

MINUTES OF THE WILLOWS PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
HELD November 5th 2008

1. The Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairperson Domenighini.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chairperson Domenighini led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **PRESENT:** Woods, Warren, Thur, Melquist, & Domenighini.
ABSENT: None
4. **AGENDA REVIEW:** There were no recommended changes by the Commission or Staff and the Agenda for November 5, 2008 was accepted as presented.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None
6. **CONSENT AGENDA:** It was **moved** by Commissioner Woods and **seconded** by Commissioner Warren to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The Motion was unanimously passed and the following items were approved / adopted:
 - a.) Minutes of Planning Commission meeting held September 17, 2008.
7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None
8. **REGULAR BUSINESS:** General Discussion & Update
 - a.) Residential Design

City Planner Karen Mantele started off the discussion with a reminder that according to Section 2-96 of the Planning Code which covers design review criteria and physical improvements the City has discretion as to the future design of City neighborhoods.

Chairman Domenighini suggested that in future developments he would like to see designs that would address the issues of the abundance of visible cars as well as the safety issue of having the sidewalk right next to the street.

Commissioner Melquist stated that with such small lot sizes he does not see how designers could design something that would adequately hide cars as well as provide enough storage for the average family.

Commissioner Woods added that she would like to see the City be proactive in the designing phase of future developments. The City should know what they would like their neighborhoods to look like and the features they would like to have so that these neighborhoods can be designed to the City's specifications.

Commissioner Melquist concurred adding that the City also needs to be careful that neighborhoods not be so affluent that no one can afford to live there.

Chairperson Domenighini asked staff if there was anything that they needed from the Planning Commission to further the aforementioned ideas.

Ms. Mantele responded that according to the Community Vision & Action Plan one of the things the City could do is to prepare design guidelines specifically for residential development.

Chairperson Domenighini stated that he is not sure if the City needs to go that far at this point.

Discussion ensued between the commissioners, Ms. Mantele & City Engineer John Wanger regarding varying degrees of setbacks, alleyways, sidewalks, parks, architectural styles, etc.

Chairman Domenighini directed Staff to give the Planning Commission some examples of residential design so that they can see some working plans and see the pros and cons so as to be more aware of what is possible as far as future developments.

Ms. Mantele stated that the future may not be too far away as Basin Street has contacted her as of this week and wants to resurrect the project previously put on hold.

Discussion then ensued regarding design elements of various projects pitched to the city such as Pacific Union Homes and Basin Street.

b.) Housing Density / Housing Element

Ms. Mantele stated that the current density is set by the General Plan in section 6.0 Land Use Classifications. The city will have to update the housing element by August 2009. These densities are predicated upon the HCD Regional Housing Means numbers which are based on the projected household growth of the last census. If the City doesn't have the means to build enough homes to keep up with the updated housing element then it will have to increase its density.

Commissioner Woods asked Ms. Mantele if there was any opportunity to give HCD the facts regarding the actual housing situation such as vacancy percentages etc. Ms. Mantele answered that has been tried before but that HCD strictly runs off of census information.

Peggy White said that the other thing that ties into housing density is the new environmental regulations regarding greenhouse gases etc. Subdivisions are increasingly becoming Multi-Use, that is, homes and commercial developments are being built in the same subdivision so that people living in the community don't have to drive very far to go to work thereby reducing their impact on the environment.

Discussion ensued between the Commissioners & Ms. Mantele regarding different combinations of zoning, properties, & densities so that the City could meet the numbers put forth in the housing element.

c.) Sign Ordinance

Ms. Mantele stated that the sign ordinance is currently with the City Attorney for his review prior to bringing it to the Planning Commission around the first of the year for their review and comment.

Commissioner Melquist commented that before the sign ordinance is sent to the City Attorney to be legalized it should be brought before Staff and the Commission so that the concepts can be reviewed.

City Manager Holsinger stated that the sign ordinance had been discussed previously at three public hearings and that the Planning Commission has had two opportunities to propose changes to the sign ordinance, and that those proposed changes were applied prior to it being taken to the City Attorney's office.

Commissioner Melquist stated that the Commission had not seen a final draft of the sign ordinance prior to it being taken to the City Attorney's office.

City Manager Holsinger stated that the Commission and the City Council met in joint session and that they discussed some of the problems that were apparent with the sign ordinance. The changes that were discussed were then implemented and another hearing was held wherein the sign ordinance, with its changes, was reviewed again article by article to get the Commission's input. From that discussion a draft was prepared and sent to the City Attorney at the Commission's direction.

Some discussion ensued as to the timeframe of when the hearings were held regarding the sign ordinance.

Commissioner Melquist stated that it would have been nice to have had a hearing wherein the merchants that are affected by the sign ordinance could be present and have some input.

Discussion ensued between Commissioner Melquist and the City Manager regarding the fact that the hearings that the City conducted regarding the sign ordinance were in fact public hearings that were properly advertised. The City Manager expressed that it is not the City's responsibility if the merchants who are being affected did not come forward.

Chairperson Domenighini directed that Staff make sure that the Chamber of Commerce is aware of Public Hearings as a way to increase our outreach to the public.

There was some discussion between Sacramento Valley Mirror Reporter Doug Ross, the Commissioners, and City Manager Holsinger regarding signs and what the code says about particular types of signs.

City Manager Holsinger stated that in the near future we plan to have a fully searchable version of the City's Municipal Code including the Sign Ordinance on the City's Website.

Chairperson Domenighini said that eventually the City would like to have an "Administrative Permit" process so if a business would like to put up a sign they don't have to come to City Hall for a hearing to get a sign permit. There would be certain parameters to meet and if the business meets them they would be allowed to put up their sign.

d.) Code Enforcement

Chairperson Domenighini asked if the activities in the memorandum put together by the Chief of Police on the activities of the Code Enforcement Officer how many of them are really related to Planning Commission concerns. He added that most of the things on the list seemed to be of public safety & parking concern.

There was discussion between the Commissioners and the City Manager regarding man power and code enforcement.

Commissioner Melquist cited some examples of code enforcement issues on City property such as an adult beverage banner on a grocery store that had been there for over a month. He felt that those kinds of issues would be a concern for the Code Enforcement Officer and that the Code Enforcement Officer should not only work on public safety & traffic concerns but also planning code concerns.

There was discussion between the City Manager and Commissioner Melquist regarding signage on City property and where the City draws the line on these issues, however there was no resolution in this matter.

Chairperson Domenighini added that the Planning Commission would like to be kept aware of anything the Code Enforcement Officer has done that would be of interest to the commission so that the commission could begin to build a knowledge base of what problems there are.

9. **COMMISSION COMMENTARY:**

1.) Chairperson Domenighini asked if there was any action taken regarding storage containers. Ms. Mantele stated that she didn't get any direction to obtain a storage container ordinance.

Discussion ensued between the Commissioners, Ms. Mantele & the City Manager regarding the storage containers and whether or not there was any resolution on the matter. It was found that there was no resolution regarding the matter of storage containers.

2.) Chairperson Domenighini asked if there was any progress on the fact that there are no provisions in the code for modular homes.

The City Manager stated that he thinks that Clay Dawley addressed that but that he would check on it.

3.) Commissioner Warren stated that it would be nice if they could get some feedback so that they know when and if the things that the Commission discussed have been taken care of. She also pointed out that the Commission has not gotten staff meeting minutes in a couple of months and would like to get those again.

City Manager Holsinger added that it would not be a problem and that he thought this information was already being conveyed to the Commission but that he would double check on it. There could be some things that fell through the cracks with the transitions of staff.

- 4.) Chairperson Domenighini asked if the Planning Commission would be having a meeting on November 19, 2008. Ms. Mantele replied that she doesn't have any applications at this time but that she is expecting a few shortly. If these applications do not come though she expects there will likely not be a meeting until December.
- 5.) Commissioner Melquist asked if there are any new homes being built in town. The City Manager replied that he couldn't say when the last single family home permit was pulled but it has been awhile. Basin Street will be the first discussion the City has had in awhile regarding new residential development.
- 6.) Chairperson Domenghini asked Ms. Mantele if she would send the Planning Commission the information she puts together regarding residential design ideas. That way if there isn't a Commission meeting until January at least they could have studied the information before the Commission meets. Ms. Mantele responded that she would do so.
- 7.) Commissioner Melquist inquired about the Taylor property; he wanted to know if the Taylor's still own it and what is happening with it. The City Manager confirmed that the Taylor's and the investment company still own the property but they tentatively sold the property to FA Investments and the Hampton Group, who then defaulted on the original agreement. They have taken it out of default, have tentatively reached an agreement, and as a result of this all parties have to sign off on the map to get a final. That would sub-divide the two pieces of property; the 80 to the north and the 8 at the south end. Once approved, the final map will come back to the city to be approved by the City council and filed with the county. That will pave the way for Loves to buy the south section. Loves would, at the same time, process a lot line adjustment to make the south parcel 16 acres and the north parcel 72. City staff has recently talked with another group about potential commercial development for the northern 72 acres. This group has contacted the Taylor's and the Hamptons about entering into negotiations for the balance of the lot.
10. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

LARRY DOMENIGHINI, Chairperson

Hollie Johnson, Minute Clerk