

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
MINUTES OF REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2019  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 12<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
CITY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
202 C STREET, SAN DIEGO, CA 92101**

**CHRONOLOGY OF THE MEETING:**

Chairperson Susan Peerson called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Chairperson Susan Peerson adjourned the meeting at 12:47 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE DURING THE MEETING:**

Chairperson Susan Peerson – present  
Vice-Chairperson William Hofman – present  
Commissioner James Whalen – present  
Commissioner Douglas Austin – present  
Commissioner Vicki Granowitz – present  
Commissioner Dennis Otsuji – present  
Commissioner Matthew Boomhower - present

Staff

Shannon Thomas, City Attorney – present  
Laura Black, Planning Department – present  
PJ FitzGerald, Development Services Department – present  
Tony Khalil, Development Services Department – present  
Carmina Trajano, Recorder – present

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT**

Elyse Lowe, Director of Development Services Department, honored outgoing City Attorney Shannon Thomas, thanking her for her 26 years of service to the City and noting that today's session would be her last Planning Commission hearing. On Elyse Lowe's prompt, P.J. Fitzgerald presented a token of appreciation to Shannon Thomas in the form of a purple lei. She thanked Shannon for guiding and supporting the department especially with respect to the review of discretionary reports. Elyse Lowe commented on Shannon Thomas' eye for detail noting that she had to implement a peer review process in response to Shannon's exacting expectations of error-free reports. She stated that Shannon's knowledge of the Municipal Code was beyond anyone she knew. She had the privilege and honor of working with Shannon in the Mayor's office on the issue of the Short-Term Vacation Rentals. They met for six months in preparation for the ordinance, and Shannon provided valuable insights into how every action taken as part of the ordinance implicated other zones. She said it was a pleasure to work with, so smart, so quick, even when she was stern and frustrated. Elyse Lowe pointed out that former Chief Operating Officer Stacey LoMedico was present in the audience to honor her today. Elyse Lowe congratulated her and wished her well in retirement.

Leslie Fitzgerald, Senior Chief Deputy of the Environment and Land Use section at the City Attorney's office, acknowledged the huge contribution Shannon Thomas has made to the City, the Attorney's office, and the Planning Commission. She noted that Shannon has worked for the City for 26 years in many different capacities including working as legal advisor to various departments such as the Police Department, DSD, Planning, and Parks and Recreation. She has advised the Planning Commission for ten years, having offered advice on countless development projects as well as having reviewed EIRs, community plans, and project documents. She also noted the appreciation of Shannon's vast range of knowledge, helpfulness, and her ability to answer any question. When thinking about Shannon, the following adjectives come to mind: professional, well spoken, elegant, brilliant, ethical and efficient. She always has the best interest of the City and the public at heart. She wished her well in her retirement and said that she will be missed.

Commissioner Whalen commented on how Shannon Thomas would say, "I need to caution you about your comments. You're running perilously close to inappropriate." He said she would be deeply missed because when they would get desperate, he would find himself looking her way and wondered, now, who would fill her shoes.

Commissioner Otsuji commented that it was a pleasure working with her and appreciated her comments, advice, and direction in "keeping us out of trouble". He noted on working with her on two occasions.

Commissioner Boomhower commented that he had only worked with her a short time, but he absolutely recognized what was said by the other Commissioners and said that she would be missed.

Commissioner Granowitz commented that she recalled when she first met Shannon Thomas at a Park and Rec meeting saying she was "utterly terrified", but she commented that Shannon Thomas was kind, steady and consistent, "like a parent" in helping the Commissioners not go too far. She wished her luck, congratulated her, and let her know that she will really be missed.

Commissioner Austin echoed Commissioner Granowitz' comments, noting that anytime he tried to be creative, he looked for the "look" to indicate to him that he was going off-track. He appreciated that she was able to steer them back; she was so competent, and that it was a joy to know that they could have so much confidence in her.

Commissioner Hofman said "ditto" to all the comments. He said that ever since he started, she has been his "rock" when it came to complicated land matters. When he would email her for advice, she would respond very quickly, very professionally and would always steer him "away from cliffs". He said he would miss her and wished that she were staying.

City Engineer Tony Khalil commented on having worked with Shannon for over 24 years and always valued her sound legal advice and professionalism. He offered his best wishes.

Commissioner Peerson wanted to echo the other commissioners' comments. She noted that in the last seven years, she has also had the opportunity of a sideward glance to see if she had strayed. In the last six months as a Chair, Shannon had been a sounding board and mentor. She was someone she respected greatly for her frankness, honesty, kindness, and for helping the hearing body from being sued. She offered her best wishes and will miss her deeply, and she looked forward to hearing about her adventure and her travels in retirement.

City Attorney Shannon Thomas thanked the City staff for taking time out of their day to come to Council Chambers. She appreciated the comments from Elyse Lowe and Leslie Fitzgerald representing the various departments. She appreciated the comments from the Commissioners and mentioned that she appreciated having worked with Dennis Otsuji and Vicki Granowitz on the Park and Rec board along with Stacey LoMedico. She mentioned that their work there included Children's Pool items, golf fees, and clubhouses. She commented on her long career here at the City where she had the opportunity to work on many interesting and challenging projects and said it was a great learning experience, both personally and professionally. She appreciated all the comments made today.

#### **REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE CONTINUED AND/OR WITHDRAWN**

None.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

None.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Accepted.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Laura Black reported that, on Tuesday, the City Council had second readings of the Mixed-Use Zoning package, the Balboa Avenue Station Specific Plan, and the Morena Corridor Specific Plan, looking to move forward with projects in those areas. In addition, the Mission Valley Community Plan Update was presented and unanimously approved. She also announced that the Planning Department is working on updating the Housing Element of the General Plan for the 2021-2029 planning cycle. SANDAG recently adopted to approve the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) where it is noted that the City has been allocated approximately 107,000 units to be built within that time frame. Five public workshops are scheduled to gather input as well as a Planning Commission workshop on the Housing Element scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup>; input is sought to address how to meet housing needs in the areas of housing production, affordability, accessibility, and quality as well as addressing issues of homelessness, displacement, and ownership.

### **COMMISSION COMMENT**

Chairperson Susan Peerson announced that the California American Planning Association will be holding a conference from September 15 to the 18<sup>th</sup> in Santa Barbara. She will be attending particular sessions relating to the role of Planning Commissioners and was looking forward to sharing what she learned from the conference including best practices.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 14, 2019, MARCH 21, 2019, APRIL 4, 2019, APRIL 11, 2019, MAY 9, 2019, JUNE 6, 2019**

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER WHALEN APPROVING THE MINUTES FROM MARCH 14, 2019, MARCH 21, 2019, APRIL 4, 2019, APRIL 11, 2019, MAY 9, 2019 AND JUNE 6, 2019. COMMISSIONER WHALEN COMMENTED SMALL TYPO ON PAGE 3 ON OF THE MINUTES ON JUNE 6, 2019. Seconded by Commissioner Austin. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0 with Commissioner Peerson, Hofman, Austin, Granowitz, Otsuji, Boomhower and Whalen voting yea.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **ITEM-1: *Appeal of Civic San Diego Board of Director's decision on July 24, 2019***

##### **EV NINTH & ISLAND - PROJECT NO. 2017-30**

City Council District: 3

Plan Area: Downtown

Staff: James Alexander

Speaker slips in favor of the project and opposed to the appeal submitted by Jeff Schwartz, Frank Ternasky, Jeff Forrest, Sam Beard, Kelsey Clayton, and Cindy Purcell.

Speaker slips in favor of the appeal and opposed to the project were submitted by Ellen Smith, Shari Burkhart, Daga Krackowizer, Robert Summer, and Gina Pierce,

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER WHALEN APPROVING THE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION TO DENY THE APPEAL AND AFFIRM THE CIVIC SD BOARD DECISION TO APPROVE CCDP/CCPDP/NUP NO. 2017-30 FOR THE PROJECT. Seconded by Commissioner Otsuji. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0 with Commissioner Peerson, Hofman, Austin, Granowitz, Otsuji, Boomhower and Whalen voting yea.

***Break time: 10:26 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.***

ITEM-2: **SCRIPPS MIRAMAR RANCH COMMUNITY AMENDMENT INITIATION - VILLAGE AT SCRIPPS  
PROJECT NO. 629049**

City Council District: 5

Plan Area: Scripps Ranch

Staff: Tony Kempton

Speaker slips in favor of the project submitted by Kurt Bausback, Randi Coopersmith, Steve Ruffner, Nick Psychogios, Elizabeth Hansen, Sandra Atkinson, and Buddy Bohrer.

Speaker slips in opposition to the project were submitted by Wallace Wulfeck, Marc Sorensen, Sandra Wetzel-Smith, Dennis Ray Engler, Kristin Rayder, David Rosati, Kyle Rayder, Dave Rayder, Evan B. Rayder, Tony Allen, Lance Allison, Jane E. Graham, Amy Cleveland, Mark O'Connor, Sally Cameron, Victoria Cleveland, Patrick Cleveland, Bob Meehan, Mykel Scott, Marilou Pennington, Roberta "Robin" Sparkman, Steven Riddle, Teres Byrne, John Carpenter, Brian Rodl, Roberto Quinones, Teshona Bennett, and Jennie Harris.

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOFMAN APPROVING THE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION TO INITIATE THE PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS. Seconded by Commissioner Whalen. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0 with Commissioner Peerson, Hofman, Austin, Granowitz, Otsuji, Boomhower and Whalen voting yea.