



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 26, 2021, 6:30 PM
Via Zoom Teleconference**

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Braun on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was held Via Zoom.

ROLL CALL

Chair: Janet Braun
Vice-Chair: John Lesak
Commissioners: Amitabh Barthakur, Lisa Padilla, Laura Dahl

STAFF PRESENT

Teresa L. Highsmith, City Attorney
Joanna Hankamer, Planning & Community Dev. Director
Kanika Kith, Planning Manager
Malinda Lim, Associate Planner
Elizabeth Bar-EI, AICP, Interim Manager of Long Range Planning

COUNCIL

Council Liaison: Diana Mahmud, Mayor

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Braun made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted by staff.
Vice-Chair Lesak seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. **Planning Commission Reorganization**

Chair Braun nominated Vice-Chair Lesak for the new Chair.

Vice-Chair Lesak seconded.

Motion carries, 5-0

Chair Lesak nominated Commissioner Padilla for Vice Chair and Commissioner Dahl for Secretary.

Commissioner Braun seconded.

Motion carries, 5-0

2. **2019 Annual Report of 2020 Work Plan (Continue)**

Grammatical/wording mistakes were brought up and corrected.

Vice-Chair Padilla motioned to approve the 2020 Planning Commission Work Plan.

Commissioner Braun seconded.

Motions carries, 5-0

PUBLIC HEARING:

3. **Inclusionary Housing Ordinance**

Staff Presentation:

Manager Bar-El presented the proposed Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Regional Housing Trust Administrator Acevedo presented the SGV Regional Housing Trust.

Recommendation

Staff recommends to hold a public hearing to discuss the draft and propose revisions. Staff also recommends to adopt a resolution recommending the City

Council approve the proposed amendment to the South Pasadena Municipal Code.

Questions for Staff:

Vice-Chair Padilla asked if the graphs could be more legible for the Planning Commission and City Council.

Vice-Chair Padilla asked if the in-lieu fee projects would count towards the South Pasadena RHNA requirement. Manager Bar-El replied that if the units were built outside the city, it could not be counted toward RHNA. Director Hankamer added that the in-lieu trust was to be shared for all SGV cities who need additional funding on a specific project.

Vice-Chair Padilla asked if there was a way to ensure that projects approved with a development agreement have an affordable component. Manager Bar-El replied that the agreement allows the city to negotiate more with the developer and are adopted by ordinance, which often allows more affordable housing to be built in exchange for incentives.

Commissioner Dahl asked if all the opportunity sites are covered under the ordinances. Manager Bar-El confirmed that. Commissioner Dahl asked if one incentive was to allow for a slightly smaller unit size. Manager Bar-El confirmed that, as long as it was comparable with market size.

Commissioner Barthakur asked if South Pasadena projects had utilized the state density bonus before. Director Hankamer confirmed a project that was approved last year. Director Hankamer later clarified it was a senior project and they were all rented and age-restricted. Planning Manager Kith clarified there were no active state density bonus projects. Commissioner Barthakur asked if the SGV trust fund considered incentives to be put in place to have cities be included as beneficiaries of projects created elsewhere.

Commissioner Braun asked if staff had looked at the LA County inclusionary housing ordinance for SGV in preparing the city's ordinance. Manager Bar-El replied they had not.

Chair Lesak asked if the in-lieu fee would be adjusted yearly. Manager Bar-El replied that the fee would be set by the City Council and adjusted as appropriate. Chair Lesak asked if there were any minimums or maximums. Manager Bar-El clarified there were not.

Public Comment:

Mr. Albrektson felt that the ordinance did not reflect the community input that was given on the inclusionary housing ordinance last year and created numbers that were too harsh and would discourage any new housing.

Commissioner Discussion:

Commissioner Braun brought up the specific income levels to illustrate how it might not be financially viable for developers. Also brought up that LA County exempted anything under 5 units and had different requirements for rental and ownership units.

Commissioner Barthakur commented that calibrations should be based on financial feasibility. Additionally, he added that staff should take a look at Alhambra and Pasadena's housing market and IHO's to see what the market responds to.

Commissioner Dahl added that from her experience cities have to amend their IHO multiple times, primarily because developers exploit loopholes.

Vice-Chair Padilla commented that there will never be a perfect ordinance. The developers might take up valuable sites that could be affordable and that developers want to do work in South Pasadena which gives the city leverage over the IHO.

Chair Lesak asked how fast this would get to City Council. Director Hankamer replied that it could be as soon as next month. Director Hankamer also added that when Pasadena changed their IHO to 20% there was no effect on the housing numbers built.

Commissioner Barthakur asked if more clarity was needed on the difference between rental and ownership properties.

Commissioner Braun agreed that there should be a difference. Also added that South Pasadena's specific needs should be taken into account.

Chair Lesak further agreed, stating a 15 unit development in LA is nothing while it is a major project in South Pasadena.

Mayor Mahmud was concerned with the ambiguity in the charts shown and reminded the commission that City Council does not have related experience needed to tackle the IHO. Mayor Mahmud asked that more time be spent on revising the IHO.

Commissioner Dahl asked if anyone else wanted to comment on the 3-4 unit development exemptions proposed by Commissioner Braun.

Commissioner Barthakur asked how the rounding would work. Manager Bar-El replied three units are exempt, four units are not. Manager Bar-El then asked if the commission wanted higher rates for condos or apartments. Commissioner Barthakur thought requirements should be higher for condos and emphasized there should be a clear path for developers to comply.

Director Hankamer reminded the Commission that a significant amount of housing has to be built for the RHNA mandate. Chair Lesak brought up that the city needs to be more flexible in the specific plan areas. Director Hankamer reminded the Commission that the sites identified on the map are not cleared for projects, they are just anticipated sites for future building.

Motion:

Chair Lesak motioned to continue this item to the March 9th Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Braun seconded.

Motion carries, 5-0

ADMINISTRATION

4. Comments from City Council Liaison

Mayor Mahmud brought up a concern about having affordable condos for sale due to her observations with struggles Caltrans is having with selling the homes it purchased, mainly due to low-income families unable to find proper financing for the home. Mayor Mahmud thanked the Commission.

5. Comments from Planning Commissioners

Commissioner Barthakur thanked the Commission for updating him on what has happened regarding the IHO.

Commissioner Dahl welcomed Commissioner Barthakur and confirmed with staff that there would be two meetings in February. Director Hankamer confirmed that.

Vice-Chair Padilla thanked Commissioner Braun for serving as Chair the last year.

Chair Lesak thanked staff and the subcommittee and the rest of the Commission and staff.


6. Comments from Staff

Director Hankamer thanked the Commission and welcomed Commissioner Barthakur.

ADJOURNMENT

7. Adjournment to the Planning Commission meeting scheduled on February 9, 2021.

There being no further matters, Chair Lesak adjourned the meeting at 9:13 p.m.



John Lesak, Chair