

MEMORANDUM

Planning & Neighborhood Services Department



To: Planning Commission
From: Bill Ekern, Interim Director
Subject: September 23, 2015 Meeting
Date: September 15, 2015

As part of staff's response to the Commission's interest in education on a wide range of planning topics, we are taking advantage of meeting nights that have limited or no public hearings to provide presentations on topics of interest. On September 23, the Interim City Attorney, Gary Baum, will provide an introduction to CEQA and Nina Hawk will provide an update on the City's response to the ongoing drought. If you have specific questions you would like each of them to address, please let me know before close of business on Monday, so they have time to prepare.

Previously, staff has provided informational presentations on the Planning Commission's roles and responsibilities under the law and also on the City's process for reviewing Conditional Use Permits. The City Manager has also provided a comprehensive overview of development and the economic status of the City.

The discussion of CEQA is complex and many-layered. It is not possible to cover everything of importance and interest in an evening, or even a week of evenings. Staff recommends that Commissioners interested in the details of CEQA take first the educational opportunities provided by the League of California Cities. There is a Planning Commission institute in March 2016, which should be attended by all commissioners. After that event, if there are still areas of interest to the entire Commission, we can look at options for those training sessions.

Below is the list of topics of interest provided by the Commission:

Commissioner Mohsin – water crisis, new construction
Commissioner Maglalang – modern mobility in the city, how walkable and bikeable the city is, how to discourage driving, how to attract birds in the city, how to be attractive to new people and businesses, the dos and don'ts of meeting with developers
Commissioner Lien – traffic and school concerns with city growth and how students are accommodated
Commissioner Morris – what is projected to happen in the city
Commissioner Madnawat – review a sample EIR report and discuss major findings
Commissioner Sandhu – parking issues at old shopping centers, how to encourage development of land
Vice Chair Ciardella – regular updates on projects, city and water resources for future projects
Chair Mandal – projected growth, upcoming projects

After the September 23 meeting, the Commission will have had presentations on and the opportunity to ask questions about the water crisis, dos and don'ts of meeting with developers, projections for the City, discussions of EIRs, and discussions on the topic of findings.

On October 6, the Planning Commission will meet with the City Council in a Study Session. The topics on that agenda are structured such that the Commission can gain further insight into the direction the City is headed in relationship to growth. This topic can include the concept of residential development and school impacts, as well as the concept of how the City and the Planning Commission can work to encourage proper development of land in the City.

It is also worth noting that the City Council will have had a study session on September 15 to hear from the owners of the Serra Center about their desire to convert the zoning of that property. This discussion should provide insight to the Commission on the development goals and visions of the City Council in relationship to existing zoning and General Plan expectations.

Finally, staff anticipates the City will begin updating the General Plan sometime in early 2016. This will be a multi-year effort that will engage the Planning Commission in the discussion of all of the topics identified in your list from June.