



City of Las Vegas

Agenda Item No.: 28.

**AGENDA SUMMARY PAGE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF: JUNE 26, 2008**

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR: M. MARGO WHEELER

Consent Discussion

SUBJECT:
CON-2801 - REZONING - PUBLIC HEARING - APPLICANT: BLOKHAUS
DEVELOPMENT, LP - OWNER: AB CENTRAL SOUTH, LLC - Request for a Rezoning
FROM: R-4 (HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) TO: R-5 (APARTMENT) on 0.48 acres at the
southwest corner of Main Avenue and Casino Center Boulevard (APNs 162-03-210-039 and 040),
Ward 3 (Reese)

C.C.: 06/06/08

PROTESTS RECEIVED BEFORE:

APPROVALS RECEIVED BEFORE:

Planning Commission Mtg.	2	Planning Commission Mtg.	2
City Council Meeting	0	City Council Meeting	0

RECOMMENDATION:
APPROVAL

BACKUP DOCUMENTATION:

1. Location and Aerial Maps
2. Conditions and Staff Report
3. Supporting Documentation
4. Photos
5. Justification Letter
6. Protest/Support Postcards
7. Submitted After Final Agenda Protest Postcard for Items 28 and 29

Motion made by STEVEN EVANS to Hold in Abeyance Items 28 and 29 to 7/24/2008

Passed For: 7; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 0
SAM DUNNAM, DAVID STEINMAN, RICHARD TRUESDELL, BYRON GOYNES,
GLENN TROWBRIDGE, STEVEN EVANS, VICKI QUINN; (Against-None); (Abstain-None);
(Did Not Vote-None); (Excused-None)

NOTE: COMMISSIONER TRUESDELL disclosed that he owns property in the downtown area, which is outside of the notice area, and he would vote on this matter.

Minutes:

CHAIR GOYNES declared the Public Hearing open for Items 28 and 29.

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PETER LOWENSTEIN, Planning and Development Department, stated the project meets the redevelopment goals for the area and is consistent with the neighborhood's pattern of development. He recommended approval of both items.

JIM TORTI, San Diego, California, appeared on behalf of the applicant. He explained that this project would provide workforce housing with a designer edge. He agreed to all conditions and respectfully requested approval.

MR. TORTI informed COMMISSIONER TROWBRIDGE that the project would consist of 54 units with an emphasis on two-bedroom units. He described the units, which would vary in size from 440 square feet to 1000 square feet and noted that the project would not include many amenities in order to make it feasible. MR. TORTI confirmed that the units would be constructed above a parking deck and would be offered at market rates.

COMMISSIONER EVANS suggested that Casino Center has the potential to be one of the greatest streets in the downtown area, but expressed concern with the lack of detail in the elevations. He requested the applicant provide elevations of the final building and noted the lack of streetscape and trees in the proposal.

DOUG HANKIN, Planning and Development Department, informed COMMISSIONER EVANS that each project is considered on its own merits and would not comment on how this project would impact the streetscape for Casino Center. He stated that staff does support the project.

With regards to the streetscape request, MR. TORTI informed COMMISSIONER EVANS that the applicant does not have enough room on the parcel to setback the buildings to create more pedestrian-friendly streets. MR. TORTI explained that the project's corner had been cut back to encourage a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

COMMISSIONER EVANS wondered why trees could not be included in the project's streetscape and stated that people would not be encouraged to walk without trees. He pointed out that the average nighttime temperatures in the Las Vegas Valley have increased due to the lack of trees.

COMMISSIONER TROWBRIDGE stated that he was not impressed with presentation and observed that the project looks like a box with outside stairwells facing the streets. He stated he could support 54 units on a half-acre if the building were attractive and innovative. MR. TORTI agreed that the building's combination of textures and materials were not adequately expressed in the submitted elevations, but stated the building would be interesting and attractive. He explained that the challenge was making the project financially feasible as a rental property and that was the reason for the number of units. MR. TORTI pointed out that workforce housing is underserved in this area.

COMMISSIONER STEINMAN pointed out the area needs a lot of help and expressed concern that this project will not match the downtown standards. He suggested the applicant is

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attempting to overbuild the site. MR. TORTI explained that the contributing factor to the size of the project was the effort to provide one parking space per unit. COMMISSIONER STEINMAN suggested an added condition requiring the inclusion of trees in the streetscape.

MARGO WHEELER, Director of the Planning and Development Department, informed COMMISSIONER STEINMAN that parking standards were not applied in the downtown area and stated the applicant could submit an application for a project with no parking.

COMMISSIONER EVANS observed that the applicant might need to modify the project's design and recommended holding the items to allow the applicant to work with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) on the streetscape continuity.

MR. TORTI expressed his willingness to work with staff and the RTC, but noted that the property might not have enough land to accommodate a completely articulated landscape plan.

COMMISSIONER EVANS requested that the applicant provide a better example of the final project and COMMISSIONER STEINMAN suggested the applicant bring colored elevations.

COMMISSIONER THUESDELL observed that the area has a major landscaping program and stated that allowing this project to be built without assistance for into that plan would be a travesty. He expressed his support for holding the items for 30 days. MR. TORTI reiterated his willingness to work with staff and the RTC, but added that reducing the number of units would make the project less economically feasible.

MS. WHEELER informed the Commissioners that a ten-foot distance between the existing curb and property line is required for a tree canopy program and FLINN FAGG, Planning and Development Department, noted that the subject property is an unusual case with only a five-foot buffer available.

BART ANDERSON, Public Works Department, informed COMMISSIONER EVANS that Casino Center is the route for AC Line, the Bus Rapid Transit Line for the RTC and stated that its dedication would require two lanes. He explained that is the reason Casino Center is excluded from the Downtown Centennial standards and is allowed to be developed differently. He expressed support for holding the items to allow staff to do more research and present a more complete presentation.

COMMISSIONER STEINMAN suggested that the project might need a waiver, given Casino Centers limitations, and MR. ANDERSON observed that a waiver might not be necessary, as Casino Center was designated as a transit-oriented street.

MR. TORTI explained that he could not compromise on the building's envelope, the number of units or the number of parking spaces, but expressed his willingness to include some form of landscaping buffer in the five-foot area between the property line and Casino Center.

CHAIR GOYNES declared the Public Hearing closed for Items 28 and 29.

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