

# CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting  
Wednesday, March 3, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.  
245 East Bonita Avenue, City Council Conference Room

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## **Present**

Chairman James Schoonover  
Commissioner David Bratt  
Commissioner Stephen Ensberg  
Commissioner M. Yunus Rahi  
Assistant City Manager for Community Development Larry Stevens  
Director of Development Services Dan Coleman  
Associate Planner Marco Espinoza

## **Absent**

Commissioner John Davis

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

Chairman Schoonover called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. and Commissioner Bratt led the flag salute.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Approval of Minutes: January 6, 2010 (Bratt, Davis absent)

**MOTION:** Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Rahi to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried 3-0-1-1 (Davis absent, Bratt abstain).

## **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

2. **DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR DOWNTOWN SAN DIMAS**

Staff report presented by *Assistant City Manager Larry Stevens*, who stated the proposed façade improvement program is based on a study conducted with the four property owners, the City Council, and the Bonita Corridor Committee, and reviewed by John Sorcinelli, architect. He showed the original building footprints and additions and stated all the properties are in the parking district so there are no parking requirements for any of these sites.

He then presented a detailed review of the buildings located at 151 to 161 West Bonita Avenue and the current conditions of the facades. All of these buildings were constructed from 1908 to 1912 of unreinforced masonry (URM). One of the reasons they undertook this study was because of failures to the existing wood fascia and trying to determine what the options are for

repair and what was beneath the facades. He went over the changes to the storefronts and the different sidewalk coverings, adding that it was thought the original clerestory windows might be behind the facades. He stated the State only requires that URM buildings be posted as such, and does not require seismic retrofit unless the building is remodeled. He showed the condition of the bricks in several areas and stated they were similar to the condition of the bricks at the Hardware Store, which was required to be torn down and rebuilt with the original bricks. The buildings are also not ADA compliant. He described alternatives for short-term, mid-term, and long-term historic replication of the façade, as well as new building options, and costs associated with each option.

He stated the City Council at this time likes Alternative No. 2, if they were to just do the historic facades without the cornice. If they were to consider a development option, they liked the two-to three-story options. However, at this time they do not see anyone willing to come in to assemble the parcels for a new construction project, so they need to stimulate interest in façade improvements. The existing façade program is limited with a 50/50 split up to \$5,000.

Staff feels they need to provide design assistance, which has been done for other projects, where the City would pay for the cost. Providing grants may be more feasible for the property owners, as loans would probably not be utilized by the buildings owned by trusts. He outlined options for funding similar to the type of projects utilized through the Housing Department.

He stated Staff's recommendation to the City Council is to use a combination of strategies to get the best participation from the owners. Along with these four buildings, there are at least three other facades that are in similar condition: Old Towne Antique Mall, O'Malley's Florist building, and the Train Stop. They have intentionally left the Johnstone Block on the south side off this list because they are currently conducting a seismic review for that building. Right now there are limited resources for a façade improvement program, and outlined funds they might be able to get and ways to structure the funding.

**Commissioner Ensberg** asked if there is a public safety issue with facades that are falling down, if the City could enforce reconstruction through a regulatory process. He also asked if grants are given out, is there a way to recapture some of those funds if the properties are sold.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated they could probably institute some type of compliance through the regulatory process, but if the property owner does not have the funding to rebuild, the most they could probably enforce is removal. As to other funding, he stated you try to structure the loans in such a way as to get most of the money back over time.

**Commissioner Ensberg** stated he understands the City wants an attractive downtown, but was concerned about the windfall aspect of giving grants.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** went over options for easements, loans, and writing a deferred loan with the right to buy. They would try to structure it in a way the City will receive benefit but provide enough incentive to the property owners to want to participate.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated this plan does not appear to include the Bank of America building or the salon building. He also wanted to know in regards to the Shoemaker building and the one next to it, what would drive it to become a three-story building instead of a two-story building.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated Bank of America will not do any improvements and the salon frontage does not look that bad currently. As to the height of buildings in the downtown, it will depend on how the properties can be assembled and ways to best utilize them.

He stated there is still a debate over the western wood look versus historic. It is Staff's preference to have historic where it should be. There are some instances where there is no historic façade so wood would be an appropriate material in that case. He stated a couple of the stores have a nice ornamental metal ceiling element inside the building that relates to the clerestory windows, so by restoring the historical façade you can have a view of what is inside the building. He felt the Council was also leaning in the direction of historic where appropriate and wood in other locations.

### **ORAL COMMUNICATION**

#### **3. Planning Manager**

Director Coleman stated the City Hall is relocating to the temporary location this coming weekend and reminded the Commissioners that Planning Commission meetings will be held at the Sheriff's Station Community Meeting Room during the remodeling.

#### **4. Members of the Audience**

No communications were made.

#### **5. Planning Commission**

No communications were made.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Bratt to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0-1 (Davis absent). The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for March 17, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

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James Schoonover, Chairman  
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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Dan Coleman, Director of Development of Services

Approved: April 7, 2010