



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 9, 2021, 6:30 PM  
Via Zoom Teleconference**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Lesak on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was held Via Zoom.

**ROLL CALL**

Chair: John Lesak  
Vice-Chair: Lisa Padilla  
Commissioners: Amitabh Barthakur, Janet Braun, 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-El, AICP, Interim Manager of Long-Range Planning

**COUNCIL**

Council Liaison: Diana Mahmud, Mayor

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**Motion carried, 5-0**

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

Commissioner Braun received a text message asking for how to view PC meetings.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Josh Albrektson made comments regarding the legality of the City's Housing Plan as well as the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**1. Recommendation to Adopt an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (Continued from January 26, 2021)**

Staff Presentation:

Manager Bar-El presented the proposed Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Recommendation

Staff recommends to adopt a Resolution recommending that the City Council approve the proposed amendments outlined in the presentation as well as incorporate the proposed changes to the South Pasadena Municipal Code.

Questions for Staff:

Commissioner Braun asked if the required affordable unit for condos would be moderate income. Manager Bar-El affirmed that but if the units were for-rent then it would have to be at the affordable level of other projects. Commissioner Braun asked if an ownership project would be eligible for the in-lieu fee. Manager Bar-El affirmed that, and clarified the in-lieu fee is determined by the City with the intention to charge the developer the amount that it would cost to build the affordable unit. Commissioner Braun then asked for specific costs. Manager Bar-El used Santa Monica as an example with each unit costing \$500,000. Commissioner Braun asked what projects the ordinance would apply to. Manager Bar-El clarified it will apply to all new projects that require affordable housing.

Commissioner Barthakur asked if the 20% applied to base units would be the norm as Pasadena had switched to it and then away from it. Manager Bar-El thought that Pasadena switched back due to general confusion about calculations. Commissioner Barthakur asked about the mechanism of the in-lieu fee. Manager Bar-El replied that any project had to provide staff with financial details and the City would then decide what the in-lieu fee would be after a third party source assessed the financials of the project.

Commissioner Dahl mentioned that an in-lieu fee calculated on a case by case basis is not optimal and asked for a timeline of decision. Director Hankamer replied that it was being introduced to City Council soon.

Vice-Chair Padilla asked if the SGV Housing Trust was already in place for the in-lieu fee option. Director Hankamer confirmed it was but City Council would decide whether to send funds to the trust or keep it for other more local purposes.

Public Comment:

Josh Albrektson brought up concerns that the IHO set unrealistic goals that were not matched by any other city in California and did not reflect what the community wanted.

Gail Maltun brought up concerns that the IHO was far higher than neighboring communities and any developer would skip over South Pasadena in favor of nearby cities.

Commissioner Discussion:

Commissioner Dahl approved of the IHO as submitted.

Vice-Chair Padilla had some concerns on the 20% on base but was comfortable with the rest of the IHO since that part could be revisited later.

Commissioner Barthakur thought that the IHO was well calibrated but could be adjusted later.

Commissioner Braun felt that 20% would chase developers away and discourage more housing and would prefer 15%.

Chair Lesak felt that the zoning codes and laws should be dynamic, not static, fine tuning the numbers every few years or so.

Vice-Chair Padilla feels like the IHO is making up for lost opportunities. Vice-Chair Padilla also mentioned that if the percentage is calculated on the base, the number is closer to 15% not 20%.

Commissioner Barthakur agreed with Commissioner Braun's points. Commissioner Barthakur thought that the success of Pasadena's ordinance should be a sign that the proposed IHO would be successful, but recognizes the higher density of development in Pasadena.

Vice-Chair Padilla mentioned that the populations of each category are different than before COVID and emphasis should be placed on the lower levels.

Chair Lesak asked staff that the marketing plan would focus on local low-income residents. Manager Bar-El confirmed that.

Motion:

Chair Lesak motioned to recommend the City Council adopt the amended ordinance adding Division 36.375 inclusionary housing to Chapter 36 of the South Pasadena Municipal Code as presented within the resolution.

Commissioner Dahl seconded.

Motion carries, 4-1 (Commissioner Braun noes)

**ADMINISTRATION**

**2. Comments from City Council Liaison**

Mayor Mahmud thanked the Commission for their work.

**3. Comments from Planning Commissioners**

Commissioner Dahl thanked staff for meeting with her and Vice-Chair Padilla and thanked staff for giving the commission public comments well in advance.

Commissioner Barthakur mentioned that building new affordable housing is the most expensive way to create affordable housing and suggested converting units to be affordable. Additionally thought that the city should keep the in-lieu fees for that goal rather than give it to the SGV trust.

Commissioner Braun thanked everyone.

Vice-Chair Padilla thanked everyone.

Chair Lesak thanked everyone.

**4. Comments from Staff**

Director Hankamer thanked everyone and reminded the commission that on March 17<sup>th</sup>, the ordinance would go to City Council. Director Hankamer gave an update on the SCAG RHNA allocations that are now final and an update on the appeals. South Pasadena now has an allocation of 2,067 units.

Planning Manager Kith reminded commission that Commissioner Braun will be giving a Planning Commission recap of the last year at the next City Council meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**5. Adjournment to the Planning Commission meeting scheduled on April 13, 2021.**

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



John Lesak, Chair