MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

A regular meeting held at the La Quinta City Hall
78-495 Calle Tampico, La Quinta, CA

April 10, 2007 7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. This meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Paul Quill who asked Commissioner Engle to lead the flag salute.

B. Present: Commissioners Ed Alderson, Katie Barrows, Rick Daniels, Jim Engle and Chairman Paul Quill. It was moved and seconded by Commissioners

C. Staff present: Community Development Director Doug Evans, Assistant City Attorney Michael Houston, Planning Manager Les Johnson, Principal Engineer Ed Wimmer, Principal Planner Wallace Nesbit, Assistant Planner Yvonne Franco, Planning Consultant Nicole Criste, and Executive Secretary Betty Sawyer.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

III. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA: Confirmed.

IV. CONSENT ITEMS:

A. Chairman Quill asked if there were any changes to the Minutes of March 27, 2007. There being no changes, it was moved and seconded by Commissioners Alderson/Barrows to approve the minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved. Commissioner Daniels thanked the Commission for excusing him from the meetings he has had to miss.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Site Development Permit 2007-881; a request of R. T. Hughes Co., LLC for consideration of project architecture and landscaping for a 57 unit single-family residential community located southwest corner of Madison Street and Avenue 60.

1. Commissioner Alderson excused himself due to a potential conflict of interest and left the dais.

2. Chairman Quill opened the public hearing and asked for the staff report. Planning Consultant Nicole Criste presented the information contained in the staff report, a copy of which is on file in the Community Development Department. Staff asked that Condition No. 24 have the last sentence regarding the location of the water feature deleted.

3. Chairman Quill asked if there were any questions of staff. Commissioner Daniels asked if the water feature had been discussed with the applicant in terms of its necessity. Staff stated a recommendation was made for a reduction in size to the Architecture and Landscape Review Committee (ALRC), but the ALRC did not recommend the condition.

4. Commissioner Barrows stated she would like to see either the water feature deleted or reduced in size and ask how much turf is shown. Staff stated the applicant indicated it is less than 50% turf. Commissioner Barrows asked why Condition No. 26 did not include a requirement for a "no turf" option. Staff stated a condition could be added.

5. There being no further questions of staff Chairman Quill asked if the applicant would like to address the Commission. Mr. Richard Hughes stated he and his team were available to answer their questions.

6. Chairman Quill asked if there were any questions of the applicant. Commissioner Engle asked about the color mix on the units. Mr. Hughes stated there would be wide variety.

7. Commissioner Daniels noted the Commission is not favoring water features due to the drought conditions that are throughout the State. His concern is whether the water feature pool could be scaled back as well as the amount of turf and the lake. Mr. Hughes stated the project was designed to have the look of Southern Spain. The name of the project "Malaga" is from Southern Spain as well. The front of their project will also have an impact on the entrance to the Travertine project. Mr. Mike Horton, HSA Architects, stated the calculations for the amount of turf along the entire perimeter of the project is only 25% and met the CVWD requirements. The lake has been reduced to work with the retention requirements.

8. Chairman Quill asked if the majority of the turf was located in the retention basin. Mr. Horton stated yes. The goal was to produce a view of the lake from Madison Street. Chairman Quill noted that the turf area at the corner of the Griffin Ranch project is not even seen. Mr. Horton stated this area will be seen. They added large fingers of drought tolerant plants to make it visually interesting and to down play the amount of turf. Chairman Quill asked if they had any objection to reducing the amount of turf. Mr. Horton stated they could slightly, but do not want to hurt the integrity of the design. Mr. Hughes stated they have been working with the Travertine project which has caused them to delay their project. They have also given an easement to Travertine to construct the roadway.

9. Commissioner Daniels asked if there were pedestrian accesses. Staff indicated the location of the pathway.

10. Commissioner Barrows asked what calculation they used to come up with 25% on the turf. Mr. Horton stated the calculations were based on the whole project. Commissioner Barrows stated the condition was written to require the corner to have less than 50% of turf and this appears to be over 50%. Mr. Horton stated they could reduce the area and add shrubs. This is the first time he has ever been approached with reducing turf on one section of a project instead of the project as a whole. Commissioner Barrows stated that in today's environment she would want to see the lake and turf reduced significantly more. Mr. Horton stated the water has to have a beginning and end.

11. Chairman Quill asked how Madison Street was approved. Staff stated there is a condition in the Tentative Tract Map regarding the size of the street with a five year improvement timeline. Madison Street is a Secondary Arterial in the General Plan and is planned to go through to the south. Chairman Quill stated that in the General Plan Madison Street does not show a multi-use trail from Avenue 58 to the levee and the Commission was certain that they would want a multi-use trail continue from the intersection of Madison Street and Avenue 58 to the levee. It was his understanding that this project was conditioned for a trail. This map does not show the trail going up and over the levee. When Andalucia comes back for the development west of Madison Street they will be conditioned to put the trail in. He wants to be sure that this

project has a trail on Avenue 60, and/or Madison Street. Staff stated the tract was not conditioned for a multi-use trail on Madison Street. There is a multi-use trail conditioned on Avenue 60. The applicant in conjunction with the processing of the map has asked for a change to Avenue 60, which makes Avenue 60 west of Madison Street a private street. This will have a multi-use trail on Avenue 60. The trail is called out in the General Plan Map and the conditions for this permit reference those conditions. Plans have not been submitted for the redesign of Avenue 60, so staff has not seen the design yet.

12. Commissioner Barrows asked where the trail on Avenue 60 connects. Staff stated there is no place for it to connect at this time.

13. Chairman Quill stated there has to be a trail either on Madison Street or Avenue 60. As the east side is developed it is too late to add the trail on the east side, but the west side could be required. Staff stated there will be a trail on Avenue 60. As all the property owners on Avenue 60 have to agree to privatization of the street, staff cannot determine which side of the street it will go on until the plans are submitted. Community Development Director Doug Evans stated this street is a local street and it would come to the Commission for a General Plan determination and the street vacation would go to Council. Staff could require the applicant to bring back the preliminary design of the street. Chairman Quill asked if there was any significant objection to requiring a condition for a multi-use trail on Madison Street or Avenue 60. Mr. Hughes stated they have no objection. They have no objection to the trail being put on Madison Street. Community Development Director Doug Evans stated a condition could be added that the multi-use trail be required on Madison Street and when Avenue 60 street vacation comes forward, we can change the designation. Discussion followed regarding the location of the trail.

14. Commissioner Barrows asked if there were any features of the homes that lend themselves to energy efficiency or conservation. Mr. Dennis Danahey, architect, stated they have made the walls thicker and recessed the windows and added large overhangs. Solar reflectors to reduce heat gain as well as stone and brick. Passive solar will also be used. Mr. Horton stated that in regard to the non-turf options, they are instituting a number of the newer irrigation technology into the project. In regard to the pumps being used they are investigating their options.

15. There being no further questions of staff, the applicant or any other public comment, Chairman Quill closed the public participation portion of the hearing.

16. Commissioner Engle stated that as long as they could reach a solution to the turf, trail and water feature, he has no objection.

17. Commissioner Daniels stated his concern is only the water feature. He would have no objection to the elimination of the lake and the corner turf being reduced to 50%.

18. There being no further discussion, it was moved and seconded by Commissioners Barrows/Daniels to adopt Planning Commission Resolution 2007-015 to of Site Development Permit 2007-881, as recommended and modified:

    a. Condition 24: Last sentence deleted and multi-use trail along Avenue 60 or Madison Street added to the landscaping plan.
    b. Condition added: The water feature shall be eliminated and the corner landscaping reduced to 50% and adding a no-turf option for the front yard be added.

ROLL CALL: AYES: Commissioners Barrows, Daniels, and Chairman Quill. NOES: Commissioner Engle. ABSENT: Commissioner Alderson. ABSTAIN: None.

Commissioner Alderson rejoined the Commission.

A. Site Development Permit 2007-882; a request of Fancher Development Services-Mimi's Cafe for consideration of architecture and landscaping plans for a restaurant located south of Highway 11, southeast of the Depot Drive in the Komar Desert Center.

1. Chairman Quill opened the public hearing and asked for the staff report. Assistant Planner Yvonne Franco presented the information contained in the staff report, a copy of which is on file in the Community Development Department.

2. Chairman Quill asked if there were any questions of staff. Commissioner Daniels asked if this fronts onto Highway 111. Staff stated yes. There is no development in front of this project.

3. Commissioner Barrows asked about the Chilean Mesquite and the ALRC has suggested these species be replaced. Staff stated it was not mentioned and it will also be used in the circular planter.

4. Commissioner Alderson asked about Condition No. 8 and the ground-mounted flood lights being removed. Staff recommended this to the ALRC because it appeared they would be too bright and the ALRC agreed.

5. There being no further questions of staff Chairman Quill asked if the applicant would like to address the Commission. Mr. Jared Taylor, representing Francher Development, stated he was available to answer any questions. They had a request to change Condition No. 52 regarding a modification to the cornice on the entry feature to make it match the remainder of the building. They are requesting to leave the detail as proposed to help point out the entry location.

6. Commissioner Alderson asked why staff was requesting the post size on Condition No. 4 be increased. Planning Manager Les Johnson stated it was a staff recommendation and ALRC concurred that they needed to be larger. Commissioner Alderson commented that the waiting room inside was very small. Mr. Taylor stated they do have the outside area as well as the bar area and has worked in the past at their other restaurants.

7. Commissioner Daniels asked if this was the same size as the one in Rancho Mirage. Mr. Taylor stated yes.

8. Commissioner Barrows asked the location of the additional landscaping by the electrical room. Staff noted the location on the site plan.

9. There being no further questions of staff, the applicant or any other public comment, Chairman Quill closed the public participation portion of the hearing.

10. There being no further discussion, it was moved and seconded by Commissioners Alderson Barrows/Daniels to adopt Planning Commission Resolution 2007-016 to of Site Development Permit 2007-882, as recommended and modified:

    a. Condition 52: deleted

BUSINESS ITEMS:

A. Village Use Permit 2005-030; a request of Leyva & Wilde, Inc. for consideration of pre-construction landscaping and streetscape program for a 20-unit, two and one half story residential condominium building in the Village at La Quinta located on the south side of Calle Tampico, bounded by Avenida Villa and Avenida Navarro.

1. Chairman Quill opened the public hearing and asked for the staff report. Principal Planner Wallace Nesbit presented the information contained in the staff report, a copy of which is on file in the Community Development Department. Staff noted a public utility easement has been found along Avenida Villa and it is not known whether or not the tree treatment will be feasible.

2. Chairman Quill asked if there were any questions of staff. Commissioner Alderson clarified that all three options have the same number of trees and the same amount of curvilinear wall treatment. Staff stated the wall is the same but the tree options are reduced on Option 1. Commissioner Alderson asked for clarification on what the Commission's review went into regarding the streetscape. Staff explained the area.

3. Commissioner Daniels asked what areas would be replaced with river rock. Staff stated it was to be under and between the low-lying shrubs. Community Development Director Doug Evans stated that staff would not support use of any material which could be picked up and used as a projectile.

4. Commissioner Barrows asked how this could interfere with people walking or with the bicycle travel. Staff stated that with street trees in the curb it would reduce the ability to ride on the sidewalk. Commissioner Barrows asked how children are expected to ride bicycles and should the Commission ensure there is the ability to have a safe place for children to ride.

5. Chairman Quill stated the sidewalks are not designed to have bicyclists riding on them.

6. Commissioner Barrows asked if the tree is a multi-branch tree. Staff stated it is hopeful that the tree wells are designed to not cause a problem. In regard to it being multi-trunk, the landscape architect can answer that question.

7. There being no further questions of staff Chairman Quill asked if the applicant would like to address the Commission. Mr. Richard Leyva stated they were available to answer any questions.

8. Chairman Quill asked if there were any questions of the applicant. Commissioner Alderson asked if it is a canopy or multi-trunk tree. Mr. Leyva stated the tree type was recommended by staff. They wanted more of a willow and linear. Community Development Director Doug Evans stated the Tipuana was recommended in that it was approved at the La Quinta Museum and recommended by local landscape architects as street trees. Staff was concerned that the willow was too spindly and Council wanted a tree that was strong and would have an impact. This can be worked out between staff and the applicant. Mr. Leyva stated it does have a canopy and is normally a single trunk canopy tree.

9. Commissioner Daniels asked how high the tree gets in relation to the building; will it reach the second story. Mr. Leyva stated it could in time.

10. Chairman Quill asked if the applicant was OK with Option 3C and the responsibility of maintenance the street trees. The applicant agreed with Option 3C and maintaining of the trees. Chairman Quill stated he would not want to lose the street tree design for a Public Utility Easement (PUE). Principal Engineer Ed Wimmer stated that in regard to public utility easements they do have their restrictions. Chairman Quill stated that if we defer to the utility they will not allow the tree within 15 feet. It would be important to the aesthetics of "Old Town" to see that a solution is reached. Staff stated they will do their best to see this happen, but it is not certain that a utility company will observe the City's request. This easement was found late in the process and the City has no feedback from them at this time. Mr. Timothy Odebunmi, Hacker Engineering, stated that in regard to the PUE on the south side they currently have CVWD laterals coming from Avenida Navarro along the south side of the property going 100 feet into the landscape area. On the north side they have a 20 foot landscape and PUE coming through an access corridor between the two buildings along Tampico. They will be speaking with the utility companies regarding the easements. These utilities are currently being designed and are not yet installed. There are utilities in the five foot easement. Mr. Leyva stated the utilities are currently more in conflict with the hardscape than the landscape.

11. There being no further questions of staff, the applicant or any other public comment, Chairman Quill closed the public participation portion.

12. There being no further discussion, it was moved and seconded by Commissioners Barrows/Alderson to adopt Minute Motion 2007-007 approving Village Use Permit 2005-030, recommending Option 3C as recommended and modified:

    a. Condition 4: The applicant shall use an alternative material to the river rock and mulch.
    b. Condition added: The applicant shall work with staff to allow flexibility in the selection of the tree species.

CORRESPONDENCE AND WRITTEN MATERIAL: None.

COMMISSIONER ITEMS:

A. Chairman Quill gave a review of the City Council meeting of April 3, 2007.
B. Commissioner Daniels asked that the subject of water use standards be added to the next Joint Meeting with the City Council to get a consensus regarding the City's direction. Also, he would like to request staff look at the Green Build ideas. Staff stated a policy has been added regarding energy and conservation uses and staff has implemented some of these ideas in one of the City's RDA projects. Research is being done and money allocated for conference work to educate staff on this new area. Discussion followed regarding energy conservation ideas.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further it was moved and seconded by Commissioners Barrows/Daniels to adjourn this regular meeting of the Planning Commission to a regular meeting to be held on April 24, 2007. This regular meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m. on April 10, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Sawyer, Executive Secretary
City of La Quinta, California