

MINUTES: of the Planning Commission Meeting of the City of Redlands held Tuesday, July 26, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. are as follows:

PRESENT: Gary Miller, Chairman
John James, Vice Chairman
Carol Dyer, Commissioner
Jan Hudson, Commissioner
Julie Rock, Commissioner

ADVISORY STAFF Oscar Orci, Development Services Director
PRESENT: Robert Dalquest, Assistant Development Services Director

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - 3 MINUTES

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order, and opened up the Public Comment period. All members were present with the exception of Commissioner Conrad Guzkowski who was excused.

There were no Public Comments and the Public Comment period was closed.

Chairman Miller stated they were going to take item III A out of order.

III. MINUTES

A. Planning Commission Minutes of June 14, 2011

MOTION

It was moved by Commissioner Rock, seconded by Commissioner Hudson and carried on a 5-0 vote (Commissioner Guzkowski absent) that the Planning Commission approve the minutes of June 14, 2011.

II. ADDENDA

A. Update on work of Planning Commission Sub-Committees.

Chairman Miller requested an update on the General Plan Sub-Committee.

Commissioner Rock stated the Sub-Committee had created a mission statement and read it to the Commission. The mission statement is on file in the Development Services Department under Planning Commission Staff Reports and Minutes 7.26.11

Commissioner Dyer requested clarification on the acronym GG implementation. Commissioner Rock stated she would find out and get back to the Commission. Commissioner Dyer requested the Committee use the full description instead of acronyms. Commissioner Rock agreed. Commissioner Dyer recommended Principles, Policies, and Programs kept as a complete document. Commissioner Rock stated the Committee wanted a clear direction of policy and to define implementation. Commissioner Rock stated the Committee is trying to have measureable items for implementation. Commissioner Dyer recommended having a separate implementation plan after the Principles, Policies, and Programs are in order so the documentation is not lost or misplaced. Commissioner Rock concurred.

Commissioner Rock stated she will need to recuse herself, due to a conflict of interest.

VI. WORKSHOP

Discussion on key policy issues regarding the Draft Revised Downtown Specific Plan.

Assistant Director Robert Dalquest gave a presentation and overview of the Draft Revised Downtown Specific Plan.

Chairman Miller inquired if the Commission had any questions or concerns regarding the redesignation of areas in the Specific Plan, and pocket parks.

Commissioner Dyer stated she was in support of adding the Town Center designation between 6th and 7th Street. Commissioner Dyer said the Town Center designation east and west of Texas Avenue does not make sense for the neighborhood, due to environmental impacts from the freeway. Commissioner Dyer confirmed her agreement with the Corridor 3 West designation across State Street and recommended extending the designation to Neighborhood 2. Commissioner Dyer recommended the deletion of the pocket park.

Vice Chairman James expressed concern on the existing automotive use. Assistant Director Dalquest stated the Town Center area could have automotive as a conditionally permitted use. Vice Chairman James said he was in agreement with the stipulation that automotive use was a conditionally permitted use. Vice Chairman James recommended the deletion of the pocket park.

Commissioner Hudson recommended the deletion of the pocket park and confirmed her agreement with the designations.

Chairman Miller opened up the hearing.

Mr. Greg Best, automotive shop owner, expressed concern when the time comes for him to retire or sell his business, or if the building was destroyed fifty percent or more he could not rebuild. Chairman Miller stated the Service Commercial makes the new development go through the approval process to obtain a conditional use permit. Assistant Director Dalquest stated with the existing automotive use the current owner would not need a conditional use permit unless he wanted to expand the building. If the business was destroyed or under new management it would need to go through the approval process; for a conditional use permit.

Mr. Gene Stenowski, manufacturing business owner, expressed concern on his manufacturing use, and stated he agreed with the deletion of the pocket park. Assistant Director Dalquest stated manufacturing is a permitted use.

Mr. Jim Venstag, automotive shop owner, requested a notice of the hearing ahead of time so they could make arrangements to attend. Mr. Venstag stated they were forced out of their location twenty one years ago by Redevelopment, and it is very difficult to find a neighborhood that would allow an automotive use. Mr. Venstag requested the City leave the zoning alone.

Mr. Ron Running, resident and member of the Historical Society Board, stated the Specific Plan has buildings in the National Registered Historic District. Mr. Running recommended highlighting the buildings that are in the district. Mr. Running stated the Specific Plan allows five story buildings and stated he is in disagreement because it would block the views from the freeway. Commissioner Dyer clarified Mr. Running's recommendation to clearly indicate the buildings that are in the National Register in the Specific Plan in order to be aware of new development near the designated buildings. Mr. Running concurred and stated there are approximately thirty buildings that are designated. Assistant Director Dalquest confirmed the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) does list the properties that are in the boundaries of the Santa Fe Depot District. If there is a development that is proposed for the district a Cultural Resources Study would be completed.

Mr. Dick Burkhart, business owner, stated he was in agreement with the new recommendations on the Draft Revised Downtown Specific Plan with the exception of the pocket park. Mr. Burkhart requested the pocket park be deleted from the plan.

Mr. Robert Dawes, president of the Redlands Conservancy, stated the Conservancy had submitted comments on the EIR and had not heard a response from the City. Assistant Director Dalquest stated the City had received eighteen letters; and the consultant is preparing a response. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the response to be sent out ten days prior to the Public Hearings.

Chairman Miller closed the hearing.

Chairman Miller stated the Commission is not in support of the pocket park.

Assistant Director Dalquest clarified the extension of Corridor 3 West. The Commission concurred with Assistant Director Dalquest's clarifications.

Chairman Miller inquired if the Commission had any questions or concerns regarding the traffic at the Orange Street off ramp and Eureka Street.

Vice Chairman James stated the Orange Street and Eureka Street off ramp is confusing to visitors that are not familiar with Redlands. Vice Chairman James recommended two through lanes and one right turn only lane to mitigate confusion to the downtown area.

Commissioner Hudson stated the exit is challenging from the freeway merging from Freeway 210 or the Interstate 10 and exiting Orange Street off ramp. The off ramp backs up at times when drivers try to make a left turn. It may be a safety concern and needs to be addressed.

Commissioner Dyer suggested a directional sign stating Historic Downtown straight ahead. Commissioner Dyer stated Engineering restriped the intersection at Orange to one lane so by eliminating the left turn lane at Eureka Street it may cause even more congestion on Stuart Avenue to Orange Street. Assistant Director Dalquest stated the traffic study indicated approximately 130 left turn trips at the off ramp, and if the left turn lane was eliminated they would be redirected to turn left at Orange Street which is already congested.

Director Oscar Orci stated staff has been in contact with Caltrans regarding any improvements. There are directional signs along Pearl Avenue and the City is inquiring if the directional signs can be modified or if additional signs would be allowed. Staff will review what the necessary requirements near the Promenade are, and what restrictions were placed on the City from Measure U regarding the level of service at major intersections. Once clarified staff will share their findings with the Commission.

Chairman Miller recommended when the General Growth property develops to add a condition to install a right turn only lane. Chairman Miller informed the Commission that in the future there will be a traffic signal at Eureka Street and Colton Avenue. Chairman Miller inquired if the Commission was in agreement on the following:

To add an additional right turn only lane at the off ramp.

To install additional directional signage for the Historic Downtown area.

The Commission was in agreement for an additional right turn only lane, and additional signage.

Chairman Miller inquired if the Commission had any questions or concerns regarding the number of stories allowed downtown.

Vice Chairman James inquired if the Downtown Specific Plan was exempt from Measure U. Director Orci stated it would require a 4-5ths majority vote from the City Council. If there are revisions that change the level of service that are not currently in the Downtown Specific Plan those revisions would not be able to be adjusted. Vice Chairman James stated there was a mixed used design presented for the Redlands Mall which would increase it to three stories and inquired if it would require a 4-5th vote by City Council or an amendment to Measure U by the voters. Assistant Director Dalquest stated it would not require a vote; there is no maximum building height south of Redlands Boulevard. The maximum building height north of Redlands Boulevard is three stories in the existing plan.

Commissioner Dyer stated five story buildings are not appropriate in the Downtown area and recommended a maximum of three stories in order to keep the view shed open from the freeway. Commissioner Dyer expressed concern that a five story building would not fit with the existing characteristics of the City.

There was discussion on areas where the three and five stories are allowed and their required setbacks.

Chairman Miller stated if the City's desire is to have more underground parking; land prices need to get to a certain point by increasing the density before it would be affordable to have underground parking. The increased density is the only way to get a five story building in a Transient Oriented Development (TOD) area. Chairman Miller recommended stronger language to protect the historical buildings on the height limitations. Assistant Director Dalquest stated under the development standards there are standards requiring compatibility with existing historic buildings. Chairman Miller recommended developers overhang the second story of the buildings in the public right of way by way of a second story garden, plaza, or a shaded colonnade available for the public to enjoy. Chairman Miller recommended if a four or five story building is proposed, to step it back on the fourth and fifth story. Assistant Director Dalquest stated Centennial Plaza has a colonnade.

Director Orci recommended staff review the impacts that Commissioner Dyer had mentioned, a three story building could have impacts. Director Orci recommended the Commission review the design component and architectural design requirements so they are designed to fit their setting. Chairman Miller inquired if there were any TOD mandates from the state regarding higher density in the vicinity of the TOD area. Director Orci stated it is an incentive at this time which may change to a mandate in the future.

Chairman Miller inquired if the Commission had any questions or concerns regarding quality development downtown with architectural character. There were no other comments from the Commission.

Chairman Miller inquired if the Commission had any questions or concerns regarding mixed uses in the Service Commercial area.

Chairman Miller stated he has seen successful horizontal mixed uses with residential development next to commercial as opposed to multi level buildings stacking residential above the commercial uses. Chairman Miller inquired if the City is prohibiting a residential mixed use development by prohibiting a residential only density.

Commissioner Dyer stated the City is trying to avoid single family housing next to an incompatible use, and because of the uses being incompatible it is easier to prohibit residential.

Vice Chairman James stated he was in favor of horizontal mixed use with a conditional use permit.

Assistant Director Dalquest gave Victoria Gardens as an example of a horizontal mixed use project with a block of commercial on one side of the street, and multifamily residential across the street.

Director Orci stated it would be very difficult to assemble the land for mixed use in Redlands because of the small lot size. The cost for horizontal mixed use is higher, and the downtown would not be a pedestrian friendly TOD. Residential on the first floor downtown may be another option to consider. Director Orci recommended the Planning Commission review the limited amount of parcels, and to consider the variables of the small lots and cost of doing business, and the City's vision.

Vice Chairman James stated the horizontal mixed use may not work for the downtown area.

Chairman Miller stated if a parcel works well as a residential property and the City is imposing mixed use it may drive away a developer, where as if the City was to allow a residential only multifamily use may be more attractive to a developer. Assistant Director Dalquest stated multifamily is allowed in all districts as a permitted use with the exception of State Street which is Service Commercial.

Chairman Miller stated the Commission needs to support the businesses in the community. Chairman Miller inquired if the Commission had any questions or concerns regarding blight.

Commissioner Hudson stated the areas along the railroad tracks had many broken down cars, unkempt properties, and graffiti. Commissioner Hudson expressed concern on the impression the rail passengers would have while passing through the City of Redlands. Director Orci stated there has been discussion on the passenger's views and stated when the TOD comes into town; staff will need to include conditions in the guidelines.

Commissioner Dyer stated usually the rail areas are normally industrial or commercial because of their compatibility issues. Commissioner Dyer recommended adding development standards for future development.

Director Orci stated there was a multifamily project in Pasadena where the rail lines run along the development and the developer had mitigation on impacts for noise, vibration, etc. which drove the cost up.

Assistant Director Dalquest summarized the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission clarified the recommendations, and concurred with Assistant Director Dalquest.

VIII. ADJOURN TO SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

Vice Chairman James adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m. to the September 13, 2011 meeting.

Linda McCasland
Senior Administrative Technician

Oscar Orci
Development Services Director