



REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 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 - Commissioner Martinez 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: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Commissioner Dickson commented on the recent "Neighborhoods Where We Belong" event held at the Senior Center. He suggested that future events could incorporate more of a town hall format to allow for general audience questions. He noted that community members he spoke with expressed interest in having that type of opportunity.

Commissioner Martinez commented on the "Neighborhoods Where We Belong" rezoning initiative and noted his attendance at the recent meeting at the Norma Herzog Community Center. He expressed appreciation for the event and the participation of council members and commissioners. He encouraged community members to attend upcoming meetings, including the session on August 21 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall regarding Harbor Boulevard and Newport Boulevard, and the Westside walking tour on August 23 at 10:00 a.m. at the Senior Center. He also highlighted additional community events.

Vice Chair Zich reiterated his request for staff to include in the regular commission meeting packets a list of all active planning applications with their associated property addresses. He noted that staff had previously committed to providing this information once resources allow. He also reiterated his request for a list of SB-9 projects and their associated addresses, emphasizing his continued interest in receiving both items.

Chair Harlan reported on his attendance at the recent housing rezoning workshop. He emphasized the importance of providing clearer context to the public regarding the outcomes of the process, including zoning code changes, revisions to the land use map, and amendments to the General Plan and Housing Element. He cautioned against vague questions that could risk disengaging participants and suggested offering more direct information on deliverables. He also recommended exploring additional outreach methods, including informal community settings, to broaden participation.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. JULY 28, 2025 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/ DICKSON

MOTION: to approve Consent Calendar.

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

ACTION:

Planning Commission approved consent calendar items.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. DESIGN REVIEW (PA-23-14) AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 2023-117 REQUEST 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 2308 SANTA ANA AVENUE

Presentation by Assistant Planner Caitlyn Curley.

Ali Sedghi stated he read and agreed to the conditions if approval.

Public comments:

Santa Bob expressed support for the project. He stated he had no objections to the proposal, noting only his dislike of the palm trees included in the plan.

Dave Prosek expressed concern about the limited time provided to review project documents. He highlighted privacy impacts from second-story windows overlooking his property, potential drainage issues affecting neighboring yards, and gaps in landscaping that could worsen privacy and noise concerns.

Blake Garner expressed concerns regarding the project's impact on neighborhood character and quality of life. He noted that the property had been left unattended for years and questioned the applicant's readiness to proceed. He cited concerns about increased traffic, parking, and potential strain on public services, as well as the scale and height of the proposed development compared to surrounding single-level homes. He also raised questions regarding compliance with solar requirements and minimum lot size standards.

Kelly Prosek expressed concerns regarding privacy impacts, the use of palm trees for screening, and potential safety issues from falling debris that could affect children and pets. She noted ongoing maintenance issues, including overgrowth and bamboo from the property damaging her yard and drainage system. Additional concerns included the placement of solar panels and air conditioning units, as well as the limited time provided to review project materials.

Alfonso Jimenez spoke on behalf of property owners Mike and Gene Tchaikovsky who were unable to attend. He stated that the owners submitted written objections to the Planning Commission and expressed concern about the limited time provided to review project materials. He requested a continuance of the hearing to allow additional time for review and consultation. Specific concerns included the project's layout and proximity to the backyard of 323 23rd Street, windows overlooking private yards, and existing issues with stormwater flooding and sewer overflows.

Motion Discussion:

During discussion, Commissioners expressed overall support for the project but raised broader concerns regarding processing timeframes, public notification, drainage concerns, and privacy impacts. Commissioner Martinez suggested reorganizing conditions of approval for clarity and commented on the unusual number of palm trees required by code, while Vice Chair Zich emphasized the need for adequate public review time and cautioned against approving projects solely because they provide housing. Commissioner Dickson highlighted Condition of

Approval No. 3 as addressing privacy concerns and supported the project with that safeguard in place. Commissioner Andrade supported the project and encouraged consideration of opportunities for first-time homebuyers. Commissioners further debated the proposed landscaping, with several expressing concerns about palm trees providing little privacy. A friendly amendment was accepted to direct staff to work with the applicant to replace as many palms as feasible with alternative trees, particularly along Parcel Two adjacent to neighboring lots, and to consider additional screening vegetation.

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/ ZICH

MOTION: To approve staff recommendation with an amendment directing staff to work with the applicant to replace palm trees with more suitable alternatives and add screening vegetation along Parcel Two to address privacy concerns, while noting the importance of clear conditions of approval and improved public review processes.

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

ACTION:

The Planning Commission adopted a resolution to:

1. Find that the staff presentation is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15315 (Class 15) Minor Divisions of Land, and Section 15303 (Class 3) New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures. In addition, this project is statutorily exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.66; and
2. Approve Parcel Map No. 2023-117 and Design Review PA-23-14 based on findings of fact and subject to conditions of approval, with an amendment directing staff to work with the applicant to replace palm trees with more suitable alternatives and add screening vegetation along Parcel Two to address privacy concerns.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. STUDY SESSION REGARDING POTENTIAL ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS

Presentation by Contract Planning Manager Amber Gregg.

The Commission discussed prioritization of proposed zoning code amendments, focusing on which categories would have the greatest impact on staff efficiency, project processing, and community development. Staff noted that use, standards, and definitions categories are the most common sources of ambiguity and clarifying them would save time and streamline reviews. Commissioners emphasized the importance of addressing inconsistencies with state law, correcting ambiguities, and distinguishing between technical amendments and policy-related items. Parking standards, drive-through uses, and floor area ratio were identified as higher priorities, along with coordination with other city bodies such as the Arts Commission and Active Transportation Committee where relevant.

Public Comments:

Mark Vukseovich expressed support for the proposed zoning code updates, particularly the removal of arbitrary parking minimums, citing the example of Neat Coffee on 19th Street, which nearly could not open due to parking requirements. He emphasized that landowners and business owners should have flexibility in determining their parking needs. He also voiced agreement with Commissioner Martinez on limiting drive-throughs, citing circulation and property tax concerns, and noted additional issues such as setbacks, floor area ratio standards, and the prohibition of hookah lounges.

Motion Discussion:

During discussion on the motion, the Commission agreed to receive and file the report and supported staff's proposal to return with a reorganized list of zoning code amendments that distinguishes between technical updates and policy issues, and prioritizes items needed to address state law compliance and code ambiguities. Commissioners expressed differing views on whether to tackle easier items first or to focus on more complex, policy-driven amendments, and suggested grouping related items for efficiency. Additional comments touched on topics such as green space, parking standards, drive-through uses, and potential fiscal impacts.

MOVED/SECOND: DICKSON/ ZICH

MOTION: To 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

ACTION:

The Planning Commission received and filed.

REPORT - PUBLIC WORKS - None.

REPORT - DEVELOPMENT SERVICES - Ms. Tai reported that City Council approved the residential development at 3150 Bear Street with modifications, including removal of a pedestrian gate to Olympic Avenue, incorporation of pedestrian safety features in the new signal at Bear Street, and direction to monitor parking impacts in adjacent neighborhoods. The rezoning portion of the project is scheduled for second reading on September 2. Staff also thanked the public for participating in the "Neighborhoods Where We All Belong" workshop and noted that the Fair Housing workshop originally scheduled for August 14 has been rescheduled to October 9 due to a conflict with the fair.

REPORT - ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY - None.**ADJOURNMENT AT 8:29 p.m.**

Submitted by:

CARRIE TAI, SECRETARY
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION