

# CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting  
Wednesday, April 6, 2011 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  
Commissioner M. Yunus Rahi  
Assistant City Manager of Dev. Services Larry Stevens  
Director of Development Services Dan Coleman  
Associate Planner Marco Espinoza  
Planning Commission Secretary Jan Sutton

## **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 16, 2011  
March 2, 2011

**MOTION:** Moved by Bratt, seconded by Ensberg to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

2. **CONSIDERATION OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 11-01 - DEFALCO** – A request for a nature preserve on 40 acres of land (Falcon Ridge Ranch) in Specific Plan No. 25 located on Sycamore Canyon Road. (APN: 8678-030-005) Related Files: Precise Plan No. 11-01 and DPRB Case No. 07-27 **(ITEM TO BE CONTINUED TO APRIL 20, 2011)**

*Director of Development Services Dan Coleman* stated a neighbor had come for the hearing, and Staff notified him this will be back on the next agenda.

Chairman Schoonover opened the meeting for public hearing for anyone that would like to speak and was unable to attend the next meeting. No comments were made.

**MOTION:** Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Davis to continue the public hearing to the April 20, 2011 meeting. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

3. **CONSIDERATION OF TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 71252** – A request to subdivide one lot (two assessor parcel numbers) into four lots for the future development of single-family residences at 526 W. Gladstone Street. (APN: 8386-005-050 and 051)

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Commissioner Ensberg stated he has represented the applicant in legal matters and recused himself from this item

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Staff report presented by *Associate Planner Marco Espinoza* who stated the project site is a rectangular shaped lot, 3.84 acres in size with two assessor parcel numbers, which fronts both Gladstone and Fifth Streets. The applicant would like to create four lots, ranging in size from approximately 22,000 to 86,000 square feet per lot for the future development of single-family homes. One lot is currently developed, and the other three would be vacant. The density standard in Specific Plan No. 3 (SP-3) is the equivalent of one unit per acre. The Specific Plan allows parcels with acreage increments over one-half to have an additional lot as long as no new ridgeline lots are created. While the existing home is on the ridgeline, it already existed and no new ridgeline lots are being created, which meets the code standards. He went over the size of the proposed lots and how the driveways will be accommodated. He stated there is potential for some retaining walls for Lots 1, 3 and 4 which could be up to six feet in height, or less if tiered. Currently the applicant is not proposing to remove any trees, but that would be reviewed further at the time of development. The Subdivision Committee reviewed the application and their comments have been incorporated into the Conditions of Approval. Staff is recommending the Commission recommend approval to the City Council.

*Commissioner Davis* asked who the members of the Subdivision Committee are.

*Associate Planner Espinoza* stated the Committee is comprised of the Director of Development Services, the Director of Parks and Recreation, the Director of Public Works, and the City Engineer.

*Commissioner Davis* stated it appeared the parcels on either side of this lot had a much higher density.

*Associate Planner Espinoza* stated that was part of the catalyst for the creation of SP-3, which requires a lower density and better preservation of the hillside.

*Assistant City Manager Larry Stevens* stated in the early 1990's the General Plan was modified to lower the density on Way Hill and remove the opportunity for higher density contained in the previous General Plan. The Specific Plan was modified by the Council a few years ago to keep the same density requirement but to allow smaller lots along Fifth Street that would be more compatible with the downtown. He felt a condition needed to be added that would prohibit the subdivision of Lot Number 2.

*Commissioner Davis* asked if the lot to the east on Gladstone was privately held.

*Assistant City Manager Stevens* stated it is the open space parcel for the condominium project to the east. All the density for the project was concentrated on the Fifth Street side and this part of the property will never be developed.

**Commissioner Rahi** asked if the existing house was recently built and is there a limitation on how high a retaining wall can be.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated the original house was built more than 40 years ago, and the current house which has been recently constructed was essentially built in the same location.

**Associate Planner Espinoza** stated they try to keep retaining walls less than six feet to avoid massive structures, but they can be higher if necessary.

**Commissioner Davis** asked about the existing driveway from Fifth Street and if it was just dirt.

**Associate Planner Espinoza** stated the access driveway from Fifth to the existing house will be abandoned and it was dirt so would eventually come back to a natural condition.

Chairman Schoonover opened the meeting for public hearing. Addressing the Commission was:

**Eduardo Siapno, Applicant**, who after hearing an explanation regarding the new condition to prohibit any further subdivision on the large parcel, stated he was in agreement with all the proposed conditions.

There being no further comments, the public hearing was closed.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated he recalled an item at DPRB to remove several eucalyptus trees on a lot on Gladstone Street and asked if this was the same parcel.

**Associate Planner Espinoza** stated that item was to remove trees to allow for the new driveway to Lot 2, but the action tonight would not require any further tree removals at this time.

#### RESOLUTION PC-1436

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 71252. A REQUEST TO SUBDIVIDE ONE LOT (TWO ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBERS) INTO FOUR LOTS ON THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 526 W. GLADSTONE STREET (APN: 8386-005-050 & 051)

**MOTION:** Moved by Davis, seconded by Bratt to approve Resolution PC-1436 recommending approval of Tentative Parcel Map No. 71252 to the City Council, with the addition of a condition prohibiting any further subdivision of the lots. Motion carried 4-0-0-1 (Ensborg abstained).

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Commissioner Ensberg rejoined the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

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### **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- 4. CONSIDERATION TO CHANGE REGULAR MEETING LOCATION, AND REGULAR MEETING NIGHT DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS**

Staff report presented by **Director of Development Services Dan Coleman**, who stated now that City operations are moving back to City Hall, the Commission needs to adopt a resolution changing the location of their regular meetings. Also, because of the number of events that happen on Wednesday nights during the summer months, it is proposed to move the regular meeting night to Thursday during June, July and August to avoid noise and parking conflicts.

#### RESOLUTION PC-1435

#### A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS CHANGING THEIR MEETING LOCATION AND TIME

**MOTION:** Moved by Davis, seconded by Bratt to adopt Resolution No. 1435. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

### **ORAL COMMUNICATION**

#### **5. Planning Director**

**Director Coleman** stated the City Hall has reopened and there will be a public open house with tours on April 12 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., followed by a dedication ceremony prior to the City Council meeting. The Farmer's Market starts on April 13<sup>th</sup>, and the Family Festival will be on April 16<sup>th</sup> with tours of the building from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The City Council will hold their Spring Retreat on April 18<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. There will also be a Metro Gold Line planning meeting on the station location on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated he is preparing a summary of the comments received at the Community Sign Forum, and stated if the Commissioners had any thoughts they would like to express now, they can be added to the report.

**Commissioner Ensberg** stated he has made an effort to look at window signs since the last hearing, especially the fast food restaurants, and asked about the City's enforcement policy and if that should be addressed at the next meeting.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated that technically many establishments may be out of compliance on window coverage, and that there may have been code enforcement in the past on these businesses, but usually the City enforces sign issues when a complaint is lodged or if something is really egregious. He stated the window sign provisions are fairly restrictive and may need to be amended. He thought that previously it was around 15-20 percent, which was considered too much, and it may have been made so low in response to that.

**Commissioner Davis** asked about the format for the meeting and will it be a public hearing.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated there will be a list of discussion items that may or may not need to be changed. If it is felt something should be changed, that recommendation would be made to the Council, and then Staff will research those items. It is not a public hearing item but the Commission can allow comments.

**Commissioner Rahi** asked if the wording of signs can be restricted.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated they can approve types and categories of signs, but normally you can't regulate content as the law states you have to be content neutral.

**Commissioner Davis** asked if there were any letter height restrictions on signs, and if not, should there be a minimum and maximum height.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated currently they do not have a set height limit. On monument signs it is usually controlled by the number of spaces allowed; the more spaces, the smaller the letter height. They could look at setting a standard for window signs.

**Commissioner Bratt** wanted to be sure that the discussion addresses digital signs like the one requested by the hospital and A-frame signs for the Downtown merchants.

**Chairman Schoonover** stated there was an article about digital signs in the recent Planning magazine that the Commissioners might want to read.

## 6. **Members of the Audience**

No communications were made.

## 7. **Planning Commission**

### a. Report on Meetings

**Commissioner Rahi** stated he attended the League's Planner's Institute in Pasadena and felt it was better attended than last year. He attended sessions regarding parking issues in Los Angeles and ethics training. He also attended a session on signs but felt it was not relevant to what they are looking at doing here.

**Commissioner Bratt** stated he attended the same conference. He went to the session on signs but stated it mostly dealt with what you couldn't prohibit based on First Amendment rights. He thought the speakers presented interesting topics on going green and the environment, and what they will need to understand for the future.

**Chairman Schoonover** stated he liked that they had new topics at this conference. He also went to the session on sign programs but was disappointed that the topic dealt with constitutionality. While he was disappointed in the speakers on Wednesday and Thursday, he felt it was good to attend these conferences for the exposure to problems that are occurring in other parts of the state.

**Commissioner Ensberg** asked if they could adopt a rule of procedure limiting the length of comments to maintain good order and ensure everyone has a chance to be heard at the meetings.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated they can set a time limit on public comments period, similar to what the City Council does, but it may be more difficult to put a formal time limit on public hearing comments. You can have parameters to keep people from repeating the same point of view, but that can be done from the chair's operation of the meeting as opposed to a set rule. Staff could write up a pro forma text to be read during that type of situation if the Commission feels there is a problem.

**Chairman Schoonover** felt that they haven't had a problem in general.

**Commissioner Ensberg** stated he was not aware of a rule to allow unlimited debate even on a public hearing item, and just thought it should be considered.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Davis to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for April 20, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.

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James Schoonover, Chairman  
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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Jan Sutton  
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: May 4, 2011