

CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Wednesday, April 7, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.
270 South Walnut Avenue, Sheriff's Community Meeting Room

Present

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

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: February 17, 2010 (Davis, Ensberg absent)
March 3, 2010 (Davis absent)

MOTION: Moved by Bratt, seconded by Schoonover to approve the minutes of February 17, 2010. Motion carried 3-0-1-1 (Davis absent, Ensberg abstain).

MOTION: Moved by Bratt, seconded by Schoonover to approve the minutes of March 3, 2010. Motion carried 4-0-1 (Davis absent).

COMMISSION BUSINESS

2. REVIEW OF CARGO CONTAINER POLICY

Staff report presented by Assistant City Manager of Community Development Larry Stevens, who stated that in the past they have not allowed the use of cargo containers for storage on a long-term basis, though there wasn't a written policy. Recently there was a complaint filed about a specific one in a commercial zone, and when the property owner objected to the enforcement to the City Council, the Council asked Staff to review what other cities do and present options. In January 2010 when Staff went back to the Council, the recommendation was that cargo containers should be prohibited except in conjunction with construction. The

owners of Old Towne Antiques and The Train Stop argued that they have had their containers for many years and felt they were essential to the operation of their businesses. He stated several containers are located on public properties such as the school district, the City Yard and public parks, which technically are not subject to regulation. Staff did a further inventory which is reflected in the chart in the report. There may be more, but this is probably the majority of them. He felt there are about eight sites that are at issue because the others are either on public properties, or in residential zones where the Council has specifically indicated they are not appropriate. Staff is looking for the Commission's input on the ones that may be allowed to stay for a designated period of time, and if so, what standards should be set.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated one option being considered for commercial retailers is to allow containers for seasonal storage for up to 30 days when issued a Temporary Use Permit. This would accommodate special needs but on a very limited basis. They also intend to allow with construction projects but would like to formalize the process so that there is some type of time limit associated.

As to the eight pre-existing containers at issue, it was felt there needed to be a timeframe given for their removal, and also standards established on their appearance, how they are screened, and their position in relation to available parking.

Chairman Schoonover felt there should definitely be a maintenance requirement, such as annual painting, and that they should be fenced or screened in some manner.

Commissioner Ensberg did not want to make it difficult for stores like Target or Albertson's to accommodate seasonal merchandise.

Assistant City Manager Stevens felt they could be allowed to bring them in several times a year for seasonal sales, and be issued a TUP for 30 days.

Commissioner Ensberg felt they should be given 60 days for each seasonal TUP. He also felt that there should be limit on how many can be at one location, and concurred with earlier statements on maintenance and screening requirements.

Commissioner Bratt concurred, and felt that for the existing ones, they should be phased out within the next three years.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated it was felt that if a business needed long-term storage, they should make improvements to the building or rent an off-site storage unit. He also concurred with Commissioner Ensberg that the City should comply with the regulations as well to set an example.

In response to Commissioner Rahi, Assistant City Manager Stevens stated the intent is to prohibit cargo containers in residential zones except during construction. The owners of containers that are there now will be told to remove them immediately.

Commissioner Ensberg stated he was not in favor in allowing containers for the life of the building permit because sometimes projects can drag on for several years.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated he would prepare a draft written policy and return to the Commission for comments before presenting it to the City Council. After the policy is adopted, he will be processing a code amendment to put some of the regulations into the Municipal Code.

3. UPDATE ON LONG-RANGE PLANNING PROJECTS

Staff report presented by Assistant City Manager Larry Stevens, who stated Staff has prepared a list of various projects that the Council would like see to accomplished. One of the major items is the preparation of the Downtown Specific Plan. He felt they should be starting the public hearing process sometime this summer. In response to Commissioner Rahi, he stated this will be a very complicated process as they are going to adopt a form-based code as opposed to zoning by use, and explained the differences and the boundaries of the plan area.

He stated they are still working with the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy in regards to the Walnut Creek property that was purchased last year, and outlined some of the funding challenges. Other items that Staff is addressing include: alternatives for the Wagon Entry renovation at Arrow Highway and Bonita Avenue; artificial turf; inclusionary housing; Johnstone Building seismic analysis; an ice skating rink proposal for the Bonita/Cataract property; Grove Station; and another possible revision for the Bonita Canyon Gateway residential project.

Assistant City Manager Stevens outlined the current status of the NJD project, and advised that the tract at the end of Valley Center has now been purchased by the Tzu Chi Foundation. He felt they may want to try to get approval for a school there, but for now will probably just hold the property. The owner of a large portion of San Dimas Station is also meeting with Staff to discuss a major exterior renovation. In response to Commissioner Rahi, he stated Costco is currently not marketing the pad sites at their location due to the downturn in the economy.

Chairman Schoonover asked about SB 375.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated that even though it is characterized as a greenhouse gas emission reduction bill, it is actually a land use bill that tries to push communities into building more compact and dense housing. SCAG is the entity authorized to prepare the sustainable community strategy, and the City is participating through the COG to determine which land use strategies best suited for the San Gabriel Valley. This will also lead into the next Housing Element process, and he has been working with COG in reviewing the growth forecasts for the next cycle and getting them reduced from the 2014 numbers, because SCAG was showing growth where there was no development potential at all.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

4. Planning Manager

Director Coleman stated the City Hall remodeling project was going well and that they were able to start a week early on demolition and hazardous material abatement. He also stated he will provide the Commission with a legislative update at an upcoming meeting.

5. Members of the Audience

No communications were made.

6. Planning Commission

a. Report on Meetings

Commissioner Bratt stated he enjoyed the Planner's Institute in Monterey, but felt the attendance was down from previous years. The sessions he found most helpful were the ones covering site review and SB 375.

Chairman Schoonover stated he also found the Planner's Institute interesting and stated that in speaking with Commissioners from other cities, it seemed the only city that was experiencing any development right now was Delano, with a Super Walmart project.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Bratt to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0-1 (Davis absent). The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for April 21, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

James Schoonover, Chairman
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Dan Coleman, Director of Development of Services

Approved: April 21, 2010