

December 17, 2019 BJ Johal Apartment Outreach Meeting

Tonight, I held the mandatory neighborhood outreach meeting for the BJ Johal project on the north west corner of Chestnut and Behymer Avenues. About 20 people attended. Len Osborne, the project architect, also attended and provided information about the apartment design.

We discussed project traffic and the strong likelihood that office traffic would be of a substantially greater volume in both a peek and in total traffic than the proposed apartments. We told the neighbors we would work with city staff to determine the precise location of entries onto Chestnut and whether a full turn movement would be allowed.

Privacy was an issue. We committed to providing precise information regarding window height and placement and grading once we finish the city review process. The precise type of landscaping will also be provided the neighbors defining the project buffers.

The neighbors appreciate that the project will be market rate. They also liked the design concept of pushing the buildings as far to the east as possible. I assured them that any commitment by us would be put in writing to the planning commission and city council.

The neighbors would like the project gated. We told them that we will work with staff to see if that is possible and if an alternative stacking scheme could be available to allow the gates.

We discussed the functional set back of the apartments to the property line and that we will use the FID easement as a buffer. I discussed the Office zone building height of 60 ft. and *by right* uses allowed in the Office zone.

One person wanted the project developed as a park. Another person representing himself and 2 other members of his family will be happy that the project site remain vacant.

I committed to having another meeting after the environmental assessment was completed and before the planning commission hearing. A couple of the neighbors offered to meet with us to discuss and negotiate project details. We told the group would be happy to have those conversations with reasonable neighbors.

After the meeting one person suggested that we have the meeting closer to the neighborhood. I explained at the Woodward Park Library, adjacent schools and other facilities were booked or would not return phone calls. I told that person we would hold the 2nd neighborhood meeting closer to the neighborhood.

Dirk Poeschel, ACIP

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August 14, 2024 - BJ Johal Apartment 2nd Outreach Meeting

Tonight, I held a second neighborhood outreach meeting for the BJ Johal project on the northwest corner of Chestnut and Behymer Avenues. The meeting was held at the Woodward Park Library as had been suggested as venue at the first meeting on December 17, 2019.

Seven individuals attended the meeting. Color renderings of the site plan and elevations prepared by architect Len Osborne were displayed to illustrate the design, scale and color palate of the project.

I provided a summary of the project describing the size of the parcel, number of proposed units, density, building height, landscaping, setbacks and discussed the Fresno Irrigation District easement. I also noted that the site had been marketed for years to be developed with an office use with no takers. I explained how the proposed project multi-family project would result in drastically less air quality emissions and trip generation based on the reduced traffic volumes as compared to an office use.

Each of the individuals in attendance expressed opposition to the project. Concerns included noise, traffic, adequacy of on-site parking, increase in on-street parking and light impacts to surrounding areas.

I made the attendees aware that they will have an opportunity to voice their concerns at the Planning Commission hearing and that they will be noticed prior to the hearing. I also provided my e-mail address for those in attendance to send any follow up questions they may have.

Dirk Poeschel, AICP

Los Pueblos Apartments 3rd Neighborhood Outreach Meeting May 27, 2025

At the request of Council Member Nick Richardson, a 3rd neighborhood outreach meeting was held regarding the Los Pueblos Apartments proposed by applicant Mr. B.J. Johal. Three-hundred sixty-five letters were sent to property owners. Ten neighbors attended the meeting. At the last meeting, eight neighbors attended.

A presentation of the project details was made by the applicant's representative, Dirk Poeschel of Land Development Services. Renderings were presented showing elevations, setbacks, open space and landscaping. The applicant has owned the site for many years and actively marketed it as an office project without takers. Poeschel told the neighbors that a site plan for office development had been approved on the site but never sparked interest.

Councilman Richrdson spoke for about 5 to 7 minutes about neighborhood integrity. He also spoke about a council matter allowing MFR in office designated lands by right that he opposed.

The project is sited with a 58-foot setback from the neighbors to the west which is almost three times the typical 20 foot rear yard setback. This setback encompasses the Fresno Irrigation District easement. Neighbors were also informed that the project density is very low at 12.7 UPA for a multi-family development and that about 46 percent of the site is open space (not buildings).

The project applicant also acquired the narrow strip at the north of the site to make a complete street improving aesthetics and circulation along this segment of Chestnut Ave. Curb, gutter and sidewalk will be installed along Chestnut Ave. which will improve drainage and walkability.

Neighbors voiced the following concerns.

1. Increased traffic as a danger to children.

- 2. Insufficient project parking and on-street parking along Chestnut.
- 3. Privacy issues with apartment dwellers having views into neighbors' back yards.
- 4. Assertions by neighbors that they were told they could walk across the site and have an easement for that purpose.
- 5. Concerns about residents subletting rooms in their units and their garages to other renters.

Poeschel summarized the substantial increase in traffic and air quality impacts from the planned office project v. the proposed apartments. The project will be market rate and gated. Parking is proposed along Chestnut Ave.. Poeschel also stated that the light poles illuminating the parking area would be substantially lower than typical poles so as not to create a glare that would adversely affect adjacent properties.

He also addressed concerns about the undulating grades and heights of the proposed block wall versus the existing fence. Poeschel committed to working with neighbors when the civil engineering drawings were developed to ensure that the location of the proposed wall created as much privacy as could be reasonably attained.

Poeschel also talked about the evergreen landscaping proposed along the perimeter, the open space areas such as the parking bays and proximate to the buildings. These trees would create a layer blocking views of the apartments into the existing single-family residential backyards. Poeschel emphasized that the closest unit setback of 58 ft. is almost 3 times the 20 ft. setback of the existing homes and the minimum setback of the required residential zone district.

Poeschel emphasized that at this rental price point, excellent marketing and maintenance people would be employed. He also said that multiple room tenants, rentals as college students and other ne'er-do-wells would not be tolerated. Generally, people felt a MFR prject would be a better use than office.