



**City of South Pasadena
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 11, 2020, 6:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Janet Braun on Tuesday, August 11, 2020, at 6:31 pm. This meeting was held via Zoom, in accordance with AB 361.

ROLL CALL

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

City Staff

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

Council

Present: Council Liaison Diana Mahmud, Mayor Pro Tem

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion carried, 5-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

- 1. 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, with connection to the northern end of Lowell Avenue only, and Tree Removal Permit for the removal of five (5) protected trees. This private road will**

provide access to seven (7) lots in the City of Los Angeles through an easement in South Pasadena (continued).

Recommendation:

Approve the project, subject to Conditions of Approval and approve a Resolution approving Project 2191-HDP/TRP Hillside Development Permit for the street design of the private street portion of Moffat Street connecting only to Lowell Avenue and Tree Removal Permit of five (5) trees, subject to Conditions of Approval.

Staff Presentation:

Planning Manager Kith introduced the PowerPoint presentation - *Item 1 – Moffat Street Continued – Project No. 2191-HDP/TRP.*

Questions for Staff:

Commissioner Padilla asked if the design change for the sidewalk to be reduced to two (2) feet from five (5) feet was included in the Resolution.

Staff clarified the recommendation and explained that the design change was part of the Conditions of Approval.

Public Comments:

Staff received nine (9) written public comments regarding this item which were provided to the Commission in their agenda packets and no comments were submitted by phone.

Applicant's Presentation:

Staff introduced the PowerPoint presentation *Moffat Street Extension* from the Applicant presented by Civil Engineer Scott Ewell with Lane Engineering.

Applicant's Rebuttal:

The Applicant's attorney provided rebuttal to the public comments. He requested a vote and approval of the project. The Applicant's attorney added that they objected to the proposed Condition requiring access to the site off of Lowell Avenue and believe access off of Moffat Street should be permitted.

Questions for Applicant:

Vice-Chair Lesak asked a question forwarded by a public comment regarding the plans for water and sewer hook-ups.

The Applicant's attorney explained that water would be the only public utility that would need to be provided to the site. All other public utilities are already accessible from the site. A sewer system already exists on the southern side of the lots within the vacated Moffat Street within the City of Los Angeles. The specific language of the 1962 easement specifically states that the easement is also for purposes of public utilities needed to service the lot. Civil Engineer Ewell confirmed that the utilities are confirmed.

Discussion:

Vice-Chair Lesak reviewed the public comments received regarding this project which included questions about CEQA, project segmentation and the lead agency for the project. He asked staff or the City Attorney to address those concerns.

Planning Manager Kith explained that the project was a roadway design on an easement to landlocked parcels and qualified for a CEQA exemption. The accompanying development occurs on parcels belonging to the City of Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles, therefore, had the ability to determine how the development was to be processed.

City Attorney Highsmith added that the Applicant intended to do a by-right development within the City of Los Angeles and, therefore, the project would not be subject to CEQA and was not a project segmentation issue.

Commissioner Padilla, Commissioner Tom and Chair Braun appreciated the willingness of the Applicant to work closely with staff to resolve prior concerns and issues with the project.

Vice-Chair Lesak stated that he preferred providing egress/ingress from Moffat Street as a better solution, but understood the need to move the project forward. He appreciated staff presenting an alternative solution and would support the Lowell Street solution alternative in order to move the project forward.

Commissioner Dahl commented that while changing the access point may mitigate the impact on South Pasadena residents, the major impacts would fall within Los Angeles's jurisdiction and she would therefore vote in favor of staff's recommendation.

Chair Braun noted that an amended Resolution proposed by staff had been received by the Commission included a date correction.

Decision:

Commissioner Padilla motioned, seconded by Commissioner Tom, to adopt the Resolution approving Project No. 2191 HDP/TRP, Hillside Development Permit for the street design of a private street portion of Moffat Street connecting only to Lowell Avenue and a Tree Removal Permit for five (5) trees, subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented by staff.

Roll call:

Vice-Chair Lesak	Aye
Commissioner Dahl	Aye
Commissioner Tom	Aye
Commissioner Padilla	Aye
Chair Braun	Aye

Motion passed, 5-0.

- 2. 804 Valley View Road, Project No. 2298-HDP/DRX – Hillside Development Permit and Design Review for the construction of a new tri-level, 3,125 square-foot single-family residence including a two (2)-car garage designed in a modern architectural style located at 804 Valley View Road, Assessor’s Parcel Number 5310-020-900.**

Recommendation:

Continue to the regular Planning Commission meeting of September 8, 2020.

Decision:

Vice-Chair Lesak motioned, seconded by Commissioner Tom, to continue this item to the Planning Commission’s September 8th meeting.

Roll call:

Vice-Chair Lesak	Aye
Commissioner Dahl	Aye
Commissioner Tom	Aye
Commissioner Padilla	Aye
Chair Braun	Aye

Motion passed, 5-0.

DISCUSSION

- 3. 2021 Housing Element Update – Preliminary Sites Analysis (Continued from July 21, 2020) – Inclusionary Housing and Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinances.**

Recommendation:

Provide direction regarding a potential Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and Update to the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance.

Staff Presentation:

Manager Lin introduced the presentation, noting that the presentation had been updated from the previous meeting to include additional details on the Housing Element’s site analyses and the proposal for increased height limits. She introduced City Consultants from PlaceWorks - Woodie Tescher, Jonathan Nettler, Deputy Project Manager, and Jennifer Gastelum, Lead Housing Official for the State of California. Woodie Tescher presented the *2021 South Pasadena Housing Element Update* PowerPoint presentation.

Questions:

Vice-Chair Lesak inquired about several sites, including adjacent parcels to the Ostrich Farm site (not included in the presentation, but comprising properties that are underutilized, would not block views, and are in a good location); the Meridian site (located in the Mission West Historic District and expressed caution against proposing height increases in an area that might overwhelm historic resources); and requested further clarification of the Ralphs site.

Consultant Tescher addressed Vice-Chair Lesak's queries and explained that the Ostrich Farm site was chosen because it is currently vacant; outreach to the property owners of the adjacent parcels would be needed in order to demonstrate strong potential for redevelopment from an existing use to a residential one; and for those sites located within a historic district, they recommended either maintaining existing heights or staying within minimum height limits.

Director Hankamer concurred that outreach to property owners is part of the work needed as the site analysis continued.

Public Comment:

Staff played a voicemail from Robert Joyner, a resident on Glendon Way (within the Mission-Meridian Parking District), expressing concerns about the impacts of additional housing in South Pasadena, especially increased traffic and parking demands of future development projects. In particular, he conveyed apprehension about the number of resident parking permits that would be issued to future residents. He requested that the City perform a traffic engineering and mitigation study specifically to address the Farmers Market traffic impact on Glendon Way.

Staff received five (5) written comments by four (4) individuals which were included in the agenda packet.

Questions for Staff:

Commissioner Dahl requested clarification on how much time the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) would allow cities without sufficient inventory to make zone changes in order to meet the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). Consultant Tescher reported that HCD allows three (3) years to make those changes. However, a current State bill on the table would reduce that timeframe to one (1) year. Commissioner Dahl asked how this related to the height increase initiative. Director Hankamer explained that the height increase should be voted on prior to submitting the Housing Element. Additionally, HCD is assessing for feasibility and, therefore, it would be difficult to rely on development standards that are not yet adopted.

Commissioner Tom asked about the Ostrich Farm site and the method of determining the number of potential units. Consultant Tescher explained the process and what HCD is looking for.

Commissioner Tom also asked about ADU projections and the reasonableness of the estimated numbers. Consultant Jennifer Gastelum explained that HCD wanted to see alternative approaches for meeting RHNA numbers such as ADUs, although the number contemplated is aggressive.

Commissioner Tom added how important it was to have this discussion on housing for the residents and the City to address the housing needs and recommended that a presentation of the modeling should include a summary of the size of the vacant sites in the presentation.

Commissioner Padilla commented that generally the site locations were pretty smart. She remarked that traffic and parking can change the outlook for some of the growth in these areas. She also noted that the proposal was not to change the height across the whole City, selecting very specific areas.

Chair Braun agreed that parking and traffic should be a part of any analyses of these sites. She asked about the State density bonus which would allow a developer to take exception and build higher than the allowed building height limit on a project.

Director Hankamer clarified the State law which allows for a density bonus and noted that over the next two months the next modeling and analyses will include information regarding possible application of the density bonus and what-ifs for proposed sites.

Chair Braun also asked for a clarification of the RHNA numbers and how they were determined by HCD. Consultant Gastelum explained that the RHNA number is based on projections of the population and the new developments coming into the City over the next eight (8) years, and is independent of a city's past number. She further explained that it is the number whereby the State anticipates the amount of growth in your community and your identification of the sites to accommodate the units necessary to house the influx of new residents. She also explained that there are three categories for meeting RHNA considerations – the land, approved projects and actual units built.

Chair Braun asked about public outreach meetings. Director Hankamer responded that nothing was currently scheduled, but staff was considering mid-September and would let the community know with plenty of notice of how and when to participate.

Staff Presentation (continued):

Manager Lin introduced the next part of the PowerPoint Presentation - *2021 Housing Element Update: Inclusionary Housing and Accessory Dwelling Unit Policies*.

Questions for Staff:

The Commissioners and staff engaged in a robust discussion encompassing several complex issues, including: the number of affordable units as opposed to the number of housing units and whether unit conversion was still under consideration; increasing the percentage of affordable housing units to reach the numbers needed on developments of five (5) or more units and recommendation of an economic study or economic input on what would be viable; the impact of an increase in the percentage calculation and the triggering of the State density bonus law; support for an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and rejection of an in-lieu fee; parking considerations; micro units and small housing units; and the establishment of covenants onto properties.

The Commissioners expressed the need for further analysis before being able to give additional direction to staff and continue to have some modicum of local control.

Staff Presentation (continued):

Manager Lin continued the PowerPoint Presentation - *2021 Housing Element Update: Inclusionary Housing and Accessory Dwelling Unit Policies* for the ADU part of the presentation.

Questions for Staff:

The Commissioners conducted an in-depth, robust discussion regarding several ADU issues, including: Junior ADUs; the emergency ordinance allowances for ADUs on multi-family properties; ADUs within the Mission Specific Plan; ADUs over detached garages; flexibility on setbacks; the two bedroom maximum; the requirement for the entrance not being visible from the right-of-way; having a separate utility service; parking issues and the changes in the parking requirements with garage conversions; prohibition on short-term rentals and how many of these issues are interrelated and have impacts on one another.

Director Hankamer added that you cannot require someone to rent an ADU out.

Manager Lin highlighted the next steps, including: staff will be modeling the selected sites discussed tonight for size heights, density, setbacks and step-backs around the end of August, beginning of September; community meetings providing an update on the Housing Element and obtaining public input on the Inclusionary Housing and ADU Ordinances will be held in mid-September; and draft ordinances will be presented to the Planning Commission in October, which the staff will then present to the City Council in November.

Chair Braun thanked everyone for their input.

ADMINISTRATION

4. Comments from City Council Liaison:

Mayor Pro Tem Mahmud provided background information regarding HCD's assignment of 1.3 million housing units within the SCAG region and the considerations of how those units were allocated.

She explained why she thought a potential appeal to SCAG of the RHNA numbers would fail. She provided examples of the RHNA numbers and percentages of surrounding cities that are even larger than South Pasadena's.

She reported on the suite of housing bills currently before the legislature and the changes to how they are being processed.

With regard to ADUs, she would like more specific information from the consultants and staff on what constitutes an aggressive ADU program. Regarding utilities and the issue of separate meters for utilities, she reminded the Commission that South Pasadena is one of the few publicly-owned retail water providers that has a low-income program (which requires its own meter). In addition, there is a low-income program for electricity through Clean Power Alliance and Southern California Edison.

She commended the Commission on their decision to recommend to City Council that there was not sufficient information to present the height limit initiative to the voters. She expressed her sincere gratitude for such strong and independent thinkers acting in the best interests of the City.

Chair Braun thanked Mayor Pro Tem Mahmud for all her hard work.

5. Comments from Planning Commissioners:

Vice-Chair Lesak thanked the staff and the consultants for setting up a good, robust discussion tonight. He encouraged everyone to fill out their census forms because many decisions rely on data from the census.

Commissioner Dahl thanked the staff for their deliberations on the Moffat Street project. She appreciated their work to get the neighbors and the Applicant to talk to each other and to have engineers look at things that weren't initially presented. She really appreciated it.

Commissioner Tom echoed his thanks to the staff and consultants on both Moffat and on the discussion of the Housing Element.

Commissioner Padilla thanked everybody – staff, fellow Commissioners, public commenters especially. She is really looking forward to the community input that will come from the community workshops on all of tonight's topics.

Chair Braun echoed all the same.

6. Comments from Staff:

Director Hankamer shared that this Commission has really been a great commission to be able to present some really difficult material to and the staff appreciated all of the input.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Braun adjourned the Planning Commission meeting at 9:36 pm to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on September 8, 2020 at 6:30 pm.



Janet Braun, Chair