



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 9, 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, November 9, 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, City Attorney
Angelica Frausto-Lupo, Community Development Director
Margaret Lin, Deputy Community Development Director
Elizabeth Bar-El, Principal Management Analyst
Jeff Hamilton, Contract Planner

COUNCIL

Council Liaison: Diana Mahmud, Mayor

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Lesak motioned to approve the agenda as submitted

Motion carried, 5-0

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

Commissioner Braun drove by both sites. Vice-Chair Padilla visited the Indiana Terrace site.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **619 Indiana Terrace, Project No. 2218-HDP/DRX/TRP - Hillside Development Permit, Design Review, Variance, and a Tree Removal Permit to allow the construction of a 4,234 square-foot multi-level single-family home with a detached garage (APN: 5314-005-021)**

Staff Presentation:

Contract Planner Hamilton presented the project.

Recommendation:

Approve as submitted by staff.

Questions for Staff:

Vice-Chair Padilla asked about a reference to a JADU in the drawings. Contract Planner Hamilton replied that it was a remnant of another project.

Commissioner Dahl asked if Contract Planner Hamilton had visited the site in the 2 year interim since the arborist report was done. Contract Planner Hamilton had not. Commissioner Dahl asked where in the conditions the protected trees outlined in the arborist were. Contract Planner Hamilton replied it was in condition P-8.

Commissioner Barthakur clarified that 9 trees were being removed, 4 of which were protected. Contract Planner Hamilton replied that a few of the drawn trees were actually shrubs, and he counted 9 actual trees. Commissioner Barthakur clarified that only 9 flora classified as trees were being removed. Contract Planner Hamilton confirmed that.

Chair Lesak asked if a geotechnical report was provided. Contract Planner Hamilton replied that it was submitted to Public Works.

Public Comment:

Hussein Amiri lives at 617 Indiana Terrace and expressed concern that the large windows and balcony on the proposed project would infringe on his family's privacy.

Miriam Amiri lives at 617 Indiana Terrace and expressed concerns that the project has 14 openings facing her house, while the east side has only 6 openings. Further expressed concern that the two balconies overlook her backyard.

Commissioner Discussion:

Commissioner Barthakur expressed concern that the percent protections on the natural landscaping were arbitrary.

Commissioner Dahl asked if the commission can impose stricter construction hours than the zoning code. City Attorney Jared replied that unless a finding is made with evidence, the commission must follow the Municipal Code. Commissioner Dahl brought up a public comment on utility lines and retaining walls. Contract Planner Hamilton replied that the applicant was not going to remove any retaining walls. Commissioner Dahl asked for confirmation that the utility lines were not disturbed. Contract Planner Hamilton replied that the Building and Safety Division carefully monitors construction. Commissioner Dahl requested the applicant to voluntarily reduce the construction hours.

Vice-Chair Padilla thought the trees were protected. She brought up the rise of glass railings as birds crash into them often. She asked what the entertainment room was, and if the applicant would consider stepping the terrace back over the garage.

Commissioner Braun brought up the large FAR variance, the 12 ft. high retaining wall, and lack of communication with neighbors.

Chair Lesak thought that the privacy issue was a major concern and was unsure that an approval could be made at this time.

Vice-Chair Padilla brought up the large driveway, guest parking, and the kitchen in the entertainment room as plans for a possible ADU development.

Chair Lesak mentioned that the drawings did not include the neighboring developments.

The commission encouraged the applicant to build an ADU and did not feel they could make a recommendation without hearing from the applicant.

Commissioner Braun asked that neighbor outreach be included in the motion.

Motion:

Chair Lesak motioned to continue the item and request clarification on the retaining wall, orientation of the windows, and orientation of the terrace, noise generating items, JADU, and entertainment room.

Commissioner Braun seconded.

Motion carried, 5-0

2. **1502 Indiana Avenue, Project No., 2319-HDP/DRX/VAR/ADU/TRP – Hillside Development Permit, Design Review, two Variances, Accessory Dwelling Unit and a Tree Removal Permit to construct a 2,468 square-foot multi-level single family home with an attached 500 square-foot junior accessory dwelling unit and removal of 10 trees on an undeveloped hillside lot. (APN: 5314-006-020)**

Recommendation:

Continue this item to the Special Meeting scheduled on November 15, 2021.

Motion:

Chair Lesak motioned to continue this item to the Special Meeting scheduled on November 15, 2021.

Motion carried, 5-0.

DISCUSSION

3. **Release of the 2021-2029 Public Review Draft General Plan Housing Element**

Staff Presentation:

Analyst Bar-El presented the Element.

Recommendation:

The Planning Commission is to provide comments and suggestions to staff to revise the Public Review Draft Housing Element, 2021-2029 in preparation for the final draft.

Public Comment:

Sean Mann, member of the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters asked that the city use local skilled workers to build housing for the Housing Element.

Samantha Hill asked if the City is taking any steps to apply for state-level housing grants.

Josh Albrektson asked the commission to review the City's ADU numbers at the 11/15 meeting after HCD makes a decision regarding Oxnard, who has similarly high numbers.

Jason Green requested the city to use local skilled workers to build housing.

Commissioner Discussion:

Commissioner Braun asked what the new timeline for approval would be. City Attorney Jared replied that the timeline has not changed but there is slightly more breathing room.

Commissioner Barthakur mentioned that HCD comments on other cities were very critical of low-income projects that were to be built on non-vacant sites. City Consultant from Placeworks confirmed there is a higher bar for redevelopment but the City decided to do outreach to those sites. Commissioner Barthakur asked if HCD asked for regional trends. City Consultant confirmed that. Commissioner Barthakur asked how the City was going to meet its affordability goal. City Consultant replied that there was going to be 100% affordable housing built. Commissioner Barthakur asked what HCD was going to look at. City Consultant replied that HCD looks at owner's interest, distance from transit, and sub-regional patterns.

Commissioner Dahl thought that the new deadline was October 15th, and the City needed to make zoning code amendments. Commissioner Dahl asked if the zone changes will be added overlays to existing zoning. Analyst Bar-El replied that some projects will need rezoning, not just an overlay. Commissioner Dahl asked how the City will handle neighborhood opposition to the sites. City Consultant replied that all projects will go through the same hearings as usual.

Commissioner Dahl asked how ADUs were determined affordable or not. City Consultant replied it was based on a HCD approved SCAG study. Commissioner Dahl asked what the difference between planning and building permits. City Consultant replied that planning permits are a requirement to get a building permit.

Vice-Chair Padilla thought that the City needs to address staffing shortages for the 38 upcoming programs and the PC might need more meetings in 2022. Vice-Chair Padilla asked if there was only one hearing. Analyst Bar-El replied that was correct, but the Commission could schedule more meetings.

Vice-Chair Padilla mentioned that the Commission and residents should be prepared for higher, denser and lower quality developments to meet the RHNA requirements. City Attorney Jared clarified that the 45 ft. barrier won't be broken but some situations will happen.

Commissioner Braun thought that the community outreach was not being direct in what was happening with RHNA. Commissioner Braun asked for an update on the Caltrans housing.

City Attorney Jared added that many cities in SCAG are fighting against the numbers allocated to SCAG.

Commissioner Barthakur thought that with community outreach, mentioning the 1% of all plots were being considered would help. Chair Lesak thought that the City needs to go out to the residents, suggesting PTA meetings and the farmers market.

4. SB9 and SB10 Presentation

Staff Presentation:

City Attorney Jared presented the updates to the state law.

Public Comment:

Sean Mann asked the commission if there were any other meetings to comment on the Housing Element. Chair Lesak replied there was.

Alan E brought up ideas and suggestions regarding split-lots and asked where the water for the additional 2,000 units was coming from.

Josh Albrektson recommended the City take a look at SB 478.

City Attorney Jared replied that the City adopted an urban water plan and did not believe the City was going to run out of water anytime soon. City Attorney Jared added that if the lot was sufficiently large enough it could be split multiple times.

ADMINISTRATION

5. Comments from Council Liaison

Mayor Mahmud brought up that the City gets its water from wells in the SGV and discussed the City's process of purifying water. Mayor Mahmud added that tomorrow there is a Special City Council meeting on the capital improvement plan and redistricting. Mayor Mahmud added that only one of the LA County cities had begun litigation against HCD. She agreed with City Attorney Jared that SB 9 will not be hugely consequential but CHC needs to look at it. Mayor Mahmud was more concerned about the state of the water infrastructure, not the availability of water.

6. Comments from Commissioners

Chair Lesak requested that at some point the Commission look at the slope and natural vegetation requirements as well as the microbrewery project.

7. Comments from Staff

Deputy Director Lin reminded the public of upcoming outreach events and mentioned that the backlog is due to staff shortages.

ADJOURNMENT

8. Adjournment to the Special Planning Commission meeting scheduled on November 15, 2021 at 6:30 PM.

There being no further matters, Chair Lesak adjourned the meeting at 9:57 P.M

John Lesak, Chair

