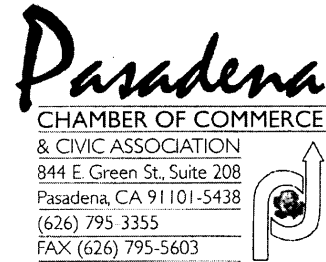


April 19, 2011

Mayor Bill Bogaard and Pasadena City Council
City of Pasadena
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109



Re: Public Hearing, revision to major project processing

Dear Mayor Bogaard and City Council members,

The Pasadena Chamber of Commerce has serious concerns about the proposal to remove hearings of buildings 75,000 square feet or larger from the responsibility of the Hearing Officer and place that responsibility with the Planning Commission.

Here are our concerns:

- 1.) There would be no hearing in front of a professional, impartial, non-politically appointed body. Currently, the Hearing Officer provides a professional interpretation of Pasadena land use regulations and the zoning code. Giving that responsibility to the Planning Commission, as well experienced, well-intentioned, knowledgeable and expert as they may be, does not provide for a professional review by an individual who is not influenced by political considerations. It is only fair that a project have its first hearing in front of a non-politically appointed professional.
- 2.) There are plenty of opportunities for the public to address issues related to any project. Currently there are three opportunities for any member of the public to be heard on any project of more than 75,000 square feet: the hearing office, the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Pasadena City Council. *Under the proposed regulation, that opportunity to comment would be restricted to only two hearings, before the Planning Commission and the City Council.* Currently, anyone with an interest in a project who objects to the decision of the hearing officer can ask that it be called up to the BOZA and subsequently the City Council, or they can appeal the decision themselves.
- 3.) More projects will end up front of the Pasadena City Council, further impacting your already overburdened agendas.
- 4.) Potentially more project dispositions would end up in court, as there are fewer opportunities to reach a compromise and consensus prior to initiating legal action on either side.
- 5.) In a time of increased economic hardship, this procedural change will make it appear much more difficult for a project to get a fair hearing on its merits. Developers may look at this change as a reason to look elsewhere to invest. Now is not the time for Pasadena to be less welcoming to investment.

For these reasons, the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce recommends the Pasadena City Council not approve the Zoning Code Amendments related to major projects. The process that is currently in place provides significant opportunities for anyone interested to provide input and having a professional make the initial determination is simply the only process that is fair.

Please consider this letter as public comment on behalf of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce.

Thank you,


Paul Little
President and Chief Executive Officer

Cc: V. Bertoni, M. Beck, M. Jomsky

05/23/2011
Item 5