

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE LITCHFIELD PARK PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
July 13, 2021**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was held online via Zoom and called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Ledyard.

Members Present: Chair Ledyard, Vice Chair Faith, and Commissioners Alvey, Darre, Fraser, Lawrence, and O'Connor (joined the meeting at approximately 7:50 p.m.).

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Jason Sanks, Planning Consultant; Pamela Maslowski, Director of Planning Services; Woody Scoutten, City Engineer; and Dawn Morocco, IT Assistant.

**II. Business**

**A. City Center Development Update**

Mr. Scoutten provided an overview of the progress of the City Center Development along with a PowerPoint presentation. His presentation included:

- Litchfield Square was chosen to be the name of the new development.
- The site plan is basically the same that was presented to Council by Destination LP, with some minor changes.
- The Phase One improvements will include:
  - All the improvements on Litchfield Road, including the round-a-bout.
  - Extension of Village Parkway, into the project, to the Desert Avenue alignment.
  - The first phase of the park.
- Development of the park will be split into four phases.
- A construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) was hired early in the process to help with cost estimating, value engineering, and other ideas to make the project better.
- When ready to start construction the CMAR will provide a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP).
- Mr. Scoutten provided what is included with the GMP Phases 1 through 5, and explained what is involved with each step. He noted that GMP #1 was approved by Council at their June meeting. That portion of the project has begun and includes preparing the site for construction; installing the sanitary sewer system, mass grading most of the site, and ordering items that require a long lead time.
- The overall project is estimated to cost \$26 million.
- The project financing was explained, including selling bonds; a bid process; the formation of a Community Facilities District (CFD); selling six parcels to developers; the CFD acquiring the infrastructure from the City; the CFD gradually acquiring the infrastructure; retiring the bonds; and developers paying a CFD tax to retire the CFD bond. Parcel sales and revenue from the CFD will support GMP Number 5, which includes items wanted, but not necessarily needed at this time. Also, CFD taxes will support the operation and maintenance of the project.

In response to questions, Mr. Scoutten provided the following:

- He indicated the location and description of a proposed clock tower. He stated that the Clock tower will be known as the Paul Litchfield Clock Tower, and there will be some type of plaque providing information regarding his contributions to the Litchfield Park area. There is also an idea of using some of the walls to convey historical City information. Another item under consideration is

providing the history of Luke Air Force Base in different areas for people to see as they walk around. Previous discussions were held regarding including a carousel in the park, but that will probably not happen due to maintenance concerns. These details will be worked out over the next few years as the Center develops.

- The design speed for the Litchfield Road round-a-bout is 20 MPH. The street curves dramatically to help people realize they need to slow down and to position them to see oncoming traffic. A traffic study was done regarding both a four-way traffic signalized intersection and a round-a-bout. It was found that both would be able to handle the traffic today and the anticipated volume.
- There will probably be three to four parking garages. If the project is as successful as hoped, there will be about 400,000 square feet of mixed-use space with a need for 1,900 parking spaces. There will be room for about 700 spaces on the ground, so there will be a need for three to four parking garages with three levels. Shared parking has been discussed, and there has been talk about relaxing the requirements for restaurants. Reserved parking for uses such as condominiums will have to be discussed with each developer. Mr. Sanks added that the City Center zoning allows the Council latitude with parking requirements for the City Center District on a case-by-case basis when a parking demand study is submitted.
- The project will adhere to the City's screening requirements for any kind of surface parking lot. As for the parking garages, the effort will be to have them blend in with the other buildings so they do not look like parking garages. Mr. Sanks added that parking garages and screening were contemplated when the Zoning Code City Center Zoning District was created, and there are design guidelines in place to ensure that developers and the City coordinate for screening mechanisms.

## **B. Zoning Code Update**

Mr. Sanks stated that Susan Goodwin has been retained on a post retirement basis to continue working on the Zoning Code update. There were a number of pauses on this project in the last few years due to the City Center project, the Sun health project, and Covid-19 issues. At this time, the Commission has gone through much of the land use items. Ms. Goodwin has been updating the legal portions of the Code, making sure the City is in compliance with any new regulations. One item that still needs to be reviewed is parking requirements. Times have changed and the need for non-residential parking has somewhat declined. People are ordering more items on line, like food for delivery or using the take-out option. The need for personal vehicles to be parked and left on commercial properties has diminished. The question now is whether or not the large parking lots are still needed. He would also like input from the Commission regarding electrical vehicle parking stations and if parking lot shade structures should be allowed to accommodate photovoltaic panels.

Mr. Sanks provided a PowerPoint presentation while discussing each item:

- Parking:
  - A chart was displayed that included land uses and the corresponding number of parking spaces required in Litchfield Park, the changes he is proposing, and requirements in the Cities of Avondale and Queen Creek.
  - The current requirements for a number of different uses were noted, and Mr. Sanks explained what he is proposing and why he is suggesting the changes.
  - The Fry's Center has a large number of parking spaces, and the lot does not seem to be full at most times. In other jurisdictions, Fry's has started developing the portion of the parking lot that is not needed into another commercial use.
  - Based on what has been currently happening in the City, there appears to be a need to increase the parking requirements for vehicle body shops.
  - The Zoning Administrator, or designee, could review and approve reductions in parking based upon a parking justification narrative. This is being done in other cities.
  - Parking maximums could be considered, as is done in other cities.

- Parking requirements for unspecified uses should probably remain subject to the Zoning Administrator's interpretation.
- The City Center Zoning District would still be subject to code requirements, or as otherwise modified by City Council through a parking demand study to be reviewed by the City Engineer, who is currently serving as general manager of the City Center.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) Requirements:
  - It is estimated that up to 50% or more of vehicle sales by 2030 will be electrified.
  - He would like the Commission to consider whether to require EV charging stations in all non-single-family zoning districts; basing requirements on the size of the development; or, allowing the market to decide. As the need arises, developments might begin providing the charging stations as their customers/residents desire it.
- Solar Voltaic Shade Canopy Parking Standards:
  - The City could encourage solar shade for required parking areas.
  - If approved, building setbacks, design standards, and signage standards should be established.
  - There should be consideration of not having those structures count against the maximum lot coverage, so property owners are not penalized for putting these in. One city interprets these structures as equipment rather than structures so they do not count against the maximum lot coverage.

Mr. Sanks noted he would like the Commission's input on these items.

Discussion included:

Commissioner Lawrence noted that the next vehicle she purchases will probably be an electric vehicle or hybrid of some kind. She also uses a bicycle to ride around the City. She has friends that visit and they look specifically for restaurants on the trip in that have charging stations so they can charge their vehicle while they eat. It would probably be an advantage to the commercial entities if there is a charging station nearby. She likes the idea of solar and the shade cover in parking lots makes a lot of sense. She tries to get a shady spot when parking.

Commissioner Alvey noted that she agrees. Her family owns a vehicle that is a hybrid, but does not need to be plugged in. Their other vehicle is a hybrid that gets plugged in, but also uses gas. The biggest problem taking that vehicle on trips is being worried that there will not be a place to plug it in to charge it. The City should be pro-active in requiring charging stations because the car manufacturers are being required to make more electric vehicles and charging stations will be needed. She also agrees with allowing the solar shade structures in parking lots. She knows that the panels can become outdated in a few years, but the structures will still provide shade. As far as using the Queen Creek requirements, parking can be a nightmare there sometimes in the winter. The number of people here in the winter time increases quite a bit, and so does the need for parking spaces. It would be good to use the type of use as a consideration for reducing the requirements. It does make sense to utilize space efficiently and effectively.

Commissioner Fraser commented that parking maximums and shared parking requirements are good ideas. The City does not have high capacity transit available out here. Fry's does have too much parking, and anything that can be done to make parking requirements less onerous and utilizing less asphalt is a good thing. Within the context of Litchfield Square, it would be a good idea to require electric charging stations for the multi-family residential units. He does agree that the shade canopies that accommodate solar panels should not count against the maximum lot coverage.

### **C. Design Review Board/Board of Adjustment Update**

Commissioner O'Connor noted the report was included in the agenda packet. Commissioner Lawrence noted that a number of items being reviewed were regarding the color palette and suggested that it

might be time to revisit that issue. The Board of Adjustment included two items where residents began building without obtaining a building permit. She wondered if there was a way to make people more aware of building permit requirements. Ms. Maslowski noted that Staff can look into ways to get the word out regarding what is required. Chair Ledyard explained that there are many colors included within the color palette and that only the colors that are not included are brought before the Board. Commissioner O'Connor commented that Staff administratively approves many applications for colors that are within the approved color palette, and the Board does not see those applications.

#### **D. Topics for Referral to City Council**

There were no topics referred.

#### **E. Minutes**

Commissioner Lawrence **moved** to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2021 minutes as amended; Commissioner O'Connor **seconded; unanimous approval.**

### **III. Staff Reports**

Mr. Sanks reported on the progress of the Dysart and Camelback Center, the Sun Health La Loma Campus, and the Monument Point Center.

### **IV. Commission Reports**

Commissioner Lawrence inquired as to when in-person meetings will be resumed. It was noted that the Covid-19 virus is still around and spreading. Ms. Maslowski responded that, at their next meeting, the City Council, will be considering whether or not to resume in-person Council meetings in September.

### **V. Adjournment**

Commissioner Darre **moved** to adjourn; Commissioner Lawrence **seconded; unanimous approval.** The meeting was **adjourned** at 8:39 p.m.

APPROVED:

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

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David Ledyard, Chair

/pm