

PIEDMONT CITY COUNCIL

Special Meeting Minutes for Monday, January 23, 2017

A Special Session of the Piedmont City Council was held January 23, 2017, in the City Hall Council Chambers at 120 Vista Avenue. In accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2(a) the agenda for this special meeting was posted for public inspection on January 20, 2017.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor McBain called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jeff Wieler (arrived at 6:49 p.m.), Vice Mayor Bob McBain, and Councilmembers Jennifer Cavanaugh, Teddy Gray King and Tim Rood

Staff: Deputy City Attorney Judith Robbins, Assistant City Attorney Chad Herrington, Planning Director Kevin Jackson, Senior Planner Pierce Macdonald-Powell, Associate Planner Jennifer Gavin, Assistant Planner Emily Alvarez, 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 then summarized the issues that had gained the most public interest throughout the process thus far, including permitted and conditional uses in Zone B, modification to uses in the Grand Avenue sub-area of Zone D, off-street parking provisions, sign regulations, regulations for short-term rentals, and requirements for wireless communication facilities. Mr. Jackson then briefly outlined the reasons behind, and content of, the recommended Interim Design Guidelines. Concluding his presentation, Mr. Jackson noted how the public may participate in the process and the next steps leading to the tentatively scheduled consideration of the recommended changes by the City Council at their regularly scheduled meeting of March 6, 2017.

Planning Commission Chair Eric Behrens gave a brief summary to the Council on the process that the Planning Commission undertook in reaching a recommendation to the City Council. He stated that leading up to the recommendation there were 16 Planning Commission meetings over a span of approximately 5 years of which Mr. Behrens calculated he has personally contributed approximately 60 hours towards. He stated that the Commission carefully considered the changes, including public input, and feels the proposed changes are an improvement to the Municipal Code that will better serve the community. He added that the revised Code was much clearer and more organized than the current Code.

Public Testimony was received from:

Rajeev Bhatia expressed general support for the amendments. Mr. Bhatia recommended changes related to the Zone D commercial use and development standards. He expressed concern for the possible loss of commercial uses and commercial floor area that could occur without his recommended changes.

Miguel De Avila expressed support for dividing Zone D into two subareas. He described the characteristics of the Grand Avenue commercial district and suggested making Zone D on Grand Avenue a transition area to taper the intensity of uses.

Rick Schiller expressed a range of concerns about the proposed amendments, including regulation of short term rentals, Zone B commercial uses, and Zone D land use and development standards. He compared the different scenarios for Zone D. Mr. Schiller also stated his opinion regarding charter requirements for reclassification of properties.

Joy Koletsky-Jacobs expressed concern that no additional parking demand should be created by the proposed amendments and that the City should not lose existing parking.

Jane Lin expressed support for the proposed amendments. She stated her belief that the amendments were small, reasonable, and incremental steps. Ms. Lin further stated that, in her opinion as an architect, the proposed changes would create nice, walkable places.

Venus French, Jane Klein, and Sharon Robinson urged the Council to allow short term rentals and requested that this issue be handled separately from the overall changes to Chapter 17.

Eric Downing expressed opposition to proposed reduced setback requirements and reduced parking requirements. He stated that he believes that some of the proposed amendments were related to a pending development application.

Sara Alspaugh expressed her support for a ban on short term rentals and her belief that this type of use brings increased crime to the community.

David Weiner discussed the proposed changes to parking requirements and his belief that parking availability will only get worse in the future. He noted that many homes in lower Piedmont are older and have small garages.

Gregory Jurin discussed his property on Grand Avenue and his concern that it would be impossible to develop it as commercial or mixed-use for which it was zoned.

Dimitri Magganas expressed support for the proposed amendments to Chapter 17. He stated his belief that the process has been transparent, democratic, and extensive. He noted that commercial property in Piedmont is less than 1% of the parcels in Piedmont.

Jonathan Jacobs stated his belief that because commercial buildings have a long lifespan, in his opinion the City should not rely on design review or CUP to deny what would otherwise be permitted.

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

Councilmembers asked questions of staff and discussed options for how consideration of this issue should proceed. Specifically, they asked about revisions to the draft amendments and the possibility of discussing topics, including short term rentals and commercial development standards on Grand Avenue separately from the bulk of the revisions to allow for more community input.

Council directed staff to post the PowerPoint presentation from tonight's meeting on the web site. Council also agreed to proceed with the first reading of the ordinance at the March 6, 2017 meeting. Council asked staff to explore the possibility of discussing the issues of Short Term Rentals and the development regulations for the Grand Avenue Sub Area of Zone D separately from the overall revisions to Chapter 17.

PUBLIC FORUM

Rick Schiller discussed the ongoing RFP for waste collection services, specifically his desire that seniors and disabled persons should be able to get backyard service and curbside prices.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Wieler adjourned the special meeting at 9:53 p.m.