



Coachella Civic Center, Hearing Room  
53-462 Enterprise Way, Coachella, California  
(760) 398-3502 ♦ [www.coachella.org](http://www.coachella.org)

# MINUTES

OF A REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE  
CITY OF COACHELLA  
PLANNING COMMISSION

**December 15, 2021**  
6:00 PM

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PURSUANT ASSEMBLY BILL 361, ALONG WITH THE GOVERNOR'S STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION ISSUED ON MARCH 4, 2020, THIS MEETING MAY BE CONDUCTED VIA TELECONFERENCE.

If you would like to attend the meeting via zoom, here is the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84544257915?pwd=VTdHWitpYVdOUk1NQW8vZ1pqUm0zQT09>

Or one tap mobile :

Us: +16699006833,, 84544257915#,,, \* 380084# US

Or telephone:

Us: +1 669 900 6833

**Webinar ID: 845 4425 7915**

**Passcode: 380084**

Public comments may be received via email, telephonically, or via zoom with a limit of 250 words, or three minutes:

**In real time:**

If participating in real time via zoom or phone, during the public comment period, use the "raise hand" function on your computer, or when using a phone, participants can raise their hand by pressing \*9 on the keypad.

**In writing:**

Written comments may be submitted to the commission electronically via email to [gperez@coachella.org](mailto:gperez@coachella.org). Transmittal prior to the start of the meeting is required. All written comments received will be forwarded to the commission and entered into the record.

IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY LEAVE A MESSAGE AT (760) 398-3102, EXTENSION 122, BEFORE 4:00 P.M. ON THE DAY OF THE MEETING.

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:03 P.M.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Figueroa, Commissioner Gonzalez, Commissioner Leal, Vice Chair Navarrete, Chair Virgen (All Planning Commissioners participated via teleconference)

Staff Present: \*Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director  
\*Nikki Gomez, Associate Planner  
\*Rosa Montoya, Planning Technician  
\*Andrew Simmons, City Engineer  
\*Rene Rosales, Code Enforcement Manager  
\*Participated in meeting via teleconference

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

“At this time the Commission may announce any items being pulled from the agenda or continued to another date or request the moving of an item on the agenda.”

IT WAS MOVED BY VICE CHAIR NAVARETTE AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GONZALEZ TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

Approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Vice Chair Navarrete, Chair Virgen, Commissioner Figueroa, Commissioner Gonzalez, Commissioner Leal.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

1. Draft Planning Commission Minutes – December 15, 2021

IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER FIGUEROA AND SECONDED BY CHAIR VIRGEN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

Approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Vice Chair Navarrete, Chair Virgen, Commissioner Figueroa, Commissioner Gonzalez, Commissioner Leal.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS):**

“The public may address the Commission on any item of interest to the public that is not on the agenda, but is within the subject matter jurisdiction thereof. Please limit your comments to three (3) minutes.”

None.

**REPORTS AND REQUESTS:**

Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director, reported that former Alternate Commissioner Miguel Leal was appointed and approved by the City Council to complete the term of former Commissioner Sahara Huazano.

**NON-HEARING ITEMS:**

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING CALENDAR (QUASI-JUDICIAL):**

2. Fountainhead Plaza Phase II and III (Continued from December 7, 2021)

Tentative Parcel Map 37940 (Revision), Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 346, CUP 347, CUP 321 (modification), Architectural Review (AR) 21-12, and AR 20-03 (modification) to develop 5.06 acres of an 8.25 acre property to include a 2,028 sq. ft. Starbucks drive thru building, a 2,600 sq. ft. Panda Express drive thru restaurant and a 20,442 sq. ft. Aldi supermarket with Type 20 Alcohol Sales (Off-Sale Beer and Wine) at the northeast corner of Cesar Chavez Street and First Street (APN# 778-020-007 and 778-010-017). Applicant: Coachella Retail Realty Associates, LP.

Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director, narrated a PowerPoint Presentation for the item. A copy of the Presentation is on file in the Planning Division.

Chair Virgen opened the meeting for public comment at 7:00 p.m.

Francis Chu, representing Fountainhead Development, LLC, expressed concern about Condition of Approval No. 9 wording for a focused traffic analysis and requested modification from a focused traffic “memo” to “analysis.” Andrew Simmons, City Engineer, replied and stated the suggested modification is acceptable. Mr. Chu continued and stated new on-site circulation improvements would allow traffic to proceed either north or south to avoid traffic back-up issues, that the proposed fan palm trees were selected to ensure cohesive landscape plan with existing development, and that the preferred rear screening would be wrought iron fencing due to the Foster Gardener property commercial zoning. Mr. Chu also stated that the proposed Panda Express architecture relates to marketing for the business’ new image.

Vasanthi Okuma, representing Fountainhead Development, LLC, reported that there is a landscape company that maintains the site and that she was not aware of the commercial center maintenance issues expressed by Planning Commissioners.

Craig Smith, representing Fountainhead Development, LLC, stated he was unaware of the homeless and maintenance issues until they were raised by staff and that he worked to fix the issue before Thanksgiving. Mr. Smith confirmed the at-risk construction plan submittal to the City, Aldi and Panda Express will be the commercial pad owners, and construction to begin January or February with 2022 planned opening dates. He stated the need to communicate with Aldi and Panda Express ownership of the Planning Commission request for block wall fencing construction.

Lucy Gan, representing Panda Express, stated the proposed building architecture is to introduce new and creative concept with Chinese/Asian inspired design distinct from surrounding buildings similar to McDonald's and Taco Bell that have their own brand identity.

During the ensuing discussion, the Commissioners, either individually or in agreement, provided the following commentary:

- Expressed concern about on-going code enforcement case, maintenance issues, homeless encampment, landscape maintenance at improved commercial center areas, and missing landscape materials.
- Suggested a rear block wall construction to replace the existing chain link fence
- Suggested that the Seven-Eleven convenience store architectural theme remain similar to the Walgreens.
- Expressed concern if the proposed entry median may negatively affect vehicle traffic stacking into the McDonald's drive thru due to observed McDonald's vehicle stacking concerns.
- Suggested a redesign of the Panda Express as the proposed architectural design is distinct from the commercial center's buildings and due to the location as an entrance to the Pueblo Viejo area.
- Suggested modifying proposed fan palm trees to date palm trees at 8-12 feet in height as requested by the Commission under a previous development approval for aesthetic purposes. Also suggested that the modification to date palm trees along First Street may be acceptable.
- Asked if Cesar Chavez Street bus stop improvements are proposed.
- Inquired about construction timing of the proposed project.

IT WAS MOVED BY CHAIR VIRGEN AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GONZALEZ TO CONTINUE TO JANUARY 5, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. PC 2021-25 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF COACHELLA PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 346, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 347, AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW 21-12 TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 2,600 SQ. FT. DRIVE-THRU RESTAURANT AND A 20,422 SQ. FT. SUPERMARKET WITH TYPE 20 (BEER AND WINE) ALCOHOL SALES ON 2.85 ACRES OF VACANT LAND LOCATED AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF FIRST STREET AND CESAR CHAVEZ STREET. (APN 778-020-007 AND 778-010-017).

Additionally, the Commission requested staff work with the applicant regarding the following items:

- Ensure existing and new landscaping be maintained and similar in appearance
- Address Panda Express design concerns

- Clarify drive-thru entry median does not create negative impacts for on-site traffic and stacking for Panda Express and McDonald's restaurants.
- Discuss inclusion of rear block wall with property owners
- Address outstanding code enforcement issues

Approved Continuance of the item by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Vice Chair Navarrete, Chair Virgen, Commissioner Gonzalez, Commissioner Leal, Commissioner Figueroa.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: None.

**INFORMATIONAL:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting Adjourned by Chair Virgen at 7:35 p.m. by Chair Virgen.

Respectfully Submitted by,

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Gabriel Perez  
Planning Commission Secretary

*Complete Agenda Packets are available for public inspection in the  
Development Services Department at 53-990 Enterprise Way, Coachella, California, and on the  
City's website [www.coachella.org](http://www.coachella.org).*

THIS MEETING IS ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES