

1 City of Pass Christian  
2 Municipal Complex Auditorium  
3 105 Hiern Avenue

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5 **Planning Commission**  
6 **Meeting Minutes**  
7 **Tuesday, November 28, 2017, 6:00 PM**  
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9 **CALL TO ORDER**

10 Chairman Tom Phares called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. In attendance were Commissioners  
11 Margaret Jean Kalif, Adam Pace, Ken Austin, Michael Lizana, Lisea Johnson, Steve Hunter and Lisa Smith.  
12 Commissioner Rebecca O'Dwyer was not in attendance.  
13

14 **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

15 The first order of business was the adoption of the minutes from the monthly Planning Commission  
16 meeting held on October 4, 2017. A *Motion* by Commissioner Lizana, seconded by Commissioner Pace,  
17 was made to adopt the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.  
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19 **NEW BUSINESS**

- 20 ○ *Discuss front-entry parking for elevated houses*  
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22 Chairman Phares introduced the topic.  
23

24 The City Planner, Danit Simon, briefed the Planning Commission on the topic: A significant number, if  
25 not the majority of the Warrant Applications we receive are to request front entry parking. The  
26 exception in the Code is for lots that are 50-feet or less, which does not significantly reduce the number  
27 of applications we receive. The first thought was to increase the 50-feet to 75-feet, which would  
28 eliminate a significant number of applications, leaving the requests based on the size of the boats and  
29 vehicles, rather than the size of the lots.  
30

31 If we were to increase the exception to 75-feet, we are left with two questions: Question number one,  
32 how do we restrict parking in the First Layer, as once they have front entry parking, they inevitably want  
33 a parking pad as wide as the house. If you look at the photos in your packet, you can see that the Code  
34 is designed to focus the front of the house on the pedestrian entrance, not the garage or the vehicular  
35 entrance, which are two very different architectural styles. When you look at the photos of the two  
36 elevated houses, their front façade appears very similar. One has louvers with a grass front yard and the  
37 other has garage doors and louvers with a parking pad to accommodate the front entry parking. I'm  
38 interested in hearing your feedback tonight, to understand what elements of the architectural and  
39 parking standards are important to the Commission.  
40

41 The second question that arises, is regarding new subdivisions that have a minimum lot width of 60-feet.  
42 The new Whispering Oaks subdivision at 260 Beach Blvd created lots that are around 60-feet and then  
43 added rear alleys, so that the parking standards would be compliant. We write the code to allow for  
44 front entry parking for infill lots that are 75-feet or less, but still require side and rear entry for lots in  
45 new subdivisions even if the lots are only 60-feet wide.  
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47 Commissioner Austin reiterated that we need to be careful if we update the text so that when new  
48 subdivisions are created we don't lose the ability to require rear and side parking.

49  
50 Simon continued that it is totally feasible to create side and rear entry parking on lots that are 60-feet in  
51 width, but it requires a commitment on the part of the architect to design it to that standard, which is  
52 often not a priority to the architect and to the owner. The owners usually want the house centered, and  
53 they want to maximize the width of the house.

54  
55 Chairman Phares stated that if we change the text, we really need to draw a line in the sand and stick  
56 to the requirement, because as of now, we have granted every Warrant Application for this request.

57  
58 Commissioner Lizana stated that he requested that this topic to be reviewed at tonight's meeting  
59 because we are constantly reviewing Warrant Applications on this topic. The other point is that this is a  
60 City by the water, which is very attractive to prospective buyers, especially those with boats, and yet we  
61 are hampering their development with the current parking standards.

62  
63 Simon responded that the Code can be updated regarding the size of the lot, but it's unclear how to  
64 update the text of the Code to provide automatic exceptions to boat owners.

65  
66 Commissioner Pace stated that these Warrant Applications are handled quickly by email, and do not  
67 cause significant delays to the applicants. Since the Warrant process is working well, I don't think we  
68 should eliminate the process, or change the Code to reduce the number of applications. If its not broke,  
69 lets not fix it.

70  
71 Commissioner Lizana asked, why keep requiring the application process if we approve all of them?

72  
73 Commissioner Austin answered that the Code sets the desired standard and most people comply with  
74 the standard. But if we reduce the standard, then we will have more development that doesn't meet  
75 the original standard, along with the inevitable Warrant Applications requesting not to meet the new  
76 standard. The Warrant process is not onerous, so lets stick with it. And, as a realtor, I have not lost any  
77 sales due to the parking standards.

78  
79 Chairman Phares stated that the email process for Warrants has been working well, and the  
80 Commissioners agreed with his statement. He also requested that moving forward all Commissioners  
81 should please respond to the Warrant Email so that there is a record.

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83 **OLD BUSINESS**

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85 **OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT**

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87 Chairman Phares asked the Commissioners if they are in agreement to update the Code so that the  
88 screening at the front façade may be positioned at the rear of the porch to create a patio at the ground  
89 level. The Commissioners were all in agreement, and requested that the Code be updated for this  
90 option to be allowed by right.

91

92 Commissioner Austin requested that the process to review and update the Comprehensive Plan begin.  
93 Development is picking up in the City and this is the right time to take stock of where we are and make  
94 some decisions for the direction that the City should go in.

95

96 Chairman Phares stated that the Zoning Maps are going to be updated, to create one simpler and easier  
97 to use map. Commissioner Austin also recommended working with the County to update the online GIS  
98 Map with the City's zoning overlay option.

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100 **ADJOURN**

101 *A Motion* by Commissioner Kalif, seconded by Commissioner Smith, was made to adjourn the meeting at  
102 6:30 P.M. The motion passed unanimously.