

# CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting  
Wednesday, August 1, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.  
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

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## **Present**

Chairman Jim Schoonover  
Commissioner David Bratt  
Commissioner John Davis  
Commissioner Stephen Ensberg (arrived 7:31 p.m.)  
Commissioner M. Yunus Rahi  
Planning Manager Craig Hensley

## **CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE**

Chairman Schoonover called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:03 p.m. and Commissioner Bratt led the flag salute.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Approval of Minutes: June 6, 2007
2. Approval of a request to construct a new, two-story 7,760 square foot single-family house, located at 1043 Via Romales in Specific Plan No. 12. (APN 8448-056-014).

**MOTION:** Moved by Bratt, seconded by Davis to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously, 4-0-1 (Ensberg absent).

## **PLANNING MATTERS**

3. **PLANNING COMMISSIONER TRAINING** – Planning Department Staff will provide a general training session for the Planning Commission on three topics:
  - A. State requirements for Housing Elements and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation recently prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments;
  - B. Requirements of a General Plan;
  - C. How to make good Findings of Fact when taking action on a project.

*Planning Manager Craig Hensley* stated the State has mandated all cities within the Southern California Associated Governments (SCAG) region to update their Housing Elements by June 30, 2008. The City has hired Karen Warner and Associates to help develop the Housing Element. SCAG recently completed a Regional Housing Needs

Assessment (RHNA) and requires the City to accommodate 625 additional housing units by 2015. The City must designate specific sites that will accommodate that many units, and once the Housing Element is adopted, those sites will need to be re-zoned to correspond. SCAG does not require that all the units have to be built by 2015, but zoning does need to be in place.

He stated that out of the 625 RHNA units, 162 need to be for very-low income, 101 for low-income and 107 for moderate income. The balance can be for any income level. He discussed the types of subsidies the City might utilize in order to meet those affordable housing numbers. He stated staff will schedule a joint meeting with the City Council and Planning Commission in the near future to discuss some of these issues in more detail.

**Commissioner Davis** asked if the information handed out tonight covered the rationale of how SCAG arrived at their figures.

**Manager Hensley** stated the methodology used is not in tonight's information but can be found on the SCAG website. He stated it can be rather difficult to follow, and does not feel that water and service availability are analyzed when these numbers are developed. The City appealed their quota; they analyzed every piece of property available for development and proved they had less available than SCAG stated, but it fell on deaf ears and their appeal was denied.

**Chairman Schoonover** felt there were other issues to be considered, such as who is dictating this policy. The citizens do not directly elect SCAG's board, and the organization is run by bureaucrats.

**Manager Hensley** stated the SCAG board is composed of an elected official from member cities, but yes, it is an extremely political process which the State legislature has allowed to occur. Home rule has been consistently infringed upon over the past few years by the State government. He stated one thing to keep in mind is that the City is only required to zone property to meet these numbers; it does not mean development will occur.

**Manager Hensley** presented a brief overview of the General Plan and the seven required elements. State law requires all cities to have a General Plan and indicated they could find detailed information in their Planning Commissioner Handbooks. The General Plan is required to set goals, policies and objectives and presented an example from the Land Use Element in regards to preservation of foothill areas.

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Commissioner Ensberg arrived at 7:31 p.m.

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**Manager Hensley** stated local zoning must be consistent with the General Plan, and the General Plan must be internally consistent, with each Element in alignment with each other. So when the Housing Element is updated, shortly thereafter the Land Use Element will need to be updated for consistency.

**Commissioner Davis** asked what process the City follows for a General Plan update.

**Manager Hensley** stated first they start with budgeting for it because it is very expensive. Because of the complexity, the City will also hire a consultant to assist with the process. There would be a number of community meetings held to receive input, followed by public hearings at Planning Commission and City Council. Overall, updating the General Plan could take one to two years to complete.

**Commissioner Davis** asked if the results of the Downtown Charrette would be part of the General Plan update.

**Manager Hensley** stated the Charrette was a visioning process for the downtown, and most comments were compatible with the General Plan already. He also added that it is not always necessary to update every element, so it is possible that some elements might need only minor changes while others might be completely amended.

**Commissioner Bratt** asked in regards to the RHNA number, would the City consider re-zoning equestrian lots to allow more development.

**Manager Hensley** stated technically that could be an option, but politically it might not be feasible or even desirable. He felt it might not be as difficult to meet the number of units required by the State as it may first appear, nevertheless, the City will be faced to make some difficult land use decisions

**Manager Hensley** referred to the handout on Findings, and stated that staff is reviewing ways to improve how they are written and the importance of presenting well-written statements of fact. He stated findings must be supported by the evidence and gave examples of poorly-written and well-written findings. He stated cities can run into problems when it appears they are making decisions arbitrarily, and stated that when there are clear goals and policies in the General Plan, it helps staff in making good findings.

#### **ORAL COMMUNICATION**

##### **4. Planning Manager**

No communications were made.

##### **5. Members of the Audience**

No communications were made.

##### **6. Planning Commission**

**Commissioner Ensberg** apologized for being late but explained he had a client meeting which ran overtime.

**Chairman Schoonover** inquired about the status of the Canyon Center Application.

**Manager Hensley** stated the application has been submitted to the City, but it is incomplete.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated he appreciated receiving the e-mail from staff regarding the proposal and having the information prior to it being in the newspaper.

**Commissioner Davis** asked what the City was doing in regards to the Downtown Charrette held last year.

**Manager Hensley** stated the City was in the process of hiring a consultant to implement some of the recommendations made in the report, and would be moving forward this year with that.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Moved by Bratt, seconded by Davis to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for July 18, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

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James Schoonover, Chairman  
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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Craig Hensley  
Planning Manager

Approved: August 15, 2007