



REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2025 - MINUTES

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

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

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Chair Jeffrey Harlan

Commissioner Dickson joined the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Commissioner Andrade congratulated the City for the successful culmination of the Art Venture program, sharing that her family enjoyed the activities at Lions Park. She encouraged the community to stay connected through social media to learn about upcoming events, which help neighbors build community. Andrade also highlighted the upcoming September 27th Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, inviting residents to enjoy Latin music, food, and culture.

Commissioner Martinez highlighted a full calendar of community events, including the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration at Lions Park on September 27 from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM, which also marks the last day to view the Art Venture exhibit at the Norma Herzog Community Center. That same day will feature a Community E-Bike Skills Workshop at TeWinkle Middle School for NMUSD students and parents, as well as the OC Pride Festival at the OC Fairgrounds. Looking ahead, he noted the Costa Mesa Sanitary District's Eco Expo on October 1, the annual Scarecrow Festival at Lions Park

on October 11, and reminded the public that two important surveys—the Neighborhoods Where We All Belong and the Climate Action & Adaptation Plan—close on September 30, encouraging everyone to participate and provide feedback.

Commissioner Dickson reminded the community about the Safe Routes to School survey available on the City's website. He emphasized the importance of participation, noting that the survey helps the City understand how families are getting children to school.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. SEPTEMBER 8, 2025 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/ DICKSON

MOTION: to approve Consent Calendar with one spelling edit.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Chair Harlan

Recused: None

Motion carried: 6-0-1

ACTION:

Planning Commission approved consent calendar items.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT PCUP-25-0017 TO ALLOW OUTDOOR STORAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLES (TOW TRUCKS AND EMPLOYEE VEHICLES) AT 2648 NEWPORT BOULEVARD.

One ex-parte communications reported from Vice Chair Zich.

Presentation by Associate Planner, Justin Arios.

David Pauda, from the applicant team, stated he read and agreed to the conditions if approval.

Public comments:

Monica McDade, spoke on behalf of the seven units directly behind the project site. She expressed concern that in the past she did not receive notice about the

removal of three large trees in her backyard, which has changed the environment after 19 years by making it brighter and warmer. She asked for clarification on whether the project will have 24-hour operations, what level of traffic is anticipated given the nearby family residences, and whether a new block wall will be constructed to address damage to existing fencing that occurred when the trees were removed.

Motion Discussion:

Commissioners expressed support for the project, noting it would replace an eyesore, improve the area with new landscaping and a block wall, and that noise concerns for nearby residents had been addressed through conditions of approval. The Commissioners highlighted the benefit of a shorter driveway for sidewalk safety and stressed the importance of including evergreen trees rather than palms in the landscaping plan, consistent with City preferences.

MOVED/SECOND: DICKSON/ZICH

MOTION: To move staff recommendations with the following modifications:

1. Add the standard landscaping condition to require that landscaping be approved by Planning Staff.
2. Strike the word "lien" from Condition No. 10.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: None

Absent: Chair Harlan

Recused: None

Motion carried: 6-0-1

ACTION:

The Planning Commission adopted a resolution to:

1. Find that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (Class 1) Existing Facilities; and
2. Approve Conditional Use Permit PCUP-25-0017 based on findings of fact and subject to conditions of approval.

2. AN APPEAL OF THE DENIAL OF A REQUEST FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION (PRAC-25-0002) FOR RELIEF FROM CERTAIN LAND USE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING CODE TO OPERATE A SOBER LIVING HOME; OPERATED BY THE OHIO HOUSE AT 115 EAST WILSON STREET, UNITS A THROUGH E

Three ex-parte communications reported from Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade and Commissioner Dickson.

Presentation by Senior Planner, Victor Mendez.

Christopher Barncart, from the applicant team, stated he read the staff report.

Public comments:

Ryan Stump urged the City to support, not eliminate, sober living homes, stressing that programs like his have saved lives, operated transparently, and are protected under housing discrimination laws. He warned that denying the appeal would displace over 40 men in recovery—leading to relapse, homelessness, and despair—while approval would show Costa Mesa values compassion, dignity, and equal treatment.

Diego Blake shared that the Ohio House gave him community, accountability, and the opportunity to rebuild his life after treatment. He described how residents support each other, pursue education and careers, and live inclusively emphasizing that addiction does not discriminate and that opportunities like this are vital for recovery.

Gary Miller shared his personal journey of relapse after 14 years of sobriety, explaining that after leaving College Hospital with limited options, the Ohio House became a lifesaving resource that has supported his recovery for the past two and a half years. He emphasized Costa Mesa's strong recovery community, the close link between homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health, and urged the City to recognize the Ohio House as a place that saves lives and deserves continued support.

Speaker 3 described the Ohio House not as a business or treatment center, but as a family and brotherhood that helped him overcome homelessness and heroin addiction. Now a college graduate with both a bachelor's and master's degree and working as a therapist, he stressed that displacing the Ohio House would take away that family for many men in recovery, sharing that even his father credits the program with giving him his son back.

Tyler Douglas Warm shared his personal story of struggling with addiction and homelessness for nearly eight years before being given a second chance at life through the Ohio House, founded by his lifelong friend Brandon and supported by Brandon's brother Ryan. He described the Ohio House as a vital sanctuary that not only saved his life but also helps countless others regain stability, return to work, and contribute positively to the community. He urged the City to recognize its value, stressing that closing or relocating the facility would jeopardize recovery.

efforts, dismantle a proven support network, and ultimately harm both individuals and the broader community.

Brandon Stump explained that the Ohio House grew from his own recovery journey into a community that has helped countless people rebuild their lives, supported by over \$7 million in local real estate investment and his family's deep roots in Costa Mesa. He emphasized that despite new ordinances unfairly impacting his homes, the Ohio House provides hope, accountability, and stability, turning those in recovery into productive community members while enhancing the neighborhoods it serves.

Corey Dispenser shared his journey from being homeless and struggling with addiction to becoming a sober, employed, and responsible resident who can now support his family and give back to the community. He credited the Ohio House for providing accountability, structure, and community, emphasizing that it transformed his life and that its residents are a gift to Costa Mesa, not a burden.

Jeremy Kangaroo shared that after losing his career and nearly his life to alcoholism, the Ohio House gave him purpose, structure, and the chance to serve as a house manager for six years, where he witnessed countless recoveries. He described the program as a gold-standard sober living community that saved his life and urged the City to reconsider its recommendation, asking leaders to imagine if someone they loved needed a place like the Ohio House.

Cynthia McDonald acknowledged and commended the success stories shared about the Ohio House but reminded Commissioners of past community concerns over the overconcentration of sober living homes. Citing two court rulings that upheld the City's ordinance as legal, she urged the Commission to maintain the denial, arguing that reversing it would risk costly litigation and that City funds would be better spent supporting residents rather than legal battles.

Motion Discussion:

Several commissioners thanked the Ohio House residents and supporters for their heartfelt testimonies, acknowledging the bravery it took to share such personal stories and recognizing the value of the recovery work being done. However, they emphasized that the decision before them was a Land Use and Zoning matter, not a judgment on the merits of recovery programs. While expressing deep sympathy and support for the individuals and their successes, Commissioners noted that the necessary permissions to operate the property were not in place, and therefore stated they would support the motion to uphold the denial.

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/DICKSON

MOTION: To move staff recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: Commissioner Andrade

Absent: Chair Harlan

Recused: None

Motion carried: 5-1-1

ACTION:

The Planning Commission adopted a resolution to:

1. Uphold the Economic and Development Services Director's denial of the Reasonable Accommodation request.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

REPORT - PUBLIC WORKS - Mr. Yang noted that the City will host a Community E-Bike Skills Course on Saturday, September 27, from 10 AM-2 PM at TeWinkle Middle School, as previously mentioned by Commissioner Martinez. He added that Citywide walk audits are underway, beginning with seven elementary schools and expanding to 16 more, as part of updating the Safe Routes to Schools plan. Lastly, he congratulated the Transportation Division for winning the ASCE Los Angeles Section award for Outstanding Bikeways and Trails Project, recognizing the Adams Avenue/Pike Creek Drive multimodal intersection improvements.

REPORT - DEVELOPMENT SERVICES - Director Tai noted that on October 7, City Council will hear an appeal of the small lot subdivision at 2308 Santa Ana Avenue, conduct the second reading of the recently approved minor code cleanup, and consider the Planning Commission's recommendation on the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan project description for environmental review. She also updated the Commission that the Hive Live project has been continued to a date uncertain at the applicant's request, with new notices to be sent once it is ready to return. When asked, she clarified that no substantial project changes are currently anticipated that would require another Planning Commission hearing, though significant alterations would trigger a return if necessary.

REPORT - ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY - None.

ADJOURNMENT AT 8:07 p.m.

Submitted by:



CARRIE TAI, SECRETARY
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION