



CITY OF RIDGECREST

100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST PLANNING COMMISSION

City Council Chambers

Tuesday, August 14, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Biddlingmeier, Vice-Chair Taylor, Commissioner Beres, Commissioner Jeglum
Absent: Commissioner Laire

Staff Present: City Planner Matthew Alexander, Public Services Director Jim McRea (attended shortly after meeting commenced), Administrative Secretary Danielle Valentine

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was moved by Commissioner Beres and seconded by Vice-Chair Taylor to approve the Agenda. The agenda was approved as submitted.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was moved by Commissioner Jeglum and seconded by Vice-Chair Taylor to approve the Minutes. The Minutes of 24th July, 2007 were approved as submitted.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

7a. TPM 11715 a request to create a 2 lot Multi Family (R-2) subdivision on 1.1 acres. located on the north side of Howell Ave between Fairview St and Warner St. APN 067-201-03

City Planner Matthew Alexander briefed the Commission on the application stating that half of the property is developed with a single family home. He indicated the land was surrounded on most sides by R2 zoning – some single family homes to the west and south west. The proposal received is to split the land into two lots. Parcel A will be approx 20,000 sq. ft and contain the existing home, Parcel B would be available for a single family home, a duplex or some multi-family homes. The 30ft westerly strip of the property would be dedicated to City for Warner Street.

Planner Alexander said that improvements had been made to the undeveloped portion of the property but would have to be made to the frontage onto Warner as it extends to the North. Planner Alexander on behalf of staff recommended the Commission approve the project with conditions.

Commissioner Beres then enquired if there would still be enough property dedicated to the parcels as planed and Planner Alexander responded in the affirmative.

Vice Chair Taylor noted that on his last visit to the area the church has not completed improvements.

Commissioner Jeglum asked if the improvements requested were only required on the front of the parcel and Planner Alexander replied that the improvements already exist on Howell Ave. Commissioner Jeglum confirmed stating "so only the front of their own parcel" to which Planner Alexander responded in the affirmative adding "and to the west along the Warner Street frontage".

Planner Alexander went on to say that Commissioner Jeglum had raised a good point explaining that he was not sure how the other half of Warner would be improved. Vice Chair Taylor concurred stating that parts of his frustration when he drove down the area was that some improvements have not been done.

Vice Chair Taylor then indicated he had no problems with the application. Commissioner Jeglum said she also had no problem. Commissioner Beres then offered to move approval of the Resolution approving the application.

Chair Biddlingmeier indicated that the Commission would firstly have to hear from members of the public.

James Bell – applicant on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Hunsinger spoke to the Commission. He indicated that his only request would be asking Engineering and the Planning Commission if they would be opposed to making the street improvements a condition of the building permit as seemed to be suggested in condition 8 – but contradicted in condition 7. He explained that this would allow the parcel to be split and if the owners pulled a building permit they would at that time be required to improve the street. Mr. Bell went on to say that the improvement costs were substantial and the Hunsingers are looking to build their dream house. He said he was sure they were not opposed to making the improvements but at this time it was a lot of money to come up with.

Commissioner Jeglum indicated she did not have a problem with Mr. Bell's suggestion as long as a time frame was in place. Mr. Bell responded stating that he was unsure of the Hunsinger's time frame. He explained they had put their application in so that they could start to plan and if required to make improvements at this time it might put the development out of their realm of possibility.

Commissioner Jeglum responded explaining that the Hunsinger's would be creating a new lot that they could sell at the going rate. Mr. Bell responded that it would be easier for the Hunsinger's to roll the cost of the improvements into the cost of the house when the building permit was pulled rather than attempting to raise a large sum of money at this initial stage.

Commissioner Beres asked Planner Alexander for his thoughts. Planner Alexander indicated he did not have a problem with the suggestion from Mr. Bell however it really was a question for the City Engineer and the Public Works Department.

Vice Chair Taylor indicated he was in favor and explained that in this particular case the other half of the lot is not improved so until someone was in residence on the land it really would not be an issue.

Mr. Bell went on to say that it was his belief that the current practice in Ridgecrest was as per his suggestion and that he was happy to speak with City Engineer Joe Pollock.

Chair Biddlingmeier summarized stating that Planner Alexander had noted that Item 8 of the Conditions for approval read:

The following certificate shall be placed on the final parcel map. "No occupancy permit shall be issued for any development on the within parcels unless each such parcel is served by (1) water from an approved source; (2) an approved wastewater system; (3) an improved and dedicated road."

Therefore Chairman Biddlingmeier was of the belief that Mr. Bell's suggestion was as per Item 8. of the Conditions of Approval.

Mr. Bell concurred and said that was his impression however when he read Condition 7. he was concerned.

Vice Chair Taylor asked which Item was being approved this evening. Commissioner Jeglum responded stating that Items 7. and 8. contradicted themselves and she thought it would be prudent to remove Item 7. and leave Item 8.

Chair Biddlingmeier asked for a motion. Commissioner Beres moved and Vice Chair Taylor seconded a motion to approve resolution 07-14 with the exception of removing Item no. 7 of the Conditions of Approval. All Commissioners present were in favor.

Resolution 07-14 with the exception of removing Item no. 7 was approved.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8a. Livable Communities – New thinking for a Transportation Age

Planner Alexander made a slide presentation to the Commission stating that in keeping with the intention of providing background data in the process of moving towards a new general plan and new zoning ordinance staff had included some documents prepared by the Local Government Commission.

The first presentation was on bicycle paths. He indicated this topic had been discussed at GPAC and concluded that it would be desirable to have some new bike paths. He stated his belief that transportation should be thought of as more than streets and highways and indicated it included such things as how we require parking lots include landscaping undertaken. Planner Alexander stated that parkway sidewalks are very desirable as they make it pleasant for the pedestrian in safe environment.

Planner Alexander acknowledged that the photo examples he provided were from water intensive communities.

Planner Alexander then went on to say that recently there had been some discussion about a “gateway” into Ridgecrest and indicated he would like to discuss a roundabout. He explained that in order to facilitate a more desirable Bowman Creek it was generally recognized that it is would be desirable to maintain a drainage channel as well as a recreation area.

Planner Alexander noted that Mr. Fallgatter had recently given public comment on creating an entrance bridge. He further stated that Mr. Lare at his presentation to GPAC had proposed the idea of a roundabout. Planner Alexander quoted Mr. Lare as saying “traffic signals stop traffic and roundabouts facilitate traffic”.

Planner Alexander provided photo examples of a roundabout on a busy intersection in Bakersfield he had recently studied for a period of approximately 10 minutes – he commented that he was “amazed” at the flow of traffic.

Planner Alexander then presented a slide show prepared by planning intern Marissa Ornelas. He explained that the slides showed examples of roundabouts and centre pieces for roundabouts noting Marissa has put the presentation together to help the Commission think about how a roundabout could look. The presentation included a number of visuals of different roundabout layouts.

Planner Alexander suggested the roundabout could have a statue of the Mayor as its centerpiece or an arch sign indicating arrival into Ridgecrest. Commissioner Beres noted that the roundabout would require two lanes anyway and therefore some of the smaller roundabouts provided as examples in the slide show wouldn't function well at the intersection.

Chair Biddlingmeier enquired if the impact of the roundabout was considered in the existing traffic studies done for Wal-Mart. Commissioner Jeglum stated the roundabout would be a different way to control traffic.

Chair Biddlingmeier noted there had been an area dedicated as the signal area for traffic lights and Planner Alexander noted that it was at a cost of "something like \$600,000.

Commissioner Jeglum said upon review the E.I.R. she had noted that signals were being proposed at more than one intersection to assist with traffic flow. She further stated it was her opinion that a roundabout would much better facilitate the traffic at Bowman and China Lake as it would be possible to get to "point A" and "point B" without having to stop much.

Planner Alexander made comment that he found it interesting that the old alignment of College Heights would run into the traffic line and noted Mayor Holloway had asked about changing the street line back to its original alignment. Further Planner Alexander stated it had also been suggested that there should be a dedication to allow for some even more creative things and summarized saying that ultimately the Wal-Mart development should not be a mediocre thing.

Commissioner Beres made comment that the Committee she is on had stressed the importance of making an impact as people enter Ridgecrest.

Chair Taylor said that he had recently traveled the Pacific Coast Highway and it was his opinion that the roundabout was about the only thing that worked smoothly on the whole highway. He explained that it still allowed traffic to slow down but at the same time facilitated flow of traffic.

Commissioner Jeglum stated her thoughts that roundabouts are much safer and putting a walkway over similar to what had been presented by Mr. Fallgatter was appealing to her. Further she commented that the bike-path would be something useable without having to cross a busy intersection. She summarized stating that she thought it would be a safe thing and a better use of the area.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & COMMENTS

Next Meeting August 28th, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

SGN/CUP-07-15 a request to install a second pole sign with changeable copy which would exceed the allowable signage for the car dealer business located at 269 S. China Lake Blvd
Applicant: Jim Charlon Ford

Planner Alexander noted that this application was to install a second sign with changeable copy.

Chair Biddlingmeier asked for any other items or comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Jeglum made comment that as a member of the Exchange Club she wished to make the community aware of a planned event:

September 11th will be a sponsored event titled "Remembrance Fields" to honor the people lost when we were attacked as well as honoring our current and past military. The Exchange Club will be flying over 900 3 x 5 flags in Freedom Park. Commissioner Jeglum described seeing that many American Flags flying 10 feet apart as "breathtaking".

Flags will be set up on 8th September and remain until 15th September.

On the 11th September there will be a buffet lunch served from 11.30 a.m. to 12.15 p.m. (cost \$15) with the ceremony starting at 12.15 p.m.

Vice-Chair Taylor noted that he had received several comments from the public on the abatement of the Sanders Street property thanking staff for their work.

10. ADJOURN - The meeting was adjourned at 7.35 p.m.