

MINUTES
ADJOURNED
JOINT
CITY COUNCIL
AND
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

A joint adjourned meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission of the City of Rolling Hills Estates was called to order at 6:04 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 4045 Palos Verdes Drive North, by MAYOR SEAMANS.

ROLL CALL

City Council Members Present: Addleman, Seamans, Zerunyan, Zuckerman

Planning Commission Members Present: Bayer*, Golida, Southwell, Vanden Bos

Planning Commission Members Absent: Conway, O'Day, Rein

*COMMISSIONER BAYER arrived at 6:17 p.m.

City Staff Present: City Manager Doug Prichard
City Attorney Kristin Pelletier
Planning Director David Wahba
Senior Planner Niki Cutler

Others Present: John Douglas, Conexus

AUDIENCE ITEMS

NONE

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. GENERAL PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE KICK-OFF MEETING

Recommendation: That the City Council and Planning Commission conduct a workshop with John Douglas of Conexus, to kick-off the General Plan Housing Element Update.

Planning Director Wahba provided a brief overview of the staff report.

John Douglas, Conexus, provided an extensive overview of the Housing Element of the General Plan, stating that it is unique in that it is the only document reviewed and approved by the state intended to maintain local control of the planning process. He provided an extensive presentation that included: 1) Key Housing Element requirements; 2) Recent changes

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in Housing Element law (AB 2348, AB 1233 and AB 2634); 3) Population, housing and employment growth; 4) Components of population growth; 5) Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA); 6) RHNA income categories; 7) RHNA allocations; 7) Significance of RHNA; 8) Options for affordable housing; 9) Effects of affordability gap; and 10) Next steps for the COUNCIL to take in moving closer to certifying the Housing Element.

Discussion ensued regarding AB 1233 with Mr. Douglas noting that the state's focus is primarily on zoning and development standards.

Discussion then ensued regarding AB 2634, with MAYOR PRO TEM ZERUNYAN noting that land costs on the Peninsula make very low-income housing impractical. Mr. Douglas responded that the HCD wants cities to do their best to at least address low-income housing needs and that the state does not wish to be involved with individual land decisions.

COUNCILMAN ZUCKERMAN inquired about affordable condominiums. Mr. Douglas noted that this would be more difficult because of resale controls as it comes down to the philosophy of elected officials and whether the policy would be to encourage rental housing or ownership. Additionally, Mr. Douglas noted that, while it would be more difficult to provide affordable ownership, cities could possibly seek out non-profit developers.

Mr. Douglas referred to a performance evaluation of the last Housing Element and the implications for the next planning cycle.

City Manager Prichard noted that the City had its Housing Element certified in the 1990s, and has been going back and forth with the HCD since the most recent planning cycle in an attempt to be certified again, but that no real reasons were provided for denial of certification.

Planning Director Wahba added that a number of consultants were retained who also received conflicting information from the state. He noted that the Housing Element was then put on hold until the Program EIR for the commercial district was completed.

MAYOR SEAMANS noted that the League of California Cities formed an HCD committee because other cities had complaints with their responses as well.

Mr. Douglas then referred to the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) with regard to income categories.

City Manager Prichard inquired if there is a special designation for senior housing projects. Mr. Douglas indicated that this type of housing is treated in the same manner as any other.

COUNCILWOMAN MITCHELL referred to the aforementioned performance evaluation, particularly as land supply diminishes over the next several years, and if the City will be able to obtain certification for the Housing Element at that time.

Mr. Douglas noted that most of the developments in California are actually in built-out areas.

City Attorney Pelletier suggested adopting a density bonus ordinance that would address this issue.

COUNCILMAN ZUCKERMAN referred to second dwelling units and asked if that would assist with the City's requirements.

Planning Director Wahba noted that a second dwelling ordinance would need to include provisions for lot coverage, setbacks, etc. Mr. Douglas commented that there are very few of those units being built.

Planning Director Wahba went on to state that the City's total housing allocation should be easily met, but the 16 affordable housing units required by RHNA would be more difficult to achieve.

Mr. Douglas noted that the state does not consider the moderate income category and focuses only on low income. Additionally, he stated that, if what is done is reasonable, no consequences would occur.

Mr. Douglas noted his opinion that the state will look for appropriate zoning and residential standards to accommodate all types of housing as well as what the City has done to encourage affordable housing.

COUNCILWOMAN MITCHELL suggested explaining to the state what the City has attempted to do with developers in asking them to provide affordable housing.

Mr. Douglas noted that a draft will be presented to the Planning Commission and COUNCIL for their review.

Planning Director Wahba inquired if a workshop would be feasible at this time. Mr. Douglas noted that the state will look to see if a good faith effort is made in educating the public.

After brief discussion, it was the consensus of the COUNCIL to meet at a future adjourned meeting and notify the public by the usual means.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:28 p.m., MAYOR SEAMANS formally adjourned the City Council meeting to the regular meeting of September 11, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Approved by,

Hope J. Nolan
Deputy City Clerk

Douglas R. Prichard
City Clerk