California Sycamores that are fairly rapidly growing trees. They do have the ability to be climbed. It would be a function of maintenance to keep the lower limbs high enough that it would become difficult to climb. They would not be opposed to having other species used if that was a concern.

Community Development Director Mainez stated what Scott Rice is telling us is that it is a corner building that is facing an internal circulation facing In n Out and LA Fitness, so he is trying to treat that as a corner element. Both sides of those walls should be landscaped so it looks cohesive. So it is no longer an issue of what you can or cannot see from the right of way from Greenspot, it is more internal.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chair Gamboa, seconded by Commissioner Haller, to:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2018-011 approving Conditional Use Permit CUP-17-003, Design Review Application DRA-18-005, and Tentative Parcel Map 15814 (TPM-18-004), subject to the Conditions of Approval (with amended Engineering Conditions) and Findings of Fact; and
2. Direct Staff to file a Notice of Exemption. Motion carried, 5-0.
RESOLUTION NO. 2018- 011

3. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP 17-002), Design Review Application (DRA 17-005), Tentative Parcel Map (TPM 17-001), and Sign Program (ASR 18-011) to construct a gas station and 3,100 square-foot 7-Eleven Convenience Store with a Type 20 Alcohol Beverage License.

Assistant Community Development Stater gave a description of the staff report.

Jian Torkan stated they have no presentation other than to accept the conditions.

Chair Hamerly announced the public hearing, asking for speakers.

David Gandolfi spoke in opposition to the project citing concerns regarding potential access and traffic problems.

Chair Hamerly stated he had questions regarding the necessity of additional parking along the northern edge of the property when that would be more in keeping with the landscape portion of the corridor along the southern side of Greenspot. Since we have so many parking spaces above and beyond what is required for this parcel, would it be of any benefit to strengthen the corridor for landscaping along the Greenspot boundary?

Jian Torkan, Boulder Holdings, LLC stated the tenant would like to have as much parking as possible, and that parking will eventually possibly be utilized by future tenants, maybe a restaurant. It is overparked at this point but he thinks when parcel 2 is developed the parking will flow much better.

Chair Hamerly asked if he felt there would be advantage to freeing up a few of those to create a corner concept for a gateway statement, landscaping signage, whatever, and maybe use the northern edge of the property closer to your restaurant or design the western parcel in a fashion where circulation is improved coming off of Greenspot with easier access of pumps and then maybe have more parking at that northern edge of the property?

Jian Torkan stated he doesn't feel there is any harm in moving a few parking spaces up on the north side. Our building on parcel 2 would most likely be centered closer to the street, so there would be not much parking along Greenspot.

Chair Hamerly stated that would actually strengthen the corridor. He would encourage him to develop more parking toward the south edge of the property and he thinks that would also line up with the parking that is on the south edge of the 7-11 parcel and create better cross lot circulation.

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A consensus was unanimously reached by the Commission to see a stronger corner statement.

Chair Hamerly asked if there were other ideas or thoughts on the site design that would get an accessible path of travel out of the main circulation route coming through the site? Coming in south of that main drive and then coming in through the planter areas would at least get you out of that main circulation path coming through the site, coming off of Greenspot and onto Boulder.

Patrick Flanagan, Thatcher Engineering stated they anticipated the main drive aisle through this access could be people heading eastbound on Greenspot so they would be making a right turn in, circling through the convenience store and pump stations, heading back north to Greenspot and making a right out. It was never anticipated that a major drive thoroughfare would be from Greenspot to Boulder. So they don’t see that ADA path would be that concerning for the path of travel.

Chair Hamerly asked is there any thought to having the northern point of access have similar level of detail and articulation that you have provided going onto Boulder where you even have a turn lane going in there, accentuated paving, it looks a little wider. One looks like the main entrance the other looks like the back door.

Patrick Flanagan stated they would have no opposition in providing that.

Jian Torkan asked if they could substitute (inaudible).

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated there is an engineering condition to add that accentuated pavement onto Greenspot, but she thinks the applicant is saying he would prefer one or the other but not both, but she thinks they have conditioned them for both.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated we did. The proposal currently by the applicant is just to put the interlocking paver. The existing driveway doesn’t have decorative pavers; it is just asphalt. However City staff has put in a condition that also this driveway on Greenspot Road would be required to remove the asphalt and put in interlocking pavers. And actually the applicant is required to maintain those.

Vice Chair Gamboa asked for clarification regarding the driveway widths on Greenspot; one being 32 feet, the other being 36 feet.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Wong stated it is within the common range of a commercial driveway. He can also address the public comment about the difficulty of access and traffic concerns. It is very common for a property located at a major intersection to have only right in and right out access. In this case you already have a median at Greenspot and also at Boulder, so all you have left is a driveway that can only make right in, right out. Inbound traffic from the west and from the north is easy. Coming from the east you would just make a left turn and go in here. Coming from the south you would make a U-turn and come back into this driveway; it all works. Outbound traffic to the south and east is easy. To go back west to the freeway, you would cut through and get into the left turn pocket and make a U-turn. Same thing going north. There is an existing striped median that we conditioned to create an opening to
allow traffic to come through. The fact that this driveway has a little distance from the intersection allowed this to happen.

Jian Torkan asked for clarification regarding the number of parking spaces to remove.

Chair Hamerly restated his direction with regard to strengthening the Gateway of the Greenspot Corridor.

Vice Chair Gamboa stated in regard to the exterior elevations, on the south and the west it was in line with the top of the building. Would it be better to be a little taller to give it some definition?

Chair Hamerly stated the overall elevations looks a bit congested given the size of each of those facades, especially on the south. Much of it will not be very visible. He wondered if they could spend some of the money allocated for the lesser elevations and put more facing the street, enhancing those elevations. If there is something that could be done especially on the northern façade to enhance that and come up with a stronger concept, they would encourage that.

Daniel Foley, Tate & Associates, architects representing 7-11, asked when you say strengthen the center, what does that mean?

Chair Hamerly spoke regarding stonework ending at the spring line, an awning right on top of the apex of the arch, and a tall element with no accent at all. The pinnacle of the element has the same level of visual detail as the smaller elements. Make the door taller, pull the stone all the way up to the awning; do something to tie it all together. Would the awning be better if it went all the way across the top of the glass, have some scale to it. The 7-11 sign is crowded at the top, understandably as the marquee, but leaves a large blank space on the wall.

Daniel Foley stated they could come up with some concepts. Or do want to condition it and then we work it out with staff?

Chair Hamerly stated he has no reservations with regard to the Conditional Use Permit. Those can be issued as directives, but they could pull the design review aspect and say work on these two facades and bring them back, without holding up the technical documents.

Discussion between the Planning Commission and the Applicants followed, providing suggestions for potential visual improvements with regard to design review.

Jian Torkan asked if they could condition it that they could work out a design with staff?

Chair Hamerly stated we do not condition that. It is a directive.

Chair Hamerly stated with regard to the address at the base of the sign, once the landscape matures it will probably not be visible. Are we requiring that there be an address on the building itself?

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated the Fire Marshal requires that.

Chair Hamerly stated not just the little five inch, backlit, contrasting address sign but
something that looks appropriate.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated yes, we can modify that.

Chair Hamerly asked for any other comments? Seeing none, the public hearing is closed.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chair Gamboa, seconded by Commissioner Haller, to:
1. Adopt Resolution 2018-012 approving Conditional Use Permit CUP 17-002 to adopt the Planned Development Document and a Type 20 ABC License, Design Review Application DRA 17-005 approving the Site Plan, Conceptual Grading Plan, Conceptual Landscape Plan, Sign Program ASR 18-011, and Tentative Parcel Map TTM 17-001, subject to the Findings of Fact, and Conditions of Approval; and
2. Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (ENV 17-002) and direct Staff to File a Notice of Determination with San Bernardino County Clerk of the Board. Motion carried, 5-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 2018 - 012
A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. CUP-17-002, DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. DRA-17-005, SIGN PROGRAM ASR 18-011, AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 19824 TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GAS STATION WITH SIX PUMP ISLANDS AND A 3,100 SQUARE FOOT CONVENIENCE STORE.
LOCATION: SOUTHWEST CORNER OF GREENSPOT ROAD AND BOULDER AVENUE, HIGHLAND (APN 1201-361-17)

COMMUNITY INPUT

David Gandolfi spoke regarding Planning Commission Meetings being televised and also about installation of CNG fueling stations

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Possible amendment to Massage Ordinance Application.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chair Hamerly adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Submitted By: Nancy Stewart
Approved By: Randall Hamerly, Chair

Administrative Assistant III Planning Commission

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