



# CITY OF RIDGECREST

100 West California Avenue  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

## MINUTES

### MEETING OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST PLANNING COMMISSION

City Council Chambers  
Tuesday, October 23, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

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

*Next Resolution # 07 - 17*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Mike Biddlingmeier, Vice-Chair Jerry Taylor, Commissioners Lois Beres, Howard Laire, Nellavan Jeglum

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

AYES: MB, JT, LB, NJ, HL

NAYES:

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Beres moved and Commissioner Laire seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of October 9, 2007. The minutes of October 9, 2007 were approved as submitted.

AYES: MB, JT, LB, NJ, HL

NAYES:

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

David Haugan 1225 Robert Avenue asked if now would be a good time to make comment on Item 7. as it had been pulled from the Agenda. Planner Alexander explained that indeed the item would be heard as whilst the applicant had requested that the item be withdrawn, the Planning Commission Chairman Mike Biddlingmeier felt it was appropriate to keep it listed as it did relate to other items important for the Commission's consideration. Mr. Haugan agreed to make his comments during the Public Hearing item.

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**a. SIGN CUP-07-20 Conditional Use Permit**

A request to relocate an existing billboard from 555 S. China Lake Blvd to 545 S. China Lake Blvd. The property at 555 S. China Lake will develop soon and the sign company has requested to relocate the billboard and upgrade the base from a double poled sign to a single pole. A Conditional Use Sign Permit is required for billboard signs. Per Section 20-26-4.g.1. *Off-Premise Signs*, Billboards are allowed on General Commercial property along S. China Lake Blvd subject to receiving a Conditional Use Permit. APN 480-010-06 Applicant: Lamar Advertising

Planner Alexander advised that the application had been withdrawn by the applicant but that the item was kept on the Agenda after discussion with the Chairman earlier in the day. Planner Alexander briefed the Commission on the original application. Staff pointed out that billboards were only allowed to be erected within city limits on Inyokern Road or China Lake Boulevard – via a Conditional Use Permit.

Planner Alexander provided photos showing billboards in place on China Lake Boulevard – these billboards' CUPs expired in 1987 and at that time should have been removed. This, he explained was the reason this item was kept on the Agenda. Planner Alexander said that staff recommended that the applicant's withdrawal be accepted and that the Commission direct the staff in relation to the related issue of signs existing longer than permitted by Resolution.

Commissioner Laire commented that the Commission had been through this exercise before. He said he was wondering why these billboards were still up – he felt that staff should require the billboards to be taken down. Vice-Chair Jerry Taylor asked for reasoning as to the signs being taken down and Planner Alexander replied stating that the billboards were approved with a 7 year limitation which had expired 20 years ago. Commissioner Beres commented that she did not like billboards on a main street in town.

Vice-Chair Taylor asked where staff was in terms of updating the sign ordinance and Planner Alexander responded saying that staff was anticipating coordinating this with the zoning ordinance.

Chair Biddlingmeier asked if the three existing signs in question could be looked at by Code Enforcement and Planner Alexander responded affirmatively. Commissioner Beres then asked about a fourth sign shown in the photos but not highlighted by staff. Chair Biddlingmeier replied that to the best of his recollection this sign had been viewed previously as a directional sign and therefore had been allowed to remain in place but that generally there was a consensus that billboards would not be allowed within the City Limits.

Commissioner Laire noted that this fourth billboard had become an advertising billboard rather than a directional sign. Chair Biddlingmeier agreed and said there was an agreement between the Fairgrounds and other organizations in regards advertising on the billboard and commented that perhaps this was something to be looked at in the ordinance review. Vice-Chair Taylor noted that the billboard in question was often used for advertising. There was general agreement that there was a need to keep the billboard as a directional sign – not as it was currently being used. Chair Biddlingmeier said he did not want to be too restrictive given that the Fairgrounds through events such as the Auto Sales generated a lot of revenue for the City.

Vice-Chair Taylor said he was concerned for consistency and that CUP's not be used as a way to arbitrate for removal of billboards. He therefore asked for a report of what billboards on Inyokern Road were within City Limits and the status of those billboards.

Commissioner Jeglum said she felt that taking down billboards in town which had been in place for some years would not be fair given that there was not a problem with them being there and any development in the area would eventually bring them down. Chair Biddlingmeier noted that the Mayor had called him earlier that day and shared his thoughts that the Planning Commission should find a way to eliminate this problem. Commissioner Jeglum said that she felt that there was research needed first to ensure that decisions would be informed and treatment fair. Vice-Chair Taylor raised the issue of the Chamber of Commerce sign which he said was "somewhat sponsored" by the City and that he had seen lot of ads on that sign.

Chairman Biddlingmeier made a general comment that all of the comments made by the Commissioners this evening were similar to those made 4 years ago at the Planning Commission when this same issue of billboard signs was discussed. He then opened the floor for public comment.

David Haugen of 1225 Robert Avenue contended that billboards were unsightly and encumbered the properties surrounding them. He noted that the sign originally on the evening's agenda should have been removed in January of 2007.

Public comment closed at 7.29 p.m.

Chairman Biddlingmeier made the suggestion that all billboard CUPs be extended for 1 year with an advisory to billboard owners that at the end of that one year the signs must be removed. Commissioner Laire suggested that firstly staff provide a report on the status of all current billboards within the City Limits for review by the Commission.

Commissioners Taylor and Beres both commented that that they felt sign owners had been given a fair chance and that 1 year extension would be "more than fair". Chair Biddlingmeier pointed out that whilst he agreed with that comment it would be prudent to consider that advertising on the signs had been sold – most likely to local businesses.

Staff was given direction to prepare a report on the status of all billboards within City Limits.

**8. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

A presentation of a concept for a proposed project by PAM Companies on 175 acres located at the Northwest corner of Ridgecrest Blvd and Mahan Street.

Planner Alexander noted that Mr. Whitten of PAM Companies had attended last meeting and asked for this item to be included at this evening's meeting under Discussion Items. Unfortunately, at a later date Mr. Whitten had advised his inability to attend this evening and requested the item be continued for next meeting.

Planner Alexander stated that he felt it would be useful to discuss related items and gave a short brief on Mr. Whitten's proposal and asked for questions from Commissioners.

Vice-Chair Taylor asked if streets were standard or sub-standard. Planner Alexander responded stating they would be below standard given the assumption that the size of the lots would mean not requiring standard streets. Commissioner Beres asked if the usual improvements would be required and Planner Alexander responded stating that Public Works requirements would most likely be amended to reflect the kind of neighborhood being proposed.

Vice-Chair Taylor said he had toured some similar type lots in the County area and said he would entertain the Public Works amendments for the type of development being put forward. He did point out that he did not want to create any safety issues for police and fire in terms of access.

Commissioner Jeglum said that she thought the proposal would be a "nice development" were it on another piece of property. She noted that the proposed site was directly north of Carol Vaughan's property and therefore had all the same associated issues as that property – noise etc. She said input from the base would most likely be that they would support the current density – i.e. 40,000 sq. ft. lots and this application had 244 residential lots at different configurations. She noted that under the current zoning the maximum density would be 185 lots for the whole parcel. She said that because of what happened with Carole Vaughan's property and taking into account the presentation made by Commander Gleason to the Planning Commission and City Council last week – sustainability of the NAWs and cooperation from the City of Ridgecrest - she would not support any application of the E1.5 density.

Commissioner Laire said that he agreed with Commissioner Jeglum's comments

Chairman Biddlingmeier said that this project fell into the same military influence area presented eloquently to the City last week by Captain Gleason. He said he would entertain the maximum density allowed by the current zoning but would not want to go beyond that maximum density.

Commissioner Beres agreed with Chair Biddlingmeier's comments.

Planner Alexander asked if it would still be worthwhile Mr. Whitten attending the Planning Commission Hearing on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November.

Vice-Chair Taylor said he felt that would be appropriate and that he appreciated Mr. Whitten's

approach and creativity. He felt the proposal was a good starting point and would be willing to open discussions as to how best make this work.

Chair Biddlingmeier opened the floor for public comment at 7.45 p.m.

Andy Kilikauskas of 1559 West Burns Avenue spoke to the Commission saying he was very involved with the Carol Vaughan property application and that he felt it was important the Commission be consistent and maintain the E1 zoning.

Bud Klampt 221 N Gold Canyon Drive seconded Mr. Kilikauskas' comments.

**9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

**TTM 6221 2<sup>nd</sup> Extension:** a request for a second 1 year extension to an approved TTM 6221 dated November 18, 2003 and extended to November 18, 2007. TTM 6221 is a request to create a 51 lot subdivision with lots ranging from 20,000 sq. ft. to 40,000 sq. ft. in size in and E-2 zone, located at College Heights Blvd and Franklin Ave. on 40 acres. Unit A (18 lots) has recorded, Unit B and C are in varies stages of improvements. APN 509-020-43 and 44; Applicant: Neil Christman

Planner Alexander noted that the November 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting would include the three public hearings regarding re-zoning.

Further he stated that due to the holidays there would be no second meeting for the Planning Commission in November or December.

**10. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 7.46 p.m.