

**TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
December 2, 2014**

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

Commissioners present were Drozd, Lavender, Whitten and Vice Chair Bridenstine.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Bridenstine.

Commissioner Whitten moved to approve the agenda, with the correction that next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission was December 9th rather than December 23rd. It was noted for the record that the December 9th meeting would be canceled, and that the December 23rd meeting might also be canceled. Commissioner Drozd seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Bridenstine opened the floor to public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENTS

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

**1. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, CUP 06-07 ESSIG
REQUEST FOR EXTENSION**

Deputy Town Manager Stueckle provided the staff report. He provided an overview of the item which was a request for extension on a conditional use permit for an approximately 5,890 sq. ft. commercial building, including approximately 3,790 sq. ft. of office space. Staff stated that the conditions of approval had been put into the current format, and that staff was recommending that the Planning Commission grant a three year extension, expiring on December 4, 2014.

Vice Chair Bridenstine opened the floor to public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jean Essig, applicant, said that there had already been a large investment in the project, and she would like to see it completed. She said it will be a beautiful building.

CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Drozd said that he saw no reason not to grant the extension. He said it seemed like a nice project.

Commissioner Lavender said that he had no objection to granting the extension.

Commissioner Whitten asked staff if there had been any changes in the Development Code which would effect this project. Staff said that they were not aware of any. Commissioner Whitten also comment on the positioning of the loading zone at the rear of the site adjacent to a residential property. He asked if there was any requirement for a block wall to provide a buffer, and staff said that a block wall was not a project requirement. Staff also said that typically with renewals there were not changes made to the conditions of approval unless ordinances or regulations had changed and the conditions needed to be modified in order to be compliant.

Vice Chair Bridenstine asked if the fact that the condition use permit had passed its expiration date would affect the Commission's ability to renew the application. Staff said that due to an error on the part of staff, the applicant had been sent a notice stating the permit expired in 2014, and so would not be considered past the expiration date.

MOTION

Commissioner Whitten moved that the Planning Commission approve the Extension of Time request for 3 years, expiring on December 4, 2017 with the requirement that if there are any changes to the ordinances that it receive commission approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drozd and passed unanimously.

2. LANDSCAPE PLAN, LP 01-14 AND NATIVE PLANT PLAN APPLICATION, NPP 82-14, SAGE ESTATES FOR TRACT MAP 17862

Deputy Town Manager Stueckle presented the staff report. He provided an overview of the item, which was the Landscape Plan and Native Plant Plan application for Tract Map 17862, a development with 105 single family resident lots. Staff noted that the updated Native Plant ordinance, which had received its first reading, referred to maximum reuse of native plants on the site. The proposed landscaping plan primarily uses native plants, namely Joshua trees and Mojave yuccas. Staff identified two areas of the landscape plan which they recommended that the Commission discuss. One was along Sage Avenue from Golden Bee to San Andreas where there is a stretch of meandering sidewalk with landscaping on both sides of the sidewalk, which will consist of Joshua trees and Mojave yuccas. The second area was the landscaping of the typical residential lot, which would consist of a Joshua tree and two Mojave yuccas. Both of these areas would be left as native soil. Staff asked that the Commission discuss whether or not some other material such as decomposed granite should be used as ground cover in those areas rather than native soil.

Ray Lopez, Landscape architect for the project, spoke about the proposed landscape plan and native plant plan. He said that the native plant survey, which had been performed approximately

five years ago, identified 859 Joshua trees and 517 total Mojave yuccas located on the project. Of those it was determined that 69 of the Joshua trees were not viable for transplant, leaving 790 Joshua trees which could be transplanted. They intended to transplant 526 Joshua trees and 422 yuccas on the project. The project will include a nursery area where 80 Joshua trees will be planted, and can either be adopted or remain in place.

Mr. Lopez said that the landscape plan only included Mojave yucca and Joshua trees except in five yards with slopes which required landscaping to provide stabilization, which will include non-native plants. The landscape plan does not include any irrigation except in the five areas with non-native plants. He said that there are some junipers on the site, but they cannot be transplanted or protected on site. In some of the sloped areas they are putting in gravel.

Commissioner Drozd asked about the adoption area and what their plan was to adopt out plants. Bill Warner, Civil Engineer for the project, said that the adoptable plants would be placed at the northern end of the wash, and that it was his understanding that the ordinance required a 60 day period for adoption.

Commissioner Drozd asked if this project was a continuation of the previous Copper Hills development. Mr. Warner said that while it was the same developer, the previous project was approved under the jurisdiction of the County and had a significantly different process.

Commissioner Whitten expressed concern about the use of native soil in the residential lots, and asked if there was any plan for soil stabilization or erosion control. Mr. Warner said that the property owner, Bill Shack, was willing to do some gravel or decomposed granite in those areas for soil stabilization. Commissioner Whitten asked if the location of the power poles could be added to the landscape plans. Mr. Warner said that the locations of the poles had been considered when designing the landscape plans, but those locations could be shown. Commissioner Whitten also asked if the package treatment plant was going to be subsurface, and Mr. Warner provided the requested details.

Mr. Warner also stated that they expected to receive the 1601 permit from the Department of Fish and Game in the next few days. He stated as part of that process the project was required to include 240 native plants in the form cat-claws to be purchased and planted in the channel. There were also about 7 acres of the channel would have to be fenced off and left undisturbed.

Commissioner Lavender said that the applicant had addressed his concern that the transplantation of the Joshua trees be coordinated with the grading to reduce the risk of damage.

Commissioner Bridenstine asked how long they expected the grading to take, and if the Joshua trees would be left exposed during the process.

Mr. Shack said that the plan was to relocate the Joshua trees immediately, so they are not exposed. He also stated that the plan was to add colored compressed granite and rock along Sage Avenue to make it aesthetically pleasing. He also said lots would have either grey rock or compressed granite, and that the lots would have a minimum of one Joshua tree, but could include more.

Commissioner Whitten asked if there was an option to add a lawn for individuals purchasing these lots. Mr. Shack said that nothing would prevent an individual from adding a lawn, they would not recommend it. Commissioner Whitten asked about artificial grass, and Mr. Shack said that it would be available as an upgrade.

Commissioner Drozd asked if the changes in the Native Plant ordinance would effect this project. Staff said it would not.

Commissioner Bridenstine asked if the yuccas which were not going to be used in the landscaping plan were going to be adopted out, used in the tract or destroyed. Mr. Lopez said that the landscape plan was already using the majority of the plants, and Mr. Shack had stated that they would be able to include additional plants in the lots if necessary, so they could conceivable use them all. Commissioner Bridenstine also asked about the irrigation on the sloped areas which would be receiving the native type, but not native, plants. Mr. Lopez said that there are five lots with backyards with a slope that landscaping for stabilization which would include drip style irrigation. Commissioner Bridenstine asked if the treatment plant would be screened from view by the landscaping, and Mr. Lopez said that the plant would be screened by a wall, and the intent of the landscaping in that area was to preserve as many native plants as possible.

Staff said that if the Planning Commission found that the native plant plan and the landscaping plan with the modifications of including decomposed granite material along the parkway along Sage as well as on the residential lots and to include more native plants back into the site if possible, then the Planning Commission could approve the landscaping plan and native plant plan as presented a modified.

MOTION

Commissioner Whitten moved that the Planning Commission approve the Native Plant Plan Application, NPP 82-14, and that the Planning Commission approve the Landscape Plan, LP 01-14, with the modification to include decomposed gravel in the specified areas. Commissioner Drozd seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. MINUTES

A request that the Planning Commission approves as submitted the minutes of the meetings held on October 14, 2014.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

END PUBLIC COMMENTS

MOTION

Commissioner Whitten moved that the Commission approve as submitted the minutes of the meetings held on October 14, 2014. Commissioner Drozd seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Staff provided an overview of the status of private land development projects currently active in the town.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND REQUEST:

Commissioner Drozd thanked everyone for attending.

Commissioner Lavender said that he had requested to leave the Commission and had asked Councilman Leone to replace him.

Commissioner Whitten thanked Commissioner Lavender for his service, and thanked staff. He also stated that it might be his last meeting depending on the selection process.

Vice Chairman Bridenstine thanked staff, and thanked Commissioner Lavender. She also asked how soon they would have new Planning Commission members, and staff said that it would typically be January or February.

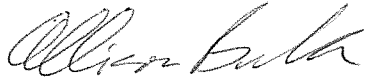
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for December 9, 2014 at 6:00pm, but it will be cancelled.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:20.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Brucker
Secretary

Approved by the Planning Commission on January 13, 2015.