



CITY OF RIDGECREST

100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST PLANNING COMMISSION

City Council Chambers

Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners: Chair, Mike Biddlingmeier, Vice-Chair, Jerry Taylor, Commissioners, Lois Beres; Howard Laire, and Nellavan Jeglum

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

Present: Vice-Chairman Taylor, Commissioner Laire, Commissioner Beres, Commissioner Jeglum

Absent: Chairman Biddlingmeier

Staff Present: Public Services Director Jim McRea, City Planner Matthew Alexander, Economic Development Project Manager Gary Parsons, Administrative Secretary Danielle Valentine

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was moved by Commissioner Laire and seconded Commissioner Jeglum by to approve the Agenda. The Agenda was approved as submitted.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES April 22, 2008

A motion was moved by Commissioner Beres and seconded by Commissioner Laire to approve the Minutes of 22 April, 2008. The Minutes of 22 April, 2008 were approved as submitted.

6. COMMENTS: (PUBLIC COMMENT)

None.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

7a. City Planner Matthew Alexander provided a briefing on the proposed project. He noted that Richmond Street was anticipated to carry a lot more traffic than it does at the present time. He said therefore there would be greater and greater need for this thoroughfare. He noted that the site was adjacent to the Bowman right of way and immediately adjacent to the M.I.A. but not within the M.I.A. He said it was proximate to the Desert Fairgrounds. Mr. Alexander said that AMG had attempted to have the property rezoned about one year ago – this was denied. He said that the recent general plan amendments taking away residential property, had happened since that decision and therefore perhaps a greater demand for residential within the City.

Mr. Alexander indicated that at the request of staff a 10 foot trail had been included. He said that staff believed that Bowman Channel was for recreation as well as drainage etc and that AMG had agreed to put in some offsite improvements in that regard.

Mr. Alexander provided graphics of a conceptual site plan. He said the applicant had requested a continuance until May 27th, 2008 but asked for Direction from Commission in regards to whether or not the City should insist on a Development Agreement in regards the commercial portion of the project. Mr. Alexander advised that Economic Development Project Manager Gary Parsons was in attendance and wanted to speak to the Commission about some concerns he had.

Mr. Parsons said that staff would agree to the continuance to allow staff to continue discussions with the developer in regards to plans for the commercial area. He said he would like some methodology to ensure that the commercial area would be built.

Vice-Chairman Taylor expressed concerned regarding depth. Mr. Parsons said in his opinion the planned depth was a little shallow.

Vice-Chairman Taylor asked what for the reasoning behind discussing the commercial aspect. Mr. Parsons said if the developer was allowed to split off the residential there may be the instance where improvements were not made. He said he did not believe that Richmond was deemed a major commercial corridor and therefore staff would want to make sure that the developer did not get the zone change, build the residential development and leave the commercial development for "some day". Further, he said that AMG in their initial presentation had been eager to get the commercial development done.

Commissioner Beres asked if the City could require payment of developer fees prior to the development being completed. Mr. Parsons suggested that Commissioner Beres attend the next Community Development Meeting where impact fees would be addressed.

Commissioner Jeglum asked if traffic impact had been considered.

Public Services Director Jim McRea advised that if the item was being continued a discussion should not be had without the presence of the developer.

Commissioner Jeglum asked what a recommended depth would be. Mr. Parsons asked that discussions be allowed to be continue with the developer but that he believed the current depth was shallow.

Commissioner Laire made a motion and Commissioner Beres seconded a motion for continuance of Item 7a.until May 27, 2008

AYES: Laire, Beres, Jeglum, Taylor

NAYES: None.

Absent: Biddlingmeier.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Alexander spoke to the Commission in regards to a 40 acre project belonging to the TAFT Corporation. He reported that the County Planning Commission had recommended the property be rezoned to ¼ acre lots – he said in the opinion of the staff that constituted an urban development. He said he had asked if there had been any discussion at the County in regards

to this project setting a precedent at the County Planning Commission and was advised by Mike Holier that there had not.

He spoke to the Commission regarding the consequences of this zone change and said at the suggestion of the County Planning Commission he was bringing this before the Commission seeking a recommendation to write a letter to County Supervisors recommending a position. He then read a letter he had received from Assistant City Manager Mike Avery noting his recommendations in regards to the TAFT Corporation's application.

Vice-Chairman Taylor asked if staff had a copy of the will-serve letter from City Manager Harvey Rose.

Commissioner Beres said that she believed that the staff report from the County was rude and arrogant with regard to the City's Master Drainage concerns. She said that she did not like the project – it did not fit in the area.

Commissioner Jeglum said she had a problem with the size of the lots, the fact that there was no accepted input from the City and said she was totally against serving County property with City sewer and that she was worried about circulation – the plan proposed did not line up with the plan inside the City limits. In summary she said there were a lot of indicators that the County was not being good neighbors.

Commissioner Laire said he had a fear that precedence would be set and the City would be stuck with it including not paying City impact fees. He said City services should not be extended as this was not done to other areas. He said he thought their whole attitude was wrong.

Vice-Chairman Taylor said that the plan suggested that traffic would be “dumped” into College Heights. He said he did not understand the determination that there would be no impact to the cumulative effect – therefore he said it was his opinion that their report was not accurate. He said that the will-serve letter should not have been sent and that the process should change so that this type of letter could not just come from staff. He said he also had concerns that this amendment had been made outside of the general plan amendments also in process.

Vice-Chairman Taylor opened the floor for public comment at 7:35 p.m.

David Hazelwood, 1652 S Rademacher Way. Said he went to the Kern County meeting and the Planning Commission approved the project on the recommendations of the staff. He confirmed that they did not talk about the City's concern. He said that he believed this did set a precedent which would be taken advantage of by developers – to the City's detriment. He asked if it was possible to rescind the will-serve letter. He said that Downs Street had been completely ignored – which he said the City had also done on the approval of a recent project. He reiterated his comments that the City and the County should work together.

Vice-Chairman Taylor asked for staff's recommendation in regards timing of draft letter and approval to go to the Supervisor by the required date. Planner Alexander advised that the draft letter be drawn up by staff and approved by the Planning Commission as well as sending the item to City Council for discussion.

Commissioner Laire made a motion and Commission Jeglum seconded a motion based on those words

AYES: Laire, Jeglum, Taylor, Beres
NAYES: None
Absent: Biddlingmeier

9. COMMISSIONERS ITEMS

Vice-Chairman Taylor advised he would not be present for the next Planning Commission.

Vice-Chairman Taylor advised that GPAC was on track for the June 14th all-day event for review of the Draft General Plan.

10. STAFF ITEMS

Mr. Alexander advised he had been to the American Planning Association Annual Conference in Las Vegas. He said there had been numerous sessions including one on zoning ordinance and he had obtained great examples of zoning ordinance from other cities, a session on big box retail and a session on green ways. Mr. Alexander said "Buzz Words" such as Livability and Sustainable Communities were evolving in the profession. He said so much information was coming together in terms of making neighborhoods more walkable and sustainable and he hoped to provide some examples to the Commission as discussion items at a later date.

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

May 27, 2008

GPA/ZC-08-02: GPA and ZC for the westerly 6.20 acres of Parcel 4, Parcel Map 10073, a 11.38 ac. parcel from a zoning of (R-1) Single Family Residential and a General Plan of (LD) Low Density Residential to a Zoning of (CG) General Commercial and a General Plan of (C) Commercial located at the NE corner of So. China Lake Blvd and Dolphin Ave. (Tokay Dev)

TPM 11826: An 8 lot M-1 Industrial Parcel Map on 3.92 acres located on Ridgecrest Blvd east of Lumill St. (CALDEVCO)

12. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.