



REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025 - MINUTES

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG - Commissioner Dickson led the Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Jefferey 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: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Commissioner Martinez announced that the Coastal Corridor Alliance is hosting a series of planning meetings regarding the Randall Preserve. He noted that draft plans for the property are also available for public review. Commissioner Martinez encouraged members of the public who are interested in the area along the Santa Ana River to attend the meetings, review the proposed plans, and submit comments as appropriate.

Commissioner Andrade announced that the IKEA Costa Mesa art therapy event will take place Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The event is free and open to the community and will feature live mural painting by local Orange County artists, a vinyl DJ (where attendees can bring their own records to be played), sand art, and various community engagement activities for families and adults. Commissioner Andrade highlighted the event's focus on promoting mental health and maintaining a healthy balanced life.

Commissioner Klepack announced that Orange Coast College was giving away compost on Saturday from 8:00am-12:00pm

CONSENT CALENDAR:

- 1. MAY 12, 2025 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**
- 2. NOVEMBER 12, 2024 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**
- 3. SEPTEMBER 11, 2025 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**
- 4. JANUARY 23, 2023 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**

Vice Chair Zich requested that Item No. 1 (Minutes from the May 12, 2025 meeting) and Item No. 4 (Minutes from the January 2023 meeting) be pulled for discussion. Commissioner Martinez also requested that Item No. 4 be pulled.

Commissioner Martinez made a motion. Seconded by Commissioner Dixon.

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/ DICKSON

MOTION: to approve Consent Calendar items No. 2 and 3.

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

Vice Chair Zich pulled Items No. 1 and No. 4 from the Consent Calendar to follow up on prior requests and clarify the record. For Item No. 1, he reiterated his request for a receive-and-file report listing all active planning applications, noting its absence from the current agenda packet. For Item No. 4, he pointed out that the minutes were significantly delayed and asked whether staff maintains a list of outstanding meeting minutes and how those are prioritized. Staff explained that due to recent staffing changes, efforts are underway to compile a user-friendly list of active applications and an inventory of pending meeting minutes. Commissioner Martinez also requested an amendment to Item No. 4 to correctly reflect the nomination of Russell Toler as Vice Chairperson.

Commissioner Martinez made a motion. Seconded by Commissioner Andrade.

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/ANDRADE

MOTION: to approve Consent Calendar items No. 1 and 4 with amendments.

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: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. PRESENTATION PERTAINING TO THE PROPOSED HIVE LIVE PROJECT (PGPA-23-0002) INCLUDING A FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT, REZONE, SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT, MASTER PLAN, VESTING TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP, DENSITY BONUS AGREEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR A THREE-PHASED, 1,050-UNIT, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH 3,692-SQUARE-FOOT RETAIL COMPONENT AT 3333 SUSAN STREET

Senior Planner Chris Yeager presented the item.

The discussion between Commission and staff focused on various technical, policy, and planning aspects of the proposed Hive Live development project. Commissioners raised questions about the project's alignment with General Plan policies, affordable housing requirements, parking standards, trip generation assumptions, and open space calculations. Staff provided clarification on zoning changes, density bonus provisions, the fiscal analysis, the status of the development agreement, and the inclusion of balconies in open space calculations. Staff also addressed concerns regarding the affordability buffer in the city's housing element, the process for managing affordable unit compliance, and the accessibility of public amenities like the rail trail. Additional clarification was provided about project phasing, the reasoning behind building height transitions near residential areas, and the method used to evaluate traffic impacts. Staff confirmed that many of the more detailed or applicant-specific questions—such as rationale behind parking ratios, public access hours, and income verification processes—would be best directed to the applicant team during their presentation or the upcoming public hearing.

The Chair opened for Public Comment.

Speaker one expressed concern about the restricted hours on the rail trail segment between South Coast Drive and Sunflower Avenue. They noted that most bike lanes and trails in the city are accessible 24/7 and questioned why

this trail is gated with limited hours. They emphasized that this could pose an issue for cyclists returning in the evening, particularly during daylight saving time, and suggested the restricted access does not make sense.

Jay Humphrey questioned several aspects of the proposal. He asked for clarification on the ratio of public to private open space and the duration such spaces remain publicly accessible, noting that limited access during peak recreational times, like evenings and weekends, may not serve cyclists well. He also expressed concern about the lack of detail regarding the distribution of affordable housing units across the project's phases, suggesting that if these units are delayed until later phases, the current affordable housing needs may not be met. Finally, he defended the proposed parking ratio, arguing that many apartment residents typically own two cars, and compared it to existing developments where ample street parking is evident.

Cynthia McDonald expressed strong concerns about the proposed project and its long-term implications. She criticized the extensive entitlements granted to the developer—including zoning changes, reduced parking and setback requirements, and a long-term development agreement—arguing that these give the developer flexibility without clear, enforceable community benefits. The speaker questioned claims of reduced traffic and improved walkability, citing a lack of nearby essential services and increased traffic congestion. She also highlighted the uncertainty of a 30-year development timeline, the absence of for-sale housing units to address the city's ownership imbalance, and the limited affordable housing offered relative to RHNA goals.

Mark Vuksevich spoke in support of the project, expressing enthusiasm about revitalizing the area with new housing, activity, and spending. However, he echoed concerns raised by a commissioner regarding the parking supply and its impact on traffic demand. He emphasized that increased parking availability is a major driver of vehicle trips, noting that this factor was not accounted for in the project's ADT (average daily trips) modeling. He urged the developer to reconsider the large amount of parking being proposed, suggesting that reducing parking could lower project costs and potentially lead to more affordable rents. He also supported keeping the rail trail open beyond limited hours, citing its personal utility for accessing community destinations like the farmers market and expressing concern about losing access at night.

The chair closed Public Comments.

The applicant provided an overview of the proposed Hive Live project, highlighting its alignment with the city's housing goals, long-term investment by institutional partner Invesco, and commitment to architectural quality, sustainability, and community integration. The development team emphasized

the inclusion of 105 low-income units—exceeding the 10% base requirement—as a public benefit, along with a public plaza featuring a bodega, art elements, and rail trail access. Commissioners asked clarifying questions regarding the base density and unit count, the inclusion of parking concessions in the North Costa Mesa Specific Plan, distribution and timing of affordable units, access hours for the rail trail and Paseos, and planned infrastructure such as electric buildings and natural gas water heaters. The applicant confirmed affordable units would be evenly distributed and that parking design complies with legal standards while balancing financial feasibility. Staff committed to including the full Environmental Impact Report, traffic analysis, and enhanced graphics and amenity details in the materials for the June public hearing.

Commissioner Martinez made a motion. Seconded by Commissioner Dickson

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/ DICKSON

MOTION: to receive and file

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

2. STUDY SESSION REGARDING THE FAIRVIEW DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN LAND USE PLAN

Anna McGill, Planning and Sustainable Development Manager presented the item, along with consultant team from Placeworks.

During discussion on the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan, the Commission raised significant concerns about the disconnect between the preferred land use concept and the community's clear preference for Concept 1, which prioritizes more open space and lower housing density. Questions were raised about access restrictions, particularly regarding Merrimac Way, and the rationale for allowing access for certain uses but not others. The Commission challenged the feasibility of meeting park acreage goals, noting that all three proposed concepts fall short of the city's General Plan target. Commissioners also questioned why community feedback from the public survey—which overwhelmingly supported Concept 1 and rejected trade-offs involving reduced open space for more housing—was not reflected in the recommended concept. Concerns were expressed about the representativeness of the survey results due to a low percentage of renter

participation. Several Commissioners questioned assumptions used in the financial feasibility analysis, including the costs of offsite improvements, golf course impacts, and parkland development. There was interest in re-examining development opportunities along Harbor Boulevard and calls to consider mixed-use options and alternative public amenities such as libraries or museums. The Commission emphasized the need to respect public input and to fully understand the consequences of selecting a lower-density plan, including how the state or a future developer might proceed under state housing laws. Staff explained that while the city controls the planning process, the state owns the land and will select a master developer based on its own housing priorities. Staff also noted that lower-density concepts are not financially feasible based on current modeling but committed to providing additional details on costs, permitted uses, and planning flexibility ahead of the next meeting.

The Chair opened for Public Comments.

Flo Martin addressed the Commission, emphasizing her active participation in all related workshops and her review of the public survey results. She strongly agreed with previous comments by the Commission that the survey clearly shows residents prefer Concept 1. She expressed opposition to Concept 3, stating it combines the worst elements of Concepts 1 and 2 while introducing additional negative features, making it the least favorable option. She urged the Commission to consider returning to the drawing board to develop a revised alternative—suggesting a “Concept 1.5”—that better reflects community input.

Jay Humphrey commended both the Commission and staff for their transparency and alignment with public sentiment, as reflected in the staff report and survey results. He emphasized the need to listen to residents' overwhelming support for Concept 1. He raised concerns about the proposed secondary road, noting that previous public discussions centered on access from Mesa Verde Drive—not across the golf course—and questioned the rationale behind the current alignment. Additionally, he asked whether the financial feasibility analysis accounted for long-term city service costs, such as public safety and infrastructure maintenance. He cautioned against setting a precedent with proposed building heights, referencing a previous 120-foot structure and the general guideline of limiting buildings south of the freeway to four stories. Lastly, he expressed concern that the project would worsen the city's already imbalanced renter-to-homeowner ratio and reduce per capita open space, moving Costa Mesa further away from its General Plan goals.

Jen Tanaka expressed concern that the reduced size of the FDC site and lack of coordination with agencies like OCTA and Newport-Mesa Unified

undermines the city's vision for a complete, connected neighborhood. She questioned the logic of including Concept 2 in public outreach despite a DDS letter appearing to rule it out and challenged the credibility of building a walkable community without public transit. She criticized the planning process for locking in decisions through the EIR and felt the proposed plan lacks the structure and livability of a true neighborhood. Although a long-time housing advocate, she stated she would oppose the current direction, calling it inadequate for Costa Mesa's needs.

Mark Vukseвич expressed frustration with the planning process for the Fairview Developmental Center site, calling it performative and lacking meaningful local control. He emphasized that the city is being constrained by state agencies and urged stronger action to transfer land ownership to Costa Mesa. He called for a more inclusive, collaborative process involving key agencies and stakeholders. He also voiced disappointment over the golf course, describing it as a missed opportunity for better public use.

Cynthia McDonald compared the Fairview Developmental Center planning process to the flawed redevelopment of a similar site in Sonoma County, criticizing it as vague, developer-driven, and lacking clear standards. She argued that the state is imposing its priorities over Costa Mesa's General Plan, particularly by underdelivering parkland relative to projected population. She expressed concern about the lack of transparency, public access to updated planning documents, and the premature timing of the EIR. The speaker urged the city to assert its authority, demand better planning, and resist state pressure to rush the process.

Dianne Russell expressed concern that the public outreach for the Fairview Developmental Center planning process has been ineffective and lacks clear purpose. She emphasized the importance of prioritizing affordable housing on the site to meet the city's RHNA goals, questioning the need for extensive business and market space. She also supported the idea of allowing public access to the golf course as open space and encouraged a long-term, forward-looking approach that considers future community needs, including reduced reliance on parking and better transit planning.

Wendy Leese expressed disappointment with the Fairview Developmental Center planning process, stating that despite attending numerous meetings, community input has had little impact. She criticized the state's influence over local planning and urged the city to push back against what she sees as excessive density and future traffic issues. She called for support from state representatives and expressed hope that environmental factors, such as protected wildlife, might prompt a reconsideration of the project. She

concluded by thanking the commission for their work and advocating for a return to the original plan favored by the community.

The Chair closed public comment.

Commissioners provided final comments emphasizing the need for clearer, community-driven planning for the Fairview Developmental Center site. They supported increasing affordable housing while maintaining Costa Mesa's character and livability, and called for better walkability, public transportation, and distribution of open space and land uses. Several suggested moving away from vehicle-centric designs, questioned clustering density or commercial areas, and highlighted the importance of rendering detailed visuals to engage the public more effectively. There was consensus on the value of a secondary access road and the importance of leveraging city assets, like golf course land, rather than offering them without return. Overall, commissioners acknowledged strong public sentiment and agreed more refinement and transparency are needed in the next steps.

Commissioner Martinez made the motion. Seconded by commissioner Dickson.

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/ DICKSON

MOTION: to receive and file

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

REPORT - PUBLIC WORKS - None.

REPORT - DEVELOPMENT SERVICES - Director Tai provided a brief report highlighting upcoming Planning Commission agenda items for the June 9 meeting, including the return of the Hive Live project, continuation of the Fairview Developmental Center discussion, and a new 40-unit residential project. She also reported on the city's recent participation at the International Conference of Shopping Centers in Las Vegas, where they promoted Costa Mesa to over 300 retailers and vendors. A farewell was given to Principal Planner Phayvahn Nanthavongdouangsy, who contributed significantly to Fairview and housing tracking efforts before departing for Riverside County. Lastly, she shared that hiring efforts are underway, with hopes to bring on a new current planning manager by early summer.

REPORT - ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY - None.

ADJOURNMENT AT 10:14 PM

Submitted by:

CARRIE TAI, SECRETARY
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION

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