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# PLANNING COMMISSION

## MEETING MINUTES

**DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2013**

**CALLED TO ORDER: 6:00 P.M.**

**MEETING LOCATION:** City Council Chambers  
450 East Latham Avenue  
Hemet, CA 92543

### 1. CALL TO ORDER:

**PRESENT:** Chairman John Gifford, Vice Chairman Greg Vasquez, and Commissioners Rick Crimeni, Vince Overmyer and Michael Perciful

**ABSENT:** None

**Invocation and Flag Salute:** Vice Chairman Greg Vasquez

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**A.** Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of November 19, 2013

It was **MOVED** by Commissioner Rick Crimeni and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Vince Overmyer to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of November 19, 2013.

The **MOTION** was carried by the following vote:

**AYES:** Chairman John Gifford, Vice Chair Greg Vasquez, Commissioners Rick Crimeni, Vince Overmyer and Michael Perciful

**NOES:** None

**ABSENT:** None

### 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no members of the public who wished to address the commission regarding items not on the agenda.

## PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

**4. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT (GPA) NO. 13-001 (2014-2021 Housing Element Update – Cycle 5)**

1       **Applicant:** City of Hemet  
2       **Planner:** Nancy Gutierrez, Contract Planner

3  
4       **DESCRIPTION:** A City-initiated proposal to adopt the revised Housing Element  
5 of the Hemet General Plan updating the current Housing Element in accordance  
6 with State-mandated requirements for the 2014-2021 housing element cycle, and  
7 consideration of an Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report of the Hemet  
8 General Plan regarding potential environmental impacts.

9  
10           (PowerPoint presentation by Contract Planner Nancy Gutierrez.)

11  
12 Ms. Gutierrez introduced Michelle Lieberman with RBF Consulting, who together with  
13 David Barquist, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Commission.

14  
15 Chairman Gifford, after the presentations, asked if the three changes being made,  
16 based on the direction of the State, were more procedural than substantive changes.

17  
18 Planner Gutierrez explained that they are technical types of minor changes and that  
19 staff is looking at the new State definition of transitional housing and supportive  
20 housing, along with the City Attorney's office, and may not have to make any changes.

21  
22 Chairman Gifford asked what 95 percent reduction in number of housing units could  
23 mean for the city, especially considering that at the very low-income housing area, the  
24 city only has to meet 67 housing sites, instead of 11,000 units in the previous housing  
25 element cycle, thereby skewing the community away from just a low income housing  
26 element, to something more towards median.

27  
28 CDD Elliano added that the highest percentage in the new RHNA numbers, is in "above  
29 moderate," indicating that the greatest need in Hemet is to have the higher value  
30 housing.

31  
32 Chairman Gifford complimented the hard work of staff and RBF in moving these  
33 numbers toward a median or upper median level income, rather than pushing it lower.

34  
35 He thereafter asked for public comment, and receiving no response, closed the public  
36 hearing portion of this item and asked for further Commissioners' comments, and  
37 having received positive comments from Commissioners Overmyer, Crimeni, Perciful  
38 and Vice Chair Vasquez, entertained a motion.

39  
40 It was **MOVED** by Vice Chair Greg Vasquez and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Rick  
41 Crimeni recommending **ADOPTION** of Planning Commission Resolution Bill 13-022  
42 recommending **APPROVAL** of General Plan Amendment No. 13-001 and **ADOPTION**  
43 of the associated Addendum to the General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report to  
44 the City Council.

45  
46 The **MOTION** was carried by the following vote:

47  
48 **AYES:** Chairman John Gifford, Vice Chairman Greg Vasquez, and  
49 Commissioners Michael Perciful, Rick Crimeni, and Vince Overmyer.

50 **NOES:** None

**ABSENT:** None

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## WORK STUDY REPORTS

### 5. WORK STUDY SESSION NO. 2 REGARDING TEMPORARY SIGNS

Report by Principal Planner Emery Papp

CDD Elliano made introductory comments before Planner Papp's presentation, advising that sign codes are very complex and detailed. She stated that staff had a productive meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and that staff recognizes the need for effective signage; however, the challenge is providing signage without visual clutter and distraction.

She indicated that the issue to be discussed at this meeting was the balance sought for temporary signage. Traditionally, temporary signage has been utilized to advertise special events, community activities, grand openings for new businesses, etc. Staff believes temporary signage should not be utilized by businesses in place of permanent signage. However, it is staff's desire to develop a strategy for temporary signage that is not overly complex and frustrating to the business owners. Her opinion is that window signage is the most effective way for businesses to advertise because there is no need to get a permit from the city if the coverage is between 25 and 50 percent, depending on location and type of business.

(PowerPoint presentation by Principal Planner Emery Papp.)

There was a discussion concerning framed posters, such as in drive-through establishments who have little window space with which to advertise. Chairman Gifford commented that we need regulations that are detailed enough to be enforceable, but also flexible enough to make exceptions, yet how much discretion does staff have? It is problematic to consider them windows, because they represent more than 50 percent of window space. He suggested staff come up with something that's hybrid for such a framed advertisement.

Commissioner Crimeni stated that he has observed vandalism with framed posters.

(Principal Planner Emery Papp continued the PowerPoint presentation.)

At the conclusion of the presentation, Chairman Gifford requested of City Attorney Jex, to report his opinion concerning the Community Development Director's jurisdiction and the limits to her discretion on signage judgments. He then asked for public comments after Commissioner Vasquez made the following suggestions:

1. For buildings that cannot accommodate banner signage, utilization of landscape banners with professional mounting poles might be considered;
2. Increasing the minimum size of the banners from 3 feet by 15 feet in length to something larger, like 3 feet by 20 feet;
3. Definitively deny banner signs on fences or handrails.

Andy Anderson, chief executive officer and president of the Hemet/San Jacinto Chamber of Commerce (615 North San Jacinto Street, Hemet), thanked the Commission for considering this issue. He made several suggestions, which included considering the time limit for banners being extended and allowing banners to be used more than once, and addressing the issue of feather signs, for which there is little

1 consistency between Hemet and the county side of particularly Florida Avenue. He  
2 announced that the Chamber, along with City of Hemet, is going to be having a seminar  
3 for business people that will address marketing and merchandising in the community so  
4 that the local businesses will understand more fully the signage issue.

5  
6 Doris Mixon, owner of C&L Coffee House, also representing Arturo's Mexican Grill, felt  
7 that Hemet was not being business-friendly by putting such restrictions on temporary  
8 signs, especially for family-owned businesses. She felt that larger banners and feather  
9 signs would be helpful to her business and those in the building around her who do not  
10 have businesses that face the street. She felt that franchise-type businesses are being  
11 given preferential treatment rather than mom and pop operations, particularly those  
12 such as Arturo's, which is struggling to maintain business because of sign restrictions.

13  
14 Chairman Gifford commented that the mandate for the Commission is very much in  
15 favor of balance and pro-business or pro-smart growth for businesses. However, there  
16 have to be regulations and rules that are going to benefit the overall plan for the City of  
17 Hemet. The Commission and staff is trying to figure out where do we have the leniency  
18 or discretion to make exceptions, that will assist such businesses as Arturo's, which is  
19 one of his favorite restaurants. But something must be crafted that will work within the  
20 bounds that are fair to everybody. With that, he closed the public hearing, as there  
21 were no additional persons who wished to speak.

22  
23 City Attorney Jex agreed that the key is drawing the line. Sign codes are incredibly  
24 complicated and the laws that govern how a sign code can be drafted are also  
25 extraordinarily complicated. It is a very specialized area of the law. Therefore, what  
26 goes into drafting amendments or changes to a sign code demands consideration of the  
27 bigger picture ideas that have been presented tonight and at earlier meetings, drill down  
28 those ideas, and formulate the language that accomplishes what is desired, as long as it  
29 is within the bounds that sign code law has set.

30  
31 He said he understands the Commission wants to have flexibility to be able to provide  
32 discretion, but too much discretion cannot be provided because there must be a uniform  
33 set of regulations. So while flexibility is desired, care must be taken in how the flexibility  
34 is worded; the detail in the language will be important. At this point, we are in a broad,  
35 conceptual level.

36  
37 Commissioner Crimeni had questions about banners, their permit cost, time of posting,  
38 and change of banners.

39  
40 CDD Elliano explained that the cost of a banner is currently \$32 for a 30-day period to  
41 hang the banner. Under the current rules, no matter what the time allowed for display of  
42 the banner, the same banner could not be posted again.

43  
44 Chairman Gifford advanced the possibility of mandating a square footage percentage  
45 rather than 3 feet by 15 feet, with Commissioner Perciful agreeing.

46  
47 Commissioner Overmyer asked if it had to be percentage of the wall.

48  
49 CDD Elliano answered that most permanent signage is in relationship to the building  
50 face. She also suggested they discuss the time-frame in which a banner could be  
posted, and specifically how long it would have to remain down.

1 Chairman Gifford indicated that it was his impression from the business leaders that if  
2 your promotion isn't working in 45 days, then you're pretty well done. And as to down  
3 time, if there is a continual offer or message, then it should be a permanent sign.

4  
5 Both Commissioners Vasquez and Crimeni agreed that 45 days is a good length for a  
6 temporary sign.

7  
8 After further discussion among Commissioners and staff, it was agreed that 14 days  
9 would be acceptable as down time for the banners. Also discussed were the banners in  
10 the landscaped area, with City Attorney Jex admonishing standards as to what was  
11 "professionally" done.

12  
13 Planner Papp asked the Commissioners their ideas concerning pennants in commercial  
14 zones. They are currently allowed in model home displays.

15  
16 CDD Elliano stated there needs to be a differentiation between pennants and flags, and  
17 Chairman Gifford stated there is a different section for the real estate signage.

18  
19 After further discussion, it was agreed that percentage of window coverage for signage  
20 would be 50 percent, whether that was 25 percent message and 25 percent window tint  
21 or 50 percent message.

22  
23 Planner Papp asked if the Commission had a consensus concerning "cane" or "feather"  
24 signs, with Chairman Gifford stating he didn't think the city was against them, but just  
25 wanted to limit the number per business.

26  
27 Commissioner Crimeni asked about printed screens on vacant buildings.

28  
29 CDD Elliano said she did not think there was a prohibition on that. If it makes a vacant  
30 building look better, the city would be in favor of it. She did not see it as an issue with  
31 signage.

32  
33 After further discussion on number of banners per business and numbers of cane signs,  
34 Chairman Gifford suggested that staff work on the details and come back January 21,  
35 2014 for a continued working session.

## DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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40 **6. CITY ATTORNEY REPORTS:** *Verbal report from the Assistant City Attorney on*  
41 *items of interest to the Planning Commission.*

42  
43 City Attorney Jex reported on a change to the Brown Act effective January 1st, 2014.  
44 After each vote that is taken, there must be a public announcement of each person's  
45 vote. This is accomplished by using the voting machine on a regular basis by the  
46 Planning Commission.

47  
48 **7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS:** *Verbal reports from*  
49 *Community Development Director Elliano*  
50

1           A. Report on actions taken at City Council meeting of December 10, 2013

2  
3 At the December 10, 2013 City Council meeting, Larry Smith was elected Mayor, with  
4 the position of Mayor Pro Tem being secured by Shellie Milne, both positions lasting  
5 one year. The Planning Commission's recommendation regarding the Specific Plan  
6 Zone and requirements was approved unanimously. The 2013 updated building code  
7 standards were adopted, and the city has the opportunity to re-adopt, review and make  
8 additional exceptions or requirements as it sees fit. The changes were generally minor  
9 from the 2010 building code update, some having to do with firewall separation between  
10 houses and garages and some other fire code provisions.

11  
12 The appeal of the Planning Commission's decision regarding alcohol sales for the  
13 Valero gas station was continued, as per applicant's request, to the January 14th  
14 meeting of the City Council.

15  
16 The new City Manager Wally Hill had several items, one of which was the appointment  
17 of a short-term ad hoc committee for the Regent development project (Ramona Creek)  
18 to review the proposed development agreement provisions. It will be the Planning  
19 Commission's charge to make sure the development agreement is consistent with the  
20 General Plan.

21  
22 At the City Manager's suggestion and Council's concurrence, a strategic planning  
23 session is being organized for big-picture planning for 2014.

24  
25           B. Update report regarding the current status of the old Albertsons and Walmart  
26 buildings on Florida Avenue and parking issues at adjacent properties (Report  
27 requested by the Planning Commission)

28  
29 CDD Elliano reported on the present situation with the old Albertson's, 869 Florida  
30 Avenue, which was originally approved in 1992, as the Palm Plaza Shopping Center.  
31 Smith's Grocery opened in '93, which became Lucky's in '96, then Albertson's took over  
32 in 2000 until 2008. The property was purchased by R&B Investments in 2009, but the  
33 property has remained vacant since 2008. There may be a major national grocery  
34 chain tenant in the future; however, no permits or activities have come forward.

35  
36 The former Walmart, 2171 West Florida, was originally approved as a Walmart in 1991.  
37 A Conditional Use Permit was obtained in 2006 in an effort to transition from a Walmart  
38 to a Sam's Club. It was not built within the time period required, and the extension of  
39 time was denied. In 2009 a new ownership brought forward a proposal for a facility  
40 called Medi-City, a heart hospital and acute care facility. A three-year Extension of  
41 Time was granted in 2011. However, staff's understanding is that the new owners do  
42 not intend to go forward with the project. It is being marketed to big-box users, but as of  
43 yet, there are no proposals. The property has been subjected to vandalism such as the  
44 stealing of pipes and electricity.

45  
46 **8. PLANNING COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** *Commissioner reports on meetings*  
47 *attended, future agenda items, or other matters of Planning interest.*  
48  
49  
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1 A. Chairman Gifford reported visiting the Shooters Pool Hall and finding it  
2 packed with 20 to 30 year old customers. He was pleased to see it flourishing.

3 B. Vice Chair Vasquez (Nothing to report)

4 C. Commissioner Perciful noted that FHFA announced they are not going to be  
5 changing loan limits; however, HUD did lower their limits to \$355,000. And recently, the  
6 Hemet/San Jacinto Association of Realtors merged with the Southwest County  
7 Associations of Realtors, resulting in a bigger membership base and more money for  
8 the organization.

9 D. Commissioner Overmyer noted that his family had moved to the Hemet area  
10 in 1965, almost 50 years ago, and with tongue in cheek, thanked the Commission for  
11 allowing him to serve at a time when the sign ordinance is being rehashed.

12 E. Commissioner Crimeni suggested that in addition to going to Shooters, the  
13 Commission members should go to Arturo's and drink coffee at the coffee shop. He  
14 also recommended attending the Ramona Bowl to see the Harmonizers.

15  
16 **9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

17  
18 A. SDR for Woodside properties in McSweeney Farms

19 B. SPA for McSweeney Farms

20 C. CUP for Multi-tenant office building on Florida

21 D. WRCOG Presentation regarding Regional Climate Action Plan, which cities  
22 will be asked to either adopt or modify. It is not required, but the State is strongly  
23 encouraging adoption.

24 E. Regent Properties - Ramona Creek SP, TTM and DEIR

25  
26 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

27  
28 It was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. to the regular meeting of  
29 the City of Hemet Planning Commission scheduled for **JANUARY 7, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.**  
30 to be held at the City of Hemet Council Chambers located at 450 E. Latham Avenue,  
31 Hemet, CA 92543.  
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John Gifford, Chairman  
Hemet Planning Commission

45 ATTEST:

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Melissa Couden, Records Secretary  
Hemet Planning Commission