



CITY OF RIDGECREST
100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
MINUTES

MEETING OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST PLANNING COMMISSION
Council Chambers

Tuesday, February 09, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

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

Next Resolution # 10-3

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6.02p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Jeglum, Vice-Chairman Beres, Commissioners Kauffman, Patin, and Porter. We have a Quorum.

Staff Present: Public Services Director Jim McRea; City Planner Matthew Alexander; Executive Secretary Eva Peterson

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda made by Vice-Chairman Beres and 2nd by Commissioner Patin. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

5. MINUTES

Consideration of 1-26-10 minutes will be deferred until 2-23-10 to allow OTAPC to comment.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.a Reconsideration of Landscape Plan for Hampton Inn

This item involves landscaping for Hampton Inn project. City Planner Matthew Alexander stated that he and assistant Pam Hill looked at the Hampton Inn landscaping plan submitted and approved by the Planning Commission yet upon inspection, noticed that there was a significant difference. Pam Hill worked with Mark Chrissi on a number of staff recommendations which were then executed by the Hampton Inn.

City Planner Matthew Alexander went out on January 28th and took note that planting selection not making it as entry way statement. Matthew Alexander commented that our new water conservation ordinance does allow for 50% turf. Approval of sod on Sydnor Avenue and taller plantings next to wall. Parking lot islands were rather drab and now added annuals have been added. Ground cover - the existing cover not acceptable and extended parking lot – the extension. Hampton Inn has made improvements as requested – sod, and taller plants.

Reciprocal parking agreement – Hampton Inn will pursue office building next door. Light poles were approved at 20feet at currently at 25 feet in height. Will need to modify in DDA. Pam Hill has signed off on behalf of City. Staff feels there has been appropriate effort on behalf of Hampton Inn.

Mark Chrissy with Hampton Inn, San Diego, apologized to the Planning Commission regarding original landscaping plan and stated Hampton Inn made modifications as quickly as they could. He stated they are shooting for a March 11th opening and they are excited about their project.

Commissioner Kauffman asked if there is more grass planted at Hampton Inn than over at Springhill Suites? Mark Chrissy replied, yes, since they have planted grass along the back by the pool and retaining area. Commissioner Kauffman added that initial grass planting at Springhill Suites appeared immature and now it looks lush. Mark Chrissy commented that they will match Springhill Suites landscaping to Hampton Inn – it will pop it. Vice Chairman Beres asked if they considered fake grass and Mark Chrissy replied, no due to expense.

Chairman Jeglum asked if there would be a restaurant in the Hampton Inn and Mark Chrissy stated they are trying. Their goal was to get the hotel up; difficult to getting a restaurant, especially in today's economy. Commissioner Kauffman stated to Mark Chrissy that Nickoletti's is interested in meeting with him and Mark Chrissy replied that they are opened to meeting with them. He added that their number one request from guests is a restaurant within walking distance.

Commissioner Jeglum remarked that the naval base is not where it's at for another couple years. Mark Chrissy pointed out that they enjoy smaller communities.

Commissioner Patin asked for further clarification by looking at the original plan and the finished plan shown on the screen. He asked if the city staff went back and asked Hampton Inn to put more grass in? City Planner Matthew Alexander answered, no. Mark Chrissy, added that the landscape architect, who manages the landscaping process, this project slipped through the cracks.

Commissioner Kauffman pointed out that he is not pleased with "how this played out." This was a unique situation because 1) this is desert region 2) water costs can go up. He would like to see if staff can go to a xeriscape workshop. In his opinion, changes need to be made on the way we think at this level regarding needing more grass. Matthew Alexander responded by saying that the plan displayed on the left side of the screen (with all the grass) was the plan that was approved by the Planning Commission. Commissioner Kauffman asked when did the Hampton Inn first file this plan? Matthew Alexander answered in 2007, however, Indian Wells Valley Water District allows for 50% grass in their new ordinance. Commissioner Kauffman argued that xeriscape is the better way to go. It can be lush when it grows out and will cost developers less money when water rates kick in. He added that , "staff should have been more even handed on this".

8.b Discussion of Draft Sign Ordinance

Planner Matthew Alexander stated that the Community Development Committee (last spring) decided to break up into two sub-committees. One committee worked on a water conservation ordinance and the other sub-committee worked on creating a sign ordinance. The earlier draft version that was distributed had no graphics or tables. Now, there is a new 4th revision, with graphics and tables. He hopes that the new

version is easier to understand. He wants to encourage well designed signs and sign conformity. The City can get into a “over-signage” situation, if they don’t do something soon. The various signs where discussed:

- Wall signs
- Projecting signs
- Free standing signs
- Off premise signs
- Monument signs
- Pole signs
- Real estate signs

There are no restrictions on political signs in the City. We looked at three sections of the new draft:

- 1) prohibited signs – illegal (i.e. banners, off-premise signs, if a business moves out, they have 60 days to remove their sign; over-signage; grandfathered signs

Commissioner Patin asked, “didn’t we say a permit could be issued without the approval of the Planning Commission? Commissioner Kauffman pointed out that he didn’t like that idea.

- 2) electronic signs – contained within the draft ordinance is the number of changes per minute

Commissioner Kauffman stated they were all bother by electronic signs but after staff researched this item, they learned that these signs are easily obtained. Matthew Alexander added that some cities require the light intensity go down at night.

Chairman Jeglum would like to see the light intensity reduced at night, however, she questions how that would be enforced. Personally, she has no problem with electronic signs. Matthew Alexander’s states the intent is to change message. Commissioner Patin asks should a line be drawn here and Chairman Jeglum commented that rules need to be followed. Commissioner Kauffman pointed out that LA and West Hollywood have some laws out there. Matthew Alexander commented that they have a draft (per committee’s input) and are looking for direction.

Chairman Jeglum added that there can be a limit on size of an electronic sign, moreover for her, each zoning designation should be the same. Commissioner Kauffman pointed out that the document reflected a good job on being objective.

Commissioner Porter questioned page 9 on prohibited sign/attention getting devices. He asked who decides and who enforces? He wasn't quite sure what that meant.

Inflatibles, human signs and temporary human signs, how are they enforced. Jim Mcree noted that a business no sign is a business with no business. Matthew Alexander stated that there should be Old Town regulations for signs and mural and that murals reflect the community's character and history.

Final decision tonight was to bring this item back to Community Development and then represent at City Council in April, 2010. All Planning Commission members agreed.

9. COMMISSIONER ITEMS

9.a Commissioner Update from City Council Committees

Commissioner Patin - Quality of Life. During the Quality of Life meeting they are discussing the re-naming of Denny's park. They are still kicking around names. Chairman Jeglum commented that the past Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Pat Farland, would be very happy if the park would be named after her. Commissioner Patin stated the Committee has agreed on a name but have not talked to the person and this item has not gone to Council. Chairman Jeglum asked Commissioner Patin to take Pat Farland's name to the Committee for consideration since Pat was a critical player in the park's conception.

Commissioner Patin stated they also discussed the RDA bond and how money would be spent if they got the money. Looking at a master plan for Parks and Recreation or formation of a committee. Matthew Alexander pointed out that the groundwork has already been done by G.P.A.C. They may kick back to Matthew Alexander or Planning Commission; will see at next meeting how to move forward. Also discussed Maturango Junction Days and Jim Ponek would like to expand further.

Commissioner Porter – no action taken at Quality of Life.

Chairman Jeglum stated she liked it better when we had set monthly meetings. It was easier for planning schedule. Commissioner Patin agreed stating it is hard to plan if you are not meeting. He added that at the Community Development Committee there is a program for 1st time low income homebuyers to get into homes. If there is any interest, people can see folks at the City. Also discussed lack of housing for seniors; working on that issue.

Commissioner Porter stated that Infrastructure Committee meets tomorrow at 5:00pm.

Vice Chairman Beres commented that City Organization Committee cancelled this and last month (and month prior).

Commissioner Patin announced that his wife delivered a 9lbs, 20inch little baby girl yesterday and all are doing fine. His wife is doing fine and will go home tomorrow. He was scheduled to speak at the Economic Outlook Conferences.

Chairman Jeglum announced she has a new career as the manager for Heritage Village Association.

9.b Commissioner Contacts

9.c Additional Commissioner Items

10. STAFF ITEMS

None

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

12. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05p.m.