

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR STUDY SESSION
OF THE CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE
PLANNING COMMISSION
June 4, 2014 @ 6:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers
100 Avenida Presidio
San Clemente, CA 92672**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Darden called the Regular Study Session of the Planning Commission of the City of San Clemente to order at 6:03 p.m. in City Council Chambers, located at 100 Avenida Presidio, San Clemente, CA 92672.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Wayne Eggleston, Michael Kaupp, Jim Ruehlin, and Kathleen Ward; Chair pro tem Barton Crandell, Vice Chair Donald Brown and Chair Julia Darden

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Jim Pechous, City Planner
Christopher Wright, Associate Planner
Eileen White, Recording Secretary

AGENDA

A. Zoning Permit Streamlining (Wright)

This is a request to receive suggestions on code and policy changes that would improve customer service and maintain quality of life. The next phase of the Zoning Ordinance update is to improve discretionary permit procedures. The Commission's comments will be used to prepare code changes that the Planning Commission will consider at a future public hearing.

Christopher Wright, Associate Planner, summarized the staff report, which answered questions from prior study sessions, provided information that was requested, and outlined some potential code and policy changes that address the principles, concerns, and ideas the Commission identified at prior study sessions. Specifically, staff identified several recommendations: 1) make the Commission the appeal body for staff waivers, rather than the City Council, so that the potential appeal process is reduced from one month to two weeks and to provide improved oversight, 2) identify staff

waivers on the consent calendar for the Commission to review the City Planner's approval of staff waivers, 3) formalize procedures for the City Planner to consult with the Design Review Subcommittee on projects, 4) clarifies that projects should be reviewed by the Design Review Subcommittee when they projects are of significant concern, 5) report City Planner waivers of design review to the Commission, and 6) expand the scope of staff waivers with modified findings to ensure projects are not of significant concern and maintain or improve quality of life. Staff explained a draft set of revised findings for staff waivers and provided a list of potential projects that could be approved with the findings. Lastly, staff provided a mock-up of an information that could be provided to the Commission to review staff waivers on the consent calendar if they were given new authority to serve as the appeal body for those decisions. Staff recommended the Commission comment and provide direction on whether staff has an accurate understanding of the principles, issues, and concerns the Commission has regarding the streamlining ordinance; whether the Commission supports the new strategy to make modest streamlining changes to allow staff to focus on General Plan implementation; whether staff should proceed to draft a streamlining ordinance for the Commission to consider.

During the ensuing discussion, of major concern to the Commissioners was the process for them to review staff waivers, ask questions, and potentially revise or reject a decision made at the staff level.

Associate Planner Wright stated that the Commission could use a process to review staff waivers that is similar to the one used by the City Council to review Planning Commission hearing minutes. The consent calendar would identify a list of approved staff waivers. The Commission would receive a project descriptions, analysis of required findings, and conditions of approval for each waiver decision within Commission meeting packets. The City Planner would have additional information on-hand at meetings in the event the Commission has questions about a staff waiver. This information would include a binder of materials for staff waiver applications. The Commission could concur with staff waiver decisions with one motion or items can be pulled for separate discussion and action. The Commissioners or members of the public would be able to pull an item from the consent calendar to ask questions. If an item is of concern and is pulled from the consent calendar, the Commission would make a separate motion on whether to "call-up" the staff waiver.

The Commission asked if they have the ability to call-up and act upon a waiver at the same hearing or whether action must be deferred until a later meeting if a waiver is called-up.

The City Planner stated that this would be researched further with the City Attorney and staff could provide this information at a future meeting. There are advantages and disadvantages to taking action on a waiver at the same meeting or deferring action until a later meeting.

During review and discussion, the Commissioners, either individually or in agreement, provided the following commentary:

- Suggested Commissioners notify staff in advance if they see a staff waiver on the Consent Calendar that they intend to call up to ask questions. This would allow staff to be prepared to share information about the staff waiver in a PowerPoint or by other means that is more convenient than reviewing materials in a binder.
- Requested that staff member(s) who process staff waivers to be identified on packet materials so the Commission and City Planner can easily identify which staff member is most informed to answer questions and be present at Commission meetings if needed.
- Commented that as time goes on, the City Planner and Commission could make adjustments to the information that is provided about staff waivers in meeting packets, as needed, to ensure there is adequate oversight.
- Agreed with staff's recommendation to formalize existing policy that requires projects to be reviewed by the Design Review Subcommittee that are of significant public concern, regardless of whether they meet required findings.
- Agreed that the list of sample streamlining projects in the staff report seem reasonable and help to put into context the scope of streamlining items that staff is now considering.
- Agreed with staff's strategy to reduce the scope of the streamlining ordinance to items that have little-to-no public concern or impacts and maintain or enhance quality of life. This would allow staff to have time and focus on implementing the General Plan and completing projects, such as new Design Guidelines or adopting a Local Coastal Plan, that are likely to have a much greater impact on improving customer service than the type of code changes that are being discussed in this round of Zoning Ordinance amendments.
- Commented that streamlining will also be very helpful to applicants.
- Agreed to direct staff to begin crafting a streamlining ordinance.

Associate Planner Wright advised that the Commission will have the opportunity to review and comment on the draft streamlining ordinance before it is presented for Council review and action.

Chair Darden commended Associate Planner Wright for his efforts.

COMMISSION COMMENT:

RECESS - Recess until 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julia Darden, Chair

Attest:



Jim Pechous, City Planner