

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION MINUTES
DECEMBER 14, 2016
Council Chamber, City Hall
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Calerdine called the meeting to order at 11:03 am.

ROLL CALL:

Present This Meeting: Commissioner Donenfeld*, Commissioner Hirschbein, Commissioner Hudson**, Commissioner Lowe, Commissioner Middleton, Chair Calerdine

Excused: Vice-Chair Weremiuk

Sustainability Commission: Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Freedman, Commissioner Futterman, Commissioner McCann

Staff Present: Planning Director Fagg, Deputy City Attorney Daudt

*Arrived at 11:21 am.

**Arrived at 11:05 am.

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 counter by 4:00 pm on Thursday, December 8, 2016.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

DISCUSSION ITEM WITH INPUT FROM THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- 1. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL SOLAR STRATEGY**

Commissioners Middleton and Freedman provided a presentation summarizing a proposed residential solar strategy.

The following invited speakers provided presentations:

- Katie Barrows, Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), provided a presentation on the green building tools and programs available through CVAG.
- Victor Hunt, Ygrene, spoke regarding the PACE program and financing for solar improvements.
- Erin Pulgar, Southern California Edison, provided information regarding net energy metering tariffs.
- Ellen Lockhart, Climate Action PS, spoke in support of the proposed solar requirements, and discussed the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Gretchen Gutierrez, Desert Valleys Builders Association, spoke regarding the financial costs of a mandatory solar program and the impact of those costs on homebuyers.
- Bambi Tran, GRID Alternatives, provided a presentation on available programs to provide solar to low-income communities.
- Christopher Parker, Perkins Coie law firm, spoke regarding trends in the adoption of solar requirements by municipal governments.

Public Comment:

HENRY HAMPTON stated that he doesn't support a solar mandate as it will impact housing affordability, and suggested that incentives should be provided instead.

RABBI DAVID LAZAR spoke regarding the importance of education and outreach as part of the adoption of a solar mandate.

The Planning Commission and members of the Sustainability Commission discussed the proposed solar mandate. Questions and comments included the following:

Commissioner Donenfeld noted his concerns about climate change, and stated that we must balance public interests. He questioned the net energy metering formulas used by Southern California Edison, and noted that the latest changes are less beneficial to consumers. He questioned the adequacy of the proposed requirement of 2 watts per square foot of floor area, and asked about incentives for the provision of solar for multifamily developments.

Commissioner Lowe provided his support for alternative energy sources, but stated he had concerns about the cost savings analyses that were provided as part of the presentations. He noted a concern about the proposed threshold for retrofit projects,

and questioned if the construction of accessory second units would be included in the threshold calculation. Commissioner Lowe asked if the threshold requirement should be based on renovation costs rather than added square footage.

Commissioner Hirschbein asked questions regarding the timing of the proposed state mandate for solar panels, and also requested clarification on how much roof area would be required to meet the proposed 2 watts per square foot mandate.

Commissioner McCann raised questions about how the costs of solar would impact housing affordability, and also questioned if the greatest impact would be to the housing down payment or monthly mortgage costs.

Chair Calerdine noted that it was necessary to end the study session as the Planning Commission meeting was to begin shortly, and offered that he would submit his questions in writing. It was also noted that the Sustainability Commission would have the solar strategy item on their agenda for next week's meeting, and that the Planning Commission would be discussing the solar strategy at a meeting in January 2017.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Planning Commission adjourned at 1:06 pm to the regular meeting at 1:30 pm, Wednesday, December 14, 2016, City Hall, Council Chamber, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way.

Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Planning Services

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
December 14, 2016
Council Chamber, City Hall
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Calerdine called the meeting to order at 1:31 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present This Meeting: Commissioner Donenfeld, Commissioner Hirschbein, Commissioner Hudson, Commissioner Lowe, Commissioner Middleton, Chair Calerdine

Excused This Meeting: Vice-Chair Weremiuk

Staff Present: Planning Director Fagg, AICP, Deputy City Attorney Daudt, Planning Administrative Coordinator Hintz, Engineering Associate Minjares, Associate Planner Lyon, Associate Planner Mlaker, AICP, Associate Planner Newell

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 counter by 4:00 pm on Thursday, December 8, 2016.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

1. CONSENT CALENDAR:

ACTION: Approve Items 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D as part of the Consent Calendar.

Motion: Commissioner Donenfeld, seconded by Commissioner Middleton and unanimously carried 6-0-1 on a roll call vote.

AYES: Chair Calerdine, Commissioner Donenfeld, Commissioner Hirschbein,
Commissioner Hudson, Commissioner Lowe, Commissioner Middleton
ABSENT: Vice-Chair Weremiuk

1A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: OCTOBER 26, 2016 AND NOVEMBER 9, 2016

Approved, as presented.

1B. DOMINION PROPERTIES FOR A MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION FOR A HOUSE RENOVATION, A 1,014-SQUARE FOOT ROOM/GARAGE ADDITION AND 502-SQUARE FOOT CASITA ON A HILLSIDE LOT LOCATED AT 2225 LEONARD ROAD (CASE 2.645 MAA & 15-033 LUP). (GM)

Approved, as presented.

1C. PALM SPRINGS PROMENADE FOR A DESIGN REVISION TO AN APPROVED SIGN PROGRAM FOR THE COMMERCIAL BUILDING, INCLUSIVE OF THE ROWAN HOTEL, LOCATED AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY AND BELARDO ROAD ON BLOCK C-1 OF THE DOWNTOWN PALM SPRINGS SPECIFIC PLAN, ZONE CBD, SECTION 15 (SP 16-004). (DN)

Approved, as presented.

1D. DAVID WILSON FOR A MINOR ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION PROPOSING AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT ON A 16,217 SQUARE FOOT HILLSIDE LOT LOCATED AT 2250 NORTH LEONARD ROAD, ZONE R-1-B (CASE 3.1708 MAA / LUP 16-065). (KL)

Approved, as presented.

2. NEW BUSINESS:

2A. PINNACLE VIEW LLC FOR A MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 4,429-SQUARE FOOT SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSE ON A HILLSIDE LOT LOCATED AT 2278 CITY VIEW DRIVE, ZONE ESA-SP PLANNING AREA 4, LOT 50, DESERT PALISADES SPECIFIC PLAN, SECTION 3 (CASE 3.3982 MAJ). (GM)

Associate Planner Mlaker provided an overview on the proposed hillside house as outlined in the staff report.

LANCE O'DONNELL, project architect, circulated a scale model of the proposed house noting how it nestles into the landscape. He was available for questions.

ACTION: Approve with Conditions.

Motion: Commissioner Lowe, seconded by Commissioner Middleton and unanimously carried 6-0-1 on a roll call vote.

AYES: Chair Calerdine, Commissioner Donenfeld, Commissioner Hirschbein, Commissioner Hudson, Commissioner Lowe, Commissioner Middleton

ABSENT: Vice-Chair Weremiuk

2B. FAR WEST INDUSTRIES, INC. FOR A REVISED FINAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT APPLICATION FOR “ICON” (FORMERLY “ALVARADO AT THE ART COLONY”), A PROPOSED GATED DEVELOPMENT OF 46, TWO-STORY DETACHED CONDOMINIUM DWELLING UNITS ON A 5.23-ACRE SITE LOCATED AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF NORTH PALM CANYON DRIVE AND ALVARADO ROAD (CASE 5.1340 / PDD 370). (KL)

Associate Planner Lyon provided an overview of the proposed revised final planned development district as outlined in the staff report.

Commissioner Donenfeld requested clarification on the City Council's direction to the Planning Commission and redesign of the project.

Director Fagg provided clarification on City Council's concern relative to the design of the units and length of driveways.

Commissioner Hudson does not think the changes provided by the applicant are acceptable. He said that a few feet more would help the driveways and 14 buildings along Palm Canyon with 6 feet between the buildings is not adequate.

Commissioner Hirschbein requested clarification on the accessory units (casitas) if they are optional and thinks a certain percentage should be mandatory. However, he likes the elevations facing Palm Canyon and questioned the concept of the project.

BRYAN BERKSON, Far West Industries, said they have been building in the desert for 30+ years. He responded that the landscaping around the perimeter was not the only change they've done. He requested if there are specific changes the Commission would like to see they are open to suggestions and prefer to work it out today rather than continuing the project. He said they are under construction and currently re-routing a major gas line and relocating 5 electrical poles.

GEORGE ALVAREZ, Vice-President, Land Development (Far West Industries), said they purchased this dormant property and have been working with the development team to get this project where it is. He addressed the casitas, shade structures on Palm Canyon, garage doors and lineage of houses. He was available for questions.

Commissioner Hudson reiterated that the units could be more successful and does not see enough change.

Commissioner Donenfeld concurred with Commissioner Hudson in that the City Council was very specific with the changes they wanted to see and he does not see that major changes have occurred on this project.

Commissioner Hudson made a motion to deny the project and stated that the applicant has not responded to the specific comments requested by the City Council as noted in the staff report.

ACTION: Deny.

Motion: Commissioner Hudson, seconded by Commissioner Donenfeld and carried 5-1-1 on a roll call vote.

AYES: Chair Calerdine, Commissioner Donenfeld, Commissioner Hirschbein, Commissioner Hudson, Commissioner Lowe
NOES: Commissioner Middleton
ABSENT: Vice-Chair Weremiuk

Planning Director Fagg reported that a resolution of denial would be brought back at their next meeting to reflect the findings of the Planning Commission.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS, REQUESTS AND COMMENTS: None.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Planning Director Fagg reported the zone text amendment for the Extension of Time will be reviewed at their January 11th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Planning Commission adjourned to a Study Session at 11:00 am followed by their regular meeting at 1:30 pm, Wednesday, January 11, 2017, City Hall, Council Chamber, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs.

Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Planning Services