

**CITY OF ESCONDIDO**

**ACTION MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION**

**June 22, 2021**

The meeting of the Escondido Planning Commission was called to order at 7 p.m. by Chair Barba, in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

**Commissioners present:** Katharine Barba, Chair; Ingrid Rainey, Vice-Chair; Dao Doan, Commissioner; Rick Paul, Commissioner; Herminia Ramirez, Commissioner; Nathan Serrato, Commissioner; and Stan Weiler, Commissioner.

**Commissioners absent:** None.

**Staff present:** Mike Strong, Director of Community Development; Kurt Whitman, Senior Deputy City Attorney; Adam Finestone, City Planner; Owen Tunnell, Assistant City Engineer; and Joanne Tasher, Minutes Clerk.

**MINUTES:**

Moved by Chair Barba, seconded by Commissioner Weiler to approve the Action Minutes of the June 8, 2021, Planning Commission meeting. Motion carried unanimously (7-0). Ayes: Barba, Doan, Paul, Rainey, Ramirez, Serrato, and Weiler.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:** Received.

Communication from Laura Hunter, Chair, Sierra Club North County Group, dated June 15, 2021, regarding the Community Choice Energy program on City Council agenda.

Communication from Laura Hunter, Chair, Sierra Club North County Group, dated June 9, 2021, and June 17, 2021, regarding a New York Times article "As Disasters Worsen, California Looks at Curbing Construction in risky Areas."

**FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS:** None.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**1. PROPOSITION S CONSTRAINT ANALYSIS AND HOTEL CONVERSION ORDINANCE - PLANNING CASE NO. PL 21-0228:**

REQUEST: Receive and file the Proposition S constraint analysis and amend the Zoning Code so that existing hotels and motels in all zoning districts as well as those located in specific plans may be converted to supportive housing, transitional housing, single-room occupancy, multi-family housing, or a combination thereof. The Project requires an amendment to Article 1 (General Provisions and Definitions) and Article 63 (Transient Lodging) of the Zoning Code to establish the regulations to authorize hotel or motel conversions.

**PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION:** CityWide

**ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:** The Project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines section 15301 (Existing Facilities).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval to City Council

**COMMISSION DISCUSSION:**

Commissioner Weiler identified the following concerns: maximum unit count of 75% for the existing hotel rooms; definition of SRO, specifically related to provision of kitchen and bath facilities, and difference between that and an efficiency unit; parking requirements for affordable SROs and guest parking; and open space provisions.

Commissioner Paul also identified parking requirements as an area of concern, as well as a desire to have City Council action on the Proposition S determination taken separately from action on the Hotel Conversion Ordinance, and identified a clerical error in the Zoning Code Amendment text.

Director of Community Development Strong responded to the inquiries regarding maximum unit count, SRO definition, parking, and open space. He and Senior

Deputy City Attorney Whitman also addressed the ability for the Proposition S determination to be bifurcated from the Hotel Conversion Ordinance when presented to City Council.

The Planning Commission discussed the various issues raised.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS: None.

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

Motion by Chair Barba, seconded by Vice-Chair Rainey, to approve Planning Commission Resolution No. 2021-05, with modifications as shown (strike-out/underline) in Exhibit "B" related to maximum unit count, parking, open space, and a clerical error, and direction to bifurcate the Proposition S determination and Hotel Conversion Ordinance for consideration by City Council. Motion carried 7-0. Ayes: Barba, Doan, Paul, Rainey, Ramirez, Serrato, and Weiler.

**2. DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT – PLANNING CASE NO. PL 21-0227:**

REQUEST: A proposed amendment to the Downtown Specific Plan to change zoning regulations to require ground-floor commercial uses only at key locations or preference areas based on context or planning objectives rather than as a blanket requirement to ensure future projects are feasible and the desired community character is preserved. The project consists of a map amendment to Figure II-4 of the Downtown Specific Plan to eliminate the ground-floor retail requirement in areas where standalone residential uses would not be detrimental to the surrounding commercial districts and goals of the Downtown Specific Plan. The proposal also includes a request to adopt an Addendum to the previously certified Final EIR for 2012 General Plan Update, Downtown Specific Plan Update, and Climate Action Plan ("Final EIR").

PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION: CityWide

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS: An Addendum to the Final EIR was prepared to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.) ("CEQA"), the regulations promulgated thereunder (14 California Code of Regulations section 15000 et seq.) ("CEQA Guidelines"), and the City's Environmental Review Guidelines (Article 47 of the

Escondido Zoning Code). The Addendum is appropriate pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15164 because only minor changes and additions to the Final EIR are necessary to address the Project changes and no circumstances exist calling for the preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15163.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval to City Council

**COMMISSION DISCUSSION:**

The Commissioners discussed the proposed amendment and identified an inadvertently omitted word on the map legend attached to draft Resolution No. 2021-07 (“residential” missing from “Interim Ground Floor Residential Allowed.”

Commissioner Paul addressed concerns with the requirement to design ground floor residential space in the “Interim Ground Floor Residential Allowed” area to accommodate conversion to commercial space at a future date.

**COMMISSION ACTION**

Motion by Chair Barba, seconded by Commissioner Serrato, to approve Planning Commission Resolution No. 2021-07, with a minor modification to the legend on Exhibit “B” to insert the word “residential” where unintentionally omitted. Motion approved 6-1. Ayes: Barba, Doan, Rainey, Ramirez, Serrato, and Weiler. Noes: Paul.

**CURRENT BUSINESS:**

**1. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT STUDY (HCIS)**

Staff provided an informational report and status update to the Commission on the Housing Element.

**COMMISSION DISCUSSION:**

Commissioners had a brief discussion.

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

No action was taken; information was presented and discussed.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:**

Chair Barba would like the Planning Commission to have the opportunity to review the Community Choice Energy Program.

Chair Barba stated that she attended the APA webinar on Public Benefits Planning and found it to be educational.

Chair Barba gave a very brief update on the Green Infrastructure Subcommittee.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

The Housing Element Update, East Valley Specific Plan, the Mercedes Benz expansion, and Design Review for the Escondido Creek Trail will be heard at upcoming Planning Commission meetings.

Director Strong stated he was leaving the City of Escondido and introduced Adam Finestone, AICP, as the new Secretary of the Planning Commission and Interim Director of Community Development.

**COMMISSION COMMUNICATION:**

Commissioner Weiler thanked Director Strong for his leadership over the last several years and greatly appreciates everything he has done for the Commission and the City. Commissioner Weiler thanked Director Strong for the tremendous job he did creating the Climate Action Plan.

Vice-Chair Rainey thanked Director Strong for his service and all he has done. Chair Barba thanked Director Strong and appreciated his leadership.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Barba adjourned the meeting at 10:08 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Finestone', written over a horizontal line.

Adam Finestone, Secretary to the  
Escondido Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Engel for', written over a horizontal line.

Joanne Tasher, Minutes Clerk