

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2006

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: APPEAL OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #4663, 3880 EAST SIERRA MADRE BOULEVARD (LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL – ATHLETIC FIELD LIGHTS)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project in accordance with CEQA; and
2. Adopt the findings in Attachments A and approve the application with Conditions of Approval in Attachment B.

BACKGROUND:

This is the appeal of a Conditional Use Permit application for the installation and operation of lights on an existing athletic field. On September 13, 2006, the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) disapproved the application. The BZA concluded that the lights would have impacts of light and glare, noise, and traffic on the adjacent residential neighborhood, and that the lights could impact views from properties in the vicinity. Prior to the BZA's disapproval, the Hearing Officer approved the application with several conditions. At both hearings, many local residents, school officials, and school alumni spoke in favor and opposition to the project.

ANALYSIS:

Light and glare

An illumination study was submitted by the high school's lighting consultant to show the existing nighttime illumination in the vicinity and the estimated illumination that would exist at the time when the lights are operating at full capacity. The levels of illumination are measured in horizontal footcandles.

According to Section 17.40.080 (Outdoor Lighting) of the City's Zoning Code, "lighting shall be energy-efficient, and shielded or recessed so that direct glare and reflections are confined to the maximum extent feasible within the boundaries of the site, and shall be directed downward and away from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way. No lighting on private property shall produce an illumination level greater than one (1.0) footcandle on any property within a residential zoning district except on the site of the light source."

The nearest residential properties to the south of the project site (on Canfield Road) are located approximately 35 feet from a proposed light pole. Additional residential properties are located across the street on East Sierra Madre Boulevard. A church is located to the west of the field, across the street. The attached map shows that the projected maximum illumination that would occur at the northern property line of the rear yards would range from .01 to .64 foot candles. The maximum illumination that would occur within the building footprint of an existing residential use would be .06 footcandles.

Based on the illumination study, the project would increase the amount of nighttime illumination on some of the residential properties on Canfield Road. However, there would not be substantial illumination projecting on any residential property because none of the estimated footcandle measurements would exceed 1.0 foot candle standard established by the Zoning Code. In addition, the lights will have visors to reduce diffused light and help direct illumination onto the athletic field. Therefore, the impact of light or glare from the project is expected to be less than significant. As part of this request, staff has recommended that if the project is approved and the lights are installed, the lights shall be used only for a maximum of 52 days during a calendar year, and the applicant shall perform on-site testing to ensure that the nighttime illumination does not exceed 1.0 footcandle on any residential property on Canfield Road. If the nighttime illumination exceeds 1.0 footcandle on any residential property, the athletic field lights shall be adjusted (e.g., lower wattage, adjustment of fixtures, etc.) to achieve less than 1.0 footcandle on residential property.

Aesthetics

The light poles are approximately 80 feet in height by two feet in diameter. The poles have two rows of lights that create a rectangle area of approximately 12 feet by three feet. The exterior of the poles and lights is a natural steel finish, gray in color. The nearest residential properties to the south of the project site are located approximately 35 feet from a light pole. The nearest residential properties to the west of the project site are located approximately 450 feet from a light pole. The nearest residential properties to the north of the project site are located approximately 270 feet from a light pole.

The poles would be visible in the vicinity of existing residential and institutional development. The existing neighborhood is in an urban area. The project is located on an institutional property on an existing athletic field with other metal features (e.g., bleachers, fencing) that are compatible with the proposed poles. Due to the poles' narrow design, neutral gray color, the sky, and existing variety of urban features in the

vicinity, the impact on the existing visual character of the site and its surroundings will be less than significant.

Transportation/traffic

Nighttime usage of the bleachers on the athletic field will occur. The majority of the nighttime athletic events are sports team practices and games that will draw nominal crowds. According to the application, a maximum of 9 events annually (football games on Fridays occurring from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) could potentially draw crowds ranging from 600 to 1,500 persons. The City of Pasadena Department of Transportation reviewed the proposed project and determined that no additional traffic analysis is required. This decision is in part based on the fact that the existing street system has sufficient capacity to serve the vehicle trips to and from the athletic field, and because the majority vehicle trips will occur during non-peak traffic times. Further, a substantial number of vehicle trips could potentially occur only 9 days annually.

Parking

The nighttime usage of the bleachers on the athletic field will create a demand for parking. The majority of proposed days and times and capacities of bleacher usage that are proposed are consistent with the previously approved Conditional Use Permit #4500 (approved August 3, 2005) which approved usage of the bleachers. The CUP #4500 application included a parking study with a parking plan that was approved to mitigate all parking impacts. The parking plan will adequately address all parking impacts associated with the nighttime bleacher usage that could occur with the new proposed lights. [Specifically, the parking impacts that could result from a maximum of 9 events annually (football games on Fridays occurring from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) that could potentially draw crowds ranging from 600 to 1,500 persons]. The City of Pasadena Department of Transportation reviewed the proposed project and determined that no additional parking analysis is required. This decision is in part based on the fact that the methodology of parking plan approved in the CUP #4500 is adequate to provide parking to serve users of the athletic field. Further, a substantial demand in parking could potentially occur only 9 days annually. The staff is recommending that the parking plan approved with CUP #4500 is applied to the athletic field usage for any of the maximum 9 annual events that could potentially draw crowds ranging from 600 to 1,500 persons.

Athletic field usage at night

The application proposes nighttime usage of the athletic field on a maximum of 87 days a year for a total of 204 hours. The majority of the usage would occur from mid-November until early March. Based on the proposal, the field could be potentially used at night an average of once every 4.2 days.

The project site is on a high school campus. It is common for athletic fields of institutions to include lighting for nighttime illumination. The athletic uses are accessory to, and compatible with, the primary use of the school for educational purposes. However, the proposed intensification of the usage of the athletic field could potentially impact the nighttime character of the surrounding residential neighborhood. In order to maintain the existing character of the residential neighborhood, the staff has

recommended the following as conditions of approval: 1) the total number of days of nighttime usage of the athletic field should be reduced to a maximum of 52 annually, which is equivalent to usage occurring an average of one night weekly during the year; 2) all non-football nighttime athletic events and light usage on the athletic field occurring Monday through Friday should terminate no later than 7:00 p.m.; 3) no nighttime lighting should occur on Saturday; 4) no athletic events, including practices and games, should occur on Sunday; and 5) no more than three events that require nighttime illumination should occur during any week, Monday through Friday.

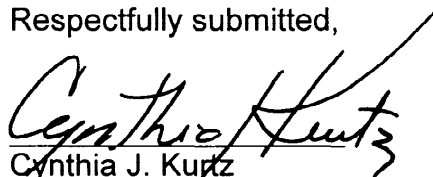
Conclusion

It is staff's assessment that the findings for approval the application can be made, subject to the recommended conditions. The proposal will enhance the quality of the school operations. The impacts of nighttime illumination, athletic field usage, traffic and parking have been analyzed and conditioned as necessary to ensure that the application will not cause adverse impacts on surrounding properties and that the operations will occur while maintaining the safety and general welfare of the surrounding residential area. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the application with the recommended conditions.

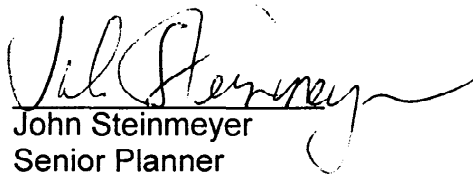
FISCAL IMPACT:

The approval of this project is not expected to have a financial impact. Further reviews by the city will require the necessary fees from the applicant.


Respectfully submitted,


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City Manager

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Approved by:


Richard J. Bruckner, Director
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ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Specific Findings for Conditional Use Permit #4663
- B. Conditions of Approval for Conditional Use Permit #4663
- C. Environmental Initial Study
- D. Site Plan