



CITY OF RIDGECREST

100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST PLANNING COMMISSION

City Council Chambers

Tuesday, May 12, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners: Chairman Nellavan Jeglum, Vice Chairman Lois Beres, Commissioners Eric Kauffman, Jason Patin, and Craig Porter

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Jeglum, Vice Chairman Beres, Commissioners Kauffman, Patin, Porter.

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

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was moved by Commissioner Kauffman and seconded by Commissioner Patin to approve the Agenda as written. The Agenda was approved as written.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 14, 2009

A motion was moved by Commissioner Patin and seconded by Commissioner Beres to approve the Minutes of April 14, 2009. The Minutes of April 14, 2009 were approved as written.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None – closed at 6:02 p.m.

7. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

7.a PZC-09-01 and TTM 6731 (120) lot proposed pre-zone E-2 project subject to proposed annexation of 40 acres located north of the NE corner of S. Norma St. and Kendall Ave. APN 510-010-06, 07 (Taft Corporation)

(This item was continued from the March 10, and April 14, 2009 PC meetings)

Planner Alexander briefed the Commissioners saying that the site was currently in an unincorporated portion of Kern County. He spoke to the condition for 30 foot parkway and said the item was continued from last month primarily for Public Works and Engineering issues including the City standard for a half street. He said that Kern County standards would be utilized with paving to the center line plus an additional 10 feet. He went on to say another major issue was to provide two accesses to the site – indicating the alternative/second paved access had caused conjecture. He provided graphics of the 3 options discussed at the last meeting and indicated that the chosen route would be north on Seirra View to Springer and then westbound on Springer over to Downs. Staff was concerned with radius on cul-de-sacs and additional maps submitted had alleviated concerns. He then spoke about the extensive park system in Bakersfield and made a comparative to Ridgecrest saying that there was not one public park included in the entire area. He went on to address concerns from major property owners surrounding the site in relation to annexation. He said that the owners of unincorporated property owners had asked for costs in relation to annexation. Referring back to the park issue

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Mr. Alexander spoke again about the severity of slopes on the site. He said he had spoken to representatives of the City of Lancaster and research yielded a recommendation of no greater than five to one. He summarized saying the item had come before the Commission on two occasions and that staff was presenting conditions and resolution for approval from the Commission.

Planner Alexander then introduced Jerry Helt – Acting City Engineer.

Jerry Helt, Acting City Engineer said that the conditions of approval should be amended to include the improvements on Downs – 12 foot paved lanes.

Vice Chairman Beres asked a question in regards to half width streets – concerned with parking causing a loss of one lane. Mr. Helt responded that the half width street details developers 10 feet to the other side of center lane thereby allowing space normally used for the other lane. He said half width indicated a typical 20 feet width divided in half. 10 foot lane on the side of the development plus another 10 feet to the fall line – people could park there and there would still be adequate parking for cars on the subdivision side only. Commissioner Patin asked for clarification that the other side of the street would not be paved and no curb and gutter – this was confirmed. Chairman Jeglum asked for clarification that the 10 foot lane did not belong to the developer and this was confirmed.

Kamyar Lashgari – addressed the Commission saying that the revised conditions were acceptable to the developer and that there had been discussion in regards to further paving and the developer had no problem adding that condition however so long as there was sufficient easement. Mr. Lashgari said that Condition 29g. was in regards to land adjacent to the tract and did not include curb and gutter. In regards to five to one requirements for slopes the developer said he had no problem complying. He further spoke about adequate easement being conditional on extra paving and that the developer understood that this was new protocol for all subdivisions coming before the Commission.

Chairman Jeglum asked if the developer had been in contact with any property owners for rights of way. Mr. Lashgari responded that they had conducted a preliminary search on title had revealed that the route shown already had easements in place. Chairman Jeglum asked for clarification as to the type of easement and this was provided – private and dedicated easements on the record. Chairman Jeglum asked how the direction of this access affected the development given that the sewer could not run the same way. Mr. Lashgari responded that the secondary access would go west for easing traffic and safety concerns but the sewer would still go per original routing. Chairman Jeglum asked how different the park area would be given the change of slope – Mr. Lashgari said another 20,000 square feet of area would need to be brought into that space and a corresponding loss of 2 lots.

Commissioner Porter asked for clarification in regards to the paving of streets within the tract. Mr. Lashgari clarified that Sierra View off-site would be two twelve foot lanes.

Chairman Jeglum asked if conditions had been included in regards to exterior boundaries – block walls etc. Mr. Helt responded that he thought planning had included a landscaping plan and Mr. Alexander said that typically a separate condition would be included for a block wall and in this case it was not. Mr. McRea clarified that municipal code required a 6 foot block wall. There was further discussion as to the block walls design and landscaping of the setback. Chairman Jeglum said that landscaping and lighting district would take care of maintenance of the perimeter block wall. Mr. Helt said that Commissioners should perhaps discuss the perimeter block wall.

Mr. Lashgari referred back to the planned map and said that the design included front yards with landscaping fronting onto the street and that the only block wall was along Norma Street broken up by three streets punching through which had a 30 foot deep setback in front of it. He said other than that portion the perimeter of the tract was front landscaped yards.

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Commissioner Kauffman highlighted that the wall would continue around the bend near the park if two lots were to be given up for the added requirements regarding the park. Mr. Lashgari confirmed those two lots would be added and due the need for an increase in the basin the wall would actually lessen.

Mr. Helt asked the Commission if they would like to amend the conditions for a wall condition in between the lots – referring to the backyards. Planner Alexander asked Mr. Lashgari for his input. Mr. Lashgari said his plan was for a block wall – depending on the builder unless the code called for a block wall.

Commissioner Patin asked a question in regards to the original access – i.e. were there any problems in regards to Kendall access. Mr. Lashgari said easements were in place and that part of the site was in the City. Mr. Lashgari said that the way the conditions were written there would be no problems with easements. Commissioner Patin asked Planner Alexander for confirmation of what Mr. Lashgari was saying – i.e. that there would be no problems with easements as he was concerned that if problems were encountered the problems would become those of the City. There was further discussion. Mr. Helt asked Mr. Lashgari if he was a licensed land surveyor in the State of California and indicated that this was virtual testimony from a licensed surveyor which would be similar to any report that might be obtained. Mr. Helt asked that it be entered into the minutes that should a right of way issue occur a reimbursement agreement between the City and the developer would be written to facilitate the City being reimbursed for any costs associated with obtaining rights of way. There was discussion as to the content of the map act and it was concluded that the map act did not conclude that the City must pay for gaining easement. It was further clarified that the City, in order to proceed, would have to expend monies to obtain easement and that there was no mechanism for reimbursement within the map act – hence Mr. Helt's suggestion that a requirement be detailed in these minutes. It was further agreed it would also be a good idea to include this as a condition. Mr. Helt asked Mr. Lashgari if this was reasonable. Further, Mr. Lashgari said that in order to record the Tract Map this Map would come before the City Council and that might be where any problems might be addressed. He confirmed that the final Tract map could not come before the City Council until all the conditions had been met as determined by City staff. He further reiterated that the search conducted by the title company indicated that easement was available for both access roads. Commissioner Patin concurred but said he felt it was important the Planning Commission took care of any issues before it went to the Council.

Mr. Lashgari asked for wording of the condition. There was discussion and referral back to Mr. Helt's original suggestion and concurrence for wording was reached. It was also agreed that a condition would be included that approval was conditional upon receipt and verification of necessary right of ways for the required improvements.

Chairman Jeglum opened the Public Hearing opened at 6:55 p.m.

David Hazelwood – spoke about easement access and queried if utility poles had been addressed and said that the “other” part of Springer not next to the “Rademacher tract” would be better. He spoke to the letter from County and a suggestion of paving in four directions not included in the conditions and suggested that the road to the sump park be paved. Planner Alexander clarified that the letter read ‘each direction’ not “four directions”. Mr. Hazelwood went on to list other concerns he had with conditions not including draining of the park sump and other conditions not included. He then referred to the environmental report and said this tract would alter the drainage pattern substantially. Mr. Hazelwood said the City had used the Impact Report of the Veatch Tract word for word. Mr. Hazelwood said the master drainage plan for the City called for a rip-wrap lined channel to be built from the corner of Downs and Kendall to the corner of Norma and Springer and asked the Commission to ‘get it right’ before approving.

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Planner Alexander recommended that the top of Page 28 be revised to read “the City of Ridgecrest has approved a tentative tract map 7112... consisting of 50 lots of 20 acres along the south boundary of subject property.

Chairman Jeglum said Mr. Hazelwood had made a good point regards drainage. Mr. Helt said a condition was included for an off-site flood study and that it could amend the flows or change the configuration of the flow – these were unknown until the study was completed and submitted. There was further clarification as to the process leading up to approval of the final map and that approval before the Commission was for approval of the Tentative Tract Map.

Public Hearing was closed at 7:07 p.m.

Commissioner Beres raised a motion and Commissioner Kauffman seconded a motion to approve Resolution of 09-06 for a Negative Declaration.

AYES: Jeglum, Beres, Kauffman, Patin, Porter
NAYES: None
Absent: None

Commissioner Kauffman raised a motion and Commissioner Beres seconded a motion to approve Resolution 09-07 for a Pre-Zone Change.

AYES: Jeglum, Beres, Kauffman, Patin, Porter
NAYES: None
Absent: None

Commissioner Patin raised a motion and Commissioner Porter seconded a motion to approve Resolution 09-08 for Approval of TTM 6731, with a re-wording of Condition 37g. and an inclusion of three additional condition at 37 (h.i.j.) as listed below:

- g. South Sierra View Street from North boundary of TTM 6731 to Springer Ave. to be improved with 24' wide paved section to allow for two 12' travel lanes with 8' graded shoulders. Springer Ave. west from South Sierra View Street to Downs St. to be improved with 24' wide paved section to allow for two 12' travel lanes with 8' graded shoulders.
- h. Downs Street from Springer Ave. to China Lake Blvd. to be improved with 24' wide paved section to allow for two 12' travel lanes match at existing.
- i. TTM 6731 approved contingent upon receipt and verification of all offsite rights-of-way (and/or) easements for road, infrastructure (and/or) utilities.
- j. Should a right of way or easement issue occur, a reimbursement agreement between the City and the developer will be entered into according to required timelines to facilitate the City being reimbursed for any costs associated with obtaining rights-of-way” (and or) easements.

AYES: Jeglum, Beres, Kauffman, Patin, Porter
NAYES: None
Absent: None

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.a Distribution and Discussion of Ridgecrest General Plan Draft EIR

Planner Alexander advised that CDs and hard copies of the General Plan Draft EIR would be available the following week for purchase - \$28 for hard copy and \$15 for CD copy. He said that public agencies would be noticed and sent a desk, following which would be a 45 day review period and that the consultant would respond to any inquiries received in that review period and typically that would be completed within a month of receipt. Therefore it was anticipated that the General Plan would come before the City Council in August of 2009.

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8.b Powerpoint Presentation of the 2009 National American Planning Association Conference by City Planner

Planner Alexander provided a briefing on his recent attendance at the 2009 American Planning Association Conference in Minnesota. Highlights included a panel session by three former Presidents of the American Planning Association.

9. COMMISSIONER ITEMS

9.a C. D. C. Water Conservation Ordinance Subcommittee update by Commissioner Patin

Commissioner Patin gave an overview on the latest draft saying that the Water District had approached the City as the State was mandating a water conservation project for cities – goal to conserve 20% water. He thanked the Water District for putting together a draft which came before the Community Development Committee. He reported that he along with Council Member Carter had met with City staff and the result was a current (albeit incomplete) draft which had gone before the Water District. He indicated that the Water District would provide feedback hopefully the following week, before coming back to Committee.

Commissioner Beres said that as she read the draft new homeowners would have restrictions on lawn but “old” homeowners would not. Commissioner Patin confirmed and said this was the less restrictive option of what was coming – i.e. that the State had much tougher recommendations but allowed for City’s to implement their own ordinance.

Chairman Jeglum asked how enforcement could occur. Commissioner Patin said that a lot of what had originally been included that would require enforcement had been removed in this latest draft. He noted that a lot of what was in the original draft was unenforceable. He also spoke about pricing of high water usage being self-enforcing. He further spoke about programs currently being offered by the Water District and a move toward education and assistance and commended the Water District for doing such.

Commissioner Porter said there was no provision for how much water would be saved and it didn’t really address the problem of conserving water. He said there was no provision for reporting how much water was being conserved.

Commissioner Patin said that provision existed for the Water District to impose penalties for higher usage.

Commissioner Porter said that a tiered system would not have to be enforced – versus the current draft. Commissioner Patin agreed that he too would prefer a tiered system and reiterated this was a work in progress draft document and it was not only his input being considered.

9. b C. D. C. New Sign Ordinance Subcommittee update by Commissioner Kauffman

Commissioner Kauffman provided a briefing to the Commission saying that staff had done a good job of refining a convoluted first draft. He said the sub-committee was trying to keep ahead of new technology and that had been probably the hardest part. He said they were trying to keep the document short including a list of prohibited signs. He said he and Planner Alexander had one meeting with merchants and were due to have another this Saturday to talk about application and enforcement of the code and he was expecting a lively debate. An open invitation was extended to attend the meeting. He went on to say that murals were a topic being discussed and a decision was made to get old down merchants together for this discussion.

Chairman Jeglum said she would like to see something in place for removal of signs after closure of a business.

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9. c Commissioner Contacts

None to report.

9. d Additional Commissioner Items

Vice-Chairman Beres asked if the house on Langley had had any work done as she had driven by and it still looked “disgusting”. Mr. McRea said it had been referred to City Manager. Commissioner Patin wished Seniors well noting their graduation was coming up – he said “congratulations and good luck”.

10. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.