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PLANNING  *COMMISSION*

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: FEBRUARY 18, 2014

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: Commissioner Rick Crimeni

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. Minutes of the January 7, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting
- B. Minutes of the January 21, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting

It was **MOVED** by Commissioner Michael Perciful and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Rick Crimeni to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of January 7, 2014.

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

- B. Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of January 21, 2014

It was **MOVED** by Commissioner Michael Perciful and **SECONDED** by Vice Chair Greg Vasquez to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of January 21, 2014.

1 The **MOTION** was carried by the following vote:
2

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

5 **NOES:** None

6 **ABSTAIN:** Commissioner Rick Crimeni
7
8

9 **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**
10

11 There were no members of the public who wished to address the commission
12 regarding items not on the agenda.
13

14 **WORK STUDY ITEMS**
15

16 **4. WORK STUDY #3 REGARDING TEMPORARY SIGNAGE REGULATIONS:**
17

18 *Presentation by Deanna Elliano, Community Development*
19

20 CDD Elliano, presenting for Planner Emery Papp, expressed the hope that this would
21 be the final Work Study regarding this topic and that final recommendations would be
22 forthcoming. She indicated that the topics recommended for final discussion included
23 banner signs, cane or swiffer signs, stake signs, LED and hand-held signs.
24

25 In response to a request from the Commission at the last Work Study, Staff checked
26 with the Riverside County Planning Department and was told that temporary signage is
27 not allowed in the County area. However, as was revealed by the code enforcement
28 manager, they do not have the staff resources for pro-active enforcement.
29

30 Other cities (San Jacinto, Moreno Valley, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Corona, and
31 Temecula) were previously surveyed, and their temporary signage requirements
32 differed; however, many had more restrictions than what is currently being proposed in
33 Hemet.
34

35 Chairman Gifford asked if the other cities dealt with special events, and what their
36 restrictions are. CDD Elliano explained that they might have something called a
37 special event, but they did not have the subcategories that are proposed.
38

39 She continued her review of the proposed banner recommendations and stated that
40 the banner signs are currently allowed for 30 days. As per the Commission's
41 suggestion, they would be allowed for a 45-day permit time-period. However, staff did
42 add a provision that the Community Development Director could extend it to up to 60
43 days under these circumstances: If the permanent sign is still being fabricated, or for
44 the theater event signage.
45

46 Also added at the recommendation of the Planning Commission was the possibility of
47 two banners per business. Additionally, landscape banners would be allowed if there
48 is no suitable place on the building and if the banners are on the owner's property, with
49 the freestanding structures approved. Exceptions would include auto service bays
50 where the banners are inside the building bay area a minimum of ten feet. These
would not require a banner permit.

1 Staff is proposing three new categories on banners on page 4 of the staff report:
2 Theatrical performance banners (removed within 5 days of conclusion of event);
3 Community Event/Non-Profit banner (removed within 5 days of conclusion of event);
4 Award Banner, such as "Press Enterprise Readers' Choice," (displayed for up to 90
5 days).

6
7 Chairman Gifford asked if the theatrical performance banners requirements include a
8 14-day interval between banners, and how often the Press Enterprise, or such
9 organizations, gives awards.

10
11 CDD Elliano replied that it was intended that the theater could overlap their banners, as
12 two could be displayed at one time.

13
14 Commissioner Crimeni noted that the PE award is given once a year; and that they had
15 received the award and kept the banner up for a year.

16
17 Vice Chair Vasquez raised several questions, including fees imposed for long-standing
18 banners, fees for award banners, and number of permits needed for banners utilized
19 more than once.

20
21 CDD Elliano explained that the theatrical banner allowed for 45 days with a potential
22 extension for up to 60 days is not intended to have an additional fee in the extension.
23 The award banner had not really been considered, but could that be considered one of
24 their two banners. However, the difficulties with the sub-categories and exceptions are
25 that it becomes very confusing.

26
27 The City Attorney explained that fees are not tied to how long a banner is displayed. It
28 is tied to the staff time involved in reviewing the permit application, issuing the permit
29 and monitoring compliance with the permit. The longer the banner is up, the more staff
30 time it takes to make sure the banner is in compliance with the permit.

31
32 Commissioner Crimeni asked if there is a fee for the award banners, stating that the
33 Press Enterprise provided the banner, and CDD Elliano stated she did not think there
34 had been a fee in the past. The Commission directed that the award banners be
35 allowed for up to a year and exempted from the banner permit and fee requirements.

36
37 Vice Chair Vasquez asked for clarification about the building elevation restriction and
38 the use of the term "landscape materials."

39
40 CDD Elliano explained that "elevation" is an architectural term. If a building has four
41 sides, each side is an elevation. "Frontage" means the side of the building facing the
42 street or other defined entrance. "Landscape materials" could mean shrubs, trees, or
43 bushes. The intent was to restrict banners in landscape areas to freestanding poles
44 that would be professionally installed and might include poles with sleeves.

45
46 Vice Chair Vasquez asked who the tiebreaker is if there is confusion regarding the
47 zoning code provisions.

48
49 The City Attorney answered that once a draft ordinance is prepared, it will come
50 through the attorney's office to make sure the language is clear.

1 CDD Elliano stated there should be clarity for both the businesses and the counter
2 people regarding the sign regulations. If it specifically says that the CDD should have
3 the ability to make the decision, then the criteria to make the judgment should be clear
4 and should not be a mystery.

5
6 There was further discussion about the language concerning banners facing private
7 property. In addition, Chairman Gifford stated that award banners should be honored if
8 they are given by a recognized organization. CDD Elliano agreed and added there
9 would have to be a definition of "recognized organization" and that they could be up for
10 a year, as long as they are well maintained. They would not count as one of two
11 banners allowed nor would they require a fee.

12
13 Chairman Gifford added that if it was a monthly award, it should only be allowed up for
14 the period of the award.

15
16 CDD Elliano brought up the next topic: Cane signs. They are currently prohibited, but
17 what is now being proposed would allow one cane sign in lieu of one temporary sign
18 for grand openings or special events for the permitted period, no longer than 14 days,
19 and that they couldn't be in the right-of-ways, landscaped parkways or required setback
20 areas.

21
22 Vice Chair Vasquez pointed out the language "limited special promotions not to exceed
23 45 days."

24
25 CDD Elliano outlined her understanding of the proposal: One, cane signs at grand
26 openings, parking lot special events; two, allowance of one cane sign in lieu of one
27 temporary banner that would follow the same regulations as the temporary banner,
28 such as the 45-day regulation.

29
30 There followed extensive discussion of cane/swiffer signs among Commissioners and
31 staff.

32
33 Andy Anderson, 615 San Jacinto Street, Hemet, and Chamber of Commerce
34 representative, advanced the opinion that swiffer signs, which cost anywhere from
35 \$150 to \$300 per sign, are not going to be purchased in bulk by businesses in Hemet.
36 As CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, he appreciated the flexibility staff has provided,
37 which he believes is enough for a business that did want to make the investment.

38
39 Next, CDD Elliano opened the discussion on stake signs, noting at present they are
40 prohibited, but at the last work-study, the suggestion was made that they be allowed
41 only for drive-through businesses, such as a restaurant. There could be a maximum of
42 three, and they would be exempt from temporary permits.

43
44 The City Attorney advised that the city has to have a substantial interest in support of
45 the regulation and in this case, it does try to prohibit visual clutter, which would support
46 outright prohibition. Therefore, making exceptions, such as placement of stake signs
47 where they are not visible from the right-of-way would serve that purpose. However,
48 making the exception for just drive-throughs may make the regulation less defensible.
49
50

1 After further discussion among Commissioners, staff, and Chamber CEO Anderson,
2 prohibition of stake signs was upheld.

3
4 CDD Elliano next introduced the subject of electronic or LED display board signs,
5 which is discussed on pages 6 through 8 of the staff report. Only a few cities have
6 codes regulating these, with existing regulations including no flashing, movement or
7 animation on signs; no advertising of off-site uses permitted for informational,
8 time/temperature, non-profit purposes and community uses. She continued to outline
9 the proposed regulations in the staff report and asked for comments from the
10 Commissioners.

11
12 Commissioner Crimeni thought the restriction on distance apart for the LED signs was
13 too restrictive.

14
15 Commissioner Perciful felt that messages that faded in and out would keep light more
16 consistent. He also noted there needed to be less light at night and more in the
17 daylight hours. He expressed that these signs are the wave of the future.

18
19 There was discussion regarding the distraction element of these signs, which prompted
20 City Attorney Vega to note that there are standards out there developed by different
21 professional organizations and Caltrans, as to what is and is not acceptable.

22
23 Chairman Gifford brought up two issues: 1, the normal LED business signs and how
24 the aesthetics fit into the city plan; 2, signs above a certain square footage should
25 come to the Planning Commission for acceptance, as it is a city planning issue and
26 should require a permit.

27
28 Commissioner Vasquez asked if businesses currently using LED signs that become
29 out of compliance when the code is completed, would be grandfathered in.

30
31 CDD Elliano indicated they would not be required to change. She also asked if there
32 were other comments from the commissioners about distance separation between
33 signs.

34
35 Chairman Gifford answered if the sign is granted by a normal permit distance is not an
36 issue. The distance requirement should be for huge display types of signs, and those
37 should come to the Commission on a case-by-case basis.

38
39 Commissioner Crimeni reiterated that the distance separation limiting signs should not
40 be instituted because it is not fair to all business owners.

41
42 Andy Anderson stressed the need for equitable consideration for standalone types of
43 businesses and their ability to utilize the technology. There also needs to be thought
44 given to such things as LED signs with scrolling messages put in business windows,
45 and whether or not these are allowed.

46
47 The last issue brought up for discussion by CDD Elliano was hand-held signs, noting
48 that political statements are a matter of free speech and cannot be regulated. If it is a
49 commercial business or advertising sign, it can be regulated.

1 Currently such signs are prohibited by code, but in 2009, because of the economic
2 downturn, the City Council directed staff not to enforce that section in the sign code
3 and to allow the hand-held signs. The options for the Planning Commission appear to
4 be as follows: A, recommend to City Council that the existing code be enforced again;
5 B, recommend this type of signage should be permitted for all businesses and
6 recommend appropriate regulations as part of the code amendment; or C, recommend
7 no change in the code and the "stay" of enforcement, allowing them to continue as they
8 have been for the last few years.

9
10 Andy Anderson stated personally that he is not a proponent of these signs; however,
11 as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, he knows many businesses believe it is a
12 valuable marketing tool, especially if their businesses are not seen well from the street.
13 He felt rather than just continuing the stay, regulations should be put into place.

14
15 Chairman Gifford felt they should either be prohibited or enforced. There needs to be
16 limitations as to where they can be and the aesthetics of the signs.

17
18 Commissioner Overmyer stated he was in favor of prohibiting them.

19
20 Chairman Gifford agreed and stated if the Planning Commission prohibited them, it still
21 goes to the City Council to address the issue.

22
23 Commissioner Crimeni stated he was in favor of prohibiting them also, and Chairman
24 Gifford, after asking for further comments and noting none, moved to Agenda Item 5.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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30 **5. CITY ATTORNEY REPORTS:** *Assistant City Attorney Vega stated she had nothing*
31 *to report.*

32
33 **6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS:** *Verbal reports from*
34 *Community Development Director Elliano*

35
36 **A.** Report on actions from the January 28 and February 11, 2014 City Council
37 Meetings.

38
39 CDD Elliano stated she had given an update on the Hemet ROCS program and
40 introduced 11 new code compliance volunteers. She reported on new ROCS
41 programs for 2014, which include the foreclosed property inspection, long-term board-
42 up, proactive enforcement, renter registration program, which will be launched in
43 March, reactivation of the crime-free housing program, rental registration database,
44 and improvements to the Web site and handouts.

45
46 The task force keeps statistics on ROCS inspections for these substandard properties.
47 Over 1,148 residential units have been inspected since October 2013, in which over
48 4,000 code violations were discovered. With these inspections, over 80 percent of the
49 violations have been corrected to date.
50

1 The secondary effects of the ROCS inspections are property owners providing
2 reinvestment into their properties, permits pulled, and compliance with health and
3 safety code requirements. Some poorly managed properties have been sold, with new
4 management and owners fixing up the units. This has also reduced the crime and
5 there has been a reduction in calls for service for the Police Department in the Yale
6 Street apartments, among other units such as the Crestwood Apartments, which have
7 been a major challenge for the city. She stated the goal of Hemet ROCS is to make
8 these downtrodden properties more viable so people want to live there, and owners
9 can get a better return on their investments, and take more responsibility for their
10 tenants and properties.

11
12 The February 11th City Council meeting included the approval of the pre-zoning in
13 Southwest Hemet, and the continuance of the Valero CUP Appeal, as the applicant
14 was in India and could not return in time for the public hearing.

15
16 **B. Review of Inland Empire Quarterly Economic Report (January 2014).** (A
17 handout was distributed to the Commissioners.)
18

19 **7. PLANNING COMMISSIONER REPORTS:** *Commissioner Reports on meetings*
20 *attended, future agenda items or other matters of Planning interest*
21

- 22 **A.** Chairman Gifford commented on the restaurants in the city and how busy
23 they were on Valentine's Day.
24 **B.** Vice Chair Vasquez (Nothing to report)
25 **C.** Commissioner Perciful (Nothing to report)
26 **D.** Commissioner Overmyer (Nothing to report)
27 **E.** Commissioner Crimeni (Nothing to report)
28

29 **8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**
30

- 31 **A.** Spa for McSweeny Farms
32 **B.** CUP for Multi-tenant office building
33 **C.** Regent Properties - Ramona Creek SP, TTM and DEIR
34 **D.** General Plan Consistency Zoning Program - Phase II
35

36 **10. ADJOURNMENT**
37

38 It was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. to the regular meeting of
39 the City of Hemet Planning Commission scheduled for March 4, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. to be
40 held at the City of Hemet Council Chambers located at 450 E. Latham Avenue, Hemet,
41 CA 92543.
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John Gifford, Chairman
Hemet Planning Commission

ATTEST:



Melissa Couden, Records Secretary
Hemet Planning Commission