

PIEDMONT CITY COUNCIL

Special Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, January 11, 2017

A Special Session of the Piedmont City Council was held January 11, 2017, in the Police Department EOC Room at 403 Highland Avenue. In accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2(a) the agenda for this special meeting was posted for public inspection on January 6, 2017.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor McBain called the meeting to order at 7:43 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jeff Wieler (arrived at 7:49 p.m.), Vice Mayor Bob McBain, and Councilmembers Jennifer Cavanaugh, Teddy Gray King and Tim Rood

Staff: City Administrator Paul Benoit, Deputy City Attorney Judith Robbins, Assistant City Attorney Chad Herrington, Planning Director Kevin Jackson, Senior Planner Pierce Macdonald-Powell, Planning Technician Chris Yeager, and City Clerk John Tulloch

SPECIAL SESSION

Revisions to Planning & Zoning Provisions of the City Code

Planning Director Kevin Jackson briefed the Council on the proposed changes to Planning & Zoning Provisions of the City Code as well as proposed changes to City Policies recommended by the Planning Commission. Mr. Jackson summarized the lengthy public process that lead to the Commission's recommendation. He then presented a brief history of the project and stressed that this would not be the end of Code changes as the Code is a dynamic document. Mr. Jackson noted that the changes are not property specific; rather, the changes are mandated by the General Plan adopted by Council in 2009.

Mr. Jackson reviewed the proposed changes to the City Code, including the adoption of a completely revised Chapter 17; the repeal of Chapters 16 (Private Schools) and 17C (Public Safety Service Charge), which are archaic, and the merging of several additional chapters into the body of Chapter 17. He also relayed the Planning Commission's recommendation that Council adopt Interim Design Guidelines, and repeal several policies that have been either incorporated into the provisions of Chapter 17 or that are being moved into the Interim Design Guidelines.

Planning Director Jackson reviewed in detail the modifications proposed for Chapter 17. He described the changes to formatting and structure that are proposed in order to modernize the language and make it more user-friendly. He then reviewed the proposed revisions to Chapter 17, section by section, as outlined in the staff report.

After a thorough review of the proposed revisions to Chapter 17, Planning Director Jackson discussed the creation of the Interim Design Guidelines. He explained goals of the Interim Design Guidelines are to reflect changes in technology and lifestyles, to clarify language, and to add new guidelines for mixed-uses, commercial, hillside developments, multi-family structures, non-residential signs, and wireless communication facilities. He continued on that the Interim Design Guidelines include General Plan policies related to design; the existing Design Review Guidelines adopted in 1988; other guidelines,

protocols, and requirements including measurements and dispersed policies; and the Planning Director's list of projects exempt from design review or eligible for expedited design review permits.

Planning Director Jackson concluded by stating that the recommended revisions to Chapter 17 are meant to better serve the community by providing clarity and conformance with the existing development patterns; are necessary in order to bring the Code into compliance with the General Plan and Housing Element; eliminate barriers to housing; and remove constraints to the type of development intended for a particular zone. He also concluded that adoption of the Interim Design Guidelines provides a placeholder document that better defines criteria and standards for design and the protocols for design review, incorporates current policies related to procedure, and are mandated by the General Plan.

Public Testimony was received from:

Miguel DeAvila, 1250 Grand Avenue, expressed his support of mixed use development but felt the process in developing the recommendation didn't have the correct focus. He stated his belief that maintaining character should be the first priority, rather than comparisons with other jurisdictions.

Dimitri Magganis commended the Planning Commission and Planning staff for their efforts in developing the proposed revisions and urged the Council not to delay the process.

Sara Alspaugh, stated her support for a ban on Short Term Rentals in Piedmont, as recommended by the Commission. She stated her belief that short term rentals can take away from long term housing stock.

Garrett Keating, 148 Ricardo Avenue, expressed concern about the proposed changes and encouraged the Council to read the portions of the General Plan on which the recommendations are based. Mr. Keating also expressed support for additional public outreach before a final decision is made.

Joy Koletsky Jacobs, 75 Nova Drive, stated her belief that resident opinion may have changed since the 2007 General Plan Survey. She expressed concerns about public outreach regarding this proposal as well as concerns regarding parking in neighborhoods.

Venus French, 926 Kingston Avenue, urged the Council to allow short term rentals in Piedmont, given the benefits to the community. She urged the Council to fully review the facts before imposing the ban recommended by the Planning Commission.

The Council thanked the audience for their comments and for sitting through the detailed presentation on a very dense topic.

Council requested that, prior to the next work session, the Planning Director highlight areas in the proposed revisions that would have increased impact on residents, as well as areas in which impact may be reduced. Also requested were additional examples of neighborhoods

that transition from commercial and mixed uses to residential, as Grand Avenue does.

In response to Council questions, the City Administrator and Planning Director emphasized the discretion that the Planning Commission has in reviewing proposed projects, and how the process is designed to protect neighbors, as well as the residential character of the City. Mr. Benoit also reminded the Council of the fact that every commercial use in Piedmont requires a Conditional Use Permit, which is a protection that doesn't exist in most municipalities.

The Council thanked staff for its hard work on this process and invited members of the public to attend the next Council work session on this topic to be held on Monday, January 23rd at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Wieler adjourned the special meeting at 10:12 p.m.