

August 20th, 2018 Ojai Valley MAC Meeting Summary

Steve Offerman of Supervisor Steve Bennett's Office called the roll. MAC members Joe Westbury, Terry Wright, Grace Malloy, Jill Borgeson, and Chris Cohen were present.

Under public comment, Steve Offerman noted a delay in installing signs for the Oak View Oversized Vehicle Ordinance. Russ Baggerly announced a Casitas Water District meeting on connecting to State water.

John Mirk of the Ojai Planning Commission reported that there were no pending projects at the Commission.

The summary of the July 16th meeting was approved unanimously on a motion by Grace Malloy, seconded by Terry Wright.

The next business item was review of a commercial project involving two existing commercial buildings in a commercial zone along El Roblar in Meiners Oaks. John Kessler of the County Planning Division presented the project's description. Terry Wright asked about installation of sprinklers and noted the negligible setback distances to property lines. Grace Malloy voiced concern about parking safety on El Roblar and whether the increase in water use would be offset: Yes, and whether it would be offset in Meiners Oaks: No; the offset is at Mira Monte Elementary School. Chris Cohen asked what the hours of operation were, and John Kessler said that the application states that operation ends at 9PM. Terry Wright asked about grading and trash enclosures. Chris Cohen asked if the project lighting would be dark sky compliant; Yes. Grace Malloy suggested that all lights should be turned off after the business closes.

Julie Stenslie says she supports the project and noted the archaeological sensitivity of the area and recommended that a Phase 1 study be done and there be coordination with Chumash representatives. She also said that a No Parking red curb is needed on El Roblar at Poli Street and requested a stop sign on El Roblar. Patrick Tumamait noted the high archaeological sensitivity of the site and recommended biofilters for stormwater. Russ Baggerly said that El Roblar is substandard, that the project will increase noise, that County WPD is not the water supplier, that Meiners Oaks Water has a moratorium on new connections, and that native plants should be used. Mike Hollebrand recommended that water offsets be within the local water district, and that greywater and cisterns be used for landscape irrigation. Russ Baggerly said that outdoor events should be restricted in keeping with County regulations. Jennifer Scholl said the Planning Division intends to prohibit amplified outdoor music. Jeff Harris noted the impact to nearby residents of trucks offloading to businesses and objected to outdoor events and noted an absence of parking enforcement. Joe Westbury encouraged restricting delivery hours. The project architect said that a loading zone would be established on El Roblar to avoid residential areas. Ali Buetti said she is concerned about pedestrian safety in the area, that the five businesses would have more employees and more impact than fewer businesses and the project will reduce the quality of life. Lori Hamor noted the high traffic and water use impacts of restaurants. Linda Harris noted the project would upgrade the appearance of the area and set a benchmark for other business; she supports the project. William Barnett is concerned about additional traffic and deliveries.

Mr. Ignacio, a neighbor of the project, said that the commercial buildings have existed for many years and were used commercially, that people should expect that they will be reused, and that the project is reasonable.

Pat Baggerly representing the Environmental Coalition noted that the project is surrounded by residential uses, including the house at 111 S. Poli that has children living in it less than 6' from the proposed restaurant that was built on the property line. She said that the Negative Declaration does not address noise impacts on adjacent neighbors. She said that the use of Sycamore trees will drop leaves over the property line and shade the yard of 111 S. Poli. She requested a mitigated negative declaration be prepared and recirculated mitigation measures included for noise, traffic, and water impacts.

Terry Wright said that it is a good project and the area needs it. Chris Cohen said it has a good design, and should incorporate dark sky lighting, green building methods, and maximum water conservation, but that he has concerns with noise and gentrification. Grace Malloy said she is concerned with increased traffic and supports local businesses, and would want to restrict outdoor gatherings and assure green building. Jill Borgeson said it is a beautiful design and has minimized impacts. Terry Wright recommended a red curb at the corner. The project architect said he would be amendable to restricting delivery hours, incorporating green building design as appropriate to existing buildings, and making the project No Smoking but want to be able to have community events such as birthday parties on the deck.

Grace Malloy made a motion to recommend that the County study additional traffic calming measures including stop signs, crosswalks, and signs, and that deliveries be limited and truck idling prohibited. The motion was seconded by Chris Cohen and approved unanimously.

Chris Cohen made a motion to recommend approval of the project with conditions limiting delivery hours, requiring that businesses close by 9PM, encouraging water offset within the Meiners Oaks Water district, maximizing greywater use and rainwater capture, use of native plant species, limiting outdoor gatherings, using dark sky compliant outdoor lighting, and performing archaeological consultation and study. The motion was seconded by Jill Borgeson and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.