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PLANNING  **COMMISSION**

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: JUNE 16, 2015

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 P.M.

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

1. CALL TO ORDER:

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Tami Wilhelm (Absent with notice)

Invocation and Flag Salute: Commissioner Vince Overmyer

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of May 19, 2015

It was **MOVED** by Commissioner Vince Overmyer and **SECONDED** by Vice Chair Michael Perciful to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of May 19, 2015.

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

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

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Tami Wilhelm

B. Minutes for the Planning Commission Meeting of June 2, 2015

It was **MOVED** by Commissioner Vince Overmyer and **SECONDED** by Vice Chair Michael Perciful to **ADOPT** the Minutes of the June 2, 2015 Hemet Planning Commission Meeting.

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

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

1 **NOES:** None
2 **ABSENT:** Commissioner Tami Wilhelm

3
4 **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

5
6 There were no members of the public who wished to address the Commission
7 regarding items not on the agenda.
8

9
10 **WORK STUDY REPORTS**

11
12 **4. WORK STUDY: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW REGARDING THE**
13 **PROPOSED DOWNTOWN HEMET SPECIFIC PLAN (SP 15-002)** — A Work Study
14 Session to provide an overview to the Planning Commission and the public
15 regarding the proposed scope of work for the City-initiated Downtown Specific Plan,
16 and to provide staff and the consultant team with the Planning Commission's input
17 on the Downtown as part of the stakeholder interview process.
18

19 Applicant: City of Hemet
20 Location: Downtown Hemet Study Area Bounded by
21 Oakland Avenue to the north, Acacia Ave. to
22 the south, Gilbert Ave. to the west, and Santa
23 Fe Ave. to the east.
24 Acres: 360.57
25 Project Planner: Ron Running, Special Projects Planner
26 Planning Consultant: Jean Ward, Principal of The Arroyo Group
27

28 **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

29
30 That the Planning Commission:

- 31
32 1. *Receive the staff and consultant presentation on the proposed*
33 *Downtown Specific Plan scope of work; and,*
34
35 2. *Provide the Commission's responses to the Stakeholder Interview*
36 *Questions; and,*
37
38 3. *Appoint a Planning Commission member as a representative to serve*
39 *on the Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC); and*
40
41 4. *Invite public comment regarding the Downtown and the proposed*
42 *Specific Plan process.*
43

44 CDD Elliano invited Planner Running to introduce the consultants who were working
45 with the City on the Downtown Hemet Specific Plan. Planner Running explained they
46 are here tonight to bring the Commission up to speed on where the project is and
47 explain the public outreach anticipated for the Downtown Specific Plan.
48

49 The consultant team of Jean Ward and Larry Morrison of The Arroyo Group from
50 Pasadena gave the background and purpose of the Downtown Specific Plan, the goals
and benefits, and the projected schedule. They also explained that one area of focus
has been transit-oriented development, since Hemet is proposed to be a stop on the

1 Metrolink rail line planned for the area. Other members of the consultant team are
2 Stanley Hoffman Associates (economics), ITERIS (transportation planning), EPT
3 (design), and JMC (civil engineering and infrastructure).
4

5 Jean Ward explained the major goals the city has are to revitalize the historic
6 downtown area, increase retail shopping and housing opportunities, enhance equity,
7 create a community center, and increase access to transit, enhancing public spaces in
8 the downtown area. She stated that the Specific Plan can really act as an economic
9 development tool. TOD (transit-oriented development) focuses on walkability, creating
10 a pedestrian oriented environment. She then outlined the 13-month schedule for the
11 planning process.
12

13 Consultant Larry Morrison continued the discussion, outlining possible plans for
14 streetscapes, pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to downtown, preserving historic
15 sites, working with the art and cultural community to stimulate community access to the
16 arts, developing a green network of parks and gathering spots, gateways and signage.
17

18 He defined three keys to success in planning: 1) public participation; 2) economics,
19 both public and private; and 3) place-making, a combination of natural and built-in
20 environments.
21

22 In conclusion, he listed a number of questions the consultants are asking stakeholders
23 in the City to address. These include: What do you consider downtown's most
24 important assets? What factors set downtown apart? What are some of the major
25 issues? What are some economic barriers? What are the biggest obstacles for
26 investment? What amenity and design features should be included? What are the
27 most important improvements to enhance quality of life and the most pressing
28 infrastructure needs? Twenty years from now, what do you envision downtown to be?
29

30 Ms. Ward stated there will be a project Website up by next week to announce
31 workshops, solicit ideas, have a survey online.
32

33 Chairman Gifford asked the consultants to stay at the podium to answer further
34 questions from the Commission, but he noted that within the 300-plus acres in the plan,
35 there are many different community pieces included. He wanted to know if they have
36 plans for interweaving these parts together, or dealing with the different regions with
37 unique names such as Historic district, Harvard district, Stock Farm, Depot, etc.
38

39 Vice Chair Perciful said when he thinks of downtown, he imagines shopping and
40 dining, not residential. He mentioned the Harvard area, Florida Avenue, and State
41 Street as important to identify as significant areas.
42

43 Commissioner Overmyer mentioned entertainment, restaurants as important, but
44 including the focus of Hemet as an agriculture, early California culturally diverse
45 community, particularly in terms of signage and identity for the Downtown Area. He
46 didn't think there is need presently for mixed-use, but as part of a 20-year plan it is
47 viable.
48

49 Commissioner Vasquez felt the primary focus should be on preserving history first in
50 the Downtown Core, then the architecture. The nostalgia and history is conveyed by
the imagery of the place, such as period lighting.

1
2 Chairman Gifford noted that the speed of traffic in the downtown area needs to be
3 slowed so people can enjoy wandering about in the district. He suggested Harvard be
4 closed as a thoroughfare and become more of a mall with restaurants and shops and
5 park areas. It needs to become a destination with entertainment included. It will keep
6 dollars in town and help to support the businesses.
7

8 Commissioner Overmyer brought up the idea of tunnels or bridges as a way to get past
9 traffic on Florida. He suggested mixed-use development in the Stock Farm area. He
10 also mentioned the downtown area in Redlands, with cobblestone streets and trees,
11 with shaded places to relax.
12

13 Vice Chair Perciful added there needs to be a draw for lunch, dinner and late-night
14 entertainment.
15

16 Commissioner Vasquez mentioned the issues of safety, cleanliness and visual blight.
17 People will not feel safe coming to a place with vagrants and homeless. And it will be
18 hard to attract investment if the rents are low.
19

20 Commissioner Overmyer commented on the three sides to Hemet: Large mountain,
21 smaller mountain, and lovely valley. This gives us a sense of place. Implementation of
22 the Plan will also need to be taken with baby steps.
23

24 Commissioner Vasquez addressed the issue of medical buildings in the downtown
25 area. He felt it's unlikely that medical professionals would be anxious to locate in a city
26 like Hemet because of schools, housing, and the closeness of other cities with the
27 amenities for which they are looking. He also felt parking was a big issue for the
28 downtown area, as was the need for facelifts on many of the buildings. He didn't think
29 roundabouts and one-way streets would be helpful and could be confusing.
30

31 Chairman Gifford felt that having a center median starting at Oakland, State Street and
32 Florida would slow traffic and identify the downtown as a different area.
33

34 Commissioner Vasquez mentioned that Escondido has Friday night cruises for car
35 clubs and felt Hemet could benefit from such a thing. He would like to see Hemet as a
36 place for quality artists, restaurants, specialty shops and a series of festivals, with a tie-
37 in to the Bowl, perhaps shuttling patrons from the downtown area to the Bowl.
38

39 Chairman Gifford opened the meeting for public comments.
40

41 Paul Raver, City Council member, suggested a downtown amphitheater and other
42 amenities. His plea was to not be restricted by what is there right now but to dream
43 big. Clear some of it out and reuse the space at a higher level. Use solar in this area
44 for the benefit of downtown merchants. Just think outside the box.
45

46 Jim Patz, a Hemet businessman whose business is in the downtown development
47 area, said the heart of the city has to be built first before any baby-stepping occurs.
48 He felt the city has spent too much time on welfare and low-rent housing. The Harvard
49 area needs to be opened up and eminent domain used to upgrade.
50

Mr. Lincoln (no first name given) applauded Mr. Raver's idea of opening up the large-

1 sized area for entertainment, park and shopping area. He also felt it of utmost
2 importance to improve the lighting in the area, especially in the back of buildings,
3 because those spaces are vulnerable. Also to keep some areas open past the 10 p.m.
4 timeframe on the outskirts along Kimball and Latham. He also approved of slowing
5 down the traffic by including one-way streets.
6

7 Chairman Gifford said staff wanted a Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC), with at
8 least one Commissioner appointed to the Committee. He stated that Commissioner
9 Wilhelm asked to be on the Committee. Vice Chair Perciful also agreed to join the
10 Committee. The Commission unanimously agreed to appoint Commissioners Wilhelm
11 and Perciful to the DAC.
12

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

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16 **5. CITY ATTORNEY REPORTS:** (Nothing to report)
17

18 **6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS:**
19

20 **A. Report on actions taken at the Jun 9, 2015 City Council Meeting**
21

22 CDD Elliano reported that the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan was adopted.
23 There was an extensive work study on the proposed budget, with the following
24 recommendations or adjustments made to the budget: 1) eliminate state and federal
25 lobbyists and provide travel funding to allow City Council members to be the city's
26 representatives at these venues; 2) reduction in the City Council's Conference budget;
27 3) a reduction in the new city manager's salary; 4) allocating some funding for a
28 contract service for grant writing provisions.
29

30 **7. PLANNING COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**
31

- 32 **A. Chairman Gifford** (Nothing to report)
- 33 **B. Vice Chair Perciful** (Nothing to report)
- 34 **C. Commissioner Overmyer** (Nothing to report)
- 35 **D. Commissioner Wilhelm** (Absent)
- 36 **E. Commissioner Vasquez** (Nothing to report)
37

38 **8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**
39

- 40 **A. Work Study:** Drought tolerant landscape requirements.
- 41 **B. ZOA 15-005,** Temporary Use Permit/Special Event Permit
- 42 **C. CUP 15-004,** A-1 Tire Store
- 43 **D. AOZ 15-003,** Fences and Walls
- 44 **E. TPM 36847,** Bayside Court.
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9. ADJOURNMENT

It was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. to the regular meeting of the City of Hemet Planning Commission scheduled for **July 7, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.** to be held at the City of Hemet Council Chambers located at 450 E. Latham Avenue, Hemet, CA 92543.



John Gifford, Chairman
Hemet Planning Commission

ATTEST:


Cathy Davis, Records Secretary
Hemet Planning Commission