

## SCOPE

### Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment

TO PROMOTE, PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE ENVIRONMENT, ECOLOGY  
AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

POST OFFICE BOX 1182, SANTA CLARITA, CA 91386



12-3-12

Planning Commission  
City of Santa Clarita  
23920 Valencia Blvd.  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

### Please copy to all Commissioners

Re: Agenda Item 1  
Master Case 12-124 Conditional Use Permit 12-007  
Location: Northwest corner of Newhall Ranch Road and Grandview Drive

Dear Commissioners:

We wish to object to the approval of this matter since it appears that designated park space is being converted to private use for a parking lot. Not only is this an inappropriate use of public park land, but this proposal may also constitute an illegal gift of public funds. The staff report also contains some apparent inaccuracies that should be clarified and corrected before this matter proceeds further.

The staff report describes this project as a CUP to develop a five-acre park site with 2.6 acres of passive neighborhood park space and approx. 2.4 acres that would be developed with parking spaces. (124 parking spaces). It further states that on Dec. 2005 the PC approved the Bridgeport Marketplace, 130,000 sq.-ft retail center, a 30,000 sq.-ft religious facility (the Real Life Church) and 5-acre parcel to the City of Santa Clarita.

It clearly states that "A Conditional Use Permit is required for the development of a park site in the Community Commercial zone. The project proposed at this time includes the development of a five -acre site for the use of a public park." However, the proposal proceeds to divide that acreage and propose an unneeded development of parking area. (The UDC requires that park space provide a minimum of one parking space for every 1/2 acre of park space. Therefore the proposed 124 parking stalls will substantially exceed the five UDC-required parking. This will leave a surplus of parking on the project site (119 surplus parking places).

Since 2005 this 5 acre parcel has been listed as Bridgeport Market Place, undeveloped park site as part of a negotiation with City Council as mitigation for the River Village Project in the City of Santa Clarita, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Update dated, August 2008.

It was listed under neighborhood parks because of its size (5 acres). The City planning staff now lists it as 2.6 acres dedicated to the City as part of River/Park/River Village project and 2.4 acres Bridgeport Marketplace, LLC.

According to the staff report "The entire five acres remains under the ownership of the Bridgeport Marketplace, LC and has been offered for dedication to the City, but has not been accepted as of the date of this report." How can this be? These projects are fully approved and either completed or in the process of being built. This acreage was required as Quimby mitigation to meet park obligations. We believe that this matter is not being accurately represented to the Commission, and request that the Commission thoroughly review the Development Agreements and approvals referred to herein before proceeding with further review.

We have noted and documented that for some time now the five acres in question in this agenda item has been used by the Real Life Church for parking during its services. We wondered way this was allowed with no review, oversight or apparent approval by the Commission. The church posts signs and directs traffic on to the 5 acres, stating it be only for their use. We can provide documentation of these actions.

However the staff report states "Once developed, the parking on the project site could be used as surplus parking for either the adjacent church or retail center in the case of special events, with approval from the City of Santa Clarita". They are already doing this! It therefore appears that this item may have been brought to you at this time merely to cover existing actions. The Commission should look closely into how this occurred.

It should be noted that on Aug. 9<sup>th</sup> 2012, the City issued a building permit for a 1000 seat amphitheater at the Real Life Church with no additional parking required.

According to an MOU approved by the Parks Commission and referred to in this matter, the Parks Commission approved a property transfer that states that Bridgeport Marketplace, LLC will transfer 2.4 acres of the (5-acre) property to the Real Life Church and approximately 2.6 acres to the City. The Real Life Church will enter into an agreement with Intertec General Contractors to construct a Park and Ride facility on their portion of the property and to construct a park on the City's portion.

The staff reports the terms for the development of the five-acre site will have to be finalized, and will require that the City Council approve the MOU that was approved by the Parks Commission.

How can the Commission now do a CUP based on this Parks Commission MOU that apparently takes a completely different tact in this matter and has not been approved by the Council? Further, the Parks Commission MOU says the City will only be getting 2.6 acres (see above), so how can the staff report state they are developing a five acre park?

We are concerned that the actions of the Park Commission in this matter were not transparent to the public, and now may not be clear to the Commission. The use of this MOU may deprive the public of the knowledge that church intends to develop property given to them as a Park and Ride.

Finally, the Resolution states that the park commission voted 5-0. They didn't. The minutes of this meeting indicate that the vote was in fact 4-1 to approve the matter. A SCOPE representative spoke at this meeting to present our concerns regarding this questionable conversion of park space.

The City of Santa Clarita is already in a deficit of per capita acreage of parkland and has not attained its stated General Plan policy goals of 5 acres per capita. Thus, we believe that this proposal is inconsistent with the City's general plan.

We therefore believe this matter deserves additional review before any further approval is granted. We also urge the Commission to investigate whether this transaction would in fact actually be an illegal gift of public funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ryan O. Rumbach". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.