

**REGULAR MEETING  
CITY OF WILDOMAR  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
April 15, 2009**

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Wildomar Planning Commission was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman Devine at 7:00 P.M. at Wildomar City Hall, Council Chambers.

**1.1 ROLL CALL OF PLANNING COMMISSION**

Present: Robert Devine, Chairman  
Harv Dykstra, Vice-Chairman  
Miguel Casillas, Commissioner  
Scott Nowak, Commissioner  
Gary Andre, Commissioner

Absent: None.

Staff Present: David Hogan, Assistant Planning Director  
Thomas Jex, Assistant City Attorney  
Sean del Solar, Planner

**1.2 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Commissioner Nowak led the flag salute.

**2.0 COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

Gina Castanan introduced herself and addressed the Commission. Ms. Castanan asked about the number of planners the City had on staff and questioned why the number of projects going forward to the City Council for approval had slowed.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan responded that the City has two Planners which staff the department regularly with the other Planning staff members exclusively dedicated to projects as needed. Mr. Hogan then explained the approval process for different application types.

**3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Andre amended the minutes to include the word “pipe” in paragraph 8 on page 7.

Commissioner Andre moved to approve the amended Minutes of March 4, 2009. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Dykstra. Motion carried, the following vote resulted:

AYES: Devine, Dykstra, Casillas, Nowak, and Andre.  
NOES: None.  
ABSENT: None.  
ABSTAIN: None.

**4.0 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:**

None.

**5.0 PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:**

**5.1 VARIANCE NUMBER 08-0072.**

Applicant: DH Holdings  
Location: Southeast corner of Clinton Keith Road and Hidden Springs Road (APN: 380-110-039).  
Proposals: Increase the height of one of two free-standing signs for the Wildomar Square commercial center from 65 feet to 85 feet within the Scenic Highway Commercial zone (C-P-S).  
Environmental Action: No California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance documentation has been provided at this time. If the Commission decides to consider approval of the variance request at a future date, the appropriate documentation will be provided.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan made the staff report.

Chairman Devine asked if the Planning Commission had any questions for Staff. None of the Commissioners had questions of Staff.

Chairman Devine opened the Public Hearing.

Applicant Horenstein introduced himself and addressed the Commission. Applicant Horenstein stated that the initial Variance was done without the benefit of engineering. He went on to explain that since the completion of site engineering, there was new

information about the condition of the site. Applicant Hornstein stated that due to the expansion of Clinton Keith Road, and the height of the proposed sign panels, the sign will not be as visible as needed for proper identification. Applicant Hornstein concluded then his presentation and asked if the Commission had any questions.

Chairman Devine noted that the previously approved variances increased the sign area to several times the allowed area resulting in large individual sign panels. Chairman Devine asked the applicant if the size of the panels could be reduced to make all sign panels visible.

Applicant Horenstein replied that the County gave him direction to expand the area of the sign panels when variance number 1827 was granted to keep the sign in proportion.

Commissioner Nowak did not agree that the sign panels were kept proportional and referenced the design of the nearby Bear Creek Village Center sign which has smaller panels higher up on the sign. He went on to ask how many major tenants the proposed retail center would have.

Applicant Horenstein replied that there would be six large tenants.

Commissioner Andre inquired about the size of the Stater Brothers panel in the Bear Creek Village sign.

Applicant Horenstein responded that he was unaware of the panel sizes in the Bear Creek Village sign. In addition, the applicant offered to bring a crane to the site to create a real-life demonstration of the proposed sign.

Commissioner Andre stated that he had visited the site previously and supported the idea of a site visit by the Commission.

Chairman Devine asked the applicant if the size of the panels and other features of the sign could be reduced to make all the panels visible without increasing the size of the sign.

Applicant Horenstein invited the Commission to schedule a field trip to the site and make a decision at that time.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan explained that if it was the will of the Commission, a site visit could be arranged.

Chairman Devine asked if the Hearing would have to be continued to the next meeting if a site visit was desired by the Commission.

Assistant City Attorney Jex then discussed the legal requirements involved to conduct a site visit.

Chairman Devine recognized the receipt of a letter from Emilio and Judith Gonzales in opposition to the project.

Resident Judith Gonzales then addressed the Commission and identified herself as the author of the letter. Ms. Gonzales stated that she and a number of her neighbors had attended the County Board of Supervisors meeting where Variance Number 1827 was heard. She went on to state that the request before the Commission was for an additional variance and expressed concern over the precedence that would establish in Wildomar if the request was approved.

Chairman Devine closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Andre stated that he spoke with the Applicant earlier in the day and discussed the possibility of a site visit by the Commission. He went on to state his opposition to the 85' height of the proposed sign but expressed his interest in giving the applicant a fair chance.

Vice-Chairman Dykstra asked staff if there was another possible action the Commission could take on this item.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan responded that if the Commission can agree on an alternative action, they could ask the Applicant to modify their request.

Assistant City Attorney Jex agreed and added that the matter before the Commission was a request addressing the height of the sign. He advised that if an alternative proposal addressed another aspect of the sign, the alternative action would need to be referred back to staff.

Vice-Chairman Dykstra suggested that in lieu of denying the request to increase the sign 20', the applicant could raise the sign 5' to overcome the unforeseen change in elevation and decrease the overall size of the panels.

Commissioner Nowak asked the applicant about the difference in the topography the site will have after development.

Applicant Horenstein responded that overall, the finished site would be lower, as the project would have a net export of soil.

Commissioner Nowak asked about the possibility of changing the overall grade of the site.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan responded that final grading plans had already been submitted for the project and that the on-site grades were established to adequately connect the site to Hidden Springs Road.

Commissioner Andre expressed concern with the precedence an approval of this variance could set.

Chairman Devine re-opened the Public Hearing.

Applicant Horenstein replied that due to the unique conditions of the site, there would not be a precedence set.

Commissioner Andre expressed his interest in going to the site to view a demonstration of the proposed sign.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan suggested that the Chairman poll the Commission to help determine the consensus of the group.

Chairman Devine recognized Commissioner Casillas.

Commissioner Casillas stated that he did not see a reason for granting the variance but he also indicated an interest in conducting a site visit.

Vice-Chairman Dykstra stated that he would be in opposition to the request because the panels are too large and smaller panels on the sign would correct any visibility problems created by the height of the building. He also stated that he was not opposed to a site visit but felt that it was not necessary.

Commissioner Andre stated that he felt that the Commission should conduct a site visit and stated that without a site visit he would not be inclined to increase the height of the sign.

Commissioner Nowak stated that the sign has plenty of visibility and that the panel sizes could be reduced slightly to overcome the visibility challenges of the site. In addition, he felt that the elevation of the site had not significantly changed since the first request for a variance and the height issues should have been addressed then. Commissioner Nowak went on to state that he did not support a site visit.

Chairman Devine agreed with Commissioner Nowak.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan suggested that a site visit would involve a continuance and that a way to resolve the issue would be to get a motion and vote for a desired action.

MOTION: Commissioner Nowak motioned to deny variance number 08-0072, a request to extend the height of Sign A-1 to 85' with resolution PC09-005. The motion was seconded by Chairman Devine. Motion carried, the following vote resulted:

AYES: Devine, Dykstra, Casillas, Nowak, and Andre.  
NOES: None.  
ABSENT: None.  
ABSTAIN: None.

**6.0 GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS:**

None.

**7.0 ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS REPORT:**

Assistant Planning Director Hogan reported on the approval of Plot Plan application number 08-0227 at a Director Hearing on April 1, 2009.

**8.0 PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Assistant Planning Director Hogan informed the Commission that the City's new website had launched. He went on to request that the Commissioners inform staff of their upcoming vacations to avoid scheduling conflicts with Planning Commission meetings.

Vice-Chairman Dykstra noted the absence of Gary Wayne and asked for information on the City's Planning Director.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan responded that due to personal reasons, Mr. Wayne would be taking an advisory role with the City and that Eric Norris would serve as the City's Planning Director.

**9.0 PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Andre stated that he would be discussing both trails and bicycle lanes at the next City Council Meeting.

Commissioner Nowak discussed the use of striping on four and six lane roadways to denote the presence of bicycle lanes.

Vice-Chairman Dykstra expressed an interest to start a bicycle transportation plan as soon as possible. He also noted that the City's trail system was primarily for recreational purposes and that it would not adequately serve bicyclists.

Commissioner Nowak inquired about the status of updating the City's Municipal Code and General Plan.

Assistant Planning Director Hogan responded that a discussion about updating the General Plan was scheduled for an upcoming City Council norming session. He went on to inform the Commission that printed copies of the General Plan will be provided to the Commission next week. He added that the Council has avoided making any commitments until a final budget has been reached.

Commissioner Nowak requested that a General Plan update status report be included in every Planning Director's Report.

**10.0 ADJOURNMENT:**

The April 15, 2009 regular meeting of the Wildomar Planning Commission adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

David Hogan  
Commission Secretary