

**CITY OF CERES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
May 6, 2019**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Condit.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners: Del Nero, Johnson, Kachel, Smith, Chairperson Condit

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Director of Community Development Tom Westbrook, City Manager Toby Wells, Director of Engineering Services/City Engineer Daniel Padilla, Senior Planner James Michaels, City Attorney Vincent Wu, Administrative Secretary Ann Montgomery

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION:**

None

**CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

1. Clerk's Report of Posting. The Agenda for the regular meeting of the Planning Commission of May 6, 2019 was posted on May 1, 2019.
2. Approval of Minutes
  - a. March 4, 2019 (all present)
3. General Correspondence – Information only
  - a. Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the City's Housing Element

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Smith; seconded by Commissioner Kachel to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Johnson, Kachel, Smith, Chairperson Condit  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

**CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR**

None

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

4. 19-08 Conditional Use Permit (CUP); Proposal to construct a 7-11 convenience store with a gas station consisting of 6 fueling stations at 1660 E. Whitmore Avenue. Benny Dhanda, applicant.

Senior Planner, James Michaels presented the staff report.

Director of Community Development, Tom Westbrook noted that staff received correspondence from two property owners who own businesses north of Whitmore Avenue: Jim Lawson and Don Widdifield, expressing their concerns with some of the access on Whitmore Avenue and indicated that their preference that this be a right-in only driveway. This has been provided at the dais this evening.

Brief Commission discussion ensued.

**The Public Hearing was opened at 6:09 p.m.**

- Dave Pratt, Ceres citizen

Mr. Pratt remarked that as far as the right-in and right-out goes, he hopes they're doing some kind of curb out in the middle; something to prevent left-hand turns.

- Benny Dhanda, applicant – Stockton, CA

Mr. Dhanda stated that he's available for any questions the Commission may have. He also remarked that just to add onto the center divider, the median; if that's what makes the project move forward, he is in favor of putting in a right-in and right-out. He knows that they had a phone conversation in regards to making a right-in only. It would impact the project if it did become a right-in only. It wouldn't be favorable as individuals are coming into get gas. They want to get on to their daily commutes; they need to make sure they're getting out onto Whitmore and going about their daily routes as well. As far as the left turn from Whitmore, he does agree that it would be substantially an issue if we have people coming in that are traveling westbound on Whitmore Avenue, trying to turn left into the station. He personally is in favor of having a center divider there as well.

- Luis Dominguez, Owner, Little Mexico City Restaurant, 1821 Mitchell Road, Ceres, CA

Mr. Domiguez stated he has a restaurant on one of their properties on Mitchell Road and has worked with these people for two years. With the two years that he's known them, he's pretty sure that whatever the City agrees to prevent anything that's going to affect not just the gas station, but the traffic and potential accidents; he's pretty sure that they're willing to do whatever it takes to move on with this project.

**The Public Hearing was closed at 6:13 p.m.**

Brief Commission discussion ensued.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Kachel; seconded by Commissioner Smith to make the determination that this project is exempt from Environmental Review, per CEQA Guidelines 15332, Class 32 for In Fill Development and approve 19-08 CUP subject to the findings and conditions contained in PC Resolution 19-07. Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Johnson, Kachel, Smith, Chairperson Condit  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

5. 19-05 General Plan Amendment, 19-06 Vesting Tentative Parcel Map and 19-07 Conditional Use Permit (19-05 GPA, 19-06 VTPM & 19-07 CUP); Proposal for two retail commercial shop buildings (15,300 square feet and 13,800 square feet each) and a 145-unit apartment complex on three proposed parcels at 3106 Mitchell Road. GDR Engineering, applicant.

Senior Planner, James Michaels presented the staff report.

Brief Commission discussion ensued.

**The Public Hearing was opened at 6:24 p.m.**

- Josh Jantz, GDR Engineering, Inc., 3525 Mitchell Road, Suite G, Ceres, CA

Mr. Jantz thanked Mr. Michaels for the project description. Mr. Jantz touched on the entrances, noting the primary in and out will be through the center of the project, to access the apartment site as well as both retail sites, with gates. The secondary in and out to the north will be mainly for the retail in and out, a right-in/right-out only, but we will have access gates for emergency vehicles to access the sites from the north. On the south side, in front of the retail buildings, there will be access to the south once that parcel develops. So, technically there will be three in and out's into the retail portion of the site, once the south property develops, but the gated access and the apartments will only be for emergency. Since it's a gated community, we wanted to keep the primary in and out to the apartments through the gated access between the two retail buildings.

Mr. Jantz explained more about the apartments, noting the configurations of the buildings and quantities of the apartment units:

- 1 bed/1 bath – total of 48 units – 33%
- 2 bed/2 bath – total of 84 units – 58%
- 3 bed/2 bath – total of 13 units – 9%

Commissioner Smith asked if these apartments will be market rate.

Mr. Jantz confirmed.

Mr. Jantz continued, with describing the details of the various buildings and rooms within the project, which will provide the residents within the community some unique amenities.

Mr. Jantz provided an explanation of what happened with the previous project that had been approved. They were having a hard time trying to find a big box retailer to come in, which would support that whole commercial center, and be the anchor of that project. The clients did have numerous calls for the 1,200 – 1,500 square foot range, which was a lot more popular for this area. With the Save Mart Center being across the street and Walmart coming in, we felt basically wiping the slate clean and proposing something different and having something smaller with the 1,200 – 1,500 square foot retail buildings up front and doing the apartment site in the back, which is consistent with the two existing apartment complexes to the north of this site.

Chairperson Condit asked Mr. Jantz about the spacing in between the retail units and the gate line for the gated community.

Mr. Jantz provided an explanation and stated that it will be completely gated in with a wrought-iron fence that will go along the back side.

**The Public Hearing was closed at 6:31 p.m.**

Commission discussion ensued.

Chairperson Condit stated he likes the project, but has a lot of concerns about the increase in traffic to the Mitchell Road Corridor.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Smith; seconded by Commissioner Kachel to:

1. Recommend the City Council adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for this project per PC Resolution 19-03;
2. Recommend the City Council approve the General Plan Amendment per the findings and conditions listed in PC Resolution 19-04;
3. Approve 19-06 VTPM subject to the City Council adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the General Plan Amendment per the findings and conditions listed in the PC Resolution 19-05;
4. Approve 19-07 CUP subject to the City Council adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approving the Conditional Use Permit per the findings and conditions contained in PC Resolution 19-06.

Motion passed by the following vote:

**AYES:** Commissioners Del Nero, Kachel, Smith,  
**NOES:** Commissioner Johnson, Chairperson Condit  
**ABSENT:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**PUBLIC MEETING(S):**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**MATTERS INITIATED BY PLANNING COMMISSION AND STAFF**

None

**REPORTS:**

Director of Community Development, Tom Westbrook announced:

- Ceres Chamber of Commerce will have their Ag Business Luncheon on Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at the Diamond Bar Arena. Please let him know if you're interested in attending or sign up through the Chamber's website.
- There's going to be a fundraiser in honor of the daughter of one of the Ceres' Firefighters who passed away a year ago from a rare disease. It will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at Blaker Brewery.
- Stanislaus LAFCO approved the Whitmore Ranch Annexation at their April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

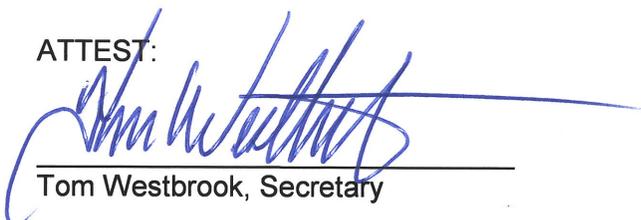
**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Commission adjourned at 6:40 p.m. to the next regularly scheduled meeting of Monday, May 20, 2019.

APPROVED:

  
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Couper Condit, Chairperson

ATTEST:

  
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Tom Westbrook, Secretary