



MINUTES
CITY OF NORCO
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 2820 CLARK AVENUE
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 10, 2010

1. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL: Vice-Chair Hedges, Commissioners Harris, Newton, and Wright. Absent: Chair Jaffarian
3. STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director King and Executive Secretary Dvorak
4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner Wright
5. APPEAL NOTICE: Read by PD King
6. HEARING FROM THE AUDIENCE ON ITEMS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA:

John Box, 159 Oldenburg Lane, read his ideas on issues surrounding accessory buildings and why the Commission was wrong in pursuing this amendment. See attached.

Nancy Kohl, 259 Oldenburg Lane, said the Commission was sneaky, that suddenly this issue affects not just the original A-1 area but all of Norco and people are not aware. She accused the Commission of taking away property rights.

Curtis Combs, 129 Oldenburg Lane, was concerned that the proposed amendment on accessory buildings suddenly applies to the whole city. It seems dishonest to change this without citizens input. If it is so hard to come up with something to address this, maybe it is because it won't work. It is amazing how Norco is looked down at by outsiders. He cannot justify to others what is going on here in the City.

Bill Kohl, 1454 Andalusian Drive, opposed the proposed amendment for accessory buildings now that it suddenly includes the whole city. Now we're talking about increased costs to the homeowners to go through conditional use permits or site plans, additional architectural drawings, fees, and processing time. The past few meetings have seen proposed restrictions on homeowners' rights. The proposed amendment is changed at every meeting. It is getting complicated and out of control.

Vice-Chair Hedges noted that this item will be noticed for public hearing at the next meeting.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of February 24, 2010
Member Newton asked for a change to top of page 5: ... Members Harris and ~~Newton~~ not agreeing but Member Newton agreeing with the majority.

MOTION: M/S Wright/ Newton to approve the minutes of February 24, 2010 as amended.

AYES: Harris, Hedges, Newton and Wright
ABSENT: Jaffarian

MOTION CARRIED

8. CONTINUED ITEMS: None

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

10. BUSINESS ITEMS:

- A. Discussion and Direction for Possible Amendment to the Sign Code.
Recommendation: Provide Direction (Director King)

PD King presented the staff report on file in the Planning Division. The City Council and Economic Development Committee feel that our current code is not business-friendly. Temporary signage for local events also needs to be addressed, as that signage is depended on by locals to spread the word about their big functions and activities.

In response to Member Newton, PD King said there was direction from the Commission and Council but no actual code amendment was adopted to take reader boards and pole signs out of the code. Flags are mentioned in the code only so they do not become permanent signs because of maintenance problems. PD King said illegal signs need to come down immediately. Abatement periods grew out of the anti-billboard movement that allows recouping the cost of a sign that needs to be taken down.

Member Wright and Vice-Chair Hedges agreed that the sign code needs to be worked on and made easier to read.

Member Harris asked who supports the overhaul of the sign code, if it is a big issue right now.

PD King said it was the Commission who said not to do the sign code updates piecemeal. If the PC still wants staff to not allow pole signs, it really needs to be in the code, otherwise technically, they are still allowed.

PD King suggested going through the sign code section by section, or having an ad hoc committee with representatives from the community, commission and council.

Member Newton asked if the code could be reviewed in just two sections, and said that it was the Commission's job to do the review. He did not want a subcommittee because he felt the Commission would move faster.

Member Harris asked for a list of the Economic Development Advisory Council's signage issues. He also wanted input from the Council and the public, such as sign companies and the Realty Board. Member Wright agreed, adding staff needed a current code to work with.

PD King said a number of requests for pole signs have been denied by staff, with the standard opportunity to appeal to the Commission. Most applicants end up going with other types of signage. The special event signs are the most problematic.

Member Newton asked about staff obtaining sign codes from other cities such as Corona and Rancho Cucamonga, and asked staff to develop a schedule of about 3-4 meetings.

PD King will bring back to the PC in the near future issues from the EDAC, codes from other cities, our own code marked with staff's concerns and will sent out letters to local sign businesses and the realty board asking for their input.

B. Discussion of a Zone Change Request at 1921 First Street within the Gateway Specific Plan. **Recommendation: Provide Direction** (Director King)

PD King presented the staff report on file in the Planning Division. This is a request for reconsideration of a denial from several years ago to change residential zoning to commercial. He said a residential use could be a nonconforming use, such as on Sixth Street, or an overlay zone could be applied. In this area the highest and best use is commercial mainly because commercial lots sell for more. PD King confirmed that this owner still does not have a development plan but has a concept, as he is trying to market the two properties he owns together.

Member Newton said he feels the same as he did the first time this was presented; zoning should not be done piecemeal and he cannot support this. This would still need 2/3 of the properties wanting this change with the city paying for it.

Vice-Chair Hedges asked what would be the detriment to doing this like Sixth Street

PD King explained financing is an issue for Sixth Street properties because when a house on Sixth Street is destroyed more than 50%, it cannot be rebuilt for the same use and insurance companies generally don't like that kind of exposure.

Member Harris wanted more information before making a decision.

Member Newton felt Sixth Street's hodge-podge use turned out not to be the best use for Sixth Street. In this case, the other property owners don't seem to be interested. All lots should be rezoned or none. He would give due consideration when this comes forward with a development plan and Member Wright agreed. Member Harris basically agreed. Member Wright said there are already lots of commercial properties available.

PD King said he will advise the applicant he needs a plan before bringing this back.

11. CITY COUNCIL: Received and filed.
 - A. City Council Action Minutes dated March 3, 2010
Member Wright asked for specifics on the parcel map extension.
 - B. City Council Minutes dated February 10 and February 17, 2010
12. PLANNING COMMISSION: Oral Reports from Various Committees – Vice-Chair Hedges reported on the first meeting of the Norconian Preservation Strategic Plan Committee, noting the ultimate goal is to obtain grant money.
13. STAFF: Current Work Program – Received and filed.
14. OTHER MATTERS:
 - Member Newton asked staff again to secure the abandoned building by Circle K on Fourth Street.
 - Member Hedges asked for corrected verbiage on new signs posted at Community Center parking lot regarding the sale of vehicles parked at the site.
15. ADJOURNMENT: 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve King
Planning Secretary

/sd-75085