

**TAFT PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
MARCH 18, 2015**

REGULAR MEETING

6:00 P.M.

The March 18, 2015, regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Taft, held in the City of Taft Council Chamber, 209 E. Kern Street, Taft, CA 93268, was opened by Vice Chairman Robert Thompson at [6:03:28 PM](#). The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chairman Thompson followed by a moment of silence.

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Robert Thompson;
Commissioners Shannon Jones, Bob Leikam and Jerry Livingston.
Planning and Community Development Director Mark Staples;
City Attorney Jason Epperson, City Clerk Yvette Mayfield.

ABSENT: Chairman Ron Orrin

1. CITIZEN REQUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mike Long of 508 Center Street and President of the Downtown Business Association wanted to speak on item number 3 and asked that the Public Hearing be reopened.

2. MINUTES

February 18, 2015 Regular

Motion: Moved by Jones, seconded by Leikam to approve Minutes as submitted.

AYES: Jones, Leikam, Livingston, Thompson

ABSENT: Orrin

VOTE: 4-1

3. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 2014-15

Planning Director Staples presented the staff report and recommendation to the Commissioners, reviewing what had transpired at last meeting on this item, and provided additional handouts from the applicant requested by the Commissioners for this project (a copy was submitted to the Clerk for the permanent file).

The Public Hearing was opened at [6:20:23 PM](#) to receive testimony from proponents and opponents.

Christy Dukan, owner of Bangs and Tangles at 404 Center Street and Vice President of the Downtown Business Association read a letter from the Downtown Business Association.

Mike Long of 508 Center Street and President of the Downtown Business Association requested that the applicant look for different sights for the project and that if approved there be a 3 year review of the project in the approval conditions. He stated the concerns are that the monopine facility being placed on a portion of the parcel will make the lot useless to other development and that the customers using the nice new hotel will have that facility as their view.

The Public Hearing was closed at [6:26:47 PM](#).

Commissioner Livingston asked what the lease term would be on the property and if the conditions for the project could state that the facility would have to be removed and the property restored to its previous condition. He was informed that the lease term was for 30 years and that yes removal could be a requirement of the project.

Michelle Ellis, a representative for the applicant, shared with the Commission that the lease area on the parcel is very small and the owner will be free to develop the rest of the property as he sees fit. She also stated that Verizon was asked to lower the height of the monopine and they have complied. Verizon will be investing over one million dollars in this project and would not like to see a condition that the permit be revisited in 3 years.

Commissioner Thompson wanted to confirm the total height of the monopine and was told that the total height is 70 ft. with a 60 ft. centerline.

Commissioner Livingston stated he was concerned about the useful life of the material used in the tree and Ms. Ellis answered that the materials are very durable and that a technician is on site one to two times a month providing maintenance including aesthetics.

Commissioner Leikam stated that he appreciated the letter from the Downtown Business Association (DBA) and questioned both Mr. Long and Ms. Dukan as to if the DBA might prefer the oil derrick design. Mr. Long indicated that on behalf of the DBA it was discussed at their last meeting that they did not want a fake tree and wanted a 60 ft. maximum height requirement.

Commissioner Jones noted that this is not the first permit for a tower seeking approval, nor would it to be the last. The need is going to continue to grow and this will be ongoing. Verizon is working with all the requests of the Commission and she believes the Commission needs to work with Verizon as they will be investing a million dollars into Taft with the project and that is a good thing.

Commissioner Livingston indicated that he still had concerns that the simulations, even with a 20 ft. reduction in height, looks like a bottle washer and he would like to see conditions placed on the project if it is going to be approved.

Motion:

Moved by Leikam, seconded by Jones to Adopt a Resolution approving Conditional Use Permit 2014-15 to construct a 70-foot stealth monopine wireless telecommunications facility, for Verizon Wireless, within a 1,250 square foot lease area, on a 0.96 acre lot, within the Downtown Commercial (DC) Zone District located at 800 Main Street (*Resolution No.2015-04*)

With the following additional Conditions of Approval placed on the project by the Planning Commission:

1. The applicant shall be responsible for regular monthly maintenance of the facility, including all items within the lease area, equipment enclosure, cell tower and faux materials applied to the monopine. Current emergency contact information shall be posted on the lease area access gate for the City or the public to call in case of an emergency maintenance situation.
2. The applicant shall apply further tapering of the faux pine branches on the monopine to have it better resemble a pine tree, which shall be reviewed and approved by the Building and Planning Departments at the final inspection of the facility.
3. The applicant shall start the branch application on the monopine starting at a point fifteen feet (15') above finished grade.

4. At such time the facility is vacated by a wireless telecommunications provider, such provider shall be responsible for the dismantling and demolition of the monopine and removal of all equipment within the lease area. The lease area shall be returned to its prior condition of a vacant pad available for future development.

AYES: Jones, Leikam, Thompson
NOES: Livingston
ABSENT: Orrin
VOTE: 3-1-1

4. PUBLIC HEARING – SITE PLAN REVIEW NO. 2015-03

Planning Director Staples presented the staff report and recommendation.

The Public Hearing was opened at [7:07:04 PM](#) to receive testimony from proponents and opponents. Seeing none the Public Hearing was closed

Motion: Moved by Livingston, seconded by Leikam to Adopt a Resolution approving Site Plan Review 2015-03 to construct a 15,000 square foot industrial building, on a 3.04 acre lot, within the Industrial (I) Zone District located at the southwest corner of Gardner Field Road and Commerce Way (*Resolution No. 2015-05*)

AYES: Jones, Leikam, Livingston, Thompson
ABSENT: Orrin
VOTE: 4-1

5. PUBLIC HEARING – SITE PLAN REVIEW NO. 2015-05

Planning Director Staples presented the staff report and recommendation.

The Public Hearing was opened at [7:14:39 PM](#) to receive testimony from proponents and opponents.

Applicant for the project, Amy Steers, shared that it is her intent to open a nursery downtown to serve the needs of the community, create jobs and help the economy in Taft.

Commissioner Jones commended Ms. Steers on her project and thought that it went along well with the vision for the downtown area.

The Public Hearing was closed at [7:16:24 PM](#).

Motion: Moved by Jones, seconded by Leikam to Adopt a Resolution approving Site Plan Review 2015-05 to establish a nursery and garden center commercial use, on a 0.30 acre lot, within the Downtown Commercial (DC) Zone District located at 207 Center Street (*Resolution No. 2015-06*)

AYES: Jones, Leikam, Livingston, Thompson
ABSENT: Orrin
VOTE: 4-1

6. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 2015-01 – HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE 2013-2023

Director Staples updated the Commissioners on the status of the Housing Element Update notifying them that he is currently working with the Department of Housing and Community Development

(HCD) on the emergency shelter requirement that the Commission had previously addressed and stated that he would be bringing it back to the Commission with any HCD required changes.

7. CANCEL THE APRIL 2015 REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Motion: Moved by Livingston, seconded by Jones to cancel the April 22, 2015, regular Planning Commission meeting, and to hold a special Planning Commission meeting on April 8, 2015

AYES: Jones, Leikam, Livingston, Thompson

ABSENT: Orrin

VOTE: 4-1

8. PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Staples shared that he attended a LAFCO class in Fresno and felt that it was a nice refresher for him and that it would help the Annexation Ad-Hoc Committee as they move forward. He also stated that he was open to reviewing and possibly updating the Wireless Communications Ordinance if given direction to do so from the Commissioners.

9. CITY ATTORNEY STATEMENTS

City Attorney Epperson reminded the Commissioners of the upcoming Ethics Training being held March 26, 2015.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Jones notified every one of the upcoming State of the City Luncheon on April 23rd.

Commissioner Thompson thanked Director Staples for all his hard work on the items brought before the Commission.

11. IDENTIFICATION OF REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Commissioner Leikam was appointed as the representative to report to the City Council at their next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct it was moved by Jones, seconded by Leikam and approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at [7:35:04 PM](#).

Yvette Mayfield, City Clerk

Ron Orrin, Chairman