

**TWENTYNINE PALMS PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, 6136 ADOBE ROAD
TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2011
6:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER-** Vice Chair Easter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- Commissioner Benton led the Pledge of Allegiance.
ROLL CALL-The following Commissioners were present: Alderson, Benton, Mendoza and Whitten. Chair Easter had an excused absence.

2.0 SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS –

- 2.1 Vice Chair Alderson announced this meeting will be televised on Cable TV Channel 10 Monday, September 12, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. and Friday, September 16, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.

3.0 MINUTES

- 3.1 August 10, 2011 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes (Special Meeting Date)
3.2 August 16, 2011 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

ACTION: On a motion made by Commissioner Whitten, seconded by Commissioner Benton and carried with a 4-0-1 (Easter absent) vote the Planning Commission approved the August 10, 2011 and August 16, 2011 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

4.0 CONSENT CALENDAR - None

5.0 ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR FOR DISCUSSION OR SEPARATE ACTION - None

6.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

C.J. Horn, Twentynine Palms, said the City needs to move on to more important discussions then the parking lot requirements at Roy's Tires regarding the Tatitlek project. He said the City should just let them park on the sand.

7.0 PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 7.1 PC 11-52- A request by Verizon Wireless for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to add six (6) additional panel antennas (two {2} per sector) to the existing eighty-two (82) feet high telecommunications tower located at 73195 Cactus Drive (APN 0617-031-10).
RECOMMENDATION: Conduct the Public Hearing, consider public comment, find the project Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA and adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-10 approving the Conditional Use Permit, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.

Community Development Director LaClaire (Director LaClaire) presented a staff report to the Planning Commission.

Vice Chair Alderson opened the Public Hearing.

Eric Meurs, representing Verizon Wireless, spoke in favor of the item. He said the County of San Bernardino owns the tower and the additional antennas will facilitate upgrading the tower to 4G.

Vice Chair Alderson closed the Public Hearing.

ACTION: On a motion made by Commissioner Whitten, seconded by Commissioner Mendoza and carried with a 4-0-1 (Easter absent) roll call vote, the Planning Commission found the project Categorical Exempt pursuant to CEQA and adopted Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-10 approving the Conditional Use Permit, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.

- 7.2 PC 11-53 – A Site Plan Review to consider a change in use from retail to institutional to allow a satellite college classroom in an existing 5,000± square foot commercial retail building (formerly Hollywood Video) at 73680 Buena Vista Drive, Twentynine Palms, CA (APN 0618-251-13).

RECOMMENDATION: Conduct the Public Hearing, consider public comment, find the project Categorical Exempt pursuant to CEQA and adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-11 approving the Site Plan Review, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.

Director LaClaire presented a staff report.

Vice Chair Alderson opened the Public Hearing.

Julie Ha, founder of Mayfield College, said their main campus is in Cathedral City and that Mayfield College is a small private school. She thanked the Planning Commission for reviewing the project.

Commissioner Whitten asked how many programs would be offered.

Ms. Ha responded Mayfield College would only be running one program from this facility focusing upon HVAC training; which is based on the job demand in the area. She said free GED prep is offered at their campus in Cathedral City.

Cal Sisco, Twentynine Palms, said the project sounds good to him.

C. J. Horn, Twentynine Palms, asked for more information about the school.

Ms. Ha responded explaining that the school is a for-profit institution and the cost of the program is aiming for students to use private financing and accessing the GI Bill for veterans and their dependents. Financial Aid, such as grants and scholarships, will be available.

Commissioner Whitten said the college is accredited through the Council of Educational Occupation.

Vice Chair Alderson closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Benton said this is a positive addition to the community.

Commissioner Mendoza welcomed the trade school.

Vice Chair Alderson said it is a good project and occupies a large, vacant building.

ACTION: On a motion made by Commissioner Mendoza, seconded by Commissioner Benton and carried with a 4-0-1 (Easter absent) roll call vote, the Planning Commission found the project Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA and adopted Planning Commission Resolution No. 11-11 approving the Site Plan Review, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval

8.0 REPORTS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 8.1 A discussion of the possibility of establishing temporary alternative meeting dates for the Planning Commission's regularly scheduled meetings.

Director LaClaire presented a brief staff report to the Planning Commission.

ACTION: On a motion made by Commissioner Whitten, seconded by Commissioner Benton and carried with a 4-0-1 (Easter absent) roll call vote, the Planning Commission approved a change to the dates of the Planning Commission's regularly scheduled meetings to the first and third Wednesdays of each month, effective as of September 21, 2011.

9.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS- None

10.0 COMMISSION COMMENTS/STAFF COMMENTS

Commissioner Mendoza thanked staff for their work.

Commissioner Whitten thanked the participation of the public at the Planning Commission meeting. He asked the public to take examine their own properties, clean up areas that need improvement and he encouraged taking pride in their community. He said he attended the Dedication for the Bike Path on Adobe Road, noting that Rick Yeager and his wife Amy were there and that Randy Husted did a lot of the fundraising to make the memorial of the bike path happen.

Vice Chair Alderson said it was great that a trade school was coming to town.

11.0 STUDY SESSION/COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

- 11.1 PC 11-72 - Guidance on a new Development Code Section to address the standards and criteria applicable to the development of Solar Farms/Fields.

Director LaClaire presented a staff report to the Planning Commission.

Pat Flanagan, Twentynine Palms, said she is not opposed to the small solar fields but there are additional considerations that should be debated before coming up with a satisfactory code. She said one of the considerations is the location and another would be consideration of the overlay zones.

Cal Sisco, Twentynine Palms, spoke in favor of the item.

John Masterson, Twentynine Palms, said he does not like to see some of the things the people are doing when installing the solar panels. He said he believes that allowing solar fields will be profitable for the community.

Ms. Fleck, Twentynine Palms, said a website called www.solardoneright.com discusses the pros and cons of solar power generation and encourages the City and interested persons to visit the website.

L.R. Sanders, Grubman Ellis Company representative, spoke in support of the item, noting a number of issues (property tax, jobs, spending in the local economy, etc.) and stated that he could supply the City with a map illustrating the location of substations and transmission lines.

Larry Briggs, Twentynine Palms, expressed his concern for the potential to loss property tax and sales tax revenue, as well as a concern for the amount of water that may be used.

Commissioner Whitten noted that he would like to do more research on the topic, would like to see the map offered by Mr. Sanders, but wanted to emphasize the need that any solar project considered must be beneficial to the community. Commissioner Whitten also asked that the solar reference noted in the draft General Plan discussed by the General Plan Advisory Committee be presented to the Commission, including a copy of the General Plan Overlay maps.

Commissioner Mendoza raised a number of questions and asked for a City Attorney opinion regarding the development of solar fields by one entity just to be "flipped" to an investment group.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that staff bring back the item with more information regarding the topic for another Study Session at the October 5, 2011 Planning Commission meeting.

12.0 CLOSED SESSION - None

13.0 ADJOURNMENT- Vice Chair Alderson adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jacqueline Palmer, Deputy City Clerk