

CITY OF ESCONDIDO

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION

January 8, 2013

The meeting of the Escondido Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Weber in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

Commissioners present: Jeffery Weber, Chairman; James Spann, Commissioner; Merle Watson, Commissioner; Bob McQuead, Vice-chairman; Gregory Johns, Commissioner; and Darol Caster, Commissioner.

Commissioners absent: Guy Winton, Commissioner.

Staff present: Barbara Redlitz, Director of Community Development; Owen Tunnell, Associate Engineer; Gary McCarthy, Senior Deputy City Attorney; and Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk.

MINUTES:

Moved by Commissioner Caster, seconded by Commissioner Spann, to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2012 meeting. Motion carried. Ayes: Caster, Watson, McQuead, Johns, and Spann. Noes: None. Abstained: Weber. (5-0-1)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – Received.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS – None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT – PHG 12-0025:

REQUEST: A request to amend the Interim Downtown Specific Plan to allow 'Educational Facilities for Adults' in the Historic Downtown District on the ground floor along Grand Avenue with a Conditional Use Permit.

LOCATION: The Historic Downtown District encompasses approximately 170 acres generally between Centre City Parkway, Fig Street, Second Avenue and Valley Parkway within the 460-acre Downtown Specific Plan Area (SPA).

Barbara Redlitz, Director of Community Development, referenced the staff report and noted that staff issues were whether the proposed amendment for adult educational facilities would benefit the community and support existing and future business in downtown. Staff recommended approval based on the following: 1) The Downtown SPA Vision Statement notes that Downtown Escondido is envisioned as a dynamic, attractive, economically vital city center that is entertaining and vibrant with activity occurring throughout the day, evening and weekend hours. The proposed amendment will expand the variety of land uses allowed in the downtown; 2) The Downtown Specific Plan provides for a variety of unique, pedestrian-oriented uses and activities that draw people to the area. Requiring a Conditional Use Permit for adult schools that locate on Grand Avenue will retain a case-by-case review of operating characteristics to ensure that future facilities incorporate pedestrian ambiance; 3) The proposed amendment would be consistent with the General Plan Guiding Principles for SPA #9 (Downtown Specific Plan) because a Conditional Use Permit for adult schools will retain provisions for a dynamic, attractive, economically vital city center that focuses on pedestrian orientation to attract and accommodate local and non-local visitors and encourage the attraction of businesses; and 4) The proposed amendment to the Interim Downtown Specific Plan would be consistent with the goals and policies of the Economic Prosperity Element of the General Plan, to strengthen workforce qualifications by expanding opportunity for educational and job training facilities.

Commissioner Johns asked if there was an age cutoff for adult education uses. Ms. Redlitz noted that this encompassed anything past high school along with trade schools.

Chairman Weber asked if elementary education was allowed on the first floor in the subject district. Ms. Redlitz replied in the negative.

Commissioner Caster asked when the Downtown Specific Plan revisions would be brought to the Commission. Ms. Redlitz noted that the Downtown Specific Plan was in a draft form and online which should be brought to the Commission in the next two months.

Commissioner Spann expressed his concern with allowing education in the historic core on the frontage of Grand Avenue, noting the area had parking issues and should be used for retail. He felt this was not in line with the vision statement.

Commissioner Caster cited the vision statement for the downtown area, feeling educational uses were not in line with the statement.

Commissioner Watson asked if any feedback had been received from the Downtown Business Association or historic district. Ms. Redlitz replied in the negative regarding the proposed amendment.

Vice-chairman McQuead was in favor of allowing educational opportunities as a conditional use.

Chairman Weber expressed his concern with revising the vision for the downtown by allowing educational facilities for adults, noting that parking had not been addressed for this use in the downtown area.

ACTION:

Moved by Commissioner Caster, seconded by Commissioner Spann, to deny staff's recommendation. Motion carried. Ayes: Spann, Weber, and Caster. Noes: McQuead, and Watson. Abstained: Johns. (3-2-1)

CURRENT BUSINESS: None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS: No comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Weber adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for January 22, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 201 North Broadway, Escondido, California.

Bill Martin, Secretary to the Escondido
Planning Commissioner

Ty Paulson, Minutes Clerk