

**CITY OF INDIO  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MAY 23, 2018  
MINUTES**

Chairperson Weller called to order the regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Indio, California, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, located at 150 Civic Center Mall, Indio, California, 92201.

- 1. ROLL CALL:                   PRESENT:** Chairperson Kenneth Weller  
Vice-Chair Eric Ceja  
Commissioner Jacqueline Lopez  
Commissioner Gloria Franz  
Commissioner Nicco Ysiano
  
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Nicco Ysiano
  
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT:** None
  
- 4. MINUTES:**

**4.1 MINUTES OF MARCH 14, 2018**

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to approve the minutes of March 14, 2018. Commissioner Ysiano seconded the motion. Motion carried 3/0/2, by the following vote, to read as follows:

***AYES:** Lopez, Ysiano, Weller*  
***NOES:** None*  
***ABSTAINED:** Ceja, Franz*

**4.2 MINUTES OF MAY 9, 2018**

Vice Chairperson Ceja made a motion to approve the minutes of May 9, 2018. Commissioner Franz seconded the motion. Motion carried 5/0, by the following vote, to read as follows:

***AYES:** Lopez, Ysiano, Weller, Ceja, Franz*  
***NOES:** None*  
***ABSTAINED:** None*

**5. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:**

**5.1 OUTDOOR RESORT INDIO SPECIFIC PLAN 18-03-38**

Assistant Planner Namvar provided and presented a staff report. Staff recommended approval of Resolution No. 1854, recommending City Council approval of Outdoor Resort Indio Specific Plan 18-03-38.

Chairperson Weller declared the public hearing open 6:06 p.m.

Jim McNeece, representing the Applicant, commented that Outdoor Resort wants new things. The Specific Plan was brought forward to address development standards in the community, to facilitate and enforce these items. All that is being added is development standards.

Commissioner Franz, commented that she understood that some of the proposed amenities have been completed on some homes, and the Specific Plan is to avoid going through the entire development process.

Chairperson Weller declared the public hearing closed 6:12 p.m.

Commissioner Ysiano made a motion to approve Resolution No. 1854, a Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Indio, California, approving Specific Plan 18-03-38. Commissioner Franz seconded the motion. Motion carried 5/0, by the following vote, to read as follows:

**AYES:** *Weller, Ceja, Lopez, Franz, Ysiano*

**NOES:** *None*

**ABSTAINED:** *None*

## 5.2 INDIO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HOSPITAL

Senior Planner Faruque provided and presented a staff report. Staff recommended adoption of Resolution No. 1851, approving Environmental Assessment 18-04-538 (Mitigated Negative Declaration with Mitigation and Monitoring and Reporting Program) for the Indio Behavioral Health Hospital development; and adoption of Resolution No. 1852, approving Conditional Use Permit 18-04-1034 allowing the use of an Acute Psychiatric Hospital in two phases on an approximately 7.71 acre-site in the Commercial Office (CO) zoning district; and, adoption Resolution No. 1853, conditionally approving Design Review 18-04-432, for the architecture, site plan orientation and layout, circulation, parking and landscaping of a new 72,273 square foot, single-story, 80-bed, Acute Psychiatric Hospital (Phase 1) with four distinct Nursing Units: Unit 1A) A 20-bed Geriatric Psychiatric Unit, Unit 1B) A 20-bed Adolescent Psychiatric Unit, Unit 2A) A 20-bed Adult General Psychiatric Unit; Unit 2B) A 20-bed Adult Dual-Diagnosis Psychiatric Unit; subject to the findings and conditions of approval, to include the amended conditions provided by staff.

Vice Chairperson Ceja questioned whether there was community outreach, and Director Johnson commented that staff was not aware of a formal community outreach by the Applicant; but referred to the Applicant.

Chairperson Weller declared the public hearing open at 6:33 p.m.

Stephen Wen, the design architect representing the Applicant, commented that under the Office of Statewide Health and Planning Development (OSHDP) regulations, and given the nature of the patients being treated, structurally, the site is considered a hospital, and will go to OSHDP for review.

Andy Hanner, Chief Strategy Officer with Acadia Healthcare, representing the Applicant, commented that the company is an addiction, behavioral health, treatment provider. The four different program types that Acadia uses for stabilization are: 1. Child/Adolescent, 2. Geriatric Psychiatry, 3. Adult Dual Diagnosis (behavioral and addiction related treatment), and 4. Adult Psychiatric Units.

Chairperson Weller declared a five-minute break, and the meeting went into recess at 7:31 p.m.

Commissioners returned to the dais, and the meeting reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

Sandra Polimerus, lives in the neighboring community on Calle Diamante, and spoke in opposition of the project. She stated that there was already a speeding problem and a problem with traffic cutting through Calle Diamante, down Buffalo Trail, and up to Doctor Carreon Boulevard. What the Applicant is doing is a good thing, but it is the wrong location for this project. She asked the Commission whether they would like to have this facility 300 feet from their backyard.

Michael Aubry, spoke in opposition of the project. The City at the time decided that adding the gate at Calle Diamante would add an inherent risk on emergency services. He wondered what effects the addition of the facility would pose on property values in the neighboring communities.

Kevin Roy, assisted Acadia with the project, reported that he worked with the Applicant to locate the project site. The behavioral health patients that go into the emergency rooms take up hospital beds, and having a facility that specializes in behavioral health would help reduce emergency room response times. One in five people suffer from mental disabilities; there is a critical need for this facility.

Jim Palmer, Las Brisas homeowner, spoke in opposition of the project, however, he understood the need to help those with mental health disabilities, and acknowledged the tremendous need for a facility like this; he applauds the Applicant. He questions the risks, and asked that the problems be resolved. People are scared to be around those with mental disabilities. He questioned what happened to patients after their mandatory hold was over.

Kim Bledsoe, resides at Las Brisas on Calle Rosarito, and she spoke in opposition of the project. She understands the need for these facilities and appreciates someone coming into the valley with this project, however, the location is not appropriate.

Leslie Dullman, resides at Las Brisas North on Calle Rosarito, spoke in opposition of the project. When she and her husband purchased their home in 2003, they were aware of the subject site, and were told that the property was zoned for commercial office use. They were also informed that Calle Diamante would be closed to traffic at Buffalo Trail once the final phase of the development was completed, but that's not the case, the gate was not installed. She was concerned that the project would be so incredibly close to residential neighborhoods. She stated that the facility is referred to as a hospital, but the Applicant wants to fall under the community care facility category. She discussed the traffic issues, and questioned the effects that the project would have on property values. She understood the need for the facility, but was very concerned about the location; she did not think that the facility should be so close to three residential communities.

Elizabeth Chavez, lives on Palomino Court and is the Director of Social Services at Palm Springs Healthcare and Rehabilitation, and spoke in opposition of the project. She deals with mental health patients every day at work, and she understands the need for the facility, but not in such close proximity to a community.

Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer of the Desert Care Network with Tenet Healthcare (also the City of La Quinta Mayor), spoke in favor of the project. She spoke of the need for this type of facility in the valley. She recognized the proximity of the facility to homes, but stated that JFK Hospital has been in the community for 52 years surrounded by homes; Desert Regional and Eisenhower Hospitals are also near residential areas. Telecare Riverside County Psychiatric Health Facility, the current facility in the valley serving this population, is also surrounded by homes. She addressed the neighbors' concerns for patients in their backyards, but stated that the facility would only make the community safer. In 2017, there

were 2,500 51/50 cases amongst the three hospitals in the Coachella Valley. Yesterday, May 22, 2018, JFK Hospital had 10 51/50 patients on hold, and Desert Regional had 14 patients; of those patients, 9 patients at JFK Hospital and 12 patients at Desert Regional Hospital required inpatient admittance into a behavioral health facility, due to the need for beds and facilities like this, patients go on a waitlist. This project will provide a safety net, and much needed resources to the community. On behalf of Tenet Healthcare, she was in complete support of the project.

Mr. Wen addressed the traffic concerns brought up by the neighbors; the Applicant is working to redirect traffic away from the community and unnecessary access to the neighborhood.

Mr. Hanner suggested the formation of a community advisory council to work through the development problems.

Commissioner Franz questioned why the site was selected, and Mr. Hanner commented that the site was selected due to its proximity to the healthcare corridor.

Commissioner Franz reported that she lives in the neighboring community, however, she does not live within 500 feet of the project, therefore, she did not recuse herself. She was concerned with the proximity of the project to the residential neighborhood. She stated that Indio has plenty of land, and has reservations about the location; she worries for the families that would live adjacent to a behavioral health facility.

Commissioner Ysiano was concerned that a behavioral health facility would abut a residential area.

Vice Chairperson Ceja spoke in support of the project. He commented that the Commission has approved similar projects that abut neighborhoods like these, and the site property is intended for medical use. However, the biggest concern is security, and the site is being secured by the Applicant. He understood the community's concerns, but acknowledged the need for this type of facility.

Chairperson Weller agreed that there was a need for this facility. Since the project would greatly impact the neighborhood and its residents, he requested vibration and noise studies, to ensure that families would not be greatly affected by the project.

Commissioner Lopez agreed with Vice Chairperson Ceja regarding the great need for this facility. Emergency services at hospitals are affected because there are not enough beds for behavioral health patients that require aid.

Commissioner Franz was concerned over the facility's security. If the community had a better understanding of the facility's security measures, the neighbors would probably feel better about the project.

Chairperson Weller declared the public hearing closed at 8:46 p.m.

Chairperson Weller declared a ten-minute break, and the meeting went into recess at 8:47 p.m.

Commissioners returned to the dais, and the meeting reconvened at 8:57 p.m.

Chairperson Weller declared the public hearing open at 8:58 p.m., and made a motion to continue the item to a date uncertain, to give the Applicant sufficient time to address concerns by the Commission and the neighboring community. Commissioner Franz seconded the motion. Motion carried 5/0, by the following vote, to read as follows:

**AYES:** *Weller, Franz, Ysiano, Ceja, Lopez*

**NOES:** *None*

**ABSTAINED:** *None*

**5.3 2018 – 2019 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) FINDING OF GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY**

Public Works Principal Civil Engineer Eric Weck and Indio Water Authority's General Manager Brian Macy provided and presented a staff report. A list of Public Works and Indio Water Authority Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects was presented to the Commission for finding of general plan consistency. Staff recommended that the Commission find the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year Capital Improvement Plan and Projects consistent with the City of Indio General Plan.

Vice Chairperson Ceja made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 1855, a Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Indio, California, finding that the 2018-2019 Capital Improvement Plan and Projects are consistent with the City of Indio General Plan. Commissioner Lopez seconded the motion. Motion carried 5/0, by the following vote, to read as follows:

**AYES:** *Ceja, Lopez, Weller, Franz, Ysiano*

**NOES:** *None*

**ABSTAINED:** *None*

**6. ACTION ITEMS:**

**6.1 APPROVAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMER SCHEDULE**

Director Johnson reported that the Planning Commission has traditionally cancelled one meeting during the summer months. To be consistent with the City Council summer schedule, staff recommended the cancellation of the July 11, August 8, and September 26, 2018 regular Planning Commission meetings.

Vice Chairperson Ceja made a motion to approve the summer schedule consisting of the cancellation of the July 11, August 8, and September 26, 2018, regular Planning Commission meetings. Commissioner Franz seconded the motion. Motion carried 5/0, by the following vote, to read as follows:

**AYES:** *Ceja, Franz, Weller, Lopez, Ysiano*

**NOES:** *None*

**ABSTAINED:** *None*

**7. DIRECTOR COMMENTS:**

**7.1 COMMENTS & CITY COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE**

Director Johnson reported that budget was introduced at the May 16<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. The City Council conducted a strategic planning retreat on May 18<sup>th</sup>, and there was

discussion regarding the general plan and the downtown specific plan. A request for \$100,000 was made for the implementation of the general plan.

**8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Lopez questioned whether anything could be done to ensure that vacant properties are maintained. Code Enforcement Supervisor Anderson spoke of Code Enforcement processes.

**9. ADJOURN:**

There being no further items to discuss, the meeting **ADJOURNED** at 9:47 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

  
Evelyn Beltran  
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved by:

  
Kenneth Weller  
Planning Commission Chairperson