

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING LANCASTER ARCHITECTURAL AND DESIGN COMMISSION

September 19, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pro Tem Parker called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Commissioners Cook, Donlon, Hall, Harvey, Stallworth and Wiley and Chairman Pro Tem Parker

ABSENT: None.

Also present were the following: Brian Ludicke (Planning Director), Silvia Donovan (Principal Planner), Dan Miller and Randie Davis (Assistant Planners) and Tess Epling (Recording Secretary) and an audience of 5.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL AND DESIGN COMMISSION

Election of Chairman and Vice Chair

Open nominations for Chairman and Vice Chair of the Architectural and Design Commission

Brian Ludicke explained that the matter regarding organization of the Architectural and Design Commission was discussed with the City Attorney and the City Attorney reviewed the ordinance. The City Attorney opined that the organization has to have the Chairman and the Vice Chairman. This is the structure that the Architectural and Design Commission has to operate under.

Chairman Pro Tem Parker stated that the agenda should have a public comment item on the organization of the Architectural and Design Commission.

The Commission proceeded to elect a Chairman and a Vice Chairman at 4:05 p.m.

It was moved by Commissioner Cook and seconded by Commissioner Hall to nominate Commissioner Harvey as Chairman. Commissioner Harvey accepted the nomination.

It was moved by Commissioner Stallworth and seconded by Commissioner Wiley to nominate Chairman Pro Tem Parker as Chairman. Chairman Pro Tem Parker declined the nomination in deference to Commissioner Harvey.

Motion adopted (by a 7-0-0-0 vote) to approve the nomination of Commissioner Harvey as Chairman.

AYES: Commissioners Cook, Donlon, Hall, Harvey, Stallworth and Wiley and Chairman Pro Tem Parker.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

It was moved by Commissioner Stallworth and seconded by Commissioner Donlon to nominate Commissioner Parker as Vice Chairman. Commissioner Parker accepted the nomination.

It was moved by Commissioner Hall and seconded by Chairman Harvey to nominate Commissioner Cook as Vice Chair. Commissioner Cook accepted the nomination.

Commissioner Parker garnered 4 votes and Commissioner Cook 3 votes. Commissioner Parker was elected Vice Chair.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes from the Regular Meeting of August 29, 2008.

Vice Chair Parker noted that public comments should be accepted for the approval of the minutes.

Vice Chair Parker noted that the following should be reflected in the minutes: That he brought up a suggestion of electing Co-Chairs and that he also asked staff to look into the viability of having Co-Chairs, should there be a mutual consensus among the Commissioners to do so.

Motion adopted to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of August 29, 2008 with suggested changes.

AYES: Commissioners Cook, Donlon, Hall, Stallworth and Wiley, Vice Chair Parker, Chairman Harvey.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

The meeting was reconvened at the Planning Large Conference Room.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL AND DESIGN COMMISSION

Election of Chairman and Vice Chair

Open nominations for Chairman and Vice Chair of the Architectural and Design Commission

The Commission and staff moved to Planning Large Conference Room.

Chairman Harvey informed the body that she would like to withdraw from the position. She said that she expected Commissioner Parker to accept the nomination for Chairman and for him to be the Chairman because he will bring a lot to the commission. She explained that there is a lot to be learned and gained, not just by herself, but by all of them.

Vice Chair Parker suggested to Chairman Harvey that she could offer a motion to the body, and if the body approves it, have a reelection.

Chairman Harvey made a motion to discuss with the Commissioners the point of having a revote, and give Vice Chair Parker the opportunity to accept the nomination for Chairman. Commissioner Hall commented that if the body would go through the whole motion of revote, then might as well do everything over and he would like to nominate Diana Cook for Chairman. Commissioners Donlon, Wiley, Cook and Stallworth signified their concurrence.

Commissioner Donlon inquired if there is an opportunity in the future to discuss the chairmanship of the body and switch up the roles, for the purpose of developing other commissioners. Brian Ludicke responded that in terms of the Planning Commission, they generally reorganize. If there is a situation where you have a Chairman that is elected and the person chose to resign from the position, then a reorganization has to be in order. Vice Chair Parker commented that the Commission as a body controls their destiny and normally, when the Chairman resigns, the Vice Chair would step up. Chairman Harvey said that resignation has a negative connotation so she would prefer a do-over.

Chairman Harvey moved to close discussion, and all commissioners agreed to do so.

It was moved by Commissioner Hall and seconded by Commissioner Stallworth to nominate Commissioner Cook for Chairman. Commissioner Cook accepted the nomination.

It was moved by Commissioner Donlon and seconded by Commissioner Wiley to nominate Commissioner Parker for Chairman. Commissioner Parker accepted the nomination.

Brian Ludicke requested that the Commissioners do a show of hands. Commissioner Parker garnered 4 votes and Commissioner Cook 3 votes. Commissioner Parker was elected Chairman.

It was moved by Commissioner Stallworth and seconded by Commissioner Hall to nominate Commissioner Cook for Vice Chairman. Chairman Parker requested the body to elect Commissioner Cook by affirmation. All 7 Commissioners voted in favor and Commissioner Cook was elected Vice Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the Regular Meeting of August 29, 2008.

Chairman Parker noted that there were some corrections to the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of August 29, 2008 and asked the Commission if they had further questions.

It was moved by Commissioner Hall and seconded by Commissioner Wiley to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of August 29, 2008 with the changes as noted.

AYES: Commissioners Donlon, Hall, Harvey, Stallworth and Wiley, Vice Chair Cook and Chairman Parker.
NOES: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: None.

LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Silvia Donovan explained that the legal basis is established by state law. It is a state mandated Constitution of Physical Development that allows the General Plan to have a Plan for Physical Development, which incorporates community design goals, objectives, policies and programs. It promotes the opportunity to establish vision, policies and programs for its achievement.

Government Code Section 65302.4 indicates that cities may also express community intentions regarding urban form and design. This is what allows cities to have design guidelines.

Brian Ludicke mentioned that the City Council has determined that under police power, cities are allowed to regulate more health, safety and welfare. The body will be dealing with the broad umbrella of welfare, which would have to do with aesthetics, attractiveness and appearance. The Council has stated their intent to establish regulation in the area of welfare based on design. Staff will be on hand to help the body and guide them towards the process. Staff will give the commissioners an overview of the development review process and design terminology.

Silvia Donovan stated that recommendations by Design Ad Hoc Committee were put out in February 2006. Their recommendations were for land use, themes, colors, materials, lighting, landscaping, signage and community. These were items that the committee thought needed to be addressed.

DESIGN TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Silvia Donovan and Brian Ludicke went through the design definitions and terminology such as scale, massing, articulation, streetscape, infill development, setback, etc. These are terms that the commissioners will be encountering and using in the course of their work.

Commissioner Stallworth commented that she is from the Mideast and they have what is referred to as *shotgun* homes, built in the 1920s and 1930's that have a skinny structure in the front and went straight back.

Chairman Parker noted that residential developments in Lancaster have a lot of open vacant lots. How would infill development apply in the areas of Lancaster in the design and plans we are moving forward on and look at areas with possible infill improvements. Brian Ludicke responded that the city has looked at the factors that would encourage the development of these areas. It is a matter of finding out why the area has not been developed; it could be a financial reason. An example of infill development is 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard. There are empty areas in between and houses all around it.

One area that the commission will tread into in the near future is design guidelines for mixed use approaches. In urban California, there is a return to this style partly because lenders and builders are finding out that mixed use development is more stable. This type of development can exist in both urban scale and rural, small towns.

Copies of design guidelines for the Cities of Simi Valley and Santa Clarita were provided. The guidelines were established to enhance the cities' overall design and architectural look and reduce arbitrariness.

Right now, the City does not really have anything in place for design guidelines, especially for residential projects. The only things that are regulated right now for single family residences are the requirements of block walls, wood garage doors, lot size/square footage, setbacks from the street and from the back property line. Importance of window orientation should also be looked into because they can either improve or detract the appearance of a house. The value of having design guidelines gives a point of reference. Vice Chair Cook commented that years ago, the scale of the window of houses in a tract that were 2,000 to 2,300 square feet were very small and looked distorted in proportion to the size of the house. There was no balance to it.

Commissioner Hall noted that most of the houses are already predesigned so he wanted to know if the body will be influencing the design of tracts when developers come to build in the community. Brian Ludicke responded that the commission will be influencing the design and layout of the tract. He encouraged the commissioners to drive around and take a look at specific tracts such as the one on the northwest corner of 20th Street West and Avenue L (across the street from Ralph's). Developers will spend the money where they see that there is a return. The commission's job is to lay out the groundwork to make it incumbent upon developers to follow them.

Chairman Parker inquired if the General Plan will provide direction regarding design. Brian Ludicke responded that the General Plan will provide the basic framework, within which the commission will be able to do their work and regulate. Chairman Parker requested that copies of the draft General Plan be provided.

A brief Powerpoint presentation of urban design definitions was presented to the commission. Silvia Donovan thanked staff for their assistance in putting the reports and presentation together. Dan Miller mentioned that Chris Aune, who was not present at this meeting, was very instrumental.

The commission was given an assignment sheet for the October 10, 2008 meeting, which is to observe the physical differences in residential areas.

Chairman Parker acknowledged that the commissioners have an assignment for the next meeting and that there are excellent materials in the binder. He requested staff to provide copies of the general guidelines of the General Plan, the Downtown Specific Plan, and the form-based code. Silvia Donovan and Dan Miller explained that Brian Ludicke had a Powerpoint presentation for staff and for the Planning Commission of the form-based code.

Chairman Parker stated that he was impressed with the design guidelines of the Cities of Simi Valley and Santa Clarita and that he hopes to have something similar for our city. In the future, it would be good to have a representative of Building Industry Association (BIA) speak at one of the meetings. The word is out that this body exists. He asked the appointee of the mayor's office to introduce himself.

Greg Hanes stated that he is a builder and general contractor. His role is to observe what the commission is doing, make sure they stay on track and report back to the mayor. The mayor is worried about the cost of houses and he wants to keep the costs down. The market has melted down to the point that builders have thrown in costs on these houses that caused the price to escalate to \$600,000 to \$700,000, when in fact they should only be worth about \$300,000.

Greg Hanes explained the procedure of installing foam around windows. He enumerated some projects that he is currently working on or has worked on, such as Miller School behind Albertson's on 20th Street West, Parkview Auditorium, Del Sur Auditorium, the mayor's house and Countrywide buildings.

Chairman Parker mentioned that Mr. Hanes will be joining the body in its meetings, and thanked him for giving some guidelines from the builders' perspective. Chairman Parker asked staff to verify if one item could be added to the next agenda, allowing the Commission to review and approve future agendas, and that as a commission, the Pledge of Allegiance to be performed at the start of each meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The commission and staff proceeded to the Council Chambers to adjourn the meeting there.

It was moved by Chairman Parker and seconded by Commissioner Wiley to adjourn the meeting at 5:59 p.m. to Friday, October 10, 2008, at 4:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers, City of Lancaster. The commissioners agreed that there was nothing further to discuss.

AYES: Commissioners Donlon, Hall, Harvey, Stallworth and Wiley, Vice Chair Cook and Chairman Parker.
NOES: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: None.

DIANA COOK, Vice Chair
Lancaster Architectural and Design Commission

ATTEST:

BRIAN S. LUDICKE, Planning Director
City of Lancaster