

CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Thursday, December 3, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

Present

Chairman David Bratt
Commissioner John Davis
Commissioner Margie Green
Commissioner Tomas Molina
Commissioner Ted Ross
Assistant City Manager Comm. Dev. Larry Stevens
Senior Planner Marco Espinoza
Associate Planner Luis Torrico
Planning Secretary Jan Sutton

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Chairman Bratt called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and Commissioner Ross led the flag salute.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes: November 5, 2015
November 19, 2015 (Davis absent)

MOTION: Moved by Green, seconded by Davis to approve the minutes of November 5, 2015. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

MOTION: Moved by Green, seconded by Molina to approve the minutes of November 19, 2015. Motion carried 4-0-0-1 (Davis abstained).

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. **CONSIDERATION OF MUNICIPAL CODE TEXT AMENDMENT 15-07** – A request to amend Municipal Zoning Code Chapter 18.14, Water Efficient Landscapes, to bring the City into compliance with Governor Brown's Drought Executive Order B-19-25. **(CONTINUED FROM NOVEMBER 5, 2015)**

Staff report presented by *Associate Planner Luis Torrico* who stated though the two items on the agenda are related to each other, the Code Amendment requires a public hearing and then referral to the City Council, but the other only requires action by the Commission. Discussion may overlap but there will need to separate actions by the Commission.

He stated this item is to amend Chapter 18.14 Water Efficient Landscapes to bring it in compliance with recent updates mandated by the State as outlined at the November 5, 2015 Commission meeting. He reviewed the purpose of the multi-city working group and the creation

of the template and regional ordinance, and the amended requirements for the type of irrigation used and artificial turf limitations. The State's guidelines went into effect on December 1, 2015 and the City will follow those guidelines until the modified ones are adopted and in effect which should be towards the end of February.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the main changes in the guidelines lowered the square footage amount of new landscapes that will have to comply with the new ordinance. For the average homeowner they were able to create an alternative compliance package that will be less complex and costly when rehabbing their landscapes. Another change involves dropping the water allowances for commercial and residential properties, and that when they reach a certain square footage threshold the owner will be required to install a separate water meter for the landscaping. The State has enacted another requirement that the City will need to complete an annual report to show compliance with the State guidelines. Currently Staff believes the initial report will be to advise if they are adopting their own ordinance or defaulting to the State's ordinance.

He stated most of the technical details will be contained in the Guidelines. The Ordinance has language stating that we are enforcing the requirements for water efficiency but the details and how to achieve the reduction is in the Guidelines. Staff is recommending the Commission recommend that the City Council approve Municipal Code Text Amendment 15-07.

Commissioner Davis asked if these requirements were just for the front yard or the whole property because it seemed like they were just for the front yard.

Associate Planner Torrico stated they are trying to get clarification from the State on that question. The City has only focused on the front yard in the past, but the new State guidelines are vague in that area so Staff is trying to determine if the standards include the backyard area as well. The standards for artificial turf are for the front yard, but they could also be applicable to the rear as well.

Commissioner Davis asked if someone had more than 2,500 square feet of landscaping but only rehabbed it incrementally to bypass the requirements, what happens then. And is there some type of timing component, so that if they were doing 500 square feet every three months, would they still be exempt.

Associate Planner Torrico stated if a homeowner was rehabbing less than 500 square feet, they would be exempt. Staff would give them the guidelines and encourage them to follow those, but we could not require it. That is another issue that they need the State to clarify as there is no time limitations called out in their regulations for new or rehabbed landscapes.

Commissioner Davis asked if that was something the City would want to address in this document.

Associate Planner Torrico stated if the Commission feels it is important, we can amend the document. In recent discussions with the State they are aware that there are many areas that were not adequately addressed when they rushed to put together the new model ordinance to meet the Governor's timeline, and it is their opinion that there will be an update within the next year or so to address the many questions regarding the ordinance, such as this one.

Senior Planner Marco Espinoza stated that when Staff has been working with homeowners who are revising their landscaping they have been doing the whole area at one time instead of in sections.

Commissioner Davis asked at what point a separate water meter is required.

Associate Planner Torrico stated for residential property it would be when they are rehabbing 5,000 square feet or more. For non-residential property it is 1,000 square feet.

Commissioner Molina asked if this was leading to allowing people to just use rock in their front yards.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the City limits hardscape to 20% of the front yard as an accent to the landscape areas.

Chairman Bratt asked when the report refers to non-residential, is that referring to commercial, and if the intent is to meet the requirements for a regional ordinance. He also asked for clarification on the definition of overhead sprinklers and if that is just a pop-up type or something else.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the term non-residential refers to both commercial and industrial properties. The State allowed cities to work individually or they could join together as a group to create a regional template that all the cities could follow. San Dimas and other cities in the San Gabriel Valley region joined with the Orange County working group to create a regional model. In regards to what is an overhead sprinkler, that is essentially any pop-up sprinklers that can lead to runoff. They are trying to push people to use drip or bubbler sprinklers.

Commissioner Davis asked in the prescriptive compliance option, is it required to have a landscape professional sign-off on the plans. He also found it interesting that they are trying to make hardscape drain towards the yard now instead of to the street.

Associate Planner Torrico stated under the compliance package you do not need a professional landscape designer. That was the intent in creating an alternative option for the average homeowner. The new guidelines do focus more on water retention on-site to percolate back into the ground instead of running down the storm drain.

Chairman Bratt opened the meeting for public hearing. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Davis stated he was supportive of the compliance package option for the average homeowner because when he first read the requirements he was concerned that they wouldn't have people comply due to the cost. He was glad there was an option that would limit the costs for residential properties.

RESOLUTION PC-1548

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF MUNICIPAL CODE TEXT AMENDMENT 15-07, A CITY INITIATED REQUEST TO AMEND CHAPTER 18.14, WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES TO COMPLY WITH THE STATE'S UPDATE TO THEIR MODEL WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE

MOTION: Moved by Davis, seconded by Ross to approve Resolution PC-1548 recommending approval of Municipal Code Text Amendment 15-07 to the City Council. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0

COMMISSION BUSINESS

3. CONSIDERATION OF REVISED WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

Staff report presented by *Associate Planner Luis Torrico* who stated the Guidelines contain all the technical details for implementing the Ordinance requirements as mentioned in the previous item. The Council intentionally set the approval process up to allow the Commission the authority to adopt and amend the Guidelines to shorten the legislative process.

Chairman Bratt stated then if there were any changes to be made in the future, it would come back to the Commission for consideration.

Associate Planner Torrico stated that was correct.

Commissioner Ross asked if there was an overlay in the tree section for fire-retardant trees to be used in the high-fire zone areas.

Associate Planner Torrico stated they have not looked at it from that standpoint, only as to their water efficiency.

Commissioner Davis stated he thought he saw something that stated if there was a conflict between fire and landscaping requirements, then the Fire Code would take precedence. He asked if there was any requirement to change existing hardscape to meet the drainage requirements.

Associate Planner Torrico stated the trees contained on the list were just recommendations and other appropriate species could be used. If someone was just rehabbing their landscape, Staff would look for compliance in regards to the amount of hardscape but they would not be required to change the drainage if they were not making any changes to the hardscape. If it is changing as part of the project, then that's when it would be reviewed as to how it meets the drainage.

Commissioner Davis stated it appears the definition of hardscape has been changed to only concrete and walls.

Associate Planner Torrico stated that was an error and the definition will continue to call out pavements, concrete, asphalt, bricks, stone or walls

RESOLUTION PC-1554

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIMAS APPROVING REVISIONS TO THE WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE GUIDELINES

MOTION: Moved by Davis, seconded by Green to approve Resolution PC-1554 approving the revisions to the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Guidelines. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

4. Community Development Department

Senior Planner Marco Espinoza stated at the next meeting will be an item to consider adopting interim policies and procedures in regards to wireless telecommunications facilities to comply with new State regulations.

5. Members of the Audience

No communications were made.

6. Planning Commission

Commissioner Davis asked if the single-family homes in the mixed-use project on San Dimas Avenue had been sold.

Senior Planner Espinoza stated not at this time, but they may have them on the market in the next month.

Chairman Bratt asked about the dates for the Planning Commissioner Conference in March.

Senior Planner Espinoza stated Staff would need to look that up and then could advise the Commissioners so they can plan their calendars.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved by Green, seconded by Davis to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 17, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.

David A. Bratt, Chairman
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Jan Sutton
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: December 17, 2015