



REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2025 - MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER - The Regular Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Chair Jeffrey Harlan at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG - Chair Harlan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Jeffrey Harlan, Vice Chair Jon Zich, Commissioner Angely Andrade, Commissioner Robert Dickson, Commissioner Karen Klepack, Commissioner David Martinez, Commissioner Johnny Rojas

Absent: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA:

Jay Humphrey expressed concern regarding the formatting of staff reports posted for public access. He noted that when printing these documents at home, sections are often cut off due to page size inconsistencies between the screen format and standard home printer settings. He acknowledged that this issue likely affects many residents, not just locally. Mr. Humphrey requested that staff ensure documents intended for public consumption are formatted for effective home printing, so residents are not required to spend significant time adjusting settings.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Commissioner Andrade reiterated comments from the previous meeting, expressing appreciation for the City of Costa Mesa and the Police Department for issuing a public statement in response to current concerns affecting local residents. She acknowledged the importance of reassuring the community that they are safe and protected under the law. Commissioner Andrade encouraged residents to support one another during this time, highlighting the work of Orange County Rapid Response (OCCR), a grassroots organization assisting individuals who are fearful of leaving their homes to meet basic needs such as grocery shopping or child drop-offs. She invited the public to contribute through food donations, essential item deliveries, or financial

support. Commissioner Andrade concluded with a message in Spanish, reaffirming the City's commitment to maintaining safety and upholding legal protections for all residents.

Commissioner Dickson provided a reminder that the annual Fish Fry will take place next weekend at Lions Park, beginning Friday and continuing through Sunday evening (approximately 8:00 p.m.). He encouraged the community to attend and enjoy the event, highlighting the excellent fish, carnival rides, and various booths hosted by community organizations and City departments. He also noted that several commissioners and community members will be volunteering and emphasized the Fish Fry as a true community celebration.

Commissioner Martinez shared that on June 19, the Airport Land Use Commission found both the Hive Live and Victoria Place projects consistent with the Airport Environs Land Use Plan, meaning no City Council override is required. He echoed Commissioner Dickson's announcement about the upcoming Fish Fry at Lions Park and encouraged the community to attend. He also reminded the public about Costa Mesa's Independence Day celebration on July 3 at the OC Fairgrounds, from 5:00 to 11:00 p.m., and recommended biking to the event to avoid parking challenges. Commissioner Martinez concluded by expressing support for Commissioner Andrade's earlier comments.

Vice Chair Zich expressed enthusiasm at the high level of public participation, emphasizing that increased community engagement leads to better and more community-focused decision-making. He encouraged those attending—whether regularly involved or newly introduced by a neighbor—to stay informed by signing up for E-Notifications on the City of Costa Mesa's website. This feature allows residents to receive updates on various topics, including Planning Commission and City Council agendas.

Chair Harlan promoted the upcoming Concerts in the Park series, beginning July 8 at Fairview Park, highlighting it as a free, family-friendly event with great music and food.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. JUNE 9th 2025 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

MOVED/SECOND: DICKSON / MARTINEZ

MOTION: to approve Consent Calendar with one minor change to correct the spelling of Commissioner Dickson's name.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Harlan, Commissioner Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas

Nays: None

Absent: None

Recused: None

Motion carried: 7-0

-----**END OF CONSENT CALENDAR**-----

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. DESIGN REVIEW (PDES-24-0013) AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 2024-156 FOR A RESIDENTIAL SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION TO CREATE TWO PARCELS EACH CONTAINING A NEW TWO-STORY DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE AND AN ATTACHED TWO-CAR GARAGE AT 2280 ELDEN AVENUE

Three ex-parte communication from Chair Harlan, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Martinez.

Assistant Planner Jeffrey Rimando presented the item.

The Commission inquired about revisions to the conditions of approval, specifically regarding a required maintenance agreement for a small lot subdivision, which staff explained is a standard municipal code requirement due to shared property areas. Clarification was also requested on the removal and redlining of certain conditions, which staff noted were updated in coordination with the applicant. Questions were raised about the lack of red curb painting near a fire hydrant and stop sign, with staff citing state vehicle code regulations that prohibit parking within 15 feet of a hydrant regardless of curb color, and additional considerations such as sight distance and long-term maintenance. Concerns about the placement and accessibility of trash bins were noted, and staff confirmed the plans were drawn to scale but deferred specifics to the applicant. A public comment about a six-foot wall along the sidewalk was addressed, and staff clarified that it pertained to a different agenda item.

The Chair opened the Public Hearing.

The Commission asked the applicant to clarify the location and purpose of a six-foot masonry wall mentioned in the staff report, noting that such walls were not reflected in the project images or typical of the surrounding neighborhood. The applicant explained that the wall is a vinyl replacement for an existing rear property wall, requested by neighbors, and confirmed that no tall walls would be placed along the public-facing sides of the property. Additional questions were raised about the spacing and accessibility of trash bins, to which the project architect responded that the site plans are illustrative and that bin placement can be adjusted. When asked hypothetically how the design might

differ without zoning code restrictions, the architect emphasized that the project was intentionally designed with community-oriented features, such as open space, thoughtful driveway placement, and reduced building massing to reflect the character of Eastside Costa Mesa. The Commission also expressed appreciation for the inclusion of additional trees along the sidewalk and the use of low, open fencing along street-facing sides.

The Chair opened public comment.

There were no public comments.

The Chair closed Public Comment.

The Chair closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Dickson made a motion to approve the application. Seconded by Vice Chair Zich.

The Commission expressed strong support for the project, noting that it aligns with the intent of the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance and conforms well to the General Plan. Commissioners praised the thoughtful architectural design, attention to neighborhood context, and the applicant's collaboration with staff on conditions of approval. They commended the project's emphasis on marketability, provision of usable open space, inclusion of garages, and overall contribution to much-needed for-sale housing in Costa Mesa. Additional comments highlighted the benefits of new sidewalk and curb ramp installations and appreciation for the removal of previously noted concerns through redline edits. The CEQA exemption under Sections 15315 and 15303 was formally added to the motion, and all commissioners indicated their support for the project as a well-balanced and appropriately scaled addition to the neighborhood.

MOVED/SECOND: DICKSON/ ZICH

MOTION: Move staff recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas

Nays: None

Absent: None

Recused: None

Motion carried: 7-0

OLD BUSINESS:

1. FAIRVIEW DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN LAND USE PLAN - REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

Advanced Planning Manager Anna McGill presented the item.

The Commission discussed the background and legislative context of the project, specifically citing Government Code provisions that guide economic feasibility and housing priorities for the site. Staff explained the evolution of unit estimates from 1,500 and 2,500 in earlier documents to the current study of up to 4,000 units, noting this range was developed to evaluate feasibility scenarios and anticipate potential master developer proposals. Questions were raised about emergency access requirements, with staff stating that 2,300 units is the threshold for requiring a second access road, and limitations exist under state law in denying waivers or concessions for such infrastructure. The Commission also explored the disconnect between the 40% affordability assumption in the Housing Element and its financial feasibility, acknowledging that the City's original projection may have been overly optimistic. Staff emphasized that housing element numbers are estimates based on land capacity and not hard limits. It was noted that in past projects, the City encouraged dispersion of affordable units, though financing realities often favor clustering. Lastly, staff confirmed that units only count toward the current RHNA cycle if a building permit is issued within the designated timeframe, and clarified that no current plans exist to remove the golf course.

The Chair Opened for public comment.

Bob Knapp, shared personal and community concerns regarding the proposed development. He emphasized the importance of the Costa Mesa Golf Course—not as a luxury, but as a valuable community asset—highlighting its role in youth sports, high school athletics, and charitable events. Drawing on his experience as a former City recreation manager, he underscored the critical value of recreation facilities for local families, particularly those with limited resources. He questioned why alternative access routes, such as via Harle Avenue, were not explored and expressed concern about the apparent absence of safety netting and the potential loss of existing athletic fields. Mr. Knapp urged the Commission to reconsider and further study the proposed development plans, particularly considering the unexpected 4,000-unit density figure and its impacts on recreational resources and community well-being.

Jay Humphrey expressed concerns about the proposed site layout, specifically the roadway alignment and its impact on the golf course. He suggested that the new development area could be shifted toward Harbor Boulevard, preserving the golf course and avoiding the need for a new access road across it. He also questioned the necessity of the EOC (Emergency Operations Center)

remaining in its current location and proposed exploring a land swap that would benefit both the developer and the public. Mr. Humphrey encouraged the Commission to recommend continued discussions with the state to pursue alternative site configurations. Additionally, he requested that future public meetings be held in a Town Hall format to allow all attendees to hear the full range of questions and responses, ensuring greater transparency and public engagement.

Mike Decker expressed his deep commitment to the City's well-being and stated his intent to listen and gather information. Mr. Decker shared three observations: he strongly supports preserving the integrity of both city golf courses (Mesa Linda and Los Lagos); he noted that the proposed development appears to be forming a "city within a city," with features such as shopping and daycare; and he expressed concern that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) did not appear to be a high priority in the plan, recommending that it be elevated above higher-end housing in importance.

Steve McNally stated he attended several meetings on the Fairview Developmental Center site, including state and city presentations, and expressed concern that the public was asked to provide input without fully understanding the site's funding and legal constraints. He questioned the tangible benefits—such as tax revenue or truly affordable housing—of the various development options and emphasized the need for housing that is actually accessible to low-income individuals, not just expensive market-rate units. He referenced other available public properties and funding sources, such as county-controlled land and Mental Health Services Act funds, and encouraged collaborative, multi-agency efforts to develop sustainable and inclusive housing solutions.

Brett Eccles, emphasized the critical shortage of active sports fields in Costa Mesa for both youth and adults. He noted that the City controls only four properties suitable for such use, which is insufficient for current demand and will become even more inadequate as new residents move into the proposed development. While he acknowledged the benefits of additional housing, he stressed the importance of expanding open space and active-use areas. Citing U.S. Census data indicating that approximately 19% of Costa Mesa's population is under age 18, he urged the Commission to consider allocating roughly 20% of the development area for open and active recreational use. Mr. Eccles highlighted the growing popularity of sports like girls' flag football, lacrosse, and field hockey, and warned that merely replacing existing fields rather than expanding capacity misses a key opportunity. He also advocated for installing lighting to maximize field use and pointed out the challenges faced by City staff in permitting fields under current conditions. As a point of reference, he compared the site to Jack Hammett Sports Complex, which spans 14.5 acres.

Diane Russell, expressed ongoing concern about the lack of clarity in the proposed plan, particularly regarding the affordable housing component. She cautioned against the potential erosion of deeply affordable units over time, especially if developers claim such housing is financially unfeasible. She urged the City to include firm commitments within the specific plan to preserve very low- and low-income housing and to maximize the total number of affordable units. Additionally, she suggested exploring a pedestrian or bike path connection to Fairview Park to enhance community access and integration. Ms. Russell concluded by indicating she would continue to engage as the planning process moves forward.

Brett Woods, expressed strong support for youth sports despite not being a personal sports fan. He emphasized the vital role youth sports play in teaching children important life lessons such as teamwork, discipline, sportsmanship, leadership, resilience, and how to handle failure—skills that contribute to long-term mental well-being. He urged the City to recognize its role in supporting these developmental opportunities and not to hinder access to them. Mr. Woods advocated for increasing the number of utility fields in the proposed development, noting that the current two fields shown are insufficient. He emphasized the need for "lights, nets, and whistles"—lit, multipurpose fields that can serve a wide range of youth sports. He also encouraged City staff and decision-makers to engage with the local community to better understand actual field needs, noting that current demand exceeds supply, especially for utility fields, while sports like baseball and tennis are already adequately served.

Melissa Hanson, emphasized the importance of planning the site's future with both care and conscience. She shared her deep personal and professional ties to the community and called on the Commission to support Concept 2, urging that a significant portion of the 95-acre site be permanently dedicated to athletic fields without impacting the public golf courses. She highlighted the growing demand for youth sports and underscored that structured recreation is essential for children's development—not just open space, but fields where youth can learn teamwork, leadership, and resilience. Ms. Hanson stressed that recreation and affordable housing must coexist in the plan, and she urged the City to include specific, non-negotiable requirements in the specific plan, such as dedicated acreage for fields and phased development ensuring recreational facilities are built alongside housing. She concluded by advocating for a holistic and equitable vision of Costa Mesa that prioritizes the needs of children and families.

Rick O'Neill, expressed support for the Fairview Development Project while emphasizing the importance of preserving the integrity of the Costa Mesa Golf

Course. He acknowledged the need for change to meet affordable housing goals but urged that the golf community be actively involved in the decision-making process to minimize negative impacts. He described the course as a thriving, community-centered space with a unique layout and high daily use, praising both its staff and role in youth sports. Mr. O'Neill noted the disappearance of other golf courses across Orange County and advocated for preserving Costa Mesa's course as a valuable and irreplaceable community asset. He encouraged continued public dialogue and thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak.

John Henson, expressed significant concern about traffic impacts, noting that the potential addition of thousands of housing units could result in 4,000 to 8,000 more cars using Harbor Boulevard and Fairview Road daily—already congested routes. He urged the Commission to consider limiting the project to the lower end of the proposed unit range. Second, Mr. Henson voiced strong support for preserving the Costa Mesa Golf Course, highlighting the broader trend of public course closures across Orange County. He warned that eliminating public golf facilities would push the sport further out of reach for average residents, making it increasingly exclusive to private club members.

Greg Pro, voiced strong support for preserving the golf course, while also acknowledging the importance of the proposed development. He expressed growing concern for youth sports field availability, noting that the current plan lacks adequate parking for field users, which could lead to enforcement and access issues similar to those experienced near the State Streets baseball fields. He questioned the usefulness of the earlier community survey, where a majority favored Concept 1 and 2, which were later deemed financially infeasible—suggesting that feasibility studies should precede public input. Mr. Pro emphasized the growing popularity and demographic shift in golf, citing increased diversity and family use. He recommended the City engage its existing golf course contractor to explore viable solutions. Additionally, he stressed the need for protective fencing near parking areas adjacent to fields and concluded by urging the City to account for elementary school capacity, noting the potential influx of young children that the development could bring.

Pete Nevins, urged the Commission to avoid increasing frustration for Costa Mesa residents, particularly with respect to traffic congestion and access to the golf course. Speaking as both a resident and an employee at the Costa Mesa Country Club, he highlighted the high demand for the facility among community members of all ages, from children to seniors. He asked that this be carefully considered in the planning process to preserve the public's ability to enjoy recreational amenities like the golf course.

Tim B. Allen, expressed deep appreciation for the community value of the Costa Mesa Golf Course, emphasizing its inclusivity and role in serving residents and surrounding communities. Reflecting on his personal experience buying a home without affordability programs, he voiced concern about the scale and density of the proposed development, noting the visual and infrastructural impacts—such as the lack of visible parking, and the potential need for services like a police station, fire station, hospital, and school within the project. He also referenced prior city projects in his neighborhood, which he has experienced firsthand, and encouraged continued community engagement and input as the plans evolve.

Ned Whitmore, expressed concern that the proposed development plans do not adequately account for the impact on the golf course, particularly Mesa Linda, which he described as one of his favorite courses. He noted that in the two higher-density concepts, a proposed access road would cut across the course, significantly altering its playability, and potentially reducing it to a par-66 layout, diminishing its value to the community. He questioned the necessity of a second road and suggested exploring alternative routes—such as an extension toward Adams Avenue—to help distribute traffic more evenly rather than concentrating it on Harbor Boulevard, which is already heavily congested. Mr. Whitmore encouraged the City to support the smaller-scale plan to protect the integrity of the golf course and limit excessive traffic impacts.

Carrie McCarthy, emphasized the urgent need for additional softball and utility fields in Costa Mesa, particularly for girls. She noted that her league currently has access to only one field at TeWinkle Park during limited hours, forcing most games to be played in Newport Beach. She advocated for creating a stronger local hub for youth sports in Costa Mesa. As a former Division I softball player and current coach, she highlighted the unique opportunity Southern California offers for young athletes to train with high-level talent and stressed the importance of providing varied, accessible facilities. Ms. McCarthy, a resident near the golf course, also expressed strong support for preserving the Costa Mesa Golf Course as a valued community amenity.

Kirk Bauermeister, urged the City to take a deliberate and strategic approach in planning for the Fairview Developmental Center site. While acknowledging the importance of addressing affordable housing, he cautioned against overloading this project as the sole solution, especially given its potential to add over 3,000 units and significantly increase demand for recreational space. He strongly opposed any reduction to the Costa Mesa Golf Course, particularly Mesa Linda, which he described as a vital and affordable resource for seniors, students, and community members. With other local courses closing or being reduced, he warned that eliminating this course would limit access, increase prices, and diminish quality of life for residents. Mr. Bauermeister

recommended forming a community advisory group to ensure stakeholder input is incorporated throughout the planning process, stating that inclusive planning leads to smoother implementation and long-term success. He offered his own support and encouraged the City to consider the generational impact of its decisions.

Kathy Espahani, voiced strong support for maximizing affordable housing at the Fairview Developmental Center site, calling it a generational opportunity for Costa Mesa to meet the pressing needs of lower-income residents. She expressed concern, echoing earlier comments, that the commitment to affordable housing—particularly the proposed 40% very low- and low-income requirement—could be weakened over time. To safeguard that commitment, she recommended that the City formally include a 40% inclusionary housing requirement in the specific plan, ensuring that regardless of the final unit count, the affordability target is met. She added that such a provision would allow the State, as landowner, to adjust land pricing accordingly to maintain financial feasibility for developers. Ms. Espahani urged the City to hold firm on this requirement to ensure the project meaningfully addresses community housing needs.

Cynthia McDonald, expressed appreciation for the wide range of community members who came forward to share their perspectives on the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan. She emphasized the value of resident input, particularly from groups advocating for special needs services, youth sports, and affordable housing. Ms. McDonald voiced disappointment that previous calls for an advisory committee were not supported by the City, despite the clear evidence that residents could significantly contribute to a better outcome. She criticized the proposed plan as relying on outdated urban planning principles, lacking emphasis on modern concepts like mixed-middle housing, walkability, bike ability, and strong community design. She also raised concerns about the secondary access road, questioning its necessity and potential impact during emergencies. Lastly, she supported calls for a Town Hall meeting and affirmed that, if the City does not host one, community groups such as Costa Mesa First would.

The Chair closed the public comments.

During the discussion, commissioners and staff explored the complexities of the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan, emphasizing the challenge of balancing much-needed housing—particularly affordable units—with the preservation of vital community assets like open space, athletic fields, and the golf course. Several commissioners expressed concern about the feasibility and public support for the proposed site concepts, especially the addition of a second access road that could impact the Mesa Linda golf course. They

questioned whether the community's feedback, particularly from the workshops, had been meaningfully incorporated into the current plan and voiced frustration that the more publicly favored concepts had been deemed financially infeasible only after gathering community input. Staff clarified that financial feasibility and environmental compliance were guiding factors in advancing the plan and noted that while the site concepts helped frame the discussion, the specific plan would be refined based on updated analyses and community input. Commissioners also discussed the importance of making youth sports facilities and deep affordability requirements non-negotiable elements within the plan. Staff reaffirmed that there would be additional opportunities for public engagement moving forward and that the adoption of the guiding principles would help ensure that future planning aligns with community values, state mandates, and long-term city goals.

MOVED/SECOND: ZICH/ DICKSON

MOTION: Receive and File

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas

Nays: None

Absent: None

Recused: None

Motion carried: 7-0

The Chair called for a break.

The Chair called the meeting back into order at 9:38p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. STUDY SESSION REGARDING THE 2025 ZONING CODE AMENDMENT PCTY-25-0001 FOR MINOR TECHNICAL UPDATES

Assistant Planner Caitlyn Curley presented the item.

Discussion ensued regarding proposed zoning code amendments, particularly the height and placement of fences and walls in front yard setbacks. Commissioners questioned the rationale behind allowing six-foot opaque walls 10 feet from the property line, expressing concerns about the impact on neighborhood aesthetics and the pedestrian experience. Staff clarified that the six-foot height would only be allowed beyond the first 10 feet and noted that many existing walls would become nonconforming if the limit were pushed further back. It was emphasized that these updates were intended as technical cleanups, not broader policy shifts, but staff welcomed direction from the

Commission if changes were desired. Commissioners debated the balance between community openness and the need for privacy, security, and safety for pets and children, suggesting alternatives like transparency or opacity standards. Other items discussed included how the proposed changes interact with existing Zoning Administrator determinations, the formatting of zoning code sections, parking requirements for counseling offices, and garage space under SB 9. Commissioners also requested a list of uncodified determinations and expressed interest in a broader review of the zoning code in future sessions.

The Chair opened for public comment.

There were no public comments.

The Chair closed public comment.

Commissioner Martinez made a motion to receive and file. Seconded by Commissioner Dickson.

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/ DICKSON

MOTION: Receive and File

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas

Nays: None

Absent: None

Recused: None

Motion carried: 7-0

REPORT - PUBLIC WORKS - None.

REPORT - DEVELOPMENT SERVICES - Director Tai thanked Commissioner Martinez for presenting the Airport Land Use Commission results. She informed the Planning Commission that two previously reviewed projects, Hive Live and Victoria Place, are scheduled for City Council consideration on July 15. She also announced that a new housing development at 3150 Bear Street will be presented at the next Planning Commission meeting, continuing the trend of bringing forward housing projects. Lastly, she noted that the zoning code amendment will return for a public hearing later in July.

REPORT - ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY - None.

ADJOURNMENT AT 10:14p.m.

Submitted by:

CARRIE TAI, SECRETARY
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION