

**NewsBank InfoWeb****NewsLibrary**

Estimated printed pages: 2

KNIGHT RIDDER/TRIBUNE BUSINESS NEWS

January 20, 1999

**SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIF., COUNCIL DEBATES MALL REVITALIZATION PROJECT**

Author: **LORE LAWRENCE**, *TELEGRAM-TRIBUNE, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIF.*

## Article Text:

Jan. 20--SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif.--An appeal of the Central Coast Mall revitalization project sparked debate among City Council members Tuesday on not only how the project should be approved, but what specific elements within the plan should be retained.

At issue was an appeal by former Santa Barbara County land-use planner Brian Christensen.

Christensen claims that the revitalization project, which was zoned as a planned development, differs substantially from the original plan approved by the city in 1984.

As a result, he believes the project requires a planned development amendment that should be administered through either the Planning Commission or the council.

The former planner claims that the public was left out of the policy process when Community Development Director Arnold Jonas sent it to the Architectural Review Commission for final approval.

However, Jonas maintained Tuesday night that under the planned development ordinance he had the discretion to route minor changes through the ARC. He said that the land-use designation for the project had not changed, and that the revitalization of the mall had been one of the council's major goals for several years.

Councilmembers Kenneth Schwartz and Jan Marx argued that the changes to the mall were not minor, however.

Marx, while saying she supports revitalizing both the Central Coast Mall and Madonna Plaza, pointed out that the refurbishment included new building design standards with three proposed new structures and four new, separate pads.

"I think this needs to go to the Planning Commission for review," she said.

But Councilman Dave Romero said sending the proposal back to the commission would simply delay the project.

However, the council did consider the possibility of returning the project to the ARC.

Council members raised a number of concerns.

Romero brought up the subject of parking layout and configuration; Schwartz said the current design did not create a synergistic effect that would move people from one shop to another. Marx wanted the more than 300 trees that were being removed to be replaced with mature trees.

But Andy Trachman of MBK, the developer working on the project, said the current plan emerged out of certain constraints necessary to make the project successful, and that if the council did not understand what those conditions were, it would be pointless to send it back to the ARC.

He asked for, and received, time to explain the project to the council members Tuesday night.

Late Tuesday, the council was still discussing the issue.

-----

Visit T-T SLO, the World Wide Web site of the Telegram-Tribune, at <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/>

(c) 1999, Telegram-Tribune, San Luis Obispo, Calif. Distributed by Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News.

Copyright (c) 1999 Knight-Ridder/Tribune Business News

Record Number: 1999020477