

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE



November 1, 2022

6:06 PM

In accordance with City policy, all Planning Commission meetings are recorded on audio and video in their entirety and are available for review in the Community Development Department (CDD). These minutes are a brief summary of action taken.

1. ROLL CALL

Chairperson Veronica Dorantes-Pulido, Vice-Chair Lucy Rojas, Commissioners Ed Acosta, Anna Kammer, and Jenni Veitch-Olson were present.

A. Motion to excuse absent Planning Commissioners (If any)

Commissioner Kammer inquired about the number of absences allowed according to the bylaws. Community Development Director Merriam clarified she will need to review bylaws and will update commissioners on this matter during report of the secretary.

In addition, Commissioner Acosta asked about the confidentiality of disclosing the reasons for absence.

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Veitch-Olson, seconded by Vice-chair Rojas, and carried by the following vote to excuse Commissioner Daniel Dodge and Brandon Sención's absence:

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS: Acosta, Kammer, Rojas, Veitch-Olson, Dorantes-Pulido
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS: None
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS: Dodge, Sención

Staff members present were Assistant City Attorney Denise S. Bazzano, Assistant Chief of Police Thomas Sims, Community Development Director Suzi Merriam, Principal Planner Justin Meek, Associate Planner Sarah Wikle, Associate Planner Ivan Carmona, Executive Assistant Deborah Muniz, Permit Technician Celia Castro, and City Interpreter Carlos Landaverry.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. PRESENTATIONS & ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

A. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

B. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Kammer encouraged the public to get involved in city government and help make Watsonville a better place to live.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. MOTION APPROVING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 REGULAR MEETING

PUBLIC INPUT

None

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Kammer, second by Commissioner Veitch-Olson, and carried by the following vote to approve the Consent Agenda:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS: Acosta, Kammer, Rojas,
Veitch-Olson, Dorantes-Pulido

NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: Dodge, Sención

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. SPECIAL USE PERMIT (PP2022-4023) TO ALLOW FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OFF-SALE BEER AND WINE SALES (TYPE 20 ABC LICENSE) AT AN EXISTING GROCERY STORE (LA CONDESA MARKET) LOCATED AT 1079 SOUTH GREEN VALLEY ROAD (APN 018-281-32)

1) Staff Report

Staff report was given by Community Development Associate Planner Sarah Wikle.

2) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

In answering Vice-chair Rojas, Associate Planner Wikle clarified training for staff is available through the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). New and existing employees are required to complete training within 90 days of granting Special Use Permit or within 90 days of any new hire. Training is free, and available online in different languages.

In further answering Vice-chair Rojas, pertaining to the ratio of allowed off-sale beer and wine sales permits in the area, Associate Planner Wikle clarified that licenses adjacent to the location are excluded from the ratio since they are within a separate census tract.

In answering Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido, Associate Planner Wikle clarified the difference between an off-sale and on-sale business license.

Commissioner Veitch-Olson inquired about what constitutes an area to be designated high-crime and changes that reverse the status. Assistant Chief of Police Sims answered, previous year crime statistics determine high-crime areas. He further explained the process that determines alcohol-related crimes within the City.

3) Applicant Presentation

Presentation was given by applicant Jeffrey Kim.

4) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

None

5) Public Hearing

Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido opened the Public Hearing.

Hearing no further comments, Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido closed the Public Hearing.

6) Appropriate Motion (s)

MAIN MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Kammer, seconded by Commissioner Veitch-Olson, to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 16-22 (PC)

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT (PP2022-4023) TO ALLOW FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OFF-SALE BEER AND WINE SALES (TYPE 20 ABC LICENSE) AT AN EXISTING 6,537± SQUARE-FOOT GROCERY STORE (LA CONDESA MARKET) IN THE PAJARO HILLS SHOPPING CENTER, LOCATED AT 1079 SOUTH GREEN VALLEY ROAD (APN 018-281-32) WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA

7) Deliberation

None

8) Chair calls for a vote on motion(s)

AYES: COMMISSIONERS: Acosta, Kammer, Rojas,
Veitch-Olson, Dorantes-Pulido
NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: Dodge, Sención

B. RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO AMEND THE WATSONVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE BY AMENDING PART 12 (SIGN PERMIT) OF CHAPTER 14-12 (ZONING PERMITS) OF TITLE 14 (ZONING); REPEALING CHAPTER 6 (SIGNS) OF TITLE 8 (BUILDING REGULATIONS); ADDING CHAPTER 14-21 (SIGNS) OF TITLE 14 (ZONING); AND AMENDING SECTION 14-40.060 (CLEAR CORNER TRIANGLES) OF CHAPTER 14-40 (GENERAL PROVISIONS, EXCEPTIONS, AND MODIFICATIONS) OF TITLE 14 (ZONING)

1) Staff Report

Staff report was given by Community Development Associate Planner Ivan Carmona.

2) Planning Commission Clarifying & Technical Questions

In answering Commissioner Kammer, Community Development Director Merriam confirmed the amendment to Sign Ordinance to Watsonville Municipal Code does not apply to school property.

In answering Commissioner Kammer, Community Development Director Merriam clarified there is currently no signage conflict with state highways.

Commissioner Kammer inquired what the procedure for current businesses that are not in compliance is pending adoption of ordinance, Community Development Director Merriam clarified the procedure for current businesses and added the ordinance will apply to new businesses.

In answering Vice-Chair Rojas, Community Development Director Merriam clarified the triggers that required the City Sign Ordinance to be reviewed and updated. Assistant City Attorney Bazzano further clarified that City Ordinances are periodically updated as appropriate to relevant laws. She added, it is standard for Sign Ordinance to be in Zoning Codes instead of Building Regulations.

In answering Vice-Chair Rojas, regarding the appropriate role Planning Commission holds through Sign Ordinance, Community Development Director Merriam clarified the purpose of the amended Sign Ordinance is to have set standards for signs within city limits including a process for property owners to take sign applications to Planning Commission as best practice.

In further answering Vice-Chair Rojas, Associate Planner Carmona clarified the visual examples of signage shared in the presentation of other cities are a comparison to reflect what the City of Watsonville Sign Ordinance plans to look like.

Commissioner Acosta shared a comment of the effects business can face through the amended Sign Ordinance and supporting long-term business in the city is important.

Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido commented that business owners have the opportunity to present alternative visions for signs that can be approved by Planning Commission and are not up to par with City Sign Ordinance.

3) Public Hearing

Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido opened the Public Hearing.

Chris Kodiga, with Oak Tree Property Company, owner of East Lake Village Shopping Center, shared his concern of amended Sign Ordinance presented to Planning Commission.

Clark Kodiga, with Oak Tree Property Company, owner of East Lake Village Shopping Center, shared his concerns understanding the changes to the amended Sign Ordinance and how this will affect businesses in East Lake Shopping Center.

Assistant City Attorney Bazzano addressed the CEQA comment made by public and clarified the adequacy of the CEQA review.

Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido closed the Public Hearing.

4) Appropriate Motion

MAIN MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Kammer, seconded by Commissioner Rojas, to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 17-22 (PC)

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE WATSONVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE BY AMENDING PART 12 (SIGN PERMIT) OF CHAPTER 14-12 (ZONING PERMITS) OF TITLE 14 (ZONING); REPEALING CHAPTER 6 (SIGNS) OF TITLE 8 (BUILDING REGULATIONS) AND ADDING CHAPTER 14-21 (SIGNS) OF TITLE 14 (ZONING); AND AMENDING SECTION 14-40.060 (CLEAR CORNER TRIANGLES) OF CHAPTER 14-40 (GENERAL PROVISIONS, EXCEPTIONS, AND MODIFICATIONS) OF TITLE 14 (ZONING)

5) Deliberation

Commissioner Kammer shared her support for Sign Ordinance and the consistency it creates for the City.

Commissioner Veitch-Olson thanked the public for providing their input, she shared Signage has been discussed through projects within the City, for the past

two years, which provided collective input from the public including business signage.

Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido thanked the staff for working on this project, including public input and alternative options for signage.

Vice-Chair Rojas inquired on the extent that the Sign Ordinance will affect existing businesses, in answering Associate Planner Carmona shared, a code violation for installed signage without permits was issued in fiscal year 2020-2021. The case on the property was used as a case study to review City Sign Ordinance.

Community Development Director Merriam clarified, the Sign Ordinance will go to City Council in December and proceed for a second reading in January of 2023 and will take effect 30 days after that meeting.

In answering Commissioner Acosta, Associate Planner Carmona clarified how the East Lake Shopping Center code violation took part of the initial review to amend the City Sign Ordinance.

Community Development Director Merriam further clarified the factors that triggered the City Sign Ordinance to be amended. She also shared the Sign Ordinance had not been updated since 1967.

Commissioner Acosta shared a comment of concern targeting political signs.

Community Development Director shared the City receives complaints from the public and it is protocol to investigate reported complaints.

Assistant City Attorney Bazzano shared the significant amount of time it takes a Department to amend a Sign Code.

Vice-Chair Rojas thanked Assistant City Attorney for the clear clarification of the context driving the current changes.

In further answering Vice-Chair Rojas, Community Development Director Merriam clarified the Planning Commission is not the final decision-making body of the Sign Ordinance amendment. Assistant City Attorney Bazzano clarified, in order for the resolution to pass there needs to be four members supporting the resolution for the resolution recommended by staff to proceed.

6) Chair calls for a Vote on Motion (s)

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Kammer, Rojas, Veitch-Olson, Dorantes-Pulido
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Acosta
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS:	Dodge, Sención

6. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Community Development Director Merriam gave her report. She announced the retirement of Executive Assistant, Deborah Muniz and thanked her for all the years dedicated to the Community Development Department. Commissioner Kammer also thanked Deborah Muniz for her time dedicated to the Planning Commission. Secretary read the bylaws on types of absences for commission members.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Dorantes-Pulido adjourned the meeting at 7:50 PM. The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 6, 2022, at 6:00 PM.

Suzi Merriam, Secretary
Planning Commission

Veronica Dorantes-Pulido, Chairperson
Planning Commission