

ITEM 5 CASE #11-02-SUP – HOLD PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING A SPECIFIC USE PERMIT AND CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION FOR AN ORDINANCE

Receive public input regarding a request for a Specific Use Permit on Vine Subdivision, Block A, Lot 1 for a Hotel in C-2 (Community Business District) zoning and consider a recommendation regarding an Ordinance. This property is located at 421 W. Airport Freeway.

Chairman McNeese opened the public hearing.

Stephen Cook, Senior Planner, gave a brief description of the case. The applicant, Mr. Manny Singh, representing Eules Hospitality, L.P. is requesting approval of a Specific Use Permit. The property is located at 421 W. Airport Freeway and is zoned C-2 (Community Business District). The property is re-branding the Comfort Suites hotel to an independent brand, Plaza Suites hotel. The existing Specific Use Permit was approved by the City Council in 2007 and was tied to the name Comfort Suites. A re-branding requires a new Specific Use Permit for the new hotel name. The applicant indicates that other than re-branding of the property, no other modifications in the site or operations are proposed.

Stephen Cook stated the applicant's representative, Leslie Garza, was available for any questions.

Leslie Garza, 421 W. Airport Freeway, Eules, Texas, stated they are asking for the name change because they were receiving no business under Choice Property. With the name change they have a contract that is bringing in more revenue, which provides more taxes for the city. The name will be changed on the sign but the size of it will not change.

Chairman McNeese asked for any proponents/opponents to come forward for any comments. Seeing none the public hearing was closed.

Vice Chairman Mennis asked Leslie Garza what spurred the name change.

Leslie Garza stated being Choice Property they were not getting any assistance from their brand. They were paying revenue out and losing money every month. With the name change they have received a 5 year contract with pilots from the airport.

Vice Chairman Mennis stated within Mr. Sharma's letter the standards of Plaza Suites are much higher.

Leslie Garza stated they do not have to follow Choice standards but instead their own now. They have high cleanliness and have planted flowers giving aesthetics.

Vice Chairman Mennis asked how long they been marketing Plaza Suites.

Leslie Garza stated they have not been affiliated with Choice since November 24, 2010.

Mike Collins stated the owner of the property approached the city for request to change the flag. It was explained that since the Specific Use Permit was tied to the name Comfort Suites a new application would have to be filed. Contractually the owner could only have the name Comfort Suites for approximately two weeks, not allowing enough time to get through the entire Specific Use process. The city cannot control the internal operations but has control of issuing a permit for the exterior signage and approving the new Certificate of Occupancy.

Leslie Garza stated because of the sign change they are jeopardizing a law suit from Choice brand. They have been able to eliminate all Choice brands internally but have not been able to change the sign.

Commissioner Tompkins asked if they have invested in a logo.

Leslie Garza stated they have created a logo and the color scheme has stayed the same with the blue, gold, and maroon.

Commissioner Portugal asked what kind of support they were looking for that Comfort Suites was not providing.

Leslie Garza stated they were not getting assistance from the franchise for example the 1 (800) phone numbers or internet sites. When they were paying franchise fees they were not seeing their hotel name at the top of the Choice Hotels web page that most people look at when booking a room. For example when a customer puts in their destination city of Euless hotels, Bedford would be at the top of the list.

Commissioner Portugal asked if they felt marketing on their own, for example through Expedia, will be better.

Leslie Garza stated they are staying sold out almost every night with the same price rate and services they were using before. They do have more vans now that provide a 3 mile radius for their customer to go to local restaurants within Euless

Commissioner Huffman asked if previously Choice had restricted them from receiving the contract with the pilots.

Leslie Garza stated they actually signed the contract while still under Choice but they sought that contract themselves. The contract started in July of 2010 and has helped allow them to stay booked.

Chairman McNeese asked how many units the hotel has.

Leslie Garza stated they have 66 units.

Chairman McNeese asked how the 5 year contract worked with the airline pilots.

Leslie Garza stated it's a subdivision company that works for the airline that books all their pilots lodging for training. They also book the new hires that stay approximately for 2 months.

Chairman McNeese asked if that part of the business will grow for extended stay versus a single night.

Leslie Garza stated she felt it could be.

Chairman McNeese asked in this arrangement how long a stay would be on average.

Leslie Garza stated she believed from 20 to 54 nights but they have the 1 and 2 nighters that bring in the revenue and taxes. As long they are under 29 nights they get full taxes on it.

Mike Collins asked if the 20 to 54 nights stay is continuous.

Leslie Garza stated it is continuous.

Commissioner Zahn asked if they are an extended stay hotel.

Leslie Garza stated they are not an extended stay hotel because customers do not live on their property. They do not offer a kitchen and unlike extended stay hotels they offer room cleaning every day.

Commissioner Zahn asked if she felt they would lean towards being an extended stay property.

Leslie Garza stated they have no plans of making the property extended stay.

*(**Discussion was made among the Commission to put a year time frame on the Specific Use Permit because there was some concern regarding extended stay)*

Commissioner Zahn made a motion to approve case #11-02-SUP with the following conditions: 1) Tied to the business owner, Mr. Manny Singh; 2) Tied to the business name, Plaza Suites; and 3) The reconstruction of the monument sign for the hotel located on S Ector to be in compliance with the City of Euless Sign Ordinance Section 84-232 (51) Euless Unified Development Code; and 4) Valid for 1 year. Vice Chairman Mennis seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Chairman McNeese, Vice Chairman Mennis, Commissioners Zahn, Huffman, Portugal, and Tompkins

Nays: None

Abstention: None

The motion carried (6-0-0)