

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF PALM DESERT  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

January 7, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Nancy DeLuna, Commissioner John Greenwood  
Vice-Chair Lindsay Holt, Chair Ron Gregory,

Staff Present: Director of Development Services Richard Cannone, Principal  
Planner Nick Melloni, Principal Planner Carlos Flores, Deputy  
City Attorney Daniel Trevino, Recording Secretary Michelle Nance

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Gregory on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall, located at 73-510 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert, California.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice-Chair Holt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**5. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Motion by:** Commissioner Greenwood

**Seconded by:** Commissioner DeLuna

To approve the consent calendar as presented.

**Motion Carried (4 to 0)**

**5.a APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion by:** Commissioner Greenwood

**Seconded by:** Commissioner DeLuna

Approve the Minutes of December 17, 2024.

**Motion Carried (4 to 0)**

**6. ACTION CALENDAR**

None.

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**7.a CONSIDERATION A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (SCH NO. 2023090542) AND A MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE HAYSTACK CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

Principal Planner Melloni and Senior Project Manager Lamb narrated a PowerPoint presentation and responded to Commissioner inquiries.

Chair Gregory opened the public hearing.

Allan Buller, Palm Desert resident, spoke in favor of maintaining the channel in its natural state.

CB Buller, Palm Desert resident, echoed the support for preserving the channel's natural condition.

There being no other speakers, Chair Gregory closed the public hearing.

During the course of discussion, the Commission stressed the importance of balancing safety and aesthetics, noting that the final project recommendations presented to the City Council should include a landscaping budget to allow planting of additional landscape within the right-of-way along Haystack Road while native plants regrow within the section of the channel east of Heliotrope Drive.

**Motion by:** Commissioner DeLuna

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Greenwood

1. Adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 2864 entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE PALM DESERT PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE ADOPTION OF A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (SCH NO. 2023090542) AND A MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE HAYSTACK CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT"

2. Recommend that the City Council's final approval of the channel include plans for landscaping, as amended to include a landscaping plan.

**Motion Carried (4 to 0)**

**7.b CONSIDERATION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2888 APPROVING A PRECISE PLAN TO CONSTRUCT A DUPLEX DEVELOPMENT ON SAN JACINTO AND A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT.**

Principal Planner Flores narrated a PowerPoint presentation and responded to Commissioner inquiries.

Chair Gregory opened the public hearing.

Shawna Schmidt, Palm Desert resident, expressed concerns about overcrowding and traffic impacts from the proposed duplex, accessory dwelling unit (ADU), and amenities.

There being no other speakers, Chair Gregory closed the public hearing.

In response to inquiry, staff clarified the current project proposal does not include consideration of accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

During the course of deliberation, individual Commissioners offered commentary as follows. The below points do not necessarily reflect Planning Commission consensus:

- Concern regarding the project's industrial design, minimal setbacks, and lack of landscaping.
- The proposed project, and future plans for ADUs, may be incompatible with the neighborhood.
- Suggested that the project should be moved further back to improve landscaping opportunities and the living environment.
- The project may encourage other homeowners to demolish existing homes and rebuild with the intent to adding ADUs.

City staff clarified that the project complies with all setback standards for the R-2 zone, including the 12-foot setback adopted as part of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update. The area was rezoned from R-1 to R-2 in July 2017 during a zoning consistency update. Staff explained that projects meeting the minimum development standards are permitted by right and cannot be required to have greater setbacks under the current ordinance, regardless of the inclusion of an ADU.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Greenwood  
**Seconded by:** Commissioner DeLuna

Adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 2888 entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) AND APPROVING A PRECISE PLAN TO DEVELOP A DUPLEX NEAR THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF ALESSANDRO DRIVE AND SAN JACINTO (ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 627-182-010)"

NOES (1): Chair Gregory

**Motion Carried (3 to 1)**

## 8. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS & COMMENTS

### 8.a SUMMARY OF CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

None.

**8.b COMMITTEE MEETING UPDATES**

**8.b.1 Cultural Arts Committee**

None.

**8.b.2 Parks and Recreation Committee**

Principal Planner Melloni provided an update on recent action taken by the Parks and Recreation Committee.

**8.c PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

None.

**8.d CITY STAFF**

Acting Assistant City Clerk Nance provided updates on the AB 1234 training taking place January 30, 2025, and use of digital agendas for future meetings.

**8.e ATTENDANCE REPORT**

Report provided; no action taken on this item.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning Commission adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Michelle Nance, Acting Assistant City Clerk  
Recording Secretary

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Richard Cannone, Director of Development Services  
Staff Liaison