



CITY OF RIDGECREST

100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST PLANNING COMMISSION

City Council Chambers

Tuesday, January 22, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Staff: City Planner Matthew Alexander, Public Services Director Jim McRea, Administrative Secretary Danielle Valentine

Next Resolution # 08- 01

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Jeglum noted that the Minutes of December 4, 2007 at Item 7 referred to her as being a member of the Ridgecrest Regional Hospital Board – she asked that this be corrected as she was a member of the Ridgecrest Regional Hospital Foundation Board.

A motion was moved by Commissioner Laire and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to approve the minutes with the amendment as requested by Commissioner Jeglum. The Minutes of December 4th, 2007 with amendment as mentioned were approved.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

7. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICECHAIRMAN

This item was continued until December 9, 2008 in order to be consistent with the rules governing the Planning Commission.

8. COMMITTEE REASSIGNMENTS

The Planning Commissioners indicated that they each wished to remain on their present Committee assignments.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

10. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

10.a Zoning Workshop

Planner Alexander briefed the Commission saying that Matrix was assisting the city with an update to the existing Zoning Ordinance via a Zoning Committee made up of Francie Lewis from the Building Department, Pamela Hill of the Planning Department, Mathew Alexander of the Planning Department and Bob Smith of Code Enforcement.

Planner Alexander asked that the item be continued given that Pamela Hill was unable to attend this evening's meeting due to being ill with the flu.

He provided a handout of a memorandum which consisted of questions brought forward by Molly Boswell of the Matrix Group which were responded to by the Commission as follows:

Mixed Use Overlay to be added as a district. Planner Alexander asked if this overlay would apply to all areas zoned other than residential and Commissioner Jeglum responded that this determination would depend on density requirements. Planner Alexander explained that an overlay would not be needed if any Commercial area would have the option to develop as Mixed Use. Vice-Chair Taylor said he was uncomfortable making a broad decision and the topic required further conversation. Chairman Biddlingmeier agreed stating that infrastructure would be an influence. It was agreed further conversation was required.

Planner Alexander said that a practical issue faced by small cities was that it was difficult to get developers to think outside the box. Commissioner Jeglum agreed with Chairman Biddlingmeier that it could get as specific as looking at a case by case scenario.

The Commission agreed that they did want to incorporate the Military Influence District into the zoning revision at this time (i.e. at this zoning revision) versus waiting for a later date (i.e. waiting until the General Plan is released).

It was agreed that the current process where plans are brought before the Planning Commission versus going to a Design Plan Review Committee for instance was desirable.

There was general agreement that there are standards that routinely require interpretation or have had multiple interpretations over the years and that this was quite a large problem. Commissioner Jeglum said she would like to see the Ordinance spell out clearly what was included rather than referring back to other sections of the Ordinance. Vice-Chair Taylor said he had been frustrated by the lack of specification on landscaping – for example what is a reasonable percentage of lot size to be dedicated to landscaping. Planner Alexander said he felt that graphics throughout the ordinance would assist greatly.

The Commission indicated that there were issues within the City that could benefit from adoption via code. Chairman Biddlingmeier cited Billboards and Sea Containers. Planner Alexander cited private energy generators via windmills. Chairman Taylor cited “right to the sun” – i.e. a neighbor having a tree versus shade/shadow created by that tree and restrictions to the neighbor to harness energy from sun. Public Services Director Jim McRea indicated there was a state law in place to address this issue.

Chairman Biddlingmeier made the point that the answers to these questions could change and might be amended as the GPAC Committee worked through its process.

It was agreed that Commissioner would take some time to think about any issues that might be appropriate to resolve via adoption of a code.

Vice-Chair Taylor asked if there was a date proposed for the zoning ordinance workshop and Planner Alexander indicated that the plan was to ask the Planning Commission to consider zoning ordinance on a continual basis however he was open to holding a special meeting for the zoning ordinance.

Commissioner Jeglum asked if GPAC would also be discussing zoning ordinance. Chairman of GPAC indicated that discussion between himself and Planner Alexander resulted in the decision that zoning ordinance should sit with the Planning Commission. Planner Alexander said this was “entirely appropriate”. Vice-Chair Taylor clarified that there would be differentiation between discussion via GPAC and a much greater detail level discussion at Planning Commission.

10.b Airport Land Use Strategy

Planner Alexander indicated that staff was in receipt of an email from Stuart Witt regarding creating an airport land use strategy. Chairman Biddlingmeier stated that the Military Sub-Committee of GPAC had been evaluating documentation to support the AICUZ study – so that it is not a stand alone document upon which decisions are based. Mr. Witt – as part of that exercise – had provided some insight into overlays used in the Mojave area. Chairman Biddlingmeier indicated this might be a tool used by the Planning Commission and asked Public Services Director Jim McRea to explain and/or discuss further.

Chairman Biddlingmeier said that Mojave had developed an emergency ordinance and it was based on the CalTrans documentation which included specifics of the AICUZ. He said the intent was not to discount the information provided by the AICUZ but that the Commission should look at additional ways to support that documentation via tools available.

He went on to say that he recognized that there was contention around the recent decision in regards to the zoning changes labeled but that he felt the decisions made were appropriate.

Public Services Director Jim McRea explained that the Planning Commission was the guardian of the General Plan and that the AICUZ was a study and that recently a state requirement had come along stating that cities adjacent to a military area should have a military land use element. He indicated that the new General Plan would include a section on the area influenced by the military.

He explained that the current zoning ordinance was a pre-70's ordinance that had been "played with" over the years and that it was appropriate to consider if that should be worked through or completed re-designed.

Commissioner Jeglum asked how the City might protect what they are trying to do so that mis-information does not carry through. Mr. McRea responded that it was information from individual's perspective versus mis-information.

Chairman Biddlingmeier referred back to the Environmental Justice Policy – saying it was an important piece of information to be considered.

Commissioner Beres asked if it would be appropriate to use the MIA and maps provided to GPAC as an interim measure. Mr. McRea responded that whilst the documents in place were recommended they were not yet finalized.

Chairman Biddlingmeier referred back to the Cal Trans documentation and said that he had that information should the Commissioners be interested in reviewing it.

Vice-Chair Taylor highlighted that the AICUZ study was a draft and that additional data would be provided the next version of the document including data on an extremely noisy aircraft.

Chairman Biddlingmeier agreed to send website information to Planner Alexander for dissemination to the Commission.

Chairman Biddlingmeier said that at the last City Council meeting so much emphasis was placed upon the Navy's influence on the zoning decision and highlighted that this was a City decision and the Navy was an affected party.

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: February 12, 2008 Planning Commission Meeting:

Site Plan Review SPR-07-11 Hampton Inn, 120 W. Sydnor Ave, Applicant: K-Partners

A request to construct a 58,000 s.f. 94 room hotel on 2.29 acres at the northwest corner of W. Sydnor Ave and Chelsea St, 120 W. Sydnor Ave. in the Ridgecrest Business Park, CS Zone APN 033-070-19 and 39 (Lot Line Adjustment 07-08 pending).

Commissioner Comments:-

Chairman Biddlingmeier said there had been an increasing amount of signage airbrushed onto the sides of buildings – there was agreement to his observance and said he would like information from staff – Planner Alexander said this was not permitted and Chairman Biddlingmeier then stated it was an enforcement issue. Planner Alexander said that based upon receiving this complaint it would be passed onto Mr. Smith.

Vice-Chair Taylor cited a piece of the code regarding periodical review of the Capital Improvement Plan.

12. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.