

Learning to Use Zimas and LA City Planning Websites

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The Los Angeles Planning Dept. has instituted a series of training sessions to educate the public in using the Zimas System and the resources of the Planning Website. The first session set was held in June and the Planning Department would like to hold two sessions per year with the second set of session being held approximately in November.

The first such session was held Monday, June 11, 2007 and was hosted by Deputy Planner, Eva Yuan and Zimas IT Manager Edward Martinez. The two hour session was a good introduction for the new user and a good refresher course for intermediate users. Even the advanced user might find a new tidbit or two thanks to the interactive give and take with the attendees.

The Zimas System is utilized by three (3) types of users:

- General Public
- Contractor/Developer
- Neighborhood Council Members & Public Sector (e.g.: Government, Public Safety, etc)

Mr. Martinez discussed specific information

each type of user would most likely require and then reviewed how to retrieve it and what additional information could be acquired. This segued into using the Planning Document Information System (PDIS) section of Zimas that allows a user to view and print case documents and permits. This section of the website system will eventually include audio files of hearings and meetings.

This general review of the Zimas sections included the following headings:

- Address/Legal Information
- Jurisdictional Information
- Planning & Zoning Information
- Assessor Information
- Case Numbers (and the Citywide Case Numbers list)
- Additional Information
- Economic Development Areas
- Public Safety

The Deputy Planner, Eva Yuan, also made several announcements throughout the program some of which are as follows:

- This day was also start of Neighborhood Council Pilot Program. This entails the

city mailing a complete copy of every case filing, not just the deemed complete or approved filings as had been prior practice. This program will be reviewed in six (6) months as to effectiveness and usability. A Training Committee and Program will be another phase and will begin at a later date after the six (6) month review.

- The Planning Department website is currently being revamped and a completely new website is expected to be up and running approximately mid July 2007. That means that those of you who have a lot of bookmarks for the Planning Website may need to redo those bookmarks when the new site goes live.

In general the training sessions would be a useful introduction for those who have not had much experience with the program but would only yield a few useful nuggets of information for the more experience user. It may be more useful as a networking opportunity to reach out to Neighborhood Council members as they comprised a surprising majority of the attendees at the Monday session.