

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF MARCH 28, 2011

2010-7670 - Realcom Associates [Applicant] **Executive Inn Inc.** [Owner]: Use Permit to allow a new telecommunications facility (AT&T) within a monopalm at **1217 Wildwood Ave.** (Mitigated Negative Declaration) SM
(Continued from February 28, 2011.)

Comm. Larsson recused himself from considering this item as he said he has a financial conflict of interest and left the Council Chambers.

Shaunn Mendrin, Senior Planner, presented the staff report. He said staff recommends approval as conditioned.

Comm. Sulser discussed with staff different monopalm designs. Staff said they would work with AT&T to determine an appropriate design, adding that other tree species were considered, however the monopalm seemed to be the best solution for the site. Mr. Mendrin committed on factors in determining the location.

Comm. Chang discussed the number of antennas, with staff commenting that it is difficult to put multiple carriers on a monopalm. Comm. Chang discussed with staff about possibly adding a condition that if the site is redeveloped the Commission would prefer to see the antennas relocated on the top of the new structure.

Comm. Hungerford discussed with staff colocation, and what other carriers are doing in this area. Staff said AT&T is taking some risk knowing this site will eventually be redeveloped and the antennas would probably be relocated. **Trudi Ryan**, Planning Officer, discussed other carriers located nearby. Comm. Hungerford asked about alternatives to the monopalm such as a flag pole. Staff responded and confirmed that the final monopalm would be better looking than the photo simulation. Comm. Hungerford asked about the conditions and said he was looking for the language from previous projects about the applicant requirement to provide written certification that the facility is in accordance with certain standards. Staff said that the language is probably worded differently and referred to several conditions that were similar to what he was looking for.

Vice Chair Hendricks commented that the monopalm may look healthier than the real palm trees and asked staff about the equipment shed. Mr. Mendrin said the equipment shed would be a switching facility and does not include a backup generator.

Comm. Dohadwala discussed with staff the look of the monopalm commenting that she thought another species of tree would be okay. She discussed with staff the monopalm and the screening provided versus other species. She expressed concern

that the monopalm looks too perfect compared to the real palms and maybe the species should be changed. Ms. Ryan referred to the conditions and said that staff would be requiring the monopalm blend in with the existing trees and that staff felt the monopalm would be the preferable option.

Chair Travis opened the public hearing.

Matt Yergovich, applicant representing AT&T Mobility, said this was a difficult site, though a very important site for AT&T and for Sunnyvale for wireless traffic. Mr. Yergovich explained the need for the facility to be located on this site and differences with the AT&T network from other carriers. Mr. Yergovich explained that AT&T had a site at the old Sheraton with the hopes that the site would be redeveloped and due to the economy downturn have been using a temporary COW (Cell on Wheels). He said they looked at several locations and designs and this is the best solution. He assured the Commission that the designer they choose will tailor the monopalm to the existing site. He said in their agreement with Ramada Inn that they would trim the existing palms and the monopalm would not be any taller than any of the other trees on the site. He discussed how the monopalm would conceal the antennas and discussed the equipment shed confirming there would be no generator and no new shelter. He said he thinks this is the best proposal for AT&T and Sunnyvale.

Vice Chair Hendricks discussed with staff whether a temporary generator would require a permit with staff saying it would depend on the generator used.

Comm. Hungerford discussed with Mr. Yergovich that colocation was considered and why it was not a good option. Mr. Yergovich referred to the coverage maps in Attachment E. Comm. Hungerford confirmed with Mr. Yergovich that the photo simulations are not what the monopalm is going to look like and that a design consultant would work with staff and the applicant to produce a monopalm more consistent with the existing trees. Mr. Yergovich said that the Commission might want to add a note about the existing trees being pruned by AT&T.

Mr. Yergovich said AT&T has been working with the City on the proposed site for a long time and respectfully requests the Commission's approval.

Chair Travis closed the public hearing.

Comm. Sulser moved for Alternative 2 to approve the Special Development Permit with modified Conditions of Approval: to add a condition that the palm trees be pruned on the site. Comm. Chang seconded the motion.

Comm. Sulser said he could make the findings as conditioned and he thinks the conditions address the aesthetic concerns of camouflaging the pole. He said he hopes the tree does not look artificial.

Comm. Chang said thank you to Mr. Yergovich for agreeing to prune the existing palm trees to improve the aesthetics of the site. He said he thinks this is a good location and will serve the community well.

Vice Chair Hendricks offered a **Friendly Amendment** that when the **property is redeveloped** that the monopalm should be removed and the carrier would have to return to Planning Commission for another antenna approval. He said he would like staff to help him with the wording. Ms. Ryan said that the wording could include that **“the application for this monopalm is good for this site provided the current buildings are on the site.”** **The Friendly Amendment was acceptable to the maker and seconder.** Vice Chair Hendricks said he can make the findings and the proposed project does not negatively impact the way the property looks today.

Comm. Hungerford said he would be supporting the motion and commented that he found the condition he was looking for earlier, AT-1, and that he is glad to see that it is still included.

ACTION: Comm. Sulser made a motion on 2010-7670 to approve the Special Development Permit with modified Conditions of Approval: to add a condition that the palm trees be trimmed and cleaned of dead fronds from all existing palm trees on the site taller than 10 feet; and if redevelopment of the site occurs, the existing facility (monopalm) should be removed and incorporated into the architectural design of the structure. Comm. Chang seconded. Motion carried 6-0, with Comm. Larsson recusing himself.

APPEAL OPTIONS: This action is final unless appealed to City Council no later than April 12, 2011.