

# MINUTES

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## SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LANCASTER PLANNING COMMISSION

March 2, 2009

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### CALL TO ORDER

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

### INVOCATION

Commissioner Burkey did the invocation.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

### ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Burkey, Haycock, Jacobs and Malhi, Vice Chair Smith, Chairman Vose.

Absent: Commissioner Ervin.

Also present were the Planning Director (Brian Ludicke), Deputy City Manager (Jason Caudle), General Plan Project Manager (Dave Ledbetter), Principal Planner (Silvia Donovan), City Engineer (Carlyle Workman), Associate Planner (Chuen Ng), Recording Secretary (Joy Reyes), and an audience of approximately 14 people.

### PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

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None.

### PURPOSE

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Further discussion of General Plan topics in preparation for commencement of public hearings on the General Plan update program. Staff will provide an update to materials distributed at the February 2, 2009, Special Meeting of the Planning Commission.

Dave Ledbetter informed the Commission that among the materials provided for tonight's meeting is an updated version of the table containing Planning Commission comments on the Draft Policy Document with staff responses, and an updated version of the Land Use Request Letters Log including five additional letters received.

Chairman Vose stated that the body will listen to public testimony first, after which they will go through each of the eight tabs/sections on their binder.

## **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

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Speaker Warren Troutman, owner of 20-acre property at the southwest corner of Avenue J and 50<sup>th</sup> Street West stated that he would like to turn 10 acres of the property into commercial land because there are no convenience stores or anything of any kind in that area. Chairman Vose responded that entry B17 in the "Request Letters Summary Log" refers to staff's recommendation to support the commercial request to increase the size to 20 acres along Avenue J, and the remainder to MR1.

Speaker Tim May, commenting on his letter that was distributed to staff and the Commission, stated that he supports the request for the southeast corner of 40<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue L to be converted into a commercial zone, but he does not believe the applicant is going through the appropriate process, because the applicant/owner should go through the General Plan Amendment process. Chairman Vose responded that the process of updating the General Plan represents a City-wide revision that has been properly noticed, and for which public meetings have been conducted.

Hearing no further comment, the Commission proceeded to discuss the materials provided by staff contained within the binder.

There were no comments regarding the materials contained under Tab 1.

For Tab 2, "Addendum to the Land use Alternatives", Vice Chair Smith inquired if this includes the added school sites and the legend changes, to which Dave Ledbetter answered that he believed that the additional school sites were reflected. Chairman Vose asked if the two sites on the southwest corner of future Avenue J-8 and 40<sup>th</sup> Street East, and the five-acre site just south of 30<sup>th</sup> Street East were not added. Dave Ledbetter stated that staff had only added sites for which correspondence had been received from the school districts, but that Staff would check into these additional sites.

For Tab 3, Dave Ledbetter noted that the addendum to the June Draft Policy Document proposes changes based on the Commission's review of the Draft Policy Document. The Commission had no comments regarding the addendum at the current time.

For Tab 4, "Planning Commission Comments Regarding the Draft General Plan Policy Document". Commissioner Jacobs noted that Item 11 relates to C12 of the "Request Letters Summary Log". He related that the Commission had received a letter which pertains to this site and corresponds to his earlier comments on the Overflight Zone. The letter was from Mr. Romeo Arengo, Department of Air Force Chief Engineer, stating that the Air Force does not have any objections to residential land uses consisting of four dwellings per acre located in East

Lancaster bounded by 15<sup>th</sup> Street East on the west, 30<sup>th</sup> Street East on the east, Avenue K-8 on the north, and Avenue L on the south. Commissioner Jacobs inquired if there are any other letters received that refers to the Overflight Zone. Dave Ledbetter responded that there were several. Brian Ludicke clarified that the letter expounds on the Air Force's past position that residential density should be limited within the Overflight Zone. Chairman Vose asked if a representative of Plant 42 can be invited to speak at the next meeting of March 23. Brian Ludicke suggested that it would be best to ask the Air Force its current position regarding this area. Brian Ludicke pointed out that when initial changes were looked at, there was a shortage of single family residential land. That same situation does not exist today. Given the Chairman's suggestion, staff will contact representatives from Air Force Plant 42 to understand what their position is.

Regarding Item 14, Commissioner Jacobs requested an update. Brian Ludicke responded that staff has proposed a revision to Specific Action 4.3.3(a), which is contained in the document currently under review. Regarding Item 14, Chairman Vose asked for the definition of major roadways, after reading the phrase "noise-reducing windows and placement of entry doors on the side of buildings facing major roadways" as contained within Specific Action 4.3.3(a). Brian Ludicke indicated that the reference to "major" applies to primary and secondary roadways. He further elaborated that there are a number of potential ways to reduce noise impact. There are techniques, such as identifying major roadways, placing entry doorways to the side of the building, mostly to address residential noise concerns. Chairman Vose stated that he wanted clarification to avoid confusion and misinterpretation in the future. Brian Ludicke read the proposed revision to the language of Specific Action 4.3.3(a).

Regarding Item 16, Commissioner Jacobs noted that the planning of equestrian trails seems to be a problem, and asked if it is possible to separate them from the planning process for bike trails. Brian Ludicke responded that since the policies and programs pertaining to the Master Plan of Trails reference a system that includes both bicycle and equestrian trails, it would be difficult to split them out. Brian suggested that the Commission may wish to add language to indicate that pedestrian and bicycle trails be focused on first as part of master plan implementation. Commissioner Jacobs indicated that he did not have a problem with the assigned priority, but rather was concerned more with the ability to implement the master plan during difficult economic times. He inquired if there is a way to put a defined timeframe on this so that if the budget situation prohibits work on the Master Plan, at least the community would have some idea of the importance placed on developing a trail system. Brian Ludicke noted that a Priority 2 assigned to the action programs indicates the City's intent to initiate the master plan within a year of General Plan adoption. Brian further indicated that if this is a priority with the Planning Commission, then it would be appropriate to encourage the City Council to consider appropriating the necessary resources to undertake this.

Chairman Vose noted that on page IV-5 of the Policy Document, the intent of "multi-purpose trails" may give the connotation that it is intermingled and on the same tract of land. Brian Ludicke clarified the even though some trail systems may be multi-use to accommodate both bicycling and equestrian users, these systems consist of separate paths for horses and bicycles usually separated by some type of barrier.

Regarding Item 30, Commissioner Jacobs noted that there was a discussion with staff regarding putting Office Professional (OP) under Commercial, and staff stated that property owners would have to go through a General Plan Amendment. Brian explained that Office

Professional and Commercial represent two General Plan land use designations, which would require a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to change the land use from one to the other. Commissioner Jacobs asked if the redesignation could be done through the CUP process. Brian Ludicke stated that it is staff's position that it should be handled through a GPA process if a requested use is more commercial in nature than what is allowed in the OP zone. Commissioner Jacobs said that he thinks some commercial land use requests in the OP zone should go through a CUP process. Brian Ludicke concurred, and stated that the CUP process is easier, and suggested considering amending the OP zone in the Zoning Ordinance to take up uses that may possibly be allowed, without having to be redesignated to commercial.

Regarding Item 18, Chairman Vose noted that his comments are related to identifying Edwards Air Force Base, including Plant 42. He noted that specific actions 16.2.1a and 16.2.1b, do not call out Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB), but rather only refers to military/civilian aerospace. He does not see any problem adding EAFB or Plant 42, since they are major employers in the community.

Regarding Item 20, Chairman Vose clarified that he was referring to Specific Action 14.4.5(c), not (e). He noted that his concern pertained to what types of transportation facilities would be allowed in the new mixed use zone. He noted that it should include such things as bus garages, transportation nodes, etc. Brian Ludicke responded that these uses could be allowed particularly in areas that would be transit dependent.

Regarding Item 7, Chairman Vose pointed out that within the downtown area that other than City Hall, there are no sites designated for government use. He stated that enough reserve land should be identified to allow sufficient land for government facilities. Brian Ludicke replied that from a regulatory standpoint, the Downtown Specific Plan addresses this. Chairman Vose opined that an analysis could be done, and recommendation could be made on the need for government facilities.

Regarding Item 32, Chairman Vose said he comments here related to what he believes to be an inconsistency between Specific Action 17.1.2(a) and Specific Action 18.1.4(a). He noted that Action 17.1.2(a) relates to the provision of sufficient residential land to provide housing opportunities for all economic segments, yet he believes that implementation of Specific Action 18.1.4(a) would limit the types of housing that could be provided. He noted that it needs to be consistent to conform to state law. Brian Ludicke responded that staff has asked the City attorney to look into this issue.

Regarding the "Request Letters Summary Log", Chairman Vose suggested going through each group within the log, and discuss concerns and issues.

Regarding entries B3 and B3a, Commissioner Jacobs noted that the proponent is requesting a commercial redesignation for seven acres on the southeast corner of 40<sup>th</sup> West and Avenue L. Brian Ludicke concurred and indicated that staff was also recommending additional acres here to make it a 10-acre commercial site, which would be more viable than the 2.5 acres originally proposed under B3.

Regarding Item B4, a request to redesignate 20 acres located on the southwest corner of 70<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue L, Chairman Vose stated that he believes that this is speculative and

premature, and that he disagrees with the staff's recommendation to support this request. Vice Chair Smith concurred with the Chairman.

Regarding Item B5, Vice Chair Smith requested clarification regarding this request. Brian Ludicke clarified that it is a request to expand urban residential from 65<sup>th</sup> Street West to 70<sup>th</sup> Street West, and from Avenue J to Avenue K.

Regarding Item B8, a land use change request involving several parcels on the north and south sides of Avenue J, north of the Antelope Valley Hospital, Chairman Vose asked if staff is recommending a change from commercial to office professional for the parcels in this area. Brian Ludicke indicated that the recommendation applies to the properties east of 17<sup>th</sup> Street West. He noted that on the south side, there are privately held office buildings that are located in the Hospital (H) zoning, which would only allow for medical type offices. Staff thinks that the change from (H) to (OP) for these properties is a necessary correction. Brian noted that for the properties on the north side of Avenue J the recommendation is to redesignate from (C) to (OP).

Regarding Item B17, 40 acres located at the southwest corner of 50<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue J, Chairman Vose expressed concern about the proximity of this area to the state prison. He inquired about the possibility of a land use buffer adjacent to the prison. He believed that not much could be done south of Avenue J. However, regarding the other areas in the proximity of the prison, he believes that land uses as proposed are too dense. He felt it was not in the City's best interest to promote housing near a prison. He stated that this area should be designate for non-urban use, and that the non-urban buffer should be quarter-mile radius around the prison.

Regarding Item C20, a request to change 2.5 acres located east of 20<sup>th</sup> Street East and south of Avenue K-8 from non-urban to urban residential, Chairman Vose stated that everything south of Avenue K-4 would be either non-urban or industrial, and that a tract was approved on the east side of 20<sup>th</sup> Street East, to which Dave Ledbetter replied that there have been some proposals in the area south of Avenue K-4 for half-acre lots, which would still fall within the NU designation.

Regarding Item C22, Chairman Vose commented that his suggestion here was for consistency, and that he does not disagree with the recommendation. He noted that his comment was in light of the recent Environmental Impact Report for 60<sup>th</sup> and Avenue K where the existing adjacent residential street patterns were proposed to be redesigned into cul-de-sacs that would encroach into the site.

Regarding Item C26, a request to redesignate 53 acres east of 20<sup>th</sup> Street East and south of Avenue K-8 from non-urban to urban residential density, Commissioner Burkey inquired if the dividing line between urban and rural was Avenue K-8. Brian Ludicke explained that the density transition actually begins at Avenue K-4 going from R-10,000 to Semi-Rural Residential (half-acre lots), and then to minimum one-acre lots south of Avenue K-8.

Regarding Item B1, a land use request to redesignate three acres on the northwest corner of 30<sup>th</sup> Street East and Avenue J from UR to C, Chairman Vose noted staff's recommendation to increase the commercial at this location to 10 acres but suggested that it be increased to 20 acres of commercial.

Commissioner Haycock stated that she was interested in Items C2 and C7 (both of which staff has recommended denial of request), and asked if they will come back because they look

like projects that will be beneficial to the community. Brian Ludicke replied that staff is recommending that C2 be redesignated as Mixed Use, and that the request being made by the proponent could be accommodated with a Mixed Use designation. He noted that a MU designation would allow a greater range of uses. Regarding C7, Brian noted that staff was looking at this as a potential site for the infill provisions provided for by Specific Action 18.2.1(c). Chairman Vose noted that looking at the aerial, the vacant property to the south is attached to the nursing home. Brian Ludicke responded that the vacant area to the south is part of the complex, and westward lot has been developed into a parking area.

Dave Ledbetter noted that for the meeting of March 23, staff will provide a graphic representation of staff's land use recommendation, an update of the addendum to the Policy Document, and any other additional correspondence received. The process will continue toward coming to a resolution of any remaining issues. With regard to the "Request Letters Summary Log," an additional column will be added to record Planning Commission recommendations.

### **DIRECTOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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Brian Ludicke commented that he appreciates the work the Commission has put in this endeavor.

### **COMMISSION AGENDA**

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Next Planning Commission Special Meeting is March 23. At the March 16 regular meeting, the Commission anticipates hearing the following: the Hellenic Center, a CUP for a restaurant (Casablanca Restaurant returning before the Commission with changes to the condition) and carwash on 17<sup>th</sup> Street West & Avenue J.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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Chairman Vose declared the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m. to Monday, March 9, 2009, at 5:30 p.m., in the Planning Large Conference Room, Lancaster City Hall.

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JAMES D. VOSE, Chairman  
Lancaster Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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BRIAN S. LUDICKE, Planning Director  
City of Lancaster