MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING

HUNTINGTON BEACH PLANNING COMMISSION

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2009
HUNTINGTON BEACH CIVIC CENTER
2000 MAIN STREET, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA 92648

5:00 P.M. – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CALL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING TO ORDER

	A	P	P	A	P	P	P
ROLL CALL:	*Speaker,*	*Mantini,*	*Farley,*	*Shier Burnett,*	*Scandura,*	*Livengood,*	*Delgleize*

Commissioner Speaker and Chair Shier Burnett were absent.

AGENDA APPROVAL

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SCANDURA, SECONDED BY LIVENGOOD, TO APPROVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2009, BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: **Mantini, Farley, Scandura, Livengood, Delgleize**
NOES: **None**
ABSENT: **Speaker, Shier Burnett**
ABSTAIN: **None**

MOTION APPROVED

A. PROJECT REVIEW (FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS)

A-1. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT NO. 08-001/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 08-007/LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM AMENDMENT NO. 08-002/ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 08-004 (DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE – BOOK ONE – CHAPTER THREE – DISTRICT ONE) – Jennifer Villasenor, Associate Planner

Jennifer Villasenor, Associate Planner, gave a brief overview of the proposed project. Eric Justesen, lead consultant with RRM Design, gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Livengood asked about the current Parking Master Plan for the Downtown Specific Plan area. Mr. Justesen said that the current Plan ties to a development cap, covers a smaller area of district one and allows the use of parking in-lieu fee payments to satisfy parking requirements.

Mr. Livengood also asked about the proposed setbacks for 4th and 5th story buildings. Mr. Justesen noted that upper-story setbacks would not be required for 1st, 2nd and 3rd stories, but would be required for 4th and 5th stories.

Commissioner Scandura noted that he has concerns with the 8' width of the sidewalk when combined with outdoor dining uses. He said that this projected sidewalk width was shown on slide #11 of RRM Design's PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Scandura also asked if the proposed Cultural Arts Overlay area was smaller. Mr. Justesen noted that the area is now smaller because the closure of 6th Street is no longer included in the Overlay.

Mr. Scandura asked if it would be possible to preserve the Main Street Library and the area known as Triangle Park while adding underground parking. Mr. Justesen indicated that it would be possible to add underground parking at the existing library site.

Mr. Scandura also asked how the proposed Cultural Arts Overlay works with the goals and objectives of the General Plan. Mr. Justesen said that the proposed Cultural Arts Overlay would provide an enriched facility and cultural enhancement. Mr. Scandura asked for General Plan consistency in the staff report.

Commission Mantini asked about the proposed parking reduction for hotels. Mr. Justesen stated that parking for hotels would be available since it is not likely that a hotel would be fully occupied at any given time. He also stated that RRM Design would go back and review that standard.

Ms. Mantini stated that she has concerns with controlling alcohol sales and the increased height of buildings.

Commissioner Delgleize asked what the square footage is at the existing Main Street Library and Ms. Villasenor said it is 9,000 square feet, including the annex. Ms. Delgleize asked if the Cultural Overlay can take place without adding underground parking beneath the Main Street Library. Mr. Justesen said yes and noted that an alternate 80-space parking site has been identified. Ms. Delgleize asked what type of development could go on Lake Street and asked if mixed-use could be developed there.

Vice Chair Farley asked about updated replacement pages for the Cultural Overlay and Ms. Villasenor indicated that these were sent to the Planning Commission between the first and second study sessions on the Downtown Specific Plan Update.

Mr. Justesen noted that the goal of the Downtown Specific Plan Update is to provide a mixed-use urban environment.

Mr. Farley noted that the Planning Commission took a field trip to Pasadena on September 11, 2008, to view mixed-use projects. He noted that the Mayor of Pasadena said that he felt that Huntington Beach would be challenged with building large scale commercial and residential projects, due to the small lot sizes downtown. He asked how the Downtown Specific Plan Update would achieve this goal. Mr. Justesen said that the updated Plan would focus on development opportunities and lot consolidation both on and off Main Street.

Mr. Farley asked Mr. Justesen if the goal is to avoid bad projects on small lots. Mr. Justesen said that the development standards help prevent over-densification and allow greater flexibility.

Mr. Farley quoted from RRM Design's PowerPoint which states that the "Cultural Arts Overlay (will feature) no net loss of green space from existing library site". He said that this statement is vague and he would like more information. He also said that development standards for the Cultural Arts Overlay are editorialized and the open space requirements seem inconsistent. He asked staff to provide an alternate action/recommendation to approval of the proposed Cultural Arts Overlay.

Commissioner Livengood said that he has concerns with the proposed theater and density. He wanted to know the amount of development that could occur based on development standards. He said he would like to see protection against over-densification and the preservation of existing ocean views be provided to Lake Street, as well as 3rd Street, 6th Street and 9th Street. He also asked staff how the addition of a 150-seat theater could provide a projected end result of 50 fewer car trips.

Commissioner Scandura said that he thinks that permitted residential uses should require a higher level of approval than what is currently proposed. He said that he has concerns with proposed building heights and would like to see a higher level of approval required for the proposed Cultural Overlay site. He asked that staff or the consultant provide him with the total square footage of the buildings and the lot at the Main Street Library and the area known as Triangle Park. He also asked for options for the Cultural Arts Overlay that would downgrade development.

Commissioner Delgleize asked what the term "net new development" entails. Mr. Justesen said that any new development would have to provide on-site parking or pay parking in-lieu fees.

Mr. Farley noted that one of the Late Communications received referenced a Marketing and Visitors Bureau report. Mr. Villasenor said that the Planning Department does not have a copy. Deputy Director of Economic Development Kellee Fritzal said that the Economic Development Department does not have a copy. It was noted that the Late Communication referencing the report included a link, but the link is to an Orange County Register article and not to the report itself.

Director of Planning Scott Hess asked Mr. Justesen if he would like to respond to the Planning Commission's concerns.

Mr. Justesen noted that Vice Chair Farley has concerns with open space and that all of the Planning Commissioners have concerns with downtown parking and parking in-lieu fees. He noted that for any new development in downtown, if you build it, you must park it, or pay an in-lieu fee. He also noted that the Planning Commission's purview is to make certain Design Guidelines are followed.

Ms. Villasenor thanked the Planning Commission for their participation in the last five study sessions on this project. She noted that the next step would be the preparation of staff's final recommendation, and that staff will be providing the Planning Commission with a matrix consisting of the existing 1995 Downtown Specific Plan, the proposed Downtown Specific Plan Update (dated June 2009) and staff's final recommendation to the Planning Commission.

B. STUDY SESSION ITEMS - NONE

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kim Kramer, Huntington Beach Downtown Residents Association (HDBRA), spoke regarding Item No. A-1. He noted that the HBDRA has hired an attorney to review the Downtown Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report. He also said that the HBDRA has gathered support in the community regarding the preservation of the Main Street Library and in opposition to the proposed redevelopment of the area known as Triangle Park.

Richardson Gray, Townsquare Condominiums, spoke in opposition to Item No. A-1. He said that he believes that citizen opinions can make a difference in the city's decision making process.

Ron McLin, resident, spoke in opposition to Item No. A-1, citing concerns with density and parking.

Steve Holden, resident, spoke in opposition to Item No. A-1, stating that he has concerns with the proposed addition of parking structures in the downtown area.

Richard Plummer, resident, spoke regarding Item No. A-1 and said that he would like to be provided with more details regarding the proposed parking in-lieu fees in the downtown area.

D. AGENDA REVIEW (UPDATE ON ALL AGENDA ITEMS) – NONE

E. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS

Commissioner Scandura noted that the Subdivision Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, September 2nd, at 4:00 PM, regarding the Huntington Shorecliffs Mobile Home Park.

F. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Livengood thanked staff for their efforts on the Downtown Specific Plan Update.

Commissioner Delgleize concurred with Commissioner Livengood.

ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned at 7:15 PM to the next regularly scheduled meeting of Wednesday, September 9, 2009.

7:00 P.M. – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CANCELLED: NO PUBLIC HEARINGS

APPROVED BY:

Scott Hess, Secretary

Elizabeth Shier Burnett, Chairperson