



CITY OF RIDGECREST

100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST PLANNING COMMISSION

City Council Chambers

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

Commissioners: Vice-Chair, Jerry Taylor, Commissioners, Lois Beres; Howard Laire, and Nellavan Jeglum
Incoming Commissioner: Eric Kauffman

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Vice-Chairman Jerry Taylor, Commissioners Nellavan Jeglum, Lois Beres, Howard Laire, Eric Kauffman

Staff Present: City Planner Matthew Alexander, Public Services Director Jim McRea

4. RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR OUTGOING CHAIR MIKE BIDDLINGMEIER

Refer Item No. 7.

5. ADMINISTRATION OF OATH TO ALLEGIANCE FOR NEW MEMBER ERIC KAUFFMAN

New Commissioner Eric Kauffman was sworn in by City Clerk Rita Gable.

6. POSSIBLE ELECTION OF OFFICERS – PLANNING COMMISSION CHARMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

The Planning Commission voted unanimously to elect Vice-Chairman Taylor to the position of Chairman of the Planning Commission and to not elect a Vice-Chairman at this time.

Further, the Commission decided to hold their next election of officers on January 13, 2009. City Planner Matthew Alexander commented that election of Officers was scheduled for December according to Ordinance and therefore recommended that the Election of Officers be included as an item in the December meeting and continued until the January 13, 2009 meeting.

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (addressed prior to Item No. 4.)

Commissioner Jeglum requested that, in accordance with outgoing Chairman Biddlingmeier's wishes the resolution of appreciation for outgoing Chair not be read. This was agreed to unanimously by the Planning Commissioners.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was moved by Commissioner Jeglum and seconded by Commissioner Beres to approve the Minutes of 24th June as submitted. The Minutes of 24th June were approved as submitted.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Peggy Breeden (address not provided) thanked the Public Safety Departments and staff for their weekend flood efforts. She requested that flooded streets be closed to through traffic and that street plans be reviewed and storm drained cleaned.

10. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

CONTINUED:

10.a Code Enforcement Pre-Abatement Hearing

Jansen Animal Hospital- 405 E. Ridgecrest Blvd

CONTINUED FROM MAY 27th and JUNE 10th PC Agenda

Code Enforcement Officer Robert Smith made a presentation of staff report noting time sequence history as follows:

2003 Letter of concern by staff Lois Landrum

2006 Site conditions transferred to Code Enforcement and initial letter of complaint.

2007 Second letter approximately January 25th

2007 Third letter, June 18th, response that a site plan promised but not delivered

2008 Letter of referral to Planning Commission for abatement or revocation of C.U.P.

2008 Several continuances of Public Hearing due to request and Planning Commission scheduling.

Mr. Smith recommended that a requirement be made that the temporary structure be removed within 45 days, alternatively approved plans be put in place.

Chairman Taylor opened the floor for public comment at 7:22 p.m.

None.

Commissioner Jeglum raised a motion and Commissioner Taylor seconded a motion for an action to comply. Chairman Taylor noted that an appeal was possible. Commissioner Kauffman requested that staff work with the owner to get the current buildings "permanent" versus removing them.

Roger Stein – Attorney for Applicant spoke to the Commissioner saying that his client had turned in plans and tried to work with the City for a solution. Further he said that the existing conditions made it difficult for him to obtain an adequate loan and current market conditions made it very hard to make improvements.

Commissioner Kauffman inquired from the City Planner if plans had been turned in and Mr. Alexander said that whilst he had seen preliminary plans – none had been submitted.

10.b 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 **CONTINUED FROM JUNE 10th PC Agenda**

Planner Alexander presented the staff report and background overview for this item in combination with Item 10.c

Chairman Taylor opened the floor for public comment at 7:47 p.m.

Handouts were distributed by the developer.

Chester Cornelius voiced his concerns and comments to the Commission including traffic flow and the effects to his property of a re-zoning

Jeffrey Hirst of Tokay Development provided a copy of a graphic of landscape exhibit discussed with City staff to the Commissioners and responded to concerns.

Public Services Director Jim McRea responded to questions and concerns of the proposed remainder and the prior existence of APN'S for the area.

Public comment closed at 8:13 p.m.

There was discussion amongst the Commissioners regarding modification of Condition 23 for 2/3 paving within right of way, with curb and gutters on north side.

Commissioner Beres made a motion and Commissioner Laire seconded a motion to approve Resolution 08-12 for Negative Declaration.

AYES: Taylor, Beres, Jeglum, Laire, Kauffman
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Commissioner Jeglum made a motion and Commissioner Laire seconded a motion to approve Resolution 08-13.

AYES: Taylor, Beres, Jeglum, Laire, Kauffman
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Commissioner Beres made a motion and Commissioner Kauffman seconded a motion to approve Resolution 08-14 with modification to Condition 4 to read Parcel A instead of Parcel 1 and Parcel B instead of Parcel 2 and Condition 8 to be labeled Condition 7.

AYES: Taylor, Beres, Jeglum, Laire, Kauffman
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Chairman Taylor made a motion and Commissioner Laire seconded a motion to approve Resolution 08-15 with an amendment to Condition 23a. improvement of Dolphin Ave to 2/3 of its right of way.

AYES: Taylor, Beres, Jeglum, Laire, Kauffman
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

NEW ITEM

10.c PM 11869 and TTM 7184: Along with GPA/ZC-08-02, a two lot PM 11869 and a 22 lot TTM 7184 located at the NE corner of So. China Lake Blvd and Dolphin Ave. (Tokay Dev)

10.d Site Plan Review SPR-08-03 Galleria at 1000 N. China Lake Blvd– VIMCO Dev. A hotel and retail complex consisting of 2 three story hotels totaling 66,000 sq. ft. with 126 rooms and 2 one story retail/food centers totaling 31,000 sq. ft. on 4.87 acres with two future 1 acre restaurant sites located on Service Commercial (CS) zoning, 700 ft north and east of China Lake Blvd and Drummond Ave on PM 11664.. APN 033-050-11

Planner Alexander presented this item in combination with items 10.e and 10.f. Included in his background review were several comments regarding staff's concerns about parking.

David Erickson of Coldwell Bank then made a presentation on the three projects. He said that the projects would bring \$1,000,000 in T.O.T. to the City each year. He said the project was looking for direction from the Planning Commission. He further spoke about a museum and convention center project which would include property donations to the City. He said the developers hoped to make the City a "destination". He said each project should carry itself on its own merit but he hoped the Commission could also consider the entire project and its benefits.

Maurice Kutt – Architect for project then addressed the Commission. Mr. Kutt's presentation included slides and graphics for each site including accommodations for construction workers to

take the project through the next few years and specialty retail sites. Mr. Kutt addressed Mr. Alexander's parking concerns saying that during the day use would be mostly for retail use and that hotel usage would be more predominant from 7:00 p.m. onwards. He also acknowledged that sufficient parking was a necessity.

Rakesh Mehta - Vice President of Operations - VIMCO Development then addressed the Commission regards parking. He said he agreed with Mr. Alexander that some deficiencies existed and then spoke about parking agreements currently being negotiated. He said the project was in front of the Commission for approval for the conditions expected in the first 24 – 36 months to accommodate the workforce being shuttled into and out of town. He said his research indicated that the Base had expectation for people to be in town from Sunday through Thursday for work purposes and that he found it ironic that the group he was travelling with wanted to stay in town that evening but could not find a room available and concurrently he had observed 40% usage of parking lots.

Commissioner Laire asked what would happen to the building to house the workers once construction was finalized. Mr. Mehta said it could be converted to extended stay or hotel. Commissioner Laire also asked if the developer was willing to hire from within the City – this was confirmed.

Commissioner Jeglum asked if the same amenities would be in place in the Miguel Court project as the China Lake Boulevard project. Commissioner Jeglum recommended that the site adjacent to City Hall include retail development to fit in with the current developments of the area. She said she feared the facility currently planned might turn into a low-rent facility in the years once construction was finalized. Further, she said parking agreements were acceptable if they involved a long term lease versus short term arrangements which might not continue in the longer term.

Commissioner Beres said she felt pressured but appreciated Mr. Mehta saying he would work with the City. She said she did not like the idea of a prime piece of real estate becoming a dormitory. She said parking specs did not meet A.D.A. requirements nor did they provide for bus or R.V. parking. She said that parking was a deal-breaker but that she did like the idea and hoped to work with the developer.

Mr. Kutt said that in regards to parking he had met with Mr. Alexander that afternoon and promised to re-look at the specs. He obligated to providing site plans for the next meeting.

Gary Parsons spoke to provide clarity on Parking Agreement, day/night parking use and mixed use provision of the municipal code.

Commissioner Kauffman said that what he was hearing was that the developer was looking for some approval to proceed and acknowledging that this approval would require certain conditions be met.

Chairman Taylor then spoke to process of a project such as that being presented. He said that he felt that the project should have been presented to the Community Development Committee firstly rather than going forward to the Council and then being sent to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Kauffman asked "what do we have to do" in the spirit of cooperation.

Chairman Taylor opened the floor for public comment at 9:07 p.m.

Chester Cornelius – 1450 Radmacher Way – owner of property nearby - said that parking was poor on the east side of China Lake Boulevard and the fact remained that there was a parking requirement.

Dorothy Brown – 221 N Gold Canyon – said her greatest concern was “what happens when they are gone”. Further she said “if there are not enough parking spaces now there will never be enough” and recommended that parking agreements should be conditional

Jerry Thompson – 707 Sherry – said that as a contractor on base he had seen instances where contractors would stay in Mojave and Bakersfield as opposed to staying in Ridgecrest. He said he hoped to see Ridgecrest beautified. He said that project such as that being proposed encouraged positive growth. Further he said he thought growth was good.

Mr. Clark assured the Commission that VIMCO was “here to stay” and that the owner had invested approximately \$4.5 million dollars in Ridgecrest already and wanted to keep the projects here. He said the owner had created a brand new nationwide registered franchise of galleries.

Tom Martin 228 E Hartley – said that the proposed project made sense but he felt it was important for the Planning Commission to look to the future and if exceptions were made for one developer a precedent was set that may cause problems in the future.

Mr. Mehta said they were not looking for exceptions.

The Public Hearing closed at 9:21 p.m.

Chairman Taylor then cited his concerns saying that parking requirements were not being met. He said he also had concerns relative to curbside appeal specifically for the buildings being proposed in front of City Hall. He asked for a site plan showing traffic flow. He said if a parking agreement were to be reached he foresaw a condition in regards to the alley – i.e. making improvements. He said he did not consider parking 500 feet from a property to be a reasonable solution – relative to distance from a hotel. Further he said that whilst he liked the idea of mixed use he was concerned with the level of mixed use in the proposed project.

Commissioner Beres said that a different arrangement needed to be made for the project near Motel 6.

Commissioner Jeglum said that the Commission could not give definitive answers without a site plan but appreciated the developer considering the community.

Commissioner Laire said he generally agreed with the projects but they needed further work.

Commissioner Kauffman said that being new and having a new perspective one position the City could not afford to be in was to throw road blocks. He said that along with “you can’t do” should be “but staff are here to assist you with what you can do”.

There was further comment and discussion.

Commissioner Beres moved a motion and Commission Kauffman seconded a motion to continue Items 10.d.e.&f. to the meeting of August 12th, 2008.

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

10.e Site Plan Review SPR-08-05 Galleria At Civic Center 131 S. China Lake Blvd– VIMCO Dev.

A 48 unit motel and 4,800 sq. ft. retail complex consisting of a 2 story building on .67 acres located on General Commercial (CG) zoning, APN 478-101-02,03,04

10.f Site Plan Review SPR-08-07 Galleria At Miguel Ct, 553 S. China Lake Blvd– VIMCO Dev. A

38 unit motel and 7,500 sq. ft. retail complex consisting of a 2 story building on 1 acre located on General Commercial (CG) zoning, APN 480-010-06

11. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
12. **COMMISSIONER ITEMS**
13. **STAFF ITEMS**
14. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**
15. **ADJOURN**
Meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.