

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA
January 23, 2019
Council Chamber, City Hall
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, California

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Woods called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Song, Vice Chair Moruzzi,
Chair Woods

Staff Present: Planning Director Fagg, Assistant City Attorney King, Administrative
Coordinator Hintz, Engineering Associate Minjares, Associate Planner
Mlaker, Associate Planner Newell, Principal Planner Robertson

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 6:00 pm on Thursday, January 3, 2019.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:

Donenfeld, seconded by Moruzzi to accept the agenda, as presented.

AYES: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Song, Moruzzi, Woods

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chair Woods opened the public comments portion of the meeting:

PAUL HINRICHSEN, spoke in favor of Item 2D; regarding Item 2E, he thinks it's
unnecessary and unwarranted to increase density in a small city; and regarding Item 4A,
CHOC development, he's concerned with how this project will affect the Wexler steel
homes and how parking will be mitigated.

VINCENT NICHOLAS, Real Estate Development for Community Housing Opportunities
Corp., vice-president, applicant for Item 4A, CHOC project, said that they addressed the
Wexler Homes in the historical report in their submission; and he's available for questions.

JOY SILVER, read a letter into the record on behalf of Greg Lucas Rodriguez, in support of
Item 4A; stating that homelessness will never be reduced significantly without having more
affordable housing.

EILEEN STERN, spoke in reference to Item 4A, said that many people cannot afford to live in this city; and urged moving forward to help these individuals.

KELLY MUSSON, spoke in reference to Item 4A, said 19% of Californians live without the security of not knowing when their next meal will be and thinks this project is a good start for many families.

TOM KUHN, spoke in reference to Item 4A, works with the homeless at Well of the Desert; and pointed-out that 1500 meals were served during Christmas. He said now is the time to take the lead to serve the poor residents; not only the rich.

NIKKI STONE, spoke in support of Item 4A, she used to work at Desert Regional Hospital; noting that many employees could not afford to live anywhere near the hospital.

JOEL WALLACE, Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, CEO, said entrepreneurs do not start off with lots money- they struggle financially and affordable housing is vital to the lifeblood of a growing entrepreneurial community.

There being no further speakers the public comments portion of the meeting was closed.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Garner, seconded by Hudson to approve the Consent Calendar.

AYES: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Moruzzi, Woods
ABSTAIN: Song

1A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JANUARY 9, 2019 STUDY SESSION MINUTES

Approved, as submitted.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2A. CANYON PARTNERS, LLC, REPRESENTING THE MUSEUM OF ANCIENT WONDERS FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A MUSEUM WITHIN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT LOCATED AT 441 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE, ZONE CBD, SECTION 10. (CASE 5.1463 CUP). (GM)

Associate Planner Mlaker presented the proposed museum as outlined in the staff report.

Chair Woods opened the public hearing:

ALBERTO ACOSTA, applicant, provided details on the museum collections and stated that the purpose of the museum is to provide educational exhibits for public viewing, exploring

ancient civilizations and prehistoric life including Egyptian, Greek and African historical specimens. Mr. Acosta was available for questions from the Commission.

There being no further speakers the public hearing was closed.

Hirschbein, seconded by Moruzzi to approve with conditions subject to:

1. The museum shall utilize window facing South Palm Canyon drive as a display area of Art with a window box to be constructed at least one (1') foot off glass and remain clear and visible from the exterior.

AYES: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Song, Moruzzi, Woods

- 2B. SONS OF ITALY ON BEHALF OF DOLLY SINATRA LODGE NO. 2400 TO RE-ESTABLISH A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO OPERATE A MEETING HALL WITHIN THE EXISTING BUILDING LOCATED AT 1700 NORTH SAHARA ROAD, ZONE P, SECTION 1 (CASE 5.0707 CUP). (DN)**

Donenfeld, seconded by Song to continue to date certain of February 13, 2019.

AYES: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Song, Moruzzi, Woods

- 2C. AUSTIN TODD ON BEHALF OF CALIFORNIA ORGANICS FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) TO OPERATE A 5,044-SQUARE FOOT CANNABIS CULTIVATION FACILITY WITHIN AN EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 695 SOUTH WILLIAMS ROAD, ZONE M-1, SECTION 33 (CASE 5.1440 CUP). (ER)**

Garner, seconded by Hirschbein to continue to date uncertain.

AYES: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Song, Moruzzi, Woods

- 2D. COACHELLA FLATS, LLC, FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) AND A VARIANCE APPLICATION TO DECOMMISSION AND REMOVE 363 EXISTING WIND TURBINE GENERATORS AND REPLACE THEM WITH TWENTY (20) NEW WIND TURBINES WITH A MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF 499 FEET AND TWO (2) 315 FEET TALL METEOROLOGICAL (MET) TOWERS ON APPROXIMATELY 858 ACRES LOCATED WEST OF NORTH INDIAN CANYON DRIVE, NORTH OF HIGHWAY 111, AND SOUTH OF INTERSTATE-10 FREEWAY; ZONE W, SECTION 23 (CASE 5.1429-CUP & 6.551-VAR). (ER)**

A recess was taken at 2:15 pm. The meeting resumed at 2:25 pm.

Principal Planner Robertson presented background information on the proposed new wind turbines as outlined in the staff report.

Chair Woods opened the public hearing:

ROBERT SKAGGS, Terra-Gen, developer, said it's a great location and project, by taking out old equipment and putting in new equipment. His team was available for questions from the Commission.

FRED NOBLE, stated that does not have an economic interest in this project. He said there has never been an eagle or a hawk killed by a windmill in this area; and does not understand why mitigation is required for a problem that does not exist.

There being no further speakers the public hearing was closed.

Vice Chair Moruzzi said the issue is not strictly eagles but rather bats and migratory birds. He thinks the Bird and Bat Conservation Study and Risk Assessment as it's presented in the mitigation measures makes sense.

Commissioner Donenfeld said with the changes that have been made he's very much in favor of the project. He thinks Palms Springs should be a leader in wind energy conservation and spoke in favor of the project.

Moruzzi, seconded by Hirschbein to approve with conditions subject to:

1. All Mitigation Measures contained in the adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) shall be part of the conditions of approval.
2. The mitigation measures of the environmental assessment shall apply.
3. Approve Conditional Use Permit and 6.551 Variance.

AYES: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Song, Moruzzi, Woods

(This Item was heard out of order.)

4. NEW BUSINESS:

- 4A. COMMUNITY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES CORPORATION (CHOC) ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS FOR AN ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW APPLICATION TO CONSTRUCT A MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX ON AN UNDEVELOPED 3.6-ACRE PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF NORTH INDIAN CANYON DRIVE, BETWEEN SAN RAFAEL ROAD AND SIMMS ROAD, ZONE R-2, SECTION 2 (CASE 3.3333 MAJ). (DN)**

Commissioner Song noted her abstention on this project due to a business-related conflict of interest. She would not be participating in the discussion and vote and left the Council Chamber at 2:58 pm.

Associate Planner Newell presented the affordable housing development as outlined in the staff report.

VINCENT NICHOLAS, CHOC DEVELOPMENT, vice president real estate development, responded to question pertaining to the unit mix. He responded to questions from the Commission- if they look at three bedrooms it increases the size of the buildings and they begin to go outside of the boundaries of the limits within the development of the site.

Commissioner Donenfeld made a motion of approval; noting that this is a very well-needed and well-done project.

Donenfeld, seconded by Moruzzi to approve with changes.

AYES: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Moruzzi, Woods
ABSTAIN: Song

Chair Song re-entered the Council Chamber at 3:23 pm

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS (CONT'D):

2E. AMENDMENT TO THE PALM SPRINGS ZONING CODE (PSZC) TO ESTABLISH GENERAL STANDARDS FOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AND TO ALLOW UP TO 70 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE IN MIXED-USE AREAS AS PERMITTED BY THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS GENERAL PLAN (CASE 5.1465 ZTA). (FF)

Planning Director Fagg presented the proposed zone text amendment to establish general standards for mixed-use development as outlined in the staff report.

Chair Woods opened the public hearing and with no speakers coming forward the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Song said with the advent of Lyft and taxis there is a creative way for transportation. She said her theory of trying to have the developer come up with the creativity of building anything higher than 40 or 50 units per acre in addition to the mixed-use and the downtown component this would be one of those projects in which 0.5 parking spaces per unit should be seriously considered.

Chair Woods does not think they are in an urban core at this point to allow 0.5 space per unit and is leaning towards 1.0 because the busing system is really poor especially through downtown. He said grocery stores are not nearby and that means carrying stuff; and although there is Uber and Lyft there is a cost associated with these.

Commissioner Hirschbein thinks residential parking requirements tagged to the number of bedrooms more accurately captures the requirements of the number of units.

Hirschbein, seconded by Garner to recommend approval to City Council with changes.

- Parking requirement in the CBD be changed to 0.5 parking space per bedroom up to 1.5 parking spaces maximum.

AYES: Donenfeld, Garner, Hirschbein, Hudson, Song, Moruzzi, Woods

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS, REQUESTS AND COMMENTS:

- Details on Task Force Committee for General Plan Update.
- Status of Regal Theatre redevelopment and Grocery Outlet Store.

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT: None.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Joint training session with the Architectural Advisory Committee.

ADJOURNMENT: The Planning Commission adjourned at 4:02 pm to 1:30 pm, Wednesday, February 13, 2019, City Hall, Council Chamber, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way.



Finn Fagg, AIO
Director of Planning Services