



## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Mark Hammerness – Chairperson  
Veronica Harvey – Vice Chairperson  
Alice Abatti – Commissioner  
Stacy Mendoza – Commissioner  
Ruben Rivera - Commissioner*

# MINUTES

## PLANNING COMMISSION TRAFFIC COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

200 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
IMPERIAL, CA 92251

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2022  
6:30 PM

### A. PLANNING COMMISSION CALL TO ORDER:

**Chairperson Hammerness called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.**

#### **Roll Call:**

#### **Commissioners Present:**

Mark Hammerness – Chairperson, Veronica Harvey – Vice Chairperson, Ruben Rivera – Commissioner and Stacy Mendoza – Commissioner present by zoom.

Alice Abatti – Commissioner on site at 06:42 pm

#### **City Staff Present:**

Dennis Morita-City Manager, Alexis Brown-Assistant City Manager, Katie Turner-City Attorney, Othon Mora-Community Development Director, Luis Anguiano-Information Technology Support Technician, Jillian Mehdipour-Public Records, and Yvonne Cordero-Community Development Planner.

#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**Led by Ruben Rivera**

### B. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

#### **B-1. Matters not appearing on the agenda.**

Brown, we do have one public comment that was sent by email addressed to the traffic commission. "The traffic on Blazing Star has increased due to the La Brucherie Rd. construction. This is bringing higher speeds in the area and inattentive drivers. This residential street has become a speedway. Can we please have an officer present or some type of speed control? " This is one of the residential streets affected by the construction. We can bring this back to the

agenda. Hammerness, can we get a speed monitor set up? Brown, we do not have an actual speed trailer but a monitor that gets the license plates. We are working on dealing with the traffic congestion in the area and adding more of a police presence. Rivera, in good faith, I will personally go over and monitor the traffic in the area.

**B-2. Matters appearing on the agenda.**

None

**C. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**C-1.** Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for August 24, 2022.

**Action:**

**Abatti, made a motion** to approve the *Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for August 24, 2022*. **Harvey, seconded** the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Mark Hammerness, Chairperson: Yes  
Veronica Harvey, Vice Chairperson: Yes  
Alice Abatti, Commissioner: Yes  
Stacy Mendoza, Commissioner: Yes  
Ruben Rivera, Commissioner: Yes

**Motion Passes 5-0**

**D. TRAFFIC COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS: (DISCUSSION/ACTION – RECOMMEND/DENY)**

**D-1:** Discussion/Action: Traffic Concerns on Victoria Terrazas (Mayfield subdivision)- Saddleback Drive and Meadowbrook Drive

**Discussion:**

Brown, presented a summary of the joint meeting held on September 13, 2022. The information was sent to a traffic engineer for examination, and a proposal for solutions for a ped path was made. We encourage any new ideas or information to be shared. The key points we understood were the stopping of citations and a solution for parking.

Raul Beltran, Saddleback, the issue I have is that the builders are working on the northeast of my home. They start working on building homes at 2 in the morning. I have called the police due to the noise, the nail guns, hammers pounding, and cement trucks running. It's too early, people are sleeping. There is no respect for us in the neighborhood, from the construction at two in the morning and no place to park. Abatti, is there an ordinance? Mora, there is only a noise element.

Charlene Valle, Meadowbrook Drive, yesterday it was commented that our community is a planned unit division/development. Our contract states the lots are single-family residential lots. Why are we being sold a single-family lot when you're telling us that is not what the development is? Harvey, it says lots vs zone? Abatti, it would be beneficial to send a copy of your contract to Ms. Brown. Harvey, you can have single-family lots in a planned zone. Mora, explained the different types of zones. Charlene asked for clarification on the type of zone/lot and what ordinances apply. Harvey, there are different ordinances for different zones. You live in a PUD zone and are comparing ordinances to those in an R1 zone.

Hammerness, we know what everyone here has. We can beat each other up on what the county ordinance says. It's not going to get us to solve the problem. Tonight, we need to focus on what you have heard that you might like, what we can do, and that's all I want to hear about. I don't want to hear about this or that it's not going to get us anywhere. If you start talking about it, I'm going to cut you off. Let's try to look at what was proposed and say what you like so that we can mark it. The City Manager spoke yesterday about the potential of abandoning the side walk. Now we are not saying that's going to happen because it needs to be examined for ADA issues. I think of all the things that would be the potential best solution if the sidewalk issue is resolved. We know stopping the ordinance guy is one thing, but what else would you like to mention or have ideas about?

Carlos Bolivar, Saddleback, mentioned there was an issue a few years ago with another developer with a shortage of footage. The homeowners took this to court and were found in favor of the homeowners. They were to be paid. This is going to get everyone involved. The city is already involved. The best thing for us to do is to take care of it here. Courts will take a long time. The pedestrian bike lane will work. It just needs to be done quickly. Hammerness, do you have any other ideas aside from abandoning the side walk? Turner, we want to push this to be fixed. What do you see as a possible solution? Carlos, we don't need sidewalks. Irena Espinosa, Meadowbrook, yesterday you mentioned speed humps. I want to know if that's still an option. Brown, all recommendations are being taken in to be examined. Hammerness, thank you. We are looking for solutions tonight.

Hammerness, how many people here believe the one-way traffic and parking on one side is a bad idea? 100% of everyone in the room raised their hand in objection to the one way.

Ed Gonzalez, Meadowbrook Drive, I believe the best solution is to make it exempt. There are signs on private property that is owned by the city. So are we going to put more signs on private property? Hammerness, what do you mean exempt? Ed, the parking is blocking the sidewalks, so one way is going to be a big issue for disability or EMS. The streets are already too tight to get into people's houses. For safety reasons, the one-way will not work. Hammerness, I don't think we are going to see that again, so you don't have to worry about that. On the exemption, some in the city could tell code enforcement not to issue citations, but the problem is it's a state law. Any law enforcement agency would still be obligated to issue a citation. Ed, what we are referencing is the county ordinance that states you can block the driveway in a lawful manner. What we want to know, and I asked yesterday, is what do you consider a lawful manor? Hammerness, I believe that is best answered by the attorney. Tuner, what Mr. Hammerness is saying it's a violation of the vehicle code, but we don't want to harp on that one. If it was as simple as no more tickets, we

wouldn't be here. Ed, how can we not focus on that? That is the issue. It's pretty vague. Turner, only warnings were issued. If you get one, please let us know. Hammerness, the Mayor said he would take care of it.

Hammerness, lower the speed limit and speed humps. Would that be something to work with? If we take care of the sidewalk and lower the speed, is everyone OK with that? OK, we will keep that and the walking lane. We will need to do that. Tuner, that is what we are working on to see the minimum we are required to do. Harvey, I have a question. I see the first option is to make the sidewalk part of your driveway. What is your second option? Charlene, it's hard because the streets are just so narrow. The only thing we are asking for is to park in our driveways without getting a ticket. We are just asking you to let us park in our driveway and leave us alone, to know that we are not going to get a ticket. That is all we are asking for and that would be the best solution for us.

Ester Frias, Meadowbrook Drive, we are a home with four vehicles. When I bought my home, I was never told that if you have a big vehicle, don't buy this home. If I had known this to be an issue, I would have purchased a home in El Centro. We went home and thought about whether we should sell our home, but we can't afford bigger house payments. Plus, who is going to want to buy our home now that it's all-over social media? No one will buy our home now. Harvey, I sympathize with you all. I have been in a first-time home buyer's situation where you just want to get into your home. Ester, most of us residents have tried to come up with more ideas. The only other option that we could come up with is if they stopped building on Green Valley and put up a parking structure. Harvey, how many building permits are out for that phase of the subdivision? Mora, they are almost completed. This is the last phase.

Michelle Hollinger, Victoria Homes, we built Victoria Terrazas homes to the code. We built a quality home. We have been building homes in the Imperial Valley for over 30 years and have a great reputation. I have heard you and sympathize with you. I didn't know this was going to be an issue. We built what we thought was going to be a really good home and a good community. That is what we pride ourselves on. I did not intentionally shorten your driveway by five feet. We are here to try and find a solution and not tear everyone apart. To any of the home owners, I will be happy to give you my card and we can meet.

Hammerness, so an option was to stripe on Second and Fourth and some on Green Valley for parking. Would this be an option in addition to what we have discussed? Ester, what would be the size of the parking spots? The issue is vehicle size. Hammerness, I believe there is a vehicle code standard. We just pick the size of the parking spots. Carlos, so you're talking about adding parking to Green Valley? Hammerness, we are thinking about adding stripping to improve the parking. Carlos, so where you are wanting to place the parking in front of someone's house? Those homes on Green Valley have garages that face Saddlebrook and Meadow Brook. So, they are in the same situation as us. There will potentially be parking on Green Valley as well. Where do the people on Second Street park? Abatti, the street parking is public parking for everyone. Brown, the striping that we are talking about is not the ultimate solution. This is an option in addition to what is selected. This will be an additional option to allow extra parking spaces for anyone. We want input from all of you if this is an option, so that we as the city can price out what it would cost for supplies and equipment. Abatti, I think the traffic expert would be the best

resource for what is going to work and not work. We just need an opinion from you, the residents, if these ideas are going to work. This will help the city start planning, gathering resources, and figuring out funds so that we are ready and quickly moving to fix the issue. Hammerness, OK, this is something we can add to our package list.

Mendoza, the expert at JPIA, is who we are waiting for a response from? My second question with speed humps is: is there consideration for fire trucks? Will the speed humps be an issue for trucks? Hammerness, they will not be an issue for the fire trucks. Brown, Yes, we are in communication with JPIA and they use a traffic engineer that specializes in these situations, so in addition to our own staff, we are using their specialist. Rivera, we have taken note of everything you all have voiced as a concern and we are not going to push this off and we do need to check our resources and the laws. Before you go and sell your home, we ask for your patience as we work to resolve this matter. Ms. Hollinger is present, and it is very rare that you will see this. She came to face the fire. The last thing we need is a misunderstanding and we need to be on the same page. Have faith in us to get results.

## **E. REPORTS:**

### **E-1: Commissioners' Reports**

Abatti, the construction has created a 30-minute traffic jam at Aten and Austin. If we could get the presence of a police officer there in the morning to help the anxious drivers.

Rivera, we are going to need to hire more police officers for Blazing Star, Bougainville and Austin for the traffic. I will be out there this week measuring potholes from the rain. I will be watching the traffic in the morning and afternoon to follow up on these things.

Hammerness, I mentioned the light at 15<sup>th</sup> and Imperial. Has anything changed? Mora, yes, we are working on this matter and will be bringing something to the committee once we have everything. Thank you everyone for your perseverance this evening and last night.

### **E-2: Staff Reports**

Mora, the stripping on Clark and Aten is completed.

Morita, thank you all for the way you engaged in the community tonight.

**Chairperson Hammerness adjourned the Commissioners Meeting at 7:52 pm until the next regularly scheduled meeting, September 27, 2022.**