



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 14, 2020, 6:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Janet Braun on Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at 6:32 p.m. The meeting was held Via Zoom.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair: Janet Braun
Vice-Chair: John Lesak
Commissioners: Laura Dahl, Richard Tom and Lisa Padilla

City Staff

Present: Joanna Hankamer, Planning & Community Development Director
Teresa Highsmith, City Attorney
Kanika Kith, Planning Manager
Malinda Lim, Associate Planner
Margaret Lin, Manager of Long-Range Planning and Economic Development

Council

Present: Council Liaison Diana Mahmud, Mayor Pro Tem

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Approved, 5-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS:

All Commissioners have visited the Moffat Street site identified in Item 2. Chair Braun also spoke with a resident at 4519 Lowell Street while at the site.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

None.

PRESENTATION:

1. General Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan – Landscape and Signage.

Recommendation:

Review and provide comments.

Staff Presentation:

Manager Lin introduced the PowerPoint presentation entitled *Downtown Specific Plan Development Standards Part 3: Landscape and Signs*. Tonight's meeting provided a summary of the parking standards previously discussed at the prior Planning Commission meeting and discussion of the landscape and signage design standards. Consultant Woodie Tescher from PlaceWorks narrated the presentation.

Discussion:

Vice-Chair Lesak shared that the Old Mission Street Specific Plan provided good guidance regarding tree wells, tree covers and signage, including language regarding ground plane treatment and information regarding street furniture (bike racks, etc.).

Commissioner Dahl expressed concerns about having consistency regarding tree grates and the permeable soil for the trees, etc., and was not sure if she approved of pole signs.

Commissioner Tom shared his concerns about neon signs, LED signs and scrolling signs, and recommended that the issue of how to handle them be addressed. He agreed Mission Street has been handled rather well. As to trees and landscape – the total landscape should be considered – the sidewalk, permeability, etc.

Commissioner Padilla noted that street tree comments in the Specific Plan should provide additional specificity, including such info as height to bottom of canopy, height to top, initial planning size, caliper and mature size because the scale of the trees is very important. She agreed with Vice-Chair Lesak about the ground plane treatment and noted that in addition to permeable pavers, there are other options, e.g., stabilized DG or permeable asphalt, integrating bioswales, etc.

Chair Braun agreed with Commissioner Dahl that pole signs do not fit in the community and recommended no rooftop signs. She further agreed that the signage on Mission Street (via the Cultural Heritage Commission) looked great.

Vice-Chair Lesak commented on different types of signage, including fascia band signs (common on Mission Street) (sometimes referred to as wall signs), an opportunity for painted wall signs, and blade signs (found on Fair Oaks, e.g., Gus's Barbeque), many of which have neon (e.g., Fair Oaks Pharmacy). He questioned LED and scrolling signs, and agreed 100% with the other Commissioners regarding pole signs and suggested that a blade sign is a good alternative to a pole sign.

Consultant Woodie Tescher noted that the Commission had provided good feedback and the information would be very helpful in moving the document forward. He thanked the Commissioners for their time and attention.

The Commissioners remarked that the recap of their comments regarding the parking summary from the prior meeting included in tonight's presentation was an accurate recap and summary reflecting an emphasis on shared parking and flexibility.

PUBLIC HEARING:

- 2. Moffat Street, Project No. 2191-HDP/TRP – Hillside Development Permit to install a private roadway extending westward approximately 600 feet from the terminus of the existing Moffat Street and Tree Removal Permit for the removal of 5 protected trees. This private road will provide access to 7 lots in the City of Los Angeles through an easement in South Pasadena (continued).**

Recommendation:

Direct the Applicant to submit an alternative street design with access to the seven (7) land-locked lots from Lowell Avenue for review by the City Engineer or City's engineering consultant prior to Planning Commission consideration, or if the Applicant's engineer is unable to provide an alternate street design, the City shall hire an engineering consultant to evaluate an alternative street design at the Applicant's expense prior to Planning Commission consideration.

Staff Presentation:

Planning Manager Kith introduced the PowerPoint presentation narrated by Associate Planner Lim and explained that this item was continued from the June 9th meeting to allow additional time for public comment.

Questions for Staff:

Vice-Chair Lesak asked about the elevation of Moffat Street and Lowell Avenue.

Commissioner Dahl asked about the new extension and its impact on the residents at 4519 Lowell Avenue.

Commissioner Tom asked about the history of 4519 Lowell Avenue.

Public Comment:

Associate Planner Lim reported that a letter was received from the Applicant's attorney with regard to the alternative street design requested by staff and two comments were received from residents in opposition to the project.

Applicant's Presentation:

Planning Manager Kith presented a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of the Applicant Planet Home Living and Civil Engineers Delane Engineering Inc. and Landscape Architects BGB Design Group. Scott Uhles, President of Delane Engineering, narrated the presentation.

Applicant Rebuttal:

The Applicant, Michael Marini, CEO of Planet Home Living, Stephen Scheck, Land Use Attorney, and Scott Uhles, Civil Engineer, were available for questions. Mr. Marini shared that they do not have access rights to Lowell Avenue. They do for Moffatt Street by way of an easement.

Questions for Applicant:

Vice-Chair Lesak asked about the grade change of Moffatt Street.

Commissioner Padilla asked for the Applicant to clarify the purpose and use of the driveway being proposed to the north into South Pasadena.

Chair Braun inquired about the use of Lowell Avenue as an alternative to using Moffatt Street. Mr. Marini explained the reservations and constraints.

Discussion:

Vice-Chair Lesak commented that an access easement was put in place in the early 60s and constructing a road provides some benefit as far as safety, fire access, etc. He would rather move forward with approval than continue studying it.

Commissioner Dahl remarked that this project has many Catch 22s because of its being in Los Angeles and South Pasadena.

Commissioner Padilla wanted the Applicant to explore an alternative street to Moffatt Street or Lowell Avenue.

Chair Braun commented on the alternative of using Lowell Avenue. She supported the staff recommendation for a continuance.

Decision:

Commissioner Padilla motioned, seconded by Commissioner Tom, to follow staff's recommendation to continue this item as efficiently as possible and for staff to work with the Applicant in terms of the feasibility and gather more information on the alternative street design and what that would involve, and to obtain any additional documentation from the City of Los Angeles that is needed to provide the Commission with enough information to make a confident set of decisions as a Commission.

City Attorney Highsmith stated that the easement right of the Applicant's claim is not being contested, but for avoidance of doubt, the City has the authority to select the alignment and the ability to request additional information or a different alignment, even though that is not the original alignment that the Applicant desired or brought to the City. If a different alignment will work, the City does have the authority to choose that.

Chair Braun called for Roll Call:

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| Vice-Chair Lesak: | No |
| Commissioner Dahl: | Yes |
| Commissioner Tom: | Yes |
| Commissioner Padilla: | Yes |
| Chair Braun: | Yes |

Motion carried, 4-1.

This item is continued to the August meeting. Between now and then, staff is directed to consider and get more information on an alternate street alignment.

3. Zoning Code Amendment for Streamline Planning Review and Minor Clean-up.

Recommendation:

Adopt a Resolution recommending approval of the proposed Zoning Code Amendment to City Council.

Staff Presentation:

Planning Manager Kith introduced the PowerPoint presentation explaining that this is a carryover from the Urgency Ordinance that was adopted by the City Council in May, with changes requested by the Cultural Heritage Commission.

Questions for Staff:

Chair Braun asked whose authority would prevail between the Planning Commission and the Cultural Heritage Commission in the event of a future stalemate if an issue is not resolved in a joint meeting of the two Commissions. Planning Manager Kith responded that further consideration would continue to explore a resolution if that situation should occur. However, she recommended approval of the Amendment *as is* because the staff will be returning to the Commission with another zoning amendment.

Public Comment:

None.

Discussion:

Commissioner Padilla shared that she thought the Design Review Board modifications and the Cultural Heritage Commission suggestions were good.

Decision:

Vice-Chair Lesak motioned, seconded by Commissioner Tom, that the Commission adopt the Resolution presented in the agenda packet recommending approval of the proposed Zoning Code Amendment to City Council.

Chair Braun called for Roll Call:

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| Vice-Chair Lesak: | Yes |
| Commissioner Dahl: | Yes |
| Commissioner Tom: | Yes |
| Commissioner Padilla: | Yes |
| Chair Braun: | Yes |

Motion carried, 5-0.

ADMINISTRATION:

4. Comments from City Council Liaison:

Mayor Pro Tem Mahmud recommended that the Commission consider how they wish to receive comments and whether or not to have submitted public comments read as is done at City Council meetings. She also encouraged consideration of what the time or word limit would be for submission of public comments. Or, at a minimum, adopt a three (3) minute public comment, which was the limit adopted by the Planning Commission when people still had the opportunity to provide oral comment to the Commission.

The Commissioners discussed their preferences and considered suggestions and recommendations from staff covering oral, voicemail, email and written comments and submissions, including limits and deadlines. In addition, they agreed with Commissioner Dahl's suggestion that staff acknowledge the written comments (including emails) they receive at every public hearing.

5. Comments from Planning Commissioners:

Vice-Chair Lesak reported that he updated and approved the plans for the Chair review of 901 Fair Oaks Avenue.

Commissioner Dahl, referencing Mayor Pro Tem Mahmud's earlier comment, suggested that if there is a long, detailed presentation, it should be paused intermittently for questions and comments, if appropriate.

6. Comments from Staff:

Director Hankamer reminded the Commission and informed the public that there is a Special Planning Commission meeting scheduled for next week at 3:00 pm rather than at 6:30 pm regarding the Housing Element. It is an update and also a request for Planning Commission recommendations to help with next steps to guide the work over the next several months. Staff will heed Commissioner Dahl's request to have opportunities in the middle of the presentation to stop and have discussions, because it is a lot of dense material and the staff needs feedback and direction.

Chair Braun thanked staff for all their hard work during the pandemic.

ADJOURNMENT

7. Adjournment to the next regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for August 11, 2020 at 6:30 pm:

There being no further matters, Chair Braun adjourned the meeting at 9:29 pm.



Janet Braun, Chair