

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR STUDY SESSION  
OF THE CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
March 18, 2015 @ 6:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers  
100 Avenida Presidio  
San Clemente, CA 92672**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Darden called the Regular Study Session of the Planning Commission of the City of San Clemente to order at 6:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers, located at 100 Avenida Presidio, San Clemente, CA 92672.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Vonne Barnes, Barton Crandell, Wayne Eggleston, and Michael Smith; Chair pro tem Jim Ruehlin, Vice Chairperson Donald Brown and Chairperson Julia Darden

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Jim Pechous, City Planner  
Christopher Wright, Associate Planner  
Jim Hare, Consultant Planner  
Matthew Richardson, Assistant City Attorney  
Eileen White, Recording Secretary

**AGENDA**

**A. General Plan Amendment Changes (Wright)  
Zoning Ordinance Update (Hare)**

A request for Planning Commission input on the next phase of the Zoning Ordinance Update: commercial and mixed use zones. Per City Council direction, zoning updates are being expedited for these areas, where developers are waiting for the adoption of new standards in order to process projects. Also, staff will provide an introduction to General Plan amendments recently initiated by City Council.

Chair Darden and Vice Chair Brown recused themselves from considering this item due to property ownership within 500 feet of properties to be evaluated and left the meeting room. Chair pro tem Ruehlin chaired this portion of the meeting.

Christopher Wright, Associate Planner, summarized the staff report and displayed a map indicating proposed land use changes and clarifications. He recommended the Commission provide input.

Jim Hare, Consultant Planner, narrated a PowerPoint Presentation entitled, "Mixed Use/Commercial Zoning Amendments, dated March 18, 2015." In response to direction from City Council and to revise code to allow consideration of pending development proposals, staff is recommending the Commission consider proposed revisions to the MU 3.2 and Mu 3.1 Zones. The most noteworthy change is a proposal to revise the appropriate height limit and the method of measuring the height limit in order to accommodate building on sloped lots and ensure El Camino Real street frontage is limited to two-story buildings. He described the "Plate Line" and "Plate Height" methods of measurement to be used solely in the MU 3.2 Zone, and displayed proposed definitions to be added for guidance. Staff recommended the Commission hear and discuss the presentation and provide input and guidance.

In response to questions from the Commission, Consultant Planner Hare provided examples of uses for the back portions of lots; discussed how the plate line and height measurements will be calculated; agreed to consult with architects to ensure the definitions are clearly defined to avoid potential for individuals to find loopholes to circumvent the intent. He noted the plate line and height measurements will ensure clear demarcation lines and limit heights of buildings to two story structures along El Camino Real in the MU 3.2 Zone as per direction from the City Council.

Jim Pechous, City Planner, speculated that the revised design guidelines, which will provide guidelines on how the development of stepped lots, will be available in approximately a year's time; noted the intent of guidelines is to give architects/developers some flexibility and let the market decide how the space should be used; suggested a minimum first floor standard height, such as 18 feet, may be required for the first floor to ensure proper commercial use of the property and/or discourage three-story building within the 30 foot height limit.

Commissioner Crandell suggested staff consider creative methods, incentives, and exchanges to encourage variation of the 30 foot height limits along the street frontage to ensure a varied streetscape. A limited number of lots could be designated to allow 32 feet high buildings, with surrounding lots designated with 30, 28, etc., height limits so that the street frontage does not present with a solid 30 foot height building line. He suggested staff converse with planning officials with the City of Newport Beach as they have volume calculations to ensure articulation of buildings.

Chair pro tem Ruehlin invited the public to provide input.


Cheryl Moe, architect and resident, recommended additional language to ensure strict compliance with plate line and height guidelines, especially with regard to roof decks; suggested allowing applicants to go higher if their parcels are larger and consider providing incentives in exchange for more amenities, including additional parking; encouraged increased density for development at North Beach to ensure a pedestrian atmosphere; thanked the City for their efforts to rehabilitate Ole Hanson Beach Club as the improvements will make the facility a very nice amenity for the community.

**RECESS** - Recess until 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Julia Darden, Chair

Attest:

  
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Jim Pechous, City Planner

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