

**TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 22, 2014**

Chair Humphreville called the regular meeting of the Yucca Valley Planning Commission to order at 6:00p.m.

Commissioners present were Drozd, Lavender, Whitten and Chair Humphreville. Commissioner Bridenstine was not present (excused).

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Humphreville.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Whitten moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Drozd seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Dennis Pask, Yucca Valley, spoke in support of the Home Occupation Permit renewal for Mr. Falossi, which is currently under consideration. Mr. Pask submitted a list of signatures from families in the neighborhood who supported Mr. Falossi. He said that he believed that the individual bringing the complaint against Mr. Falossi was acting maliciously.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**1. DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT, DCA 07-13 ARTICLE 3 CEQA EXEMPTION, SECTION 15061**

The staff report was presented by Deputy Town Manager Stueckle and Planning Technician Olsen. Staff anticipated that the Commission should be close to finishing its discussion of Article 3. Staff stated that they had added language on page 3-7 prohibiting real estate signs and sign twirlers from the clear sight triangle. Commissioner Whitten suggested also adding language prohibiting political signs. There was a consensus among the commissioners that that language should be added.

Staff outlined the changes removing the language referring to windmills and solar energy structures from the section addressing permitted structural height increases and the changes to the definition of mass grading. There was Commission consensus that these changes satisfied their previous concerns on these issues.

Staff also changed the number of spaces required for mini storage facilities to 6 plus 2 per caretaker, which is a standard common to other cities. The commission engaged in a discussion on this standard, and there was consensus that language should be modified to include 6 spaces plus 2 per caretaker with the fire department driveway width requirements. It was mentioned that climate controlled storage facilities may have different needs.

Staff modified page 3-32 in the recommended language to separate convalescent hospitals from retirement homes, and set the parking space requirement for convalescent hospitals at 1 space per 4 beds plus 1 per employee on the largest shift and 1 per staff doctor. They also set the requirements for retirement homes at 1 space per 3 beds and 1 per employee on the largest shift. There was Commission discussion on this standard. There was Commission consensus that term convalescent hospital should be changed to facility or care to remove confusion.

Staff modified page 3-53 to add language to clarify what would be considered a public nuisance. There was Commission discussion in this section. Commissioner Lavender and Commissioner Whitten expressed concern over subjective terms like substantial and unsightly. Chair Humphreville asked if the standard would be complaint driven. Staff informed the commission that the standard would complaint driven in part, but for major issues such as structure deterioration there would be proactive action. Current code enforcement tends to be 50 percent reactive and 50 percent proactive, but it varies. Commissioners Whitten, Lavender and Humphreville said that they would like to see more percentage driven standards.

Staff also modified the recommended language on 3-86 to change Soil Erosion Permit to Grading Permit, and modified 3-91 to add the language per location and/or per vendor to table 3-24 regarding special events, and changed the number of circuses or carnivals from 2 to 4. On page 3-96 and 3-98, language was combined to remove duplication. On page 3-100 Certificate of Land Use Compliance was changed to Land Use Compliance Review, and on page 3-124 the language was modified to remove reference to the scenic highway element of the general plan, and on page 3-125 language was modified to replace Conditional Use Permit with Land Use Compliance Review. On page 3-127 language was added to the effect that wireless communication facilities which are disguised may be allowed a reduced setback.

Staff informed the Commission that the State Mining and Geology board would prefer us to go through legal counsel to determine if we are mandated to allow mining activity. The questions on this area are being posed to legal counsel.

Staff recommended that the Commission continue this issue on to the next meeting. The Commission concurred with the staff recommendation.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**MOTION**

None

**2. DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT, DCA 01-14 ARTICLE 2 CEQA EXEMPTION, SECTION 15061**

Staff provided a brief overview of Article 2 and recommended a few areas that the Commission may wish to discuss, particularly accessory structure standards and native plant regulations, and asked that the Commission begin its discussion of Article 2 and provide direction to staff.

Chair Humphreville suggested going through the article by section and allowing public comments after each section. There was Commission consensus to adopt this approach.

Chair Humphreville opened a discussion on sections 9.05, Zoning Districts and Zoning Maps, and 9.06, Land Use Standards and Permit Requirements. Chair Humphreville asked if there had been any changes made to the table on 2-3 addressing Overlay Zoning Districts. Some of the overlay districts were not adopted when the Town adopted the County Code. There have been some new elements added to reflect current practices.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Dennis Pask, Yucca Valley, said that he thought the zoning codes were being misused by individuals maliciously. He stated that he was not familiar with the codes.

Staff clarified that the section of the code relating to the speaker's concern was the section governing Home Occupation Permits and informed the speaker that Planning Commission would be holding a public hearing on the Home Occupation Permits on May 13, 2014.

## **END PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Humphreville introduced a discussion about the issue of a business which has recently opened which is operating a flea market type business in a parking lot. He asked if there was language in the code to address this kind of activity. Commissioners Whitten and Lavender both expressed concern over this kind of activity. Deputy Town Manager Stueckle stated that the Town has not had regulations regarding the outdoor display of merchandise, although such regulations are common in other municipalities, and the Commission may want to consider including some kind of regulation, such as prohibiting that activity in the absence of a Conditional Use Permit. Chair Humphreville said that there was a difference between having a few antiques sitting out and have a trailer full of flea market goods, and that some kind of language was needed to deal with the issue. Commissioner Drozd suggested allowing only a certain percentage of a business's inventory to be displayed outside. Commissioner Whitten said that he thought that is was important that the display be neat and orderly. Chair Humphreville said that small temporary sales are fine but larger ongoing displays should require a Conditional Use Permit.

Chair Humphreville introduced a discussion on 9.07, Residential and Hillside Reserve Districts, and 9.08, Standards and Regulations for Specific Uses in Residential and Hillside Reserve Districts. Commissioner Whitten asked for clarification on the definition of multi-family dwellings, and social care facilities as they are currently addressed in the code, and staff provided the requested information. He also asked if vacation rentals are covered in the section

of the code addressing bed and breakfast, and if not, should they be addressed in the code. Deputy Town Manager Stueckle said that may be a topic for Commission discussion, as vacation rentals for the most part have not been an issue in this community, but it may be an issue in the future. Commissioner Whitten said that he thought it was a discussion the Commission should have. He also stated that because there were not many hotels in the area, vacation rentals may be an untapped market that would benefit the community. Chair Humphreville said he did not know of any current vacation rentals.

Commissioner Whitten also said that he felt the gun ranges and off road vehicle parks should be addressed separately from Sports and Recreational Facilities on page 2-13. The current regulation doesn't specify indoor or outdoor gun ranges and that there are additional hazards associated with gun ranges which should be addressed, particularly in outdoor gun ranges. He also feels that off road vehicle parks should be associated with a trail system. Chair Humphreville asked staff for and received confirmation that a gun range would require a Conditional Use Permit under the current regulations. Commissioner Whitten said that he thought there may be residential zones in which the Town wouldn't want outdoor gun ranges allowed, even with a CUP. There was Commission consensus that outdoor gun ranges shouldn't be allowed in zones RS and RM.

Commissioner Drozd asked if metal carports should be addressed on page 2-16. Deputy Town Manager Stueckle said that metal carports are addressed under the section on accessory structures, and said that the Commission should have a discussion on these standards, particularly the requirement for architectural compatibility. Staff has historically interpreted the current standards to mean that a metal roofed carport is not architecturally compatible with a standard stucco and tile roof construction. Staff believes that the 'architecturally compatible' standard need further definition, and asked that the commission consider what kind of standards they would like to see or if in fact it should just be adherence to the building code.

Chair Humphreville said that he believed that the Commission needs to work on the requirements for percent coverage of the house for accessory structures. The current standard can create unappealing architecture for RV garages, and in some cases prevents them from being constructed at all. Commissioner Whitten said that, when there is proper screening, architectural compatibility doesn't seem to matter. Chair Humphreville said that even on large lot sizes, there are too many limits to square footage. Commissioner Whitten pointed out that there are some structures such as horse stalls, which would not make sense to be required to be architecturally compatible. Commissioner Humphreville thought that the architectural compatibility standard is problematic for residents.

Chair Humphreville thought that, on page 2-24, boats and recreational vehicles should be in the same line. If we require recreational vehicles to be parked in the side or rear area only, there are some locations where they won't be able to be parked at all. Staff provided an overview of the current standards for placement and size of detached garages. Commissioner Whitten asked if staff can verify that the fire department's requirement is within 10 ft. of structures. Chair Humphreville asked if there were any state standards regulating square foot percentages, and was

informed by staff that those standards are up to the individual municipalities. He said he would like to see a recommendation for a greater square footage allowance.

Staff said that the Commission may wish to consider the native plant regulations. There had previously been discussion on these regulations, but the previous Planning Commission recommendations were not ultimately accepted by the Council. In commercial, multi-family, and single family developments of one unit per acre or less, it is anticipated that no native plants will remain in their original location. The California Desert Native Plants Act states that land development activity is exempt unless the plants are being transported off site, at which point those plants must be tagged and permitted. The Commission had flexibility to decide what they want those regulations to be. Staff recommends that the native plant regulations be applied to the Joshua tree and Mojave yucca.

Commissioner Drozd pointed out that two of the plants, the palo verde and the mesquite, are not actually native to the area, and should not be included in the native plant regulations. Chair Humphreville said there had previously been about 10 to 12 meetings on this issue. He believes that the ordinance was fairly balanced. Although there were things he personally disliked, he thought it was well put together. Commissioner Whitten said that he thinks that the regulation is reasonable as written and thinks it may almost be ready. Chair Humphreville said that he likes the use of incentives, and that he thinks including just the Joshua tree and the Mojave yucca is a good compromise, although he wouldn't personally include the yucca.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**END PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Staff provided a brief overview of the regulations regarding animal keeping in residential districts. He said that staff has made no changes to these, and hasn't heard of any issues that might indicate that they aren't working. Chair Humphreville said that he thought they were liberal, but he didn't think they needed to be changed. Commissioner Drozd asked what kind of permit would be required for commercial animal keeping, and was informed that it requires a livestock permit. He also said that he likes seeing these kind of regulations in place to protect animal welfare.

There was a discussion about the regulations governing bed and breakfast uses. Commissioner Whitten said that he did not have issues with this section. Chair Humphreville asked if there were any currently permitted. Staff stated that there had been no recent applications, but there had been two previous applications, neither of which were currently operational.

Chair Humphreville asked how many permits for child day care were currently active. Staff informed him that all currently active daycare facilities are limited to 7 or fewer attendees and are exempt. Staff will also double check that this is the standard mandated by state law.

Chair Humphreville asked if there were any issues regarding permanent yard sale activities. Staff said that those kind of activities were currently dealt with through code enforcement as non-

permitted home occupation activities. Staff had not previously recommended requiring permits for yard sale activities which are not ongoing.

Chair Humphreville asked if there were any proposed changes in the Multi-Family Residential Standards Site Design Guidelines and Architectural Design Guidelines section. Staff said that there were some new standards proposed in this section.

Chair Humphreville comment on second dwelling units, reiterating that he felt the size limitations were too restrictive.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**END PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Staff provided a brief overview of section 9.09, Commercial Districts. This section lays out the permitted land uses and permit requirements, and staff recommended that the Commission consider those uses. Chair Humphreville asked if staff had some specific issues that staff would like to call out. Staff said that they have not yet sat down and gone through all of this section on a technical level.

Commissioner Whitten asked about adult oriented businesses, and asked where they were permitted if they were prohibited in all commercial districts. Staff said that they were permitted in industrial zones. Chair Humphreville asked about the store with the XXX sign visible from the highway. Staff explained that under the current regulations that particular store was not classified as an adult oriented business, as that is determined by the percentage of square footage dedicated to adult oriented merchandise. Chair Humphreville would like to know what kind of zoning regulations other communities have used, and would like to see some recommendations regarding zoning areas. Staff also mentioned that part of the issue relates to the fact that, under the First Amendment, the Town does not have the ability to regulate the content of signage.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**END PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**MOTION**

Commissioner Whitten moved that the Planning Commission continue this item to the next meeting, which will be held on May 13, 2014. It was seconded by Chair Humphreville. The motion carried unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**1. MINUTES**

A request that the Planning Commission approves as submitted the minutes of the meeting held on April 8, 2014.

**MOTION**

Commissioner Whitten moved that the Planning Commission approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drozd and passed unanimously.

**STAFF REPORTS AND COMMENTS:**

Deputy Town Manager Stueckle and Project Engineer Qishta provided a report on the status current projects. Chair Humphreville asked about the overlay on the gutters along the highway. Some of the gutters are significantly higher than others. Project Engineer Qishta explained that the variation was due to the Caltrans request to meet the 2 percent slope. Commissioner Drozd asked when the highway construction was scheduled to be completed. Staff explained that the current phase was scheduled to be completed by April 30<sup>th</sup>, and that while they did not have a specific end date for the next phase as of yet, the contract was a 120 day contract. Commissioner Whitten said that the process sounded disruptive to traffic. Staff said they would have a conversation with Caltrans regarding scheduling and traffic control.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

A public hearing for the Home Occupation Permit regulations and a request for variance on a front yard setback are both scheduled for the May 13, 2014 Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Drozd asked if the matter associated with the Falossi HOP would be brought before the Planning Commission. Staff stated that the matter wouldn't be coming before the Planning Commission at the May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, but it would be coming before the Commission at a later date as a separate issue for the discussion of Home Occupation Permit regulations.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND REQUEST:**

Commissioner Drozd thanked everyone for their efforts.

Commissioner Lavender had no comments.

Commissioner Whitten thanked staff for their efforts, particularly Planning Technician Olsen. He asked that staff speak to Caltrans about putting something up to prevent illegal and unsafe turning movement in front of the AM PM. Staff informed him that this request, along with two others, is being addressed to Caltrans in writing. Commission Whitten also request that the discussion of Article 2 and the Home Occupation Permit regulations be continued on to the following meeting to allow him to be part of the discussion on these items.

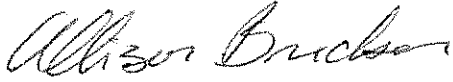
Chairman Humphreville thanked staff for their efforts, particularly Planning Technician Olsen.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Brucker".

Allison Brucker  
Secretary