

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE LANCASTER PLANNING COMMISSION May 20, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Vose called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION

Pastor Tobi England of Lancaster Baptist Church.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Harvey.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Cook, Harvey, Malhi, Smith, Terracciano, Vice Chairman Hall, and Chairman Vose.

Absent: None.

Also present were the Deputy City Attorney (David Palmer), Associate Planner (Chuen Ng), City Engineer (Michael Cantrell), Recording Secretary (Joy Reyes), and an audience of six people.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Terracciano to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of April 15, 2013. Motion carried with the following vote (5-0-2-0):

AYES: Commissioners Harvey, Smith, Terracciano, Vice Chairman Hall, and Chairman Vose.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: Commissioners Cook and Malhi.

ABSENT: None.

NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 13-02

Chairman Vose opened the public hearing at 6:05 p.m., to hear request by Dana Georges (Georges Mediterranean Cuisine), to allow on-sale consumption of alcoholic beverages (Alcoholic Beverage Control Type 41, on-sale beer and wine) within an existing restaurant (Georges Mediterranean Cuisine), and live entertainment, in the CPD (Commercial Planned Development) Zone, located at 1983 West Avenue L.

The reading of the staff report was waived since an uncontested hearing letter was received from the applicant stating agreement to the conditions of approval as stated in the staff report. There were none in the audience who wished to speak in opposition to the request. Public hearing closed at 6:05 p.m.

It was moved by Commissioner Terracciano and seconded by Commissioner Malhi to adopt Resolution No. 13-05 approving Conditional Use Permit No. 13-02. Motion carried with the following vote (7-0-0-0):

AYES: Commissioners Cook, Harvey, Malhi, Smith, Terracciano, Vice Chairman Hall, and Chairman Vose.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

DIRECTOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

COMMISSION AGENDA

Chairman Vose informed that on May 14, 2013, the County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution related to the issues of impacts from commercial grade solar projects, particularly photovoltaic facilities. He stated the Board's motion calls on the Director of Planning, Director of Public Works, and Director of Public Health in the County, to explore County Code Amendments and requirements for all solar energy facilities in Los Angeles County. This excludes the City of Lancaster; however, he opined that the Commission should be aware because numerous solar facilities have been considered in the City of Lancaster, and there are others pending in the environmental review process. The premise of the motion is two-fold: (1) The increase of incidents of valley fever allegedly contracted by construction workers on two utility-scaled photovoltaic facilities in San Luis Obispo County, and (2) The impacts of construction and fugitive dust. The intent would be to evaluate the construction methods for mass grading, disking, scraping for solar panel arrays, and establish a methodology that would eliminate grading of ground relative to the installation of solar grid projects. Chairman Vose

stated in summary that he felt staff should be aware of the possible opportunity to gather information from the County agencies, particularly public health in referenced to environmental reviews. Chairman Vose inquired of future solar projects; Chuen Ng informed there were three solar projects.

PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR - NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Three speaker cards:

Speaker Brenda Vallejo, representative for Pueblo Y Salud, local organization dedicated to educating the youth concerning healthy living, and the dangers of tobacco. She informed the organization has a partnership with ACS (American Cancer Society), which allows the provision of cessation resources. The organization has participated in events such as Antelope Valley College Health Fair, Poppy Festival, Relay for Life, AV Pride, and Senior Expo. The desire of the organization is to work with the City to improve the health of the community. She expressed in conclusion, to meet with the Commission, if possible, to share more details.

Commissioner Smith stated she was familiar with the organization and commended Ms. Vallejo for their efforts.

Speaker Liz Diachun, representative of AV Residents for Reasonable Water Rates, stated that she is a resident near Avenue L-8 & 22nd Street West, and a Cal Water customer. She has paid over \$2,500 to date to Cal Water, and received a notice that water rates would increase by another 60%, which would heighten her monthly rate to \$350. Many of her neighbors will not be able to afford the increase; the community consists of retirees and fixed-income residents. During the summer months the bills are enormous; the residents have made an effort to conserve water. The residents felt that Cal Water has them in a strangle hold with expensive water rates, which is allowed by the CPUC (California Public Utilities Company). A copy of the letter previously sent to Planning Director and a flier were distributed. Commissioner Terracciano inquired if there would be a meeting on the following Thursday night (May 23rd), and Liz Diachun affirmed.

Kirsten Larson, also a representative of AV Residents for Reasonable Water Rates, added that with the high water rates paid for by customers, there is also a charge for water that the customers do not use. She expressed that the residents are seeking assistance from the City Hall and State representatives. She concluded that the EPA has set standards to what is reasonable and affordable for water charges as 2.5% of medium household income; presently, the charge is 2.4% of medium household income. An increase rate of 60% would place the water charge to 6%, exceeding the rate of affordability set by the EPA.

Vice Chairman Hall referenced to the comment made by Kirsten Larson concerning Cal Water charges while conserving or using water, and inquired if the same condition applies to SCE and solar panels. Commissioner Harvey stated it was her understanding that SCE, as well as other major power utilities, base the charge on a per-kilowatt-hour use with a certain allowance per month; any net energy surplus from usage are credited back to the customer or can be applied toward future energy charges. Chairman Vose stated that the ultimate decision of setting the rates is by the public utility companies. He informed that the Planning Commission

deals with land use as stated in Section 17 of the Lancaster Municipal Code, and public utilities are not covered in the Commission's purview.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Vose declared the meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m., to the Special Meeting for Agenda Review on Monday, June 10, 2013, at 5:30 p.m., in the Planning Conference Room, City Hall.

JAMES D. VOSE, Chairman
Lancaster Planning Commission

ATTEST:

BRIAN S. LUDICKE, Planning Director
City of Lancaster