

CITY OF ESCONDIDO

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ESCONDIDO PLANNING COMMISSION

January 24, 2012

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

Commissioners present: Jack Campbell, Vice-chairman; Guy Winton, Commissioner; Darol Caster, Chairman; Jeffery Weber, Commissioner; Edward Lehman, and Commissioner; Bob McQuead.

Commissioners absent: Don Yerkes, Commissioner.

Staff present: Barbara Redlitz, Director of Community Development; Bill Martin, Principal Planner; Jay Petrek, Principal Planner; Rozanne Cherry, Principal Planner; Owen Tunnell, Associate Engineer; and Gary McCarthy, Senior Deputy City Attorney.

MINUTES:

Moved by Commissioner Lehman, seconded by Commissioner Weber, to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2012, meeting. Motion carried unanimously (6-0)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – Received.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS – Received.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP:

1. **A workshop to discuss the General Plan Update (PHG 09-0020), Downtown Specific Plan Update, Climate Action Plan (PHG 10-0016), and the Draft Environmental Impact Report prepared to assess these projects.**

Jay Petrek, Principal Planner, presented information regarding the draft documents that were now out for public review and requested input.

Chairman Caster asked whether more emphasis should be put on encouraging more redevelopment before the General Plan's planning horizon year of 2035. Mr. Petrek noted that the General Plan is long-term in nature and that the Council has the ability to focus on targeted areas.

Commissioner McQuead and Mr. Petrek discussed Page 2-11 of the Draft Downtown Specific Plan with regard to the adaptive reuse boundaries. Commissioner McQuead noted that some of the historic buildings to the west of the subject overlay might be well suited for adaptive reuse opportunities. He felt the language should be better clarified with regard to mixed use.

Commissioner Winton and Mr. Petrek discussed potential mitigation measures for streets that had a Level of Service F. Commissioner Winton suggested adding the overriding language in the General Plan for those areas that had a Level of Service F.

Discussion ensued regarding areas in the City that were at the Level of Service F.

Commissioner Weber and Mr. Petrek discussed mitigation measures for moving traffic in and out of the downtown area.

Chairman Caster and Mr. Petrek discussed the General Plan's proposed development standards.

Discussions ensued regarding the penalties for not meeting the climate action plan standards.

Pam Stahl, Escondido, General Plan Issues Committee, noted that she had provided a copy of the minority report to Barbara Redlitz regarding certain quality of life, annexation, and clustering issues. She noted that several members of the committee disagreed with the final decisions of the Issues Committee. She stated that there were 39 policies in the matrix that ended with the statement that proposed amendments were subject to voter approval as required by Proposition S. She felt the updated General Plan would eliminate Proposition S provisions and she questioned whether the City would notify the public of the proposed changes and whether there were legal requirements for overturning the policies that were voter approved.

Michael Anne Merrick, Escondido, concurred with Ms. Stahl. She felt the Commission should take the minority report prepared by Ms. Stahl and correlate it to the general plan update.

Commissioner McQuead asked Ms. Stahl if the information she had been provided at the dais was the dissenting opinion of the committee. Ms. Stahl replied in the

affirmative, noting that the Citizens Commission had 14 members whereby 11 were affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce and a significant number of those not being residents of the City. She expressed concern that the quality of life would be impacted if the minority report issues were not clearly defined. She then referenced the language on Page 157 of the matrix, Policy 17.1, feeling it was vague and needed to be tightened up. She also felt that quality of life of the community was being impacted by the fact that some streets were at the Service Level F without mitigation measures.

Deloris McQuistin, Escondido, questioned whether adoption of the Charter City proposal would impact the General Plan. Mr. Petrek noted that the City Attorney was researching this matter.

Commissioner Campbell questioned who had decided the issues relating to traffic and widening of streets in the downtown area in the Downtown Specific Plan. Mr. Petrek noted that City Council and Downtown Revitalization Committee had reviewed these issues. Commissioner Campbell noted concern with creating traffic issues and preferred traffic to be more free-flowing and less congested.

Commissioner Winton asked if analyses had been done regarding pedestrian and vehicle traffic in comparison with the density. Mr. Petrek replied in the affirmative. He noted that a "Complete Streets" analysis had been performed as part of the General Plan Update that analyzed building intensities that would be appropriate for the downtown area.

Commissioner Lehman questioned whether rerouting traffic or building alternate routes was part of the planning for the General Plan for those areas that had high traffic volumes. Mr. Petrek noted that no new major roadways were proposed for the Circulation Element, but noted that the entire circulation plan was not built out yet. He also stated that build out of the circulation plan would result in a better level of service.

Commissioner Weber did not feel the public had time to react to all of the subject documents. He suggested having an overview of the documents with follow up meetings.

Chairman Caster suggested reviewing the Climate Action Plan and Downtown Specific Plan and EIR certification before going into the General Plan.

Commissioner Campbell felt the matrix document referenced by Ms. Stahl should be publicized. Mr. Petrek noted that the subject document was available online. Chairman Caster noted he would like staff to provide the link or documents to the Commission.

Commissioner Winton felt the subject plan was extensive and difficult to understand for the general public, questioning how the public would be educated on the issues prior to the vote in November.

Chairman Caster asked if part of the discussion with City Council would be to figure out what portions are to be put to the voters. Mr. Petrek replied in the affirmative and also noted that the City Attorney's office would be involved as well.

CURRENT BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of Planning Commission role in Design Review

Bill Martin, Principal Planner, referenced the staff report and requested input.

Commissioner Winton felt it would be advantageous to expand the architectural design guidelines for mixed use developments in order to streamline the process. Mr. Martin noted a modification of the design guidelines would need to be authorized by the City Council and could be considered as part of or following adoption of the new Zoning Code. Chairman Caster concurred with Commission Winton.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:

Chairman Caster requested information regarding the City's requirements for demolishing vacant gas stations. Ms. Redlitz noted she would check the code on this issue and report back.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Caster adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for February 28, 2012, 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