

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION MINUTES  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA  
February 24, 2021  
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, California

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Weremiuk called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Ervin, Hirschbein, Lewin, Song, Vice Chair Moruzzi, Chair Weremiuk

**STAFF PRESENT:** Development Services Director Fagg, Assistant Planning Director Newell, Attorney Priest, Secretary Bruggemans, Principal Planner Robertson

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

STEVE GRASHA, Director, Mission Springs Water District, referenced Item No. 1; and suggested adding a Condition of Approval that the applicant be required to attach his project to available or future sewage treatment facilities when building the project.

PETER DAVIES, referenced a notice of objection submitted via email and requested including it in the record for Item No. 1.

There were no other public comments.

**DISCUSSION:**

Director Fagg announced the applicant for this item has withdrawn his application and the matter will not be considered at this time.

- 1. PRE-APPLICATION REQUEST BY TRANSWESTERN DEVELOPMENT COMPANY FOR A 1,400,611-SQUARE-FOOT FULFILLMENT CENTER TO INCLUDE APPROXIMATELY 20,000 SQUARE FEET OFFICE SPACE, WAREHOUSE SPACE, ASSOCIATED PARKING AND LANDSCAPING ON A 148-ACRE SITE LOCATED SOUTH OF I-10 FREEWAY ALONG TIPTON ROAD AT THE WHITEWATER ROAD OFF-RAMP, ZONE HC. (CASE PA-20-005) (ER).**

*(Withdrawn at Applicant's Request.)*

- 2. DISCUSSION ON CHANGES TO THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PROCESS (CASE 5.1526 ZTA) (FF).**

Director Fagg narrated a PowerPoint presentation highlighting changes to the architectural review process.

Discussion followed regarding the general review process, the importance of all architectural materials being provided as part of the site plan review so that the Planning Commission and City Council are able to see the architectural treatment materials as well.

Vice Chair Moruzzi commented positively on the pre-submittal conference with staff and suggested the Chair of the ARC take on the role of planning staff in the pre-submittal conference.

Director Fagg explained the challenges in terms of time commitments and suggested hiring a consultant with architectural experience to take on the role at pre-submittal conferences; and noted the City Council approved the hiring of a planner during this year's budget review.

Vice Chair Moruzzi referenced examples in the staff report and in response to his question about when circulation would be addressed, Director Fagg noted it would be addressed in the pre-submittal conference with staff and under step 3 with the Planning Commission.

Discussion followed regarding holding joint study sessions of the Planning Commission and ARC and resolving design issues with the ARC, upfront, before the formal process.

Commissioner Hirschbein suggested that if staff hires a planner with architectural experience, that he/she also have experience in urban design. He spoke about objective design standards and being careful of mandating a color and material palette and expressed concerns with putting the ARC at the end of the process.

Director Fagg reported that if the ARC denies an architectural application, it would be appealable to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hirschbein suggested "Site Development Standards" could have a broader definition of what the review is called.

Discussion followed regarding the down sides of the proposed changes, not compromising design standards by expediting the process, the PDD process, the appeals process, site development standards, issues requiring the input of the Planning Commission and addressing findings/criteria.

In reply to Commissioner Ervin's question regarding the significance and importance of the ARC, Director Fagg described the roles of the ARC versus the Planning Commission.

Chair Weremiuk noted that without approval of the Planning Commission, there is no project and reported the ARC enhances the role of the Planning Commission.

Planning Director Fagg recommended trying the new ARC review process for one-year and have staff return with a report on the effectiveness of the procedures.

Commissioner Ervin asked about receiving agenda packets and supporting documentation sooner.

Commissioner Lewin agreed with Commissioner Hirschbein's comments regarding objective design standards.

Director Fagg reported there are no fees associated with the pre-submittal conference.

Chair Weremiuk noted this is a hybrid process and the pre-submittal conference is very early before applicants work on designs. She pointed-out the Planning Commission interviews and appoints members of the ARC.

Vice Chair Moruzzi suggested design "guidelines" versus design "standards." He commented about working with a subcommittee and thinks design guidelines should be discussed as early as possible in the process.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Planning Commission Study Session adjourned at 5:45 p.m. to their regular Planning Commission meeting at 6:00 p.m. on February 24, 2021.



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David Newell, AICP  
Assistant Director of Planning