



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

APPROVED

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

This meeting was conducted via teleconference in accordance with Governor Newsom's Executive Orders N-20-20 and N-35-20 and COVID-19 pandemic protocols.

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL

The teleconference meeting of the Planning Commission of December 9, 2020 was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Ritter.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Ritter.

Staff Members Present: Shweta Bonn, Senior Planner; Ellen Clark, Community Development Director; Melinda Denis, Planning and Permit Center Manager; Julie Harryman, Assistant City Attorney; Eric Luchini, Associate Planner; Stefanie Ananthan, Recording Secretary

Commissioners Present: Commissioners Nancy Allen, Jack Balch, Justin Brown, Greg O'Connor, Brandon Pace and Chair Herb Ritter

Commissioners Absent: None

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

Community Development Director Ellen Clark requested the opportunity to provide an update on Consent Calendar Item 4.

Associate Planner Eric Luchini addressed the Commission regarding Item 4 and the Commission's inquiry on the condition of the existing landscaping and irrigation around the perimeter of the shopping center. He stated Lucky's and Code Enforcement would work with the property owner to bring the landscaping up to the initial conditions. He stated he would provide an update to the Commission in January 2021.

Commissioner Allen asked about the monument sign. Associate Planner Eric Luchini stated staff would discuss the sign with the property owner as well.

Chair Ritter thanked staff for the report and indicated support for the outdoor dining concept.

In response to Commissioner Pace, Mr. Luchini stated the Commission could approve the application on the Consent Calendar, since the landscaping was a separate issue.

CONSENT CALENDAR - *Consent Calendar items are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion unless a request for removal for discussion or explanation is received from the Planning Commission or a member of the public by submitting a speaker card for that item.*

- 1. Actions of the City Council**
- 2. Actions of the Zoning Administrator**
- 3. P20-0817, Michelle Setchell for The Exercise Coach, 3958 Valley Avenue, Suite A –** Application for Conditional Use Permit to operate a personal fitness studio. Zoning is PUD-I (Planned Unit Development – Industrial) District.
- 4. P20-0820 and P20-0821, Lucky’s, 6155 W. Las Positas Boulevard –** Applications for Design Review and Sign Design Review for: 1) exterior modifications to the existing Lucky's store which includes new façade, colors and a new outdoor dining area, 2) site modifications to existing landscaping and parking lot to accommodate the proposed outdoor dining area, and 3) new wall signage. Zoning is C-N (Neighborhood Commercial) District.

**Commissioner Allen moved to approve Items 1-3 on the Consent Calendar.
Commissioner O’Connor seconded the motion.**

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Allen, Brown, O’Connor, Pace, and Ritter
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: Commissioner Balch

The Actions of the City Council were approved, as submitted.

The Actions of the Zoning Administrator were approved, as submitted.

Resolution PC-2020-15 approving Case P20-0817 was adopted, as motioned.

**Commissioner Pace moved to approve Item 4 on the Consent Calendar.
Commissioner Allen seconded the motion.**

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Allen, Brown, O’Connor, Pace, and Ritter
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: Commissioner Balch

Resolution PC-2020-16 approving Cases P20-0820 and P20-0821 was adopted, as motioned.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

5. Public Comment from the audience regarding items not listed on the agenda – *Speakers are encouraged to limit comments to 3 minutes.*

Chair Ritter thanked Commissioner Balch for his service on the Planning Commission and wished him well in his position on the City Council.

Commissioner Balch thanked the Planning Commission and staff for their service to the community. He encouraged continued collaboration with staff and the Commission.

Vice Chair Brown expressed appreciation for Commissioner Balch's serious consideration of his duties on the Commission and congratulated him on his election to the City Council.

Commissioner Allen thanked Commissioner Balch for his service.

Commissioner O'Connor expressed his appreciation for Commissioner Balch's perspective.

Commissioner Pace wished Commissioner Balch well and thanked him for his service.

Commissioner Jack Balch left the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND OTHER MATTERS

6. P20-0989, Objective Design Standards – Work session to review, discuss, and kick-off the process of creating Objective Design Standards for residential development.

Ms. Clark introduced the item.

Senior Planner Shweta Bonn presented the specifics of the item in the Agenda Report.

Mr. Rick Williams of Van Meter Williams Pollack continued the presentation and provided additional specifics of the item as presented in the Agenda Report.

Chair Ritter inquired whether items in the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) had been incorporated into the project scope. Ms. Bonn stated that some of the sites provided were in downtown but that the DSP is a policy, and the Objective Design Standards were to establish specific development standards. Chair Ritter then asked if the standards were going to be similar to what was accomplished with the zoning code update. Ms. Bonn clarified that the zoning code update had been intended to focus on land uses, and consolidating the list of uses allowed by zoning. She explained that the objective design standards update focused on project design and therefore had a different objective. Chair Ritter inquired whether the project was to help the City meet state guidelines and Ms. Bonn confirmed. Chair Ritter asked if the standards would be included in the new zoning code. Ms. Clark confirmed and stated the municipal code would be updated to incorporate, by reference, the separate standards created by the exercise.

Commissioner Allen requested additional information on the specific legislation to understand where the greatest risk and focus should be. Ms. Clark explained that State law only allowed application of objective standards to housing projects within residentially zoned areas, as a basis for approval. Commissioner Allen inquired if the standard would apply to a once vacant parcel proposed to be built as a single-family residence. Ms. Clark confirmed adding that was in part why it was important to establish standards in addition to the existing regulations. Commissioner Allen asked if Mr. Williams and his team knew of other cities that had addressed the standards and if they could provide an example of best practices in objective design standards as to not reinvent the wheel.

Ms. Clark stated that Mr. Williams and his team had worked with many cities, making them a great resource for Pleasanton. Mr. Williams further clarified that his team looked at best practices. He explained that almost every city was considering developing a new set of objective design standards and he wanted to help refine the City's existing standards. He stated they were working with the City of San Jose on its standards and would be able to, over time, share examples of a variety of objective design standards being incorporated into communities all over California. He discussed consideration by other cities of PUD ordinances and the need to ensure PUDs were not used to evade the objective design standards.

Chair Ritter asked if there was a template that the City could use when developing its objective design standards. Mr. Williams stated the State originally suggested it would create a template, but it had not yet. He discussed various strategies being used by different cities to comply with state legislation. He stated Pleasanton already had a clear document which would be expanded upon since it was already tailored to the community. He mentioned that seven or eight different communities in Marin County were using the same template, but tailoring it to their specific needs, and though his team would look at it as an example, those communities are much more rural than Pleasanton.

Commissioner O'Connor inquired whether the tour referred to during the presentation was what was disseminated earlier that day. Ms. Clark confirmed and acknowledged the late delivery, noting that it was not expected that the Commissioners would have read and digested it all before the meeting, but the intent of providing it was to give a basic familiarity with the format and content of the tour. She stated the online survey for the tour would arrive in the coming week.

Commissioner Brown inquired whether, when submitting the online survey, it was spontaneous, or if he could go back and modify it later. Mr. Andrew Faulkner of Van Meter Williams Pollack explained that modifications could be made prior to pressing the "submit" button. Commissioner Brown then asked if the Commission should be thinking in terms of an objective design standard versus opportunity areas. Mr. Williams requested the Commission determine successful developments representing Pleasanton so his team could develop rules around achieving similar successful developments. He explained the proposed process of transitioning the preferences into standards and goal to create quality development that fit the style and feel of Pleasanton.

Commissioner Pace inquired if the standards being provided were real life examples relative to the standards that Mr. Williams had judged as successful or not, and whether the Commissioners were to review to see if they were aligned with the designation. Mr. Williams

explained that the exercise, although not a check list, did discuss all the various site planning features and asked the Commission to opine as to whether they were successful developments. He wanted to know of any unsuccessful developments built under current standards so the guidelines could be refined. Commissioner Pace then asked if any of the areas of the tour required scheduling or interacting with people, or if the locations on the tour were in areas were open to the public. Mr. Williams replied that when he did the tour himself, he did not contact anyone and used only areas open to the public. He stated the commissioners should be able to conduct the tour without any issues.

Commissioner O'Connor asked if the portion of the tour through Irby Ranch, which was still under development, was accessible. Ms. Clark stated all areas discussed in the tour guide should be accessible. Commissioner O'Connor asked if the Commission needed to consider the different looking developments, created under different guidelines, when looking at the various sites. Mr. Williams agreed, stating the Downtown area developments had a different character from those located in an office park area. He explained that the exercise was to anticipate future developments being built in a variety of locations. Ms. Clark stated the design standards would likely be a hybrid of some common elements, that represented common sense and good design principles, but there would also be a few variations and specific guidance for different areas and sites, reflecting their unique circumstances.

THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS OPENED

There were no members of the audience wishing to address the Commission.

THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CLOSED

Commissioner Allen encouraged Mr. Williams and Mr. Faulkner to be proactive and inform the Commission on unsuccessful projects. She expressed her hope that the Commission's point of view was just one perspective and she really wanted the team's point of view on these matters as well. She also stated that there were not a lot of good examples of 30 and 40 units to the acre because the City had not done a lot of that. She requested examples from other communities and examples of what not to do, specifically related to building materials.

Commissioner O'Connor asked the highest density in Hacienda Business Park. Ms. Clark stated that there were a few 40 unit per acre projects. Commissioner Allen stated that there might be one but it was not a good example.

Commissioner Pace expressed concern about the challenges of considering higher density projects. He stated examples from other cities with similar aesthetics to Pleasanton would be helpful as the Commissioners were constrained by their own experiences.

Commissioner Brown stated he was looking forward to the tour.

Chair Ritter stated he was not in favor of additional regulations but understood the need to comply with standards and remove subjectivity. He expressed his desire to establish effective and smooth processes. He stated he was an advocate of streamlining the zoning code and hoped the design standards would complement the code. Ms. Clark stated the City wanted to remove laborious, uncertain design review and the purpose of the exercise was to ensure the

City had the best set of tools for regulation because the discretionary tools that used to be available were being taken away.

Commissioner O'Connor stated the Commission started streamlining the process and the design standards should assist in the process.

Chair Ritter stated it added more clarity and kept people from reaching the end of the permitting process and then realizing they could not develop what they originally intended.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION'S REVIEW/ACTION/INFORMATION

7. Reports from Meetings Attended (e.g., Committee, Task Force, etc.)

Chair Ritter discussed his attendance at the 2025 Forum, at which the President of Las Positas College discussed declining enrollment.

8. Future Planning Calendar

Planning and Permit Center Manager Melinda Denis gave a brief overview of future items for the Commission's review.

Chair Ritter inquired about the Permit Center operations and whether the building department was still using third-party reviewers. Ms. Denis confirmed that contract plan checks were ongoing, but efforts were being made to retain plan checks internally. She then discussed the retirement and efforts to fill a plan checker position. She also discussed the challenges created as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, appointments and use of Zoom for meetings. Lastly, she explained the application process review and upgrades to the Accela software.

9. Adoption of Planning Commission Schedule of Meeting Dates for 2021

Ms. Denis gave a brief overview of the outlined schedule of meeting dates for 2021. There were no changes or adjustments recommended to the schedule of meeting dates for 2021 and the schedule was accepted, as proposed.

10. Selection of Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair for 2021

Commissioner O'Connor moved to elect Commissioner Brown as the Planning Commission Chair and Commissioner Allen as Vice Chair for 2021. Commissioner Ritter seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Allen, Brown, O'Connor, Pace, and Ritter
NOES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Balch
ABSTAIN: None

11. Selection of Sub-Committee Representatives for 2021

Commissioner Brown moved to elect Commissioner Pace as the representative and Commissioners Ritter and Brown as the alternates for the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Committee; and elect Chair Ritter and Commissioner Allen as the representatives and Commissioner O'Connor as the alternate for the Heritage Tree Board of Appeals. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Allen, Brown, O'Connor, Pace, and Ritter
NOES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Balch
ABSTAIN: None

MATTERS INITIATED BY COMMISSION MEMBERS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ritter adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Stefanie Ananthan
Recording Secretary