



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 8, 2022, 6:30 PM**

**Via Zoom Teleconference**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A scheduled meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Lesak on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 6:31 p.m. The meeting was held Via Zoom.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**City Staff**

**Present:** Angelica Frausto-Lupo, Community Development Director  
Margaret Lin, Deputy Community Development Director  
Matt Chang, Planning Manager  
City Attorney Office – Andrew Jared and Ephraim Margolin

**Council**

**Present:** Council Liaison: Diana Mahmud

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

Mr. Josh Albrektson provided public comment in writing, inquiring as to the timing of the draft of the Housing Element and accompanying documentation.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

- 2. 1507 Garfield Avenue, Project No. 2391-CUP – Conditional Use Permit to allow the establishment and operation of a preschool and an afterschool program at the existing Oneonta Congregational Church (APN: 5321-005-032):**

Recommendation:

Continue to a future Planning Commission meeting date to be determined.

Staff Presentation:

Planning Manager Chang reported that although this item was originally scheduled for this Planning Commission meeting, additional staff analysis needs to be conducted before the item is ready. Staff requests the Commission continue this item to a future meeting date to be determined.

**Chair Lesak made a motion to continue** this item to a future Planning Commission meeting date to be determined.

Vice-Chair Padilla seconded the motion.

Chair Lesak asked for Roll Call.

**AYES: LESAK, PADILLA, BRAUN, BARTHAKUR, DAHL**  
**NOES: NONE**  
**ABSENT: NONE**  
**ABSTAIN: NONE**

Motion carried, 5-0

**PRESENTATION**

**3. Housing Legislation Presentation**

City Attorney Jared introduced the briefing of the newly-updated Housing Accountability Act (HAA) and the Housing Crisis Act (HCA) and, in particular, the importance of the five-hearings rule under the HAA.

Deputy City Attorney Margolin presented a PowerPoint presentation titled *Housing Legislation Presentation, Housing Crisis Act*, focused on the HAA and the HCA.

Commissioner Discussion:

The Commissioners commenced a robust, in-depth discussion of the objective design standards, including the timing of when the design standards would apply to a project and consideration of objective standards outside of the Specific Plan because of the many sites identified in the Housing Element that are not in the Specific Plan which standards must be objective.

Commissioner Barthakur and Deputy City Attorney Margolin discussed the objective design standard issue as presented in the City of San Diego example provided in the presentation which demonstrated that if the project is seeking or using the State Density Bonus Law, there could be concessions to those design standards and unless the City has made a specific finding as to the impact of those concessions.

Commissioner Dahl remarked on the enormous staff pressure, perhaps meaning more staff or a different structure. City Attorney Jared concurred. She expressed concern that projects would be kept from coming to a hearing because of multiple staff reviews to make sure that the Planning Commission is able to review them in one or two meetings because of the five-hearings limit.

She also suggested consideration of more joint meetings in order to stay under the five-hearings limit – whether it's the Planning Commission and Design Review Board if a project needs both, or the Planning Commission and City Council.

Council Liaison Mahmud commented that the suggestion of joint meetings could be feasible if it involved the Design Review Board and Planning Commission, but would not be feasible between City Council and the Planning Commission because the City Council serves as an appellate body in the event of an appeal from the Planning Commission. City Attorney Jared confirmed.

Vice-Chair Padilla remarked that the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has a document on objective design standards which is a good primer that may be helpful for Commissioners. It provides an overview of what is objective and gives a lot of examples of what is measurable. It basically has to be measurable so that if you ask any two people, they come to the same conclusion.

Commissioner Barthakur requested clarification of the applicability to single dwelling units among both bills and asked when they do or do not apply. Deputy City Attorney Margolin explained and clarified when the HAA would apply.

Chair Lesak, Deputy City Attorney Margolin and City Attorney Jared discussed the five-hearings limit and clarified the distinction between an informational meeting and a hearing, and whether the five-hearings limit applies only to the housing pieces of the development of mixed-use developments.

Council Liaison Mahmud asked if there are regulations developed by HCD that provide some guidance on this issue. City Attorney Jared was not aware of any, but would research the issue.

Chair Lesak inquired about the development of procedural requirements for both noticing and staff reports to which Director Frausto-Lupo remarked that the staff is reviewing, revising and updating their processes.

Director Frausto-Lupo reported that as part of the Housing Element update, the General Plan update and the Downtown Specific Plan update, there will be a series of Zoning Code amendments that will be required.

Planning Manager Chang elaborated and mentioned that he and Deputy Director Lin met with SCAG and AECOM (consultants with the City) last week to develop the objective design standard guidelines. They will report their progress to the Commission in the future.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **4. Comments From City Council Liaison**

Council Liaison Mahmud inquired on behalf of a resident whether or not the Commission had received any SB 9 application. Director Frausto-Lupo responded that they have not received any recently.

### **5. Comments From Planning Commissioners**

Commissioner Dahl invited staff to run Housing Element ideas by the Housing Element subcommittee, consisting of Vice-Chair Padilla and herself, before bringing them back to the full Commission, if that is helpful.

Commissioner Braun inquired about the letter Commissioners received from a resident regarding the construction project next to his home alleging several things and the status of any follow-up. Director Frausto-Lupo replied that the issue referred to had been addressed.

Commissioner Braun asked if there is a list of all the various conditional use permits that have been granted. Deputy Director Lin responded that, unfortunately, currently there is not a list as described by Commissioner Braun.

Chair Lesak requested an advance calendar that would indicate when larger projects were coming for approval to be able to look ahead and see when there would be more rigorous meetings.

### **6. Comments from Staff**

Director Frausto-Lupo provided several updates, including:

an update on the planning case log: There are about 65 discretionary applications that have been distributed amongst the staff. There are 33 ADU applications that are currently being processed.

an update regarding staffing: Staff vacancies are still being filled. Planning Manager Chang started in December and three associate planners started recently. The recruitment just closed for the vacant Assistant Planner position and first interviews will happen very shortly. They are also in the middle of the recruitment for the administrative secretary position. They recently filled the position for a Code Enforcement Officer.

update regarding the Housing Element: In response to the public comment received tonight in writing, in December the comment letter was received from HCD. Staff has been working to respond to those comments. Per state law, it will be out for the public for at least seven days and then will be sent to HCD for another 60-day review.

update re the General Plan: The General Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan are in the works. The General Plan has been reviewed at the staff level and is now with the consultants. The Downtown Specific Plan is still being reviewed at the staff level. It will be sent over to the consultants to incorporate the staff comments.

update regarding SB 9: An urgency ordinance passed in December. Staff is still conducting researching and currently considering transit and proximity to transit to determine how that affects the ordinance. Staff will be coming to the Planning Commission with an ordinance to adopt.

update re upcoming City Council Presentation: On March 16<sup>th</sup> the City Council will receive a presentation on the In-Lieu Fee options. The public and Commission are all encouraged to listen in and participate. After receiving direction from Council, staff will come back to the Planning Commission to proceed on that item.

Lastly, Director Frausto-Lupo reported that the Deputy Director Lin has submitted her resignation. She thanked Margaret for her eight years of service to the City and invited Margaret to address the Commission.

Deputy Director Lin expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to work with the City and the Commission.

Director Frausto-Lupo and all of the Commissioners wished Margaret the best of luck.

**ADJOURNMENT**

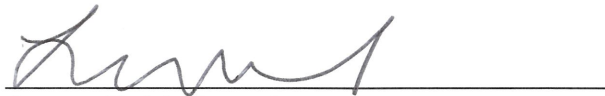
7. **Adjournment to the Regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for April 12, 2022.**

There being no further matters, Chair Lesak adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.



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John Lesak, Chair



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Laura Dahl, Secretary