

PC 11/09/2023

ITEM # 6

2 PAGES

Planning agenda item 23-2005

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To: Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>

Commissioners,

Please include this statement as part of the public statements for the above mentioned item.

For item 6 of the document attached to this agenda item:

“Commissioners should trust staff to accurately compile the administrative record and provide appropriate background information (including the staff report and exhibits) for the public. Unless there are specific public comments submitted that demonstrate misunderstanding or lack of context, commissioners should not dwell upon or ask staff to discuss topics for the benefit of public education. Comments attempting to restate or paraphrase analysis in the staff report should be avoided as such comments often have the unintended effect of clouding the record. If a commissioner feels that an item is missing from the Legistar, the concern should be raised for staff prior to the meeting when feasible.”

This is an incredulous requirement. There are many times that many of the Planning Commission have acknowledged that Staff has left data out, misled the PC, wholly changed items or understanding of these items that to make a blanket state that staff be trusted completely is just not realistic. As a member of the public, the head of an organization and the owner of a small business in EDC who has been negatively affected by the blind trust the PC and BoS place in staff, we wholly reject this requirement/statement.

While your job is to make decisions based on facts, when facts are presented, there have been multiple occasions that staff has danced around an issue or flat out misstated facts. Which facts are correct? A statement from staff that is blindly accepted with no supporting documentation or documentation provided by the public stating a direct conflict in a staff report or statement. It also seems to me that in this era where EDC is being questioned about its general transparency to the public, sure seems to me that spending a few minutes explaining to the public something they might misunderstand would be quite helpful and applauded.

Further, to effectively disallow or discredit the public to challenge staff is an inclusive and horrible policy to be included in the rules of the Planning Commission. While we believe Staff should be trusted and that they provide all data to makes the right decisions is critical, this has not been the behavior and until it is... Trust, but verify.

I offer this language as a suggested change.

“Commissioners should insure staff will accurately compile the administrative record and provide appropriate background information (including the staff report and exhibits) for the public. If there are specific public comments submitted that demonstrate misunderstanding or lack of context, commissioners should quickly discuss topics for the benefit of public education (either with staff or the Commission itself). Comments attempting to restate or paraphrase analysis in the staff report should be avoided as such comments often have the unintended effect of clouding the record. If a commissioner feels that an item is missing from the Legistar or misstated in the Legistar, the concern should be raised to staff prior to the meeting when feasible. If this is not feasible, then the Commissioners should insure that these discussions focus solely on the missing or misleading items for clarity”

Thanks for your consideration.

lee

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