

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE EL CAJON CITY COUNCIL and PLANNING COMMISSION



MINUTES

CITY OF EL CAJON EL CAJON, CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER 13, 2011

A Joint Special Meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission of the City of El Cajon, California, held Tuesday, December 13, 2011, was called to order by Mayor/Chair Mark Lewis at 1:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers, 200 Civic Center Way, El Cajon, California.

ROLL CALL

Council/Agencymembers present:	Hanson-Cox, Kendrick and Wells
Mayor/Agencymembers absent:	None
Mayor Pro Tem/Vice-Chair present:	McClellan
Mayor/Chair present:	Lewis
Planning Commissioners present:	Ambrose, Bales, Circo, Mroz and Sottile
Other Officers present:	Rutledge, City Clerk/Secretary Foley, Attorney/General Counsel Turner, Acting City Manager/Executive Director Presmyk, Acting Director of Public Works/ Acting City Engineer Ayres, Director of Community Development

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG led by Mayor Mark Lewis and MOMENT OF SILENCE. (The Courts have concluded that sectarian prayer as part of City Council Meetings is not permitted under the Constitution).

POSTINGS: The City Clerk posted the Agenda of the December 13, 2011, joint special meeting in accordance to State Law and Council/Agency Policy.

AGENDA CHANGES: None

PUBLIC HEARING:

**1.1 DRAFT DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN – RESIDENTIAL DENSITY/
BUILDING HEIGHTS/URBAN FORM (Report: Director of
Community Development)**

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council and Planning Commission

- View power point presentation;
- Open the Joint Public Hearing and receive testimony;
- Close the Public Hearing; and
- Provide guidance to City Staff on preferred development scenarios.

DISCUSSION

Acting City Manager Turner gives a slide presentation on the background and objectives for this Item.

Director of Community Development Ayres continues the slide presentation discussing densities and urban form.

Director Ayres invites the **Council, Planning Commission** and members of the public to participate in a 15-minute Visual Preference Exercise.

After a ten-minute recess to tabulate the results of the exercise, **Director Ayres** indicates the results of the exercise show a preference for low-rise developments of three stories or less.

The Public Hearing is now open.

Jerry Turchin feels the focus should be to increase civic pride and look for positive things in El Cajon, rather than focusing on density and low-cost housing. He wants the City to prosper, rather than follow a plan set by SANDAG or any other organization.

Daryl Priest feels that anything over three stories is too much for El Cajon, based on the projection of 50,000 additional residents. He stresses that we need quality, not quantity. In response to questions from **Council**, he states it would not be economically feasible to build structures with more than three stories due to construction costs, including concrete.

Mayor Pro Tem McClellan speaks about the City's demographics and increasing the number of condominiums or houses.

ITEM 1.1 (Continued)

John Gibson feels the City should reconsider expanding Specific Plan 182, given the reduction in likelihood of any redevelopment funds. He suggests that **Staff** concentrate on getting the Environmental Impact Report done. He feels that “up-zoning” is really a “down-zoning”, citing the Motoworld project, and that consideration should be given to preserve businesses that are already here.

Bill Fischbeck, a property owner in El Cajon, supports a new vision for the downtown area that needs to be driven by quality, and not quantity. He suggests the City needs to assist in spreading out infrastructure costs, so they would not be borne solely by the developer. He agrees that three to five stories is a cut-off spot for El Cajon.

Scott Alevy, representing the East County Chamber of Commerce, states they have spent a considerable amount of time meeting about the downtown specific plan, and thanks **Staff** for their time and consideration. The Chamber does not agree with adopting SANDAG’s recommendations and feels the City should be more flexible within the plan. He pledges support and outreach from the Chamber to assist in bringing more businesses into the community.

Mario Tilaro disagrees with SANDAG’s prediction on population growth, and comments on various cities with high rises and rental subsidies. He states those high rises have all been torn down.

Ron Pennock speaks about **Council’s** previous direction for no new apartments in the City, and indicates that it does not make sense to consider adding housing units. He supports a three-story maximum building height.

MOTION BY LEWIS, SECOND BY WELLS, to CLOSE the Public Hearing.

MOTION CARRIES BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

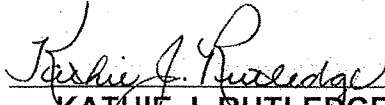
Discussion ensues among **Council, Staff and Planning Commissioners** concerning:

- Keeping the maximum height to three stories (Plan/Scenario 4), with the option to add podium parking;
- A suggestion to focus on converting apartments to condominiums or to tear down apartments and have a developer build new developments;
- Giving consideration to the City’s demographics.

With the concurrence of **Council, Acting City Manager Turner** indicates that **Staff** will bring to the Planning Commission for review, a version of Plan/Scenario 4, which will include a three-story building height limitation, with an option for podium parking.

No further comments made.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Lewis adjourned the Joint Special Meeting of the El Cajon City Council and Planning Commission held this 13th day of December 2011, at 3:05 p.m.



KATHIE J. RUTLEDGE, CMC
City Clerk/Secretary

Darrin J. MROZ, Chairman Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Manjeet RANU, AICP, Secretary Planning Commission