



PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, June 6, 2016

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Gomez at 6:05 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers, 6615 Passons Boulevard, Pico Rivera, CA.

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Benjamin A. Martinez, Director  
Evelyn Millare, Executive Assistant

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Celiz, Elisaldez, Garcia, Gomez, Zermeno

**ABSENT:** None.

**FLAG SALUTE:** Led by Commissioner Zermeno

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Dec 14, 2014; Jan 5 and 26, 2015; Mar 2, 2015; May 18, 2015; Jun 1 & 15, 2015; Aug 3, 2015; Sept 21, 2015; Nov 16, 2015; Dec 7, 2015; Jan 4, 2016; Feb 1, 2016; Mar 7 & 21, 2016

Commissioner Elisaldez made a motion to accept and approve all minutes submitted by staff with the understanding that those requiring corrections and/or revisions, as identified by the Commissioners, are addressed by staff; motion seconded by Commissioner Celiz.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

There were no items for Public Hearing

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

There were no public comments or non-agenda items.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Zermeno asked about the recently approved budget; specifically, related to the Planning Commission. Director Martinez stated he will be happy to share that portion of the budget with the Commissioners in the next meeting.

Chairperson Gomez asked Director Martinez for an update regarding the condominiums proposed behind Norm's Restaurant.

Director Martinez reported that since the project was presented to the Commission, two community meetings have been conducted by City staff before item was presented to Council. Item was continued and Council has directed staff to work with the developer and the community. Another community meeting was held and item is again going back to Council for consideration on June 14. There are a lot of concerns from the Community, same ones brought before Planning Commission. Developer is working with the community to address these concerns. Director Martinez stated he did not want to speculate at this time as to what will happen.

Commissioner Celiz asked if the community meetings were well attended. Director Martinez stated there were about 25 or so people that attend the meetings. He added that there is this "core group" that has been actively attending the community meetings as well as City Council meetings. There is also a petition that has been submitted signed by large number of people.

Commissioner Celiz mentioned that the townhomes on Passons & Washington Blvds are selling. Director Martinez said, yes. He stated as of a couple of weeks ago, half have already been sold. He also mentioned he noticed "for sale" and "open house" signs in some of the City's intersections so they are getting a little more aggressive. All indications are that the project is selling nicely.

Commissioner Zermeno spoke again regarding proposed condominiums behind Norm's restaurant by asking if the residents are still just complaining about the visual from the condominiums. Director Martinez said, yes; also privacy, parking, traffic, noise, etc.

Commissioner Zermeno continued on to say that he spoke with some of the residents after project was first presented to the Planning Commission. He told them that they are going to get fast food places that are going to stay open late, speedsters, and trash. Commissioner Zermeno said that after hearing this, some of the residents said they would rather have the condominiums. Commissioner Zermeno continued to say that he told the residents that with the new condominiums, their property value will go up and people purchasing \$600K units are going to be watching out for the neighborhood; there just would not be low-life people that would be buying \$600-700K units. He also told them that if they don't go with the new condominiums, they will end up with a lot of retail which might be a worse situation. Commissioner Zermeno stated that most of the residents he spoke agreed which makes him wonder what happened since then.

Commissioner Celiz stated she knows some of the residents on Layman Ave. and one of them said that the resident who lives at the corner house, who spoke at the Planning Commission meeting, are knocking on doors asking residents to sign petition.

Commissioner Zermeno asked, so the petition is not huge? Director Martinez responded saying he has seen it and has about 70-80 signatures.

Commissioner Zermeno asked if Council could still vote yes on the project. Director Martinez said, yes; there is no procedure requiring to follow the petition.

Commissioner Zermeno asked if as a City Commissioner he could speak in favor of the project. Director Martinez responded, I believe so; you're a resident of the community.

Chairperson Gomez stated to Commissioner Zermeno that he could not speak as a Commissioner but as a resident.

Commissioner Garcia stated to Commissioner Zermeno that he's entitled to speak but once people know you are a Commissioner, you are biased. He went on to say that he thinks there's a problem when you do that so people think you're biased. I've avoided that because of this. I don't want anyone to know that I was biased one way or another.

Commissioner Zermeno stated to Commissioner Garcia that he's not but he wants to explain to them what we might get if we don't go with the condominiums.

Commissioner Celiz said she heard they would rather have a park.

Chairperson Gomez spoke saying he heard something recently in one of the major meetings, where they go to learn new businesses, that someone is really interested in other properties in that area and this includes property behind Norm's.

Director Martinez stated that his understanding of Mr. Chow's property that burned, that he's gone through the process of working with his insurance company—filed claims, submitted plans to reopen, etc. Director Martinez said that he has not heard that he's willing to sell; that people have approached Mr. Chow to buy his property because if included with property to the rear it would make more sense for retail housing mixed use development. With Mr. Chow's property remaining "as-is", the Norm's property to the rear is more isolated in the back and retailers don't like it for visibility purposes. Furthermore, it doesn't work for the standpoint of loading/off-loading—all retailers and grocery stores require space for this purpose.

Commissioner Zermeno asked about an investigation regarding Mr. Chow's property. Director Martinez said if regarding how the fire started, yes, and he believed it was due to poor electrical conduit wiring in the ceiling portion of the building.

Commissioner Zermeno asked if Mr. Chow was planning on opening with all same businesses. Director Martinez said that he's not sure exactly but Domino's Pizza signed a new lease in the Cineapolis Center so they are moving. Director Martinez said that he believes everyone else will be going back but could not verify this at this time.

Commissioner Celiz asked when Smart & Final would be coming in. Director Martinez said they are most likely not coming because in addition to the Staples space, they also wanted a portion of Marshall's. Marshall's denied their request. Director Martinez mentioned that there is news as to progress for the space but could not say anything at this time.

Commissioner Zermeno wanted to know who was responsible for maintaining the freeways in Pico Rivera area. He said it's a mess and landscaping is terrible. On the Whittier Blvd on-ramp to Frwy 605, where there is the Arco gas station, there are pallets and stuff covered in plastic. The county seems to dump and store everything there; it looks bad on our City. I would like to report this to the county and to ask them to clean up. It's embarrassing. Director Martinez said it would be the state (Caltrans). Commissioner Zermeno added that it's an eyesore, that something needs to be done about it.

Commissioner Garcia brought up the road work that is going on at Rosemead & Telegraph, going towards Downey. It was supposed to be completed by June 17 and asked for an update. Director Martinez said the project is administered by City of Downey. He said the City Manager and Public Works Department are definitely not happy with the progress, the administration of it, and false promises made. Obviously it's way behind schedule. Half of the intersection is in Pico Rivera but Downey is administering it so we don't have any way to expedite the project.

Chairperson Gomez said that in the council meeting he attended, this issue was brought up and the Council was upset because Downey claimed Pico Rivera slowed the progress. But Downey is actually the cause because of something with Edison. Whatever Downey did resulted in Edison putting a stop on the project which really pushed it back. Council members are angry that Downey tried to blame Pico Rivera.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS:**

Commissioner Celiz did not have anything to report regarding the City Council meeting held Tuesday, March 22, 2016; neither did Director Martinez.

Commissioner Zermeno did not have anything to report regarding the City Council meeting held Tuesday, April 26, 2016.

Chairperson Gomez was scheduled to attend April 26, 2016 City Council meeting which was cancelled.

Commissioner Elisaldez not able to attend June 14, 2016 City Council meeting;  
Commissioner Celiz will attend instead.

There being no further business the Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at  
6:35p.m.

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Paul Gomez, Chairperson

**ATTEST:**

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Benjamin A. Martinez, Secretary  
Planning Commission  
Director of Community and Economic Development