



City of Venice
Planning & Zoning Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission Members
From: Jeff Shrum, AICP, Community Development Director
Date: May 27, 2014
Re: Discussion – Planning and Zoning Projects (Process and Priorities).

As was discussed at the last meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board, I wanted to provide an overview of current and pending projects to have a discussion about priority of City initiated projects. However, after a question was raised about the process of initiating projects, I thought it might be helpful to first explain the role that the Planning Commission plays. I know some longer termed Commissioners may already be familiar with this information but it may provide a helpful refresher on the subject:

Process:

The City Land Development Code Section 86-23. Planning Commission (I) (1) provides the following specific role of the Planning Commission in carrying out of duties:

“The functions, powers and duties of the planning commission shall be, in general, as follows:

- a. Acquire and maintain in current form such basic information as is necessary to an understanding of past trends, present conditions, and forces at work to cause change in these conditions.
- b. Prepare and keep current a comprehensive general plan for meeting present requirements and such future needs as may be foreseen.
- c. Propose principles and policies for guiding action affecting development in the city and its environs.
- d. Recommend to the city council ordinances, regulations and other proposals promoting orderly development along lines indicated as desirable by the comprehensive plan.
- e. Determine whether specific proposed developments conform to the principles and requirements of the comprehensive plan.

- f. Keep the city council informed and advised as to these matters.
- g. Gather information necessary for drafting, establishing and maintaining the comprehensive plan and ordinances and regulations related to it.
- h. Perform other duties which may be lawfully assigned to it, or which may have a bearing on the preparation or accomplishment of the plan.”

While there are other duties listed such as: hearing of appeals from the Zoning Administrator, hearing of Variances, and site and development plan review, the duties listed above provide a good overview of the expected role of the Planning Commission. Of significant note, item “f” requires the Planning Commission to keep the City Council informed and advised and “g” provides direction to drafting, establishing, and maintaining the comprehensive plan and regulations related to it. This of course provides clarification to the areas that the Planning Commission should be concerned with (1) the comprehensive plan and (2) the Land Development Code which provides implementing language for the Plan. Further, Section 86-47. Amendments to the land development, also provides that the Planning Commission or staff may initiate an amendment to the Land Development Code.

In conclusion, it appears to be clear that the purpose and intent of the City Code of Ordinances in establishing a Planning Commission (also established as the local planning agency) expected that this board would not only be the keepers of the comprehensive plan and implementing Land Development Regulations but to also actively seek and acquire information necessary to understand forces necessitating change to the conditions (plan). I would further offer that it has been my observation that City Council welcomes and considers any/all suggestions by the Planning Commission.

Priorities:

It was asked at a recent Planning Commission meeting that staff discuss with City Council initiating a Planning exercise for the Laurel / Border Road area. While there was no official vote on this issue, the desire to be **proactive** on the issue deserves discussion. The issue was brought up once again at our most recent Planning Commission meeting. My response to the request at that time was based upon the duties and responsibilities as indicated above in this memo, specifically that I believe given the substantial amount of projects on the Planning Department’s plate that perhaps there should be a listing of projects and a discussion with the Planning Commission about suggested priorities. An important factor to keep in mind is that there is a substantial amount of work as a result of submitted applications that staff does not have any control over the timing or the amount of work required to complete these projects. While applications/petitions are an unknown variable, it is my hope that this discussion will provide a better understanding of project demand that will lead to suggestions/recommendations from the Planning Commission on top priorities. I have compiled a listing of current and pending projects as follows (see attached Table):