

**CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL STUDY SESSION: GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS
MINUTES**

JULY 11, 1996

**West Hollywood City Hall
8300 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Hollywood, CA 90069**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Commissioner Litz.

A. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: David Behr, Brad Crowe, D'Lynda Fischer, Thomas Jones, James Litz, Steve Smith

Staff Present: Ray Reynolds, Community Development Director; Lisa Heep, Planning Manager; Thinkh Tran, Administrative Staff Assistant

Others Present: Coralee Newman, Pamela Sapetto - Government Solutions

B. Approval of Agenda

The Commission voted to move Item 3 (Items from Citizens) before Item 2. The amended agenda was approved.

C. Posting of Agenda

This agenda was posted at City Hall, the Community Development Department counter, West Hollywood Library on San Vicente Boulevard, Plummer Park, and the West Hollywood Sheriff's station.

3. ITEMS FROM CITIZENS

The following spoke regarding conduct of Planning Commission:

- a) **Jeanne Dobrin, West Hollywood**
- b) **Anita Goswami, West Hollywood**
- c) **Joyce Hundal, West Hollywood**

ITEM 4.A

2. PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION - FINDINGS OF PLANNING COMMISSION, CITY COUNCIL AND CITY STAFF INTERVIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS

This information below is taken verbatim from the Consultant's report.

A. Presentation of Findings

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the interview and the study was to determine a positive direction for change in the City's land use decision-making process. Our approach was unique in that interviews were conducted with the Planning Commission, City Council and City staff to ascertain their perceptions of the land use review process and recommendations for improvement.

- ◆ *The most frequent comment was that the City needs to "strike a balance" between the residential and business interests. It is commonly held that that the City needs tools to address the inherent conflicts created between these two interests and its current inability to do so causes stress between Council and Commission. The area most frequently mentioned needing improvement is how to manage community issues with new development proposals.*

MOST FREQUENT COMMENTS MADE IN THE TWELVE INTERVIEWS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY:

- More effective communication needs to occur between the City Council and Planning Commission.
- The discord between the Council and Commission is a result of poor communication and lack of Council sharing their vision/mission to the Commission - "not on same page"
- Commission represents the "residents", City Council represents "business"
- City Council represents business and won't solve community issues
- Commission is powerless and treated as a "step-child"
- There is a perception among Planning Commissioners that staff recommendations have more importance with the City Council
- There is a perception that the Planning Commission recommendations are not transmitted in the City Council staff reports
- House of Blues (5 Commissioners and 3 Councilmembers) and Le Colonial were raised as examples with the process
- The Planning Commission meetings are not being managed effectively
- The Commission does not focus on broad policy decisions but rather on "details" like "sideyard setbacks"
- Staff needs to give the Planning Commission a better overview of their role as a Commission
- Staff needs to better manage community issues and understand dispute resolution techniques
- Some training may be beneficial
- There is a lack of information prior to Planning Commission meetings: no briefings are held, Commission is operating blind, no management of community issues, listing and potential mitigation of community issues
- Staff not giving "big" picture, doesn't address public benefit in staff reports
- City Council needs to strike the balance between residents and business

- City Council needs to review and act on Planning Commission's parking standard recommendations
- Code enforcement is critical for land use control in the City
- There needs to be a better understanding and management of the CEQA process
- Zoning Ordinance revisions are a good idea, and they need to address the land use conflict between the residential/commercial- idea of transitional use permit raised
- Staff has improved, however some staff are still unprepared
- There is a lack of coordination between the Transportation and Planning Departments
- There is a lack of respectful treatment of staff, public and applicants in the conduct of the Planning Commission meetings

B. Questions and Answers Regarding the Findings

The Commission, consultants and staff discussed the above.

C. Draft Recommendations

- ◆ *Conduct a series of study sessions for the Planning Commission to address:*
 - *Tools to better facilitate decision-making and communication, to include adopting by-laws for meeting conduct and protocol.*
 - *Community issue management, to include developing a process to manage community issues*
 - *Current California law pertaining to the land use review process, planning and zoning, CEQA Act, Brown Act, etc.*
- ◆ *Adopt mechanisms to improve the land use review and approval process which will facilitate better decision-making and communication now:*
 - *Joint Facilitated Retreat(s) one to two times a year with an agenda to address (which PC can look at):*
 - *Mission/Vision of City Council*
 - *Process*
 - *Relations: CC/PC*
 - *CEQA scoping sessions should be expanded on major projects to include an opportunity for input from City Council, affected Community and Planning Commission*
 - *Implement publicly noticed study sessions on controversial/major projects*
 - *Allow for individual briefings from applicants of Planning Commissioners prior to public hearings in accordance with the Brown Act*
 - *Staff reports should include an executive summary, and a section focusing on how the proposed project is consistent with General Plan goals and objectives and /or provides a public benefit. This should help the Planning Commission look at the "big picture"*
 - *Designate an assistant City Attorney to attend all Planning Commission meetings*
 - *Include in Zoning Ordinance revisions standards or process to ascertain mitigation for resident/commercial land use conflicts such as parking, noise, etc.*
 - *Publish a City Development Land Use Review processing schedule*
 - *Provide to public and Commission a land use review process diagram*

D. Questions and Answers Regarding the Draft Recommendations

The Commission, consultants and staff discussed the above.

E. Commission Recommendations

The Commission would like the following to be included as part of the final report:

- There is a perception that the City Manager circumvents the planning process
- Commissioners would like to see a community issues management process developed
- Commissioners would like to see the staff reports modified to include transportation review and economic/fiscal information
- There should be a Transportation Department and Transportation Commission review of land use projects prior to Planning Commission review
- Properly facilitated retreats
- Process - how does the City's Strategic Plan fold into the City's vision/General Plan
- Implement a written Director's report which include upcoming items and Council actions taken upon Planning Commission recommendations
- Staff reports should include transportation review and economic/fiscal impacts (not a fiscal impact analysis)
- The City should adopt standard conditions of approval for development projects

4. ITEMS FROM STAFF - None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Action: To adjourn to the next meeting of the Planning Commission on Thursday, July 18, 1996 from 6:30 PM until completion at West Hollywood Park Auditorium, 647 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS DAY OF SEPTEMBER 19, 1996.

CHAIRPERSON:



ATTEST:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR:

