



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, August 10, 2021, 6:30 PM**

**Via In-Person Hybrid Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Lesak on Tuesday, August 10, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was held via in-person hybrid.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Andrew L. Jared, Assistant 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 Lesak made a motion to adopt the agenda as submitted by staff. Commissioner Braun seconded the motion

**Motion carried, 5-0**

**DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

- 1. 521 and 523 Mission St. Project No. 2396-CUP/MOD – Conditional Use Permit and an Administrative Modification to allow the sale of beer produced on-site at a microbrewery and for an 8 ft. wall along the west property line in front of the lot.**

Recommendation

Adopt resolution denying Project No. 2396-CUP/AMOD, without prejudice, based on Commission action taken on July 13, 2021.

Motion:

Commissioner Braun moved to deny the project without prejudice.

Vice-Chair Padilla seconded.

**Motion carried, 5-0**

- 2. Study Session: Update on the Pending Release of the 2021-2029 Public Review Draft Housing Element and Overview of Key Strategies**

Recommendation:

1. Receive and file the report, which provides an overview of the 2021-2029 Housing Element Public Review Draft, which is soon to be released.
2. Provide feedback and whether the Commission is generally supportive of the density proposals and policy strategies described below and included in the Public Review Draft to be released later this month; and
3. Provide direction regarding the public outreach to accompany the release of the Public Review Draft.

Staff Presentation:

Manager Lin presented the Housing Element.

Questions for Staff:

Discussion on the timeline of the plans. The Housing Element was identified as having the most immediate deadline. HCD had to approve the Housing Element but the Commission and Staff could work on problems in the interim while waiting for HCD to send the Element back.

Director Hankamer clarified that the central issue was to increase the density code for the commercial and downtown areas, as well as ADUs.

Public Comment:

Commenter expressed concern about viability of Housing Element.

Commissioner Discussion:

Commissioner Braun asked how other cities are handling things. Director Hankamer replied that other cities are frustrated and behind as well. Commissioner Braun asked if PlaceWorks is involved in the drafting process. Director Hankamer replied they were working closely with PlaceWorks. Added that HCD responses will be mainly about the suitable sites and will need more information.

Commissioner Barthakur thought that the City could still attract 100% affordable developers on City owned sites. Commissioner Barthakur asked how the City was presenting the affordable vs. non-affordable breakdown. Director Hankamer replied that HCD set the guidelines but in the interest of encouraging development the rate was no more than 50%.

Chair Lesak asked to start with the site inventory. Commissioner Braun asked what the areas of focus were. Director Hankamer replied it was the Ostrich Farm, Huntington Corridor, Monterey Road and the downtown.

Vice-Chair Padilla thought that if HCD was going to reject so many sites the City would have little choice in where the housing was built, and something should be changed. Chair Lesak added that the majority of the units are on occupied sites. Chair Lesak asked if HCD knew that the city was going to upzone residential areas. Director Hankamer replied that since the sites were under half an acre they weren't eligible unless the owner expresses intent to upzone, however it could help the narrative.

Director Hankamer mentioned that the ADU interest was an upward trend so the current estimates are very conservative. Chair Lesak asked what other cities were doing. Director Hankamer thought every city was negotiating with HCD over ADUs. Commissioner Braun asked if zoning changes had to be done before submitting

sites to HCD. Director Hankamer replied the city didn't, they just had to declare intent.

Commissioner Barthakur asked about other church properties. Director Hankamer replied it was just the one church that approached the city.

Director Hankamer made a correction to the slides, everything on Fair Oaks should be 60 per acre except for Vons which is 70.

Vice-Chair Padilla suggested choosing some examples in terms of massing per acre when community outreach is done, since numbers are very abstract.

Commissioner Dahl asked about the specific density on certain sites. Director Hankamer replied that staff created densities based on areas, such as Fair Oaks vs. Mission.

Commissioner Barthakur thought that on the larger sites it would be easier to change height, massing and have a greater density.

Multiple commissioners suggested contacting the Oneonta Church and other religious organizations. Staff will write a letter to the churches. Commissioner Braun asked if the YMCA had been approached.

Manager Lin asked the commission to look at the City sites. Director Hankamer updated the commission that HCD pushed back on the designation of City Hall, but the City was looking at a site across from the power plant on the edge of South Pas. Chair Lesak asked about the parking lot. Director Hankamer replied it wasn't a half-acre. Commissioner Braun asked if there was any pressure to consider the Arroyo Park space. Director Hankamer replied that there was strong community pushback. Commissioner Braun asked what the plan B was if the current plan failed. Chair Lesak's personal preference was to preserve downtown and look at alternative sites. Chair Lesak suggested the War Memorial site. Director Hankamer replied it had been looked at, but was taken off the list.

Vice-Chair Padilla asked how many units the amnesty program would give. Director Hankamer did not know. Commissioner Braun liked the ADUs as a way of spreading the housing around. Chair Lesak asked if the outreach for the amnesty program is Multi-lingual. Director Hankamer replied there was not. Chair Lesak suggested that they add multi-lingual outreach and do outreach at school events.

Commissioner Braun added that the City should be prepared to field questions about the Caltrans properties.

Commission discussed the best ways to conduct community outreach. Vice-Chair Padilla suggested a joint Planning Commission and City Council meeting. Mayor Mahmud updated the commission on additional city council workshops. Commissioner Braun suggested that the City enlist community groups in outreach meetings. Commissioner Dahl added that there needs to be more specificity in the public noticing.

Motion:

Chair Lesak closed this item.

**ADMINISTRATION**

**3. Comments from City Council Liaison**

Mayor Mahmud thought that there should be more press coverage of the Housing Element. Mayor Mahmud also requested the presentation be added in advance so constituents can read up on the issue ahead of time. Mayor Mahmud thanked Director Hankamer for her work and wished her the best.

**4. Comments from Commissioners**

The Commissioners all thanked Director Hankamer for her work and wished her the best.

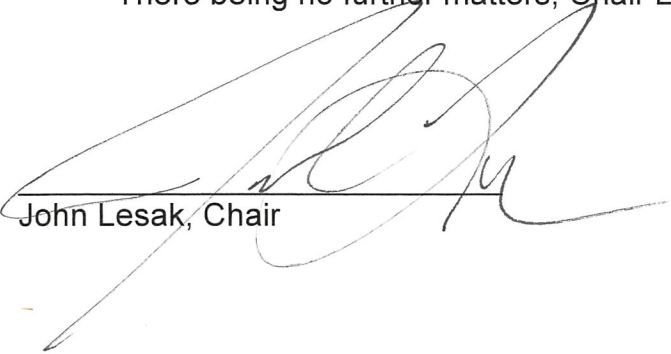
**5. Comments from Staff**

Director Hankamer thanked the commission and said goodbye as she leaves for a new job in Seattle. Updated the commission that Planning Manager Kith will also be leaving the City. Mayor Mahmud brought up the 3 major housing projects that had been approved under Director Hankamer.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**6. Adjournment to the Special Planning Commission meeting scheduled on August 25, 2021.**

There being no further matters, Chair Lesak adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

  
John Lesak, Chair

