



CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 13, 2022, 6:30 PM
Amedee O. "Dick" Richards Jr. Council Chambers
1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030
and Via Zoom Teleconference

CALL TO ORDER:

A meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Lesak on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 6:33 p.m. The meeting was an in-person hybrid meeting held at the Amedee O. "Dick" Richards, Jr., City Council Chambers, located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California and via Zoom teleconference.

ROLL CALL:

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

City Staff

Present: Angelica Frausto-Lupo, Community Development Director
Ephraim Margolin, Deputy City Attorney
Elizabeth Bar-El, Interim Manager of Long-Range Planning
Matt Chang, Planning Manager
Braulio Madrid, Associate Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chair Lesak requested a modification to the Agenda between Consent Calendar Item 2 and Public Hearing Item 3 for Commissioner Comments.

Approved, 5-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Public Comment - General (Non-Agenda Items)

Josh Albrektson spoke about the Housing Element.

CONSENT CALENDER ITEM:

2. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of March 8, 2022

Approved, 5-0.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

5. Comments from Planning Commissioners – Part 1

As tonight is the last meeting Commissioner Braun will serve as a member of the Planning Commission before joining the City Council next week, she remarked on her enjoyable experience working with her fellow Commissioners and Council Liaison over the last six (6) years and that it has been an honor to serve on the Planning Commission. She looked forward to working with everyone, just in a different capacity.

The Commissioners each commended her leadership, wisdom, patience, directness, and calmness, and expressed enjoyment working with her over the years, including through a pandemic.

Director Frausto-Lupo expressed the gratitude of the Staff for her service and presented her with flowers and a card from the Community Development Department.

Commissioner Braun recused herself from the next item and left the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING:

3. Proposed Zoning Text Amendments

The Planning Commission will review and make a recommendation to the City Council to amend Chapter 36 (Zoning) of the South Pasadena Municipal Code to adopt standards that will implement certain programs included in the Fourth Draft General Plan Housing Element in order to achieve consistency with State law and remove requirements that may impose constraints on housing development. On November 9, 2022, the City Council initiated this application through a resolution of intention. Topics for amendment include emergency shelters, transitional housing, low-barrier navigation centers, density increase for mid-size projects (SB 478), allowing mixed-use housing as a permitted use in commercial zones, and a parking exemption for qualifying land uses adjacent to transit stops (AB 2097).

The proposed Code amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15061(b)(3), which states the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

Recommendation

Recommend that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending amending Chapter 36 (Zoning) of the South Pasadena Municipal Code to the City Council.

Staff Presentation

Liz Bar-El, Interim Manager of Long-Range Planning, presented a PowerPoint presentation.

Questions for Staff

The Commissioners inquired about emergency shelters, floor area ratio (FAR) and the State's requirements, and the development standards table. They also discussed the half-mile radius from the transit station and how that is measured. Deputy City Attorney Margolin provided input.

Commissioner Padilla, with reference to a written public comment, asked for more clarification of the FAR and how that relates for all other projects.

The Commissioners and Deputy City Attorney Margolin discussed the possibility of triggering a CEQA review and impacting the timeline, and the possible exemptions that could apply.

Public Comment

Josh Albrektson spoke about rezoning for housing, inclusionary housing, and the Housing Element.

Public Comment via Zoom

Yvonne LaRose referenced her written comments and spoke of three (3) concerns; (i) regarding the number of dwelling units that the City is required to have, she is concerned with overcrowding and being unable to support the amount of population increase; (ii) regarding transitional housing, the minimum of six (6) months is too short a period of time and includes a lot of paperwork; and (iii) she would urge a second challenge to the numbers to see if they could be further reduced.

Discussion

The Commissioners discussed emergency shelters, the FAR for mid-sized projects, and removing the lot coverage requirement. They also considered having minimum densities in some multi-family districts and mixed-use districts, parking exemptions, specifically the exemption covering no minimum parking requirement within a half mile of a major transit stop, and mixed-use developments as a permitted use in commercial zones.

The Commissioners recommended changes to the Resolution's development standard changes, including a set FAR at 1.25 for both residential medium and

residential high zones, and striking single family dwellings and removing lot coverage provisions for RM and RH only.

Decision

Chair Lesak motioned, seconded by Vice-Chair Dahl, to approve Planning Commission Resolution 22-11 which recommends that City Council adopt an Ordinance to amend the City of South Pasadena Municipal Code by modifying Chapter 36 (Zoning); specifically, § 36.220.040 (Residential Zoning District General Development Standards), § 36.230.030 (Commercial Zoning District Land Uses and Permit Requirements), § 36.310.040 (Number of Parking Spaces Required), § 36.350.250 (Emergency Shelters), and § 36.700.020 (Definitions of Specialized Terms and Phrases) in order to implement associated State laws and General Plan Housing Element Programs with the Findings language therein, with the exception of changes to the recommended Residential District General Development Standards for both RH and RM Zoning to set the Floor Area Ratio at 1.25, to remove single family dwellings as a permitted use (§ 36.220.030), Residential Zoning District Land Uses and Permit Requirements), and to remove the lot coverage requirements for those two (2) zoning categories, as noted by Staff.

Chair Lesak called for Roll Call:

Commissioner Barthakur	Aye
Commissioner Padilla:	Aye
Vice-Chair Dahl:	Aye
Chair Lesak	Aye

Motion carried, 4-0.

ADMINISTRATION:

4. Comments from City Council Liaison

Councilmember Mahmud remarked that it has been her pleasure to serve as the Council Liaison and expressed gratitude for the Commission’s hard work and thoughtful discourse for the benefit of all the residents.

5. Comments from Planning Commissioners – Part 2

The Commissioners expressed appreciation and gratitude for Council Liaison Mahmud’s comments, thoughts, and probing questions, and remarked how helpful to have had her perspective as a counterpoint and complement to the Commission. They appreciated having an active Council Liaison who provided smooth communication between the Council and the commissions. The Commissioners expressed gratitude and appreciation for her passion for the City and thanked her for her active engagement.

Chair Lesak noted that registration for the Planning Commission Academy was open. He attended last year (over Zoom), thought it was very good and encouraged people to sign up and attend.

6. Comments from Staff

Director Frausto-Lupo thanked Council Liaison Mahmud on behalf of the Community Development Department. She presented Councilmember Mahmud with flowers and a card.

She also updated the Commission on the submission of the Fourth Draft of the Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) as required per the Settlement Agreement.

She also expressed appreciation to Liz Bar-El for her service as her tenure with the City has come to an end.

She wished Happy Holidays to the Commission on behalf of the Community Development Department.

The Commission expressed appreciation to Liz Bar-El for her service and hard work.

ADJOURNMENT:

7. Adjournment to the Planning Commission meeting scheduled for January 10, 2023 at 6:30 pm

There being no further matters, Chair Lesak adjourned the meeting at 8:03 pm.


For _____
John Lesak, Chair