



**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
CITY REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The City Review Commission held its public meeting in the Planning and Economic Development Department, Planning Division, 5th Floor, Paisano Conference Room, City Hall, 2 Civic Center Plaza, August 24, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. The following were present:

City Review Committee Members Present:

*Chair David Coronado, Planning and Economic Development, Lead Planner
Esther Guerrero, Planning and Economic Development, Planner
Daniel Chavira, Engineering and Construction Management, Building Plans Examiner*

Staff Members Present:

Robert Almonte, City Attorney's Office, Assistant City Attorney
Ernie Arriola, Planning and Economic Development, Planner
Geena Maskey, Planning and Economic Development, Planner

Members of the Public:

Richard Teschner, Rim Area Neighborhood Association

1. Call to Order/Chair's Comments/Public Comment

Chair Coronado called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. **PLRG11-00021** Lots 3 & 4, Block 3, Kern Place, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas

LOCATION: 1209 Rim Road

ZONE: R-3/NCO (Apartment Office/Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay)

REQUEST: Installation of solar panels in rear yard.



Two Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, TX 79901
(915) 541-0000

Mayor

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Ms. Maskey gave a PowerPoint presentation and explained the applicant is requesting that the City Review Committee review and authorize the release of permit(s) for property located at 1209 Rim Road. The applicant is proposing to install solar panels in the rear yard of the home. All work will need to be done in accordance with the Rim/University Neighborhood Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANEL IN THE REAR YARD. THE PROPOSED UNIT IS APPROXIMATELY 60' IN WIDTH, 9' IN DEPTH. THE UNIT WILL NOT BE VISIBLE FROM THE STREET OR ALLEY AND COMPLIES WITH ALL THE APPLICABLE DESIGN STANDARDS.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Design Standards are mandatory requirements, which must be met by persons who are proposing new construction, reconstruction, or renovation of the exterior of existing buildings, or structures within the Neighborhood that have a Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay (NCO) designation approved by the El Paso City Council. These Design Standards are considered in the context of surrounding properties, and with an emphasis on promoting visual harmony and maintaining the unique character of the Neighborhood (page 14).

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. Mr. Teschner felt the address should be Rim Road Place; rather than Rim Road. *Staff will verify the street name.*
2. Mr. Teschner stated City Council recently approved Rim Area Neighborhood Association document to enable solar paneling to be placed on roofs, as long as the solar paneling was flat. He noted the overlay document has nothing to say whatsoever about other types of solar paneling. He asked if Staff was clear on that, did they have any problems on solar paneling despite the fact that it is not mentioned in the overlay.

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Mr. Arriola responded, as far as Staff is concerned, Staff does not really look at a distinction between an air conditioning unit and a solar panel. Per the direction of the City Council, Staff is pro-renewable resources. Specifically, in this case, the Plan really focuses on the façade of the block, the block phase, architectural styles, etc. This utility equipment is in the rear which is completely not visible from the street. Mr. Arriola felt it was a mute point to deny the request. As far as Staff having a specific direction, Staff is trying to promote that type of use especially if it is somehow incorporated into the Neighborhood Design Standards.

Mr. Teschner agreed with Mr. Arriola's comments. Mr. Teschner was happy the meeting was recorded and the comments would appear in the minutes. He felt it was important in this case that the words, as stated by Mr. Arriola, will appear in the minutes so that it is clear that Staff has taken a position on this. The Neighborhood Association has no objection to this; but we want to make it clear that Staff has thought about the matter, that Staff has reached a decision and that Staff has expressed that decision.

Chair Coronado asked Mr. Teschner if there was anything in the Plan itself that Mr. Techner would like to change to specify any types of solar panels or any other utility agreement.

Mr. Teschner responded that, of course, is a very separate issue.

Mr. Arriola added if these panels were located in the front of the property, then Staff would have to look at some way of incorporating the design of the structure instead of just being a piece of utility equipment and somehow making it part of the landscaping or even changing color, as long as there are some components of the design guidelines and standards.

Ms. Guerrero explained that when the ordinance was amended to allow solar panels, Staff did not consider the panels being on the ground. Seeing as this is the first request, Staff should have incorporated some kind of language that allowed the solar panels period.

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Mr. Arriola interjected during the discussions regarding proposed changes to the Plan, he was informed that the neighborhood association was going to take the lead and submit some proposed changes.

Mr. Teschner responded we were never told that, we were never told that we were expected to come up with addition suggestions for change in the document. We were simply told to look at the changes that had been suggested in this particular case.

Mr. Almonte noted the discussion was off the agenda.

MOTION:

Motion made by Ms. Guerrero, seconded by Mr. Chavira AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE.

The Motion passed. The request was approved.

FOLLOWING THE VOTE

Chair Coronado felt it would be appropriate if the City Review Committee and Staff work with the Neighborhood Association to make those additions/revisions to the Plan. He felt it was time to modify the Plan so that it stays current with the changes. Chair Coronado suggested that the City Review Committee work with the Neighborhood Association at a future meeting.

Mr. Teschner requested Chair Coronado send the Neighborhood Association that request in writing to both Mr. Teschner and to the President of the Association. Mr. Teschner explained that once the correspondence is received the Neighborhood Association can then respond.

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Prior to discussing the following agenda item, Mr. _____ contractor for the property owner, and Mr. Teschner verified the property is located on Rim Road Place.

3. Approve the Minutes for the past CRC Meeting(s):
August 3, 2011

The minutes will be reviewed at the next CRC meeting.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION:

Motion made by Ms. Guerrero, seconded by Mr. Chavira **AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN.**

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