

PLANNING COMMISSION
ARCHITECTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING
MINUTES
JANUARY 7, 2009
Large Conference Room
Palm Springs, California
2:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:	Present This Meeting:	Present to Date:	Year: FY 2008/2009 Excused Absences:
Larry Hochanadel, Chair	X	19	0
Leo Cohen, Vice Chair	X	18	1
Toni Ringlein	X	16	3
Jon Caffery*	X	17	2
Bill Scott	X	16	3
Tracy Conrad	X	14	5
Doug Donenfeld	X	19	0

*Commissioner Caffery arrived at 2:08 p.m.

ARCHITECTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Present: Lance O'Donnell, Douglas Hudson, Donald Wexler and Paul Ortega

Absent: Chris Sahlin, Michael King and Jeffrey Jurasky

REPORT OF POSTING OF AGENDA – The agenda was available for public access at the City Hall exterior bulletin board (west side of Council Chamber) and the Planning Services Department counter by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 31, 2008.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA: The agenda was accepted, as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chair Hochanadel opened the Public Comments; there being no appearances, Public Comments was closed.

1. JOINT MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND ARCHITECTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

A. Discussion of Conditions for Vacant, Approved Sites -

Director Ewing provided an update on the Commission's request for staff to prepare a set of draft conditions of approval to address the issue of undeveloped sites. Director Ewing explained that the process would begin with dialogue between the project applicant (who would propose their preferred conditions) and staff. Staff would evaluate the proposed conditions and provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission or City Council.

Director Ewing reported that staff has outlined the following four "site status" circumstances that may warrant conditions of approval should a project not precede in a timely manner:

1. Vacant site, no improvements.
2. Vacant site, remains of previously demolished structures.
3. Developed site, existing structures abandoned.
4. Developed site, existing buildings vacant.

The Commission and AAC members discussed and/or commented on the idea of planting a sustainable garden on a vacant site, the liability to the city and the status of large entitled sites. Further discussion occurred on the merits of using a vacant site to be used as a public art community garden.

Director Ewing noted that the project applicant would likely be concerned with the financial aspect of imposed improvements on developments which include landscaping, lighting, better design and or a public benefit. The Commission discussed imposing project phasing on a case-by-case basis.

Director Ewing summarized the discussion and noted that staff would draft a 3rd condition for vacant sites to include public arts and a community garden as a public use that could be adopted as an additional condition.

B. Discussion of Development Standards for Hillside Sites -

Director Ewing provided background information as outlined in the staff report dated January 7, 2009. Staff explained that the Commission concluded at a previous study session that a hillside lot would be any lot that had an average slope of 10% or more over that portion of the lot which excluded the required yard areas.

The Commission discussed and/or commented that the eight foot maximum for road or driveway cut/fill (grading) is excessive, the architectural extensions, wall modulation, roof pitch and reflectivity.

Lance O'Donnell suggested hillside developments require a scale model of the project (including the adjacent existing topography) to facilitate the AAC's review process. The Commission discussed the benefits of a scale mode for larger developments, as well, as the financial hardship to the applicant.

Commissioner Scott noted his preference for stepped pads versus flat pads. Don Wexler expressed concern with the guidelines being too restrictive.

The Planning Commission and Architectural Advisory Committee consensus is to create an ad hoc committee for further discussion and review. The ad hoc committee will consist of two members from each body as follows:

Planning Commission: Tracy Conrad and Jon Caffery

Architectural Advisory Committee: Donald Wexler and Lance O'Donnell

Commissioner Conrad left at 3:24 p.m. for the remainder of the meeting.

A recess was taken at 3:24 p.m. The meeting resumed at 3:33 p.m.

C. Discussion of Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) Organization and Procedures -

Director Ewing provided background information as outlined in the staff report dated January 7, 2009. The following items were discussed:

1. Is there any benefit to having an appointed Planning Commissioner or the Planning Director act as (non-voting) chair of the AAC?

2. Is the membership of the AAC an appropriate mix?
3. Should staggered terms be considered for the current members?
4. The order of the design review process.

The Planning Commission and Architectural Advisory Committee members discussed the merits of having an appointed Planning Commissioner, the Planning Director or a member of the AAC chair the meeting.

Both bodies discussed overlapping the term limits, recording the meetings (televising), detailed minutes and the possibility for the AAC to receive project materials prior to their meetings.

The design review process was discussed and compared to other cities. Commissioner Caffery was not in favor of the project going before the planning commission prior to the architectural review.

Commissioner Ringlein requested that the “technical member or design professional” specify the type of field or experience is preferred. Several other suggestions made include a preference for a civil engineer and a historic preservation background.

The overall consensus of the Planning Commission and the Architectural Advisory Committee is:

1. The Architectural Advisory Committee shall choose one of its members to serve as chairperson and one as vice-chairperson. A new chairperson or vice-chairperson may be chosen at any time by majority vote of all the members of the committee.
2. The mix of the Architectural Advisory Committee membership to be reviewed by the Planning Commission as vacancies take place.
3. The term limits for the current members who were appointed at the same time: Hudson, King, O'Donnell and Sahlin to alternate over a period of time.
4. The design review process to remain the same.
5. Staff to provide minutes of the meeting.
6. Televising of the meetings to be looked into by staff with a report to the Commission.
7. A review of large planned development districts (PDD's) to be held in a planning commission study session.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS:

No comments were reported.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Ewing provided an update on the planning items scheduled for tonight's City Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: The Planning Commission adjourned at 4:51 p.m. to Wednesday, January 14, 2009.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

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