

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 23, 2011**Review of Proposed FY 2011-2012 Budget for Planning Program – TR**

Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer, discussed the budget for the Planning Program. She commented about the training budget for the Planning Commission and said that the Planner's Institute will take place in San Jose in 2012 which should provide all Planning Commissioners the opportunity to attend.

Comm. Sulser asked about the change in format of the information provided and expressed his concern that the budget information may be too high level to provide much feedback. Ms. Ryan explained that the information is more streamlined as the budgets are organized differently from previous years, and that the basic information provided is the cost and the number of hours. Comm. Sulser discussed with staff training options other than the annual Planner's Institute and commented that even with the Institute being paid for that it can be onerous to take three days off work. He said he is interested in additional training at study sessions and would also like to talk about the budget at a study session. Ms. Ryan noted that she has a narrow window of time to present the budget information to the commissions which makes a study session difficult.

Comm. Hungerford commented that in several places the costs have increased, the products have remained the same, and the hours declined. How do hours decline if products remain the same and costs are up? Ms. Ryan discussed the personnel costs and said that the total hours have gone down as there are 300 fewer hours overall. She said staff will need to be more efficient to get the work done. Comm. Hungerford asked about the assumptions for the level of development in 2011-12 and that it may be busier next year. Ms. Ryan said the 2010-11 and 2011-12 budgets are assuming more historical levels of activity. She said the activity levels have not reached what they were and the Planning staff has spent more time this year on policy-type activities.

Vice Chair Hendricks discussed with staff the budget format with staff saying that much of what is done in Community Development is based on demand that we cannot control. Ms. Ryan explained that slower times allow more policy, long-term work to get done and if the demands increase then staff would need to get City Manager permission to delay the policy work to address the demands. Ms. Ryan said that in Community Development most of the services are covered by fees collected. Vice Chair Hendricks asked what is staff looking for in the review of the budget? Ms. Ryan said it may be important to reflect certain activities that the Commission thinks are short-

changed, or if there are too many staff hours designated for in a particular area. Ms. Ryan said staff can collect comments and forward them to the City Council. Vice Chair Hendricks suggested that moving forward possibly staff could point out throughout the year items that are budget related to better help the Commission review the budget next year. Ms. Ryan said that staff could do that. Vice Chair Hendricks said this is a budget is like a quick snapshot. He said he did go to the Planner's Institute this year and found it a positive thing to go to.

Comm. Dohadwala said one thing that is disturbing to her, is when a person applies to serve on a commission, she is surprised that there is no minimum reimbursable expense that commissioners can ask for. She said there may be potential applicants that could be challenged to meet the expense of serving as a commissioner, like a retiree on a fixed income. She said those who do not need expense reimbursement could opt out, however some reimbursement might allow someone with valuable experience or knowledge, but limited income, the opportunity to serve on a commission.

Comm. Chang agreed with Comm. Sulser that more budget information would help him make a more informed decision, and allowing time for a study session before the public hearing would be helpful. He said it is fortunate that the Planner's Institute will be in San Jose in 2012, as training is necessary if the Planning Commissioners are to be competent in decision making.

Chair Travis commented that he would like the budget to include enough money for the Planning Commission to be provided business cards for use on site visits.

Vice Chair Hendricks discussed with staff the kind of action that could be taken this evening.

Comm. Dohadwala clarified with staff that the Planning Commission has purview over the portion of the budget activity that is related to Commission business, or affects how the Planning Commission does their job.

Comm. Sulser moved that the comments made by the Planning Commission regarding the Planning Program Budget be forwarded to the City Council. Comm. Hungerford seconded the motion.

Comm. Sulser said he agrees with many of the comments of the Commission and he would like these forwarded on to the City Council.

ACTION: Comm. Sulser made a motion that the comments made by the Planning Commission regarding the Planning Program Budget be forwarded to the City Council. Comm. Hungerford seconded. Motion carried 6-0, with Comm. Larsson absent.

APPEAL OPTIONS: This recommendation of the Planning Commission will be included in the minutes and forwarded to the City Council.