



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Planning Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 26, 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 Special Meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Lesak on Tuesday, July 26, 2022 at 6:34 p.m. The meeting was held at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena 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: Andrew L. Jared, City Attorney
Elizabeth Bar-EI, AICP, Interim Deputy Community Development Director
Matt Chang, Planning Manager

Council

Present: Council Liaison: Diana Mahmud (via Zoom)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Approved, 5-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

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

None.

CONSENT CALENDER ITEM:

2. Minutes from the Special Joint Meeting with Cultural Heritage Commission of September 23, 2021:

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the minutes with the following corrections: The City Attorney's title should be Deputy City Attorney; the spelling of the Deputy City Attorney's name is corrected to Nikhil Damle; the title of the Associate Planner should be Assistant Planner; and Commissioner Barthakur was absent.

Decision:

Chair Lesak moved, seconded by Commissioner Braun, to approve the minutes as submitted, with corrections.

Chair Lesak called the Roll:

Commissioner Barthakur	Abstain
Commissioner Braun	Aye
Commissioner Padilla	Aye
Vice-Chair Dahl	Aye
Chair Lesak	Aye

Motion carried, 4-0, 1 Abstention.

DISCUSSION ITEM:

3. Update on the Housing Element, Results of a Feasibility Review of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and Comments on Strategies:

Recommendation:

1. Receive an update on the progress of the Housing Element, including the most recent comments from HCD and July 20 City Council discussion;
2. Receive a presentation by the City's Consultant, Economic & Planning Systems (EPS) on their feasibility study of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance requirement; and
3. Provide comments on Housing Element certification strategies.

Staff Presentation:

Interim Deputy Director Bar-El introduced the consultants (available via Zoom) Jennifer Gastelum, Principal of PlaceWorks and Julie Cooper, Vice President and Director of Economic & Planning Systems (EPS). She announced that the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO) in-lieu fee would be discussed at a later meeting. She gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Questions for Staff:

Commissioner Barthakur asked about the prototypes utilized and if those were compatible with the current height limitations as a baseline.

Commissioner Padilla asked about the percentage changes shown in the information they received and whether this analysis – the methodology and the way it is presented - would be what HCD would review as part of the backup for the IHO. PlaceWorks Consultant Gastelum suggested that this be provided as an appendix to the Housing Element as additional backup information to support the IHO.

Vice-Chair Dahl asked for an explanation as to why the profit margin was different in the townhouse model vs. the condominium model. Consultant Cooper of EPS responded that the difference is a combination of the very strong market in the City, achievable sales prices and different construction costs.

Vice-Chair Dahl also asked if minimum densities as well as maximum densities were considered in the Code. Interim Deputy Director Bar-El remarked that this was not an assignment that had been requested by the Commission or Council for Staff to analyze.

Vice-Chair Dahl also asked if the 15%-20% IHO requirement is a safe harbor for HCD. PlaceWorks Consultant Gastelum responded that she is not aware of any safe harbor number.

Commissioner Braun asked about timing and the October 15th Housing Element certification date. Interim Deputy Director Bar-El said it is unlikely the deadline will be met. However, Staff is still diligently working on moving the Downtown Specific Plan, the General Plan and the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) forward.

Commissioner Braun's also asked about sequencing, outreach to the community, outreach to the development community, and Caltrans housing. Councilmember Mahmud remarked that because Caltrans housing is existing low-income housing, it would not help with meeting the RHNA numbers.

Chair Lesak spoke about the enormity of the number of considerations needed to fall into place for the Housing Element to be approved. PlaceWorks Consultant Gastelum concurred and remarked on the multitude of programs in place.

Chair Lesak commented that the modifications include many areas of zoning, including consideration of environmental constraints. He also inquired about permit processing.

Public Hearing

Alan Ehrlich – resident, spoke about the IHO, height limits and State density bonus laws.

Josh Albrektson – resident, spoke about the IHO, State density bonus laws and the feasibility study.

Reed Burnett – resident, spoke about having more housing in South Pasadena.

Anne Bagasao (via Zoom) – resident, spoke about the IHO.

The Planning Commission received nine (9) written comments regarding this item.

Discussion

Interim Deputy Director Bar-EI reviewed the three (3) key items which the Council requested recommendations from the Planning Commission:

- On revising the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance
- On initiating a ballot initiative to revise the 1983 height limit initiative
- On other strategies to achieve certification and compliance with State law

Commissioner Braun asked for clarification on whether taking any action was agendized. City Attorney Jared explained that the issue is to provide direction, at the Council's request, due to a shortage of time. He believes it is agendized properly to provide input.

First Discussion item: Revising the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Commissioner Barthakur remarked on the need to demonstrate that it is not a burden, nor a financial constraint to developers to develop or build housing as a standalone policy.

Commissioner Braun inquired about outreach to the development community to get input during this process. Interim Deputy Director Bar-EI remarked that outreach had occurred. Consultant Cooper, EPS, elaborated that the information in the models provided is informed by those conversations. The information provided included: costs to build; achievable market rents; and typical densities they want to develop at.

Commissioner Barthakur and Vice-Chair Dahl discussed the constraint presented by the 20% inclusionary requirement and the 10%+10% inclusionary requirement.

Chair Lesak remarked that his issue was on the timing and the zoning issues.

Commissioner Barthakur referenced Santa Monica's numbers for a point of comparison.

Commissioner Dahl spoke about the use of the State density bonus by developers.

The Commissioners discussed the IHO as one tool in the toolbox regarding affordable housing.

Interim Deputy Director Bar-El remarked that there are about 50 programs included in the Housing Element that are commitments by the City to building housing and promoting affordable housing and fair housing, etc. She added that for further context, the comment letter from HCD has certain points and all the programs that the letter does not comment on have been accepted. The things that are outstanding are big stumbling blocks they are working hard to get by.

Next item for discussion: Initiating a ballot initiative to revise the 1983 height limit initiative.

Commissioner Braun remarked that the height limit initiative is a much bigger topic needing a lot of input and suggested not to rush it through to the ballot.

Last discussion point: On other strategies to achieve certification and compliance with State law.

Chair Lesak remarked that a critical path schedule is needed, and it is difficult to make decisions without one. City Attorney Jared concurred. There are a number of tasks that have to be completed in a very short time period, which the City is making progress on.

Commissioner Braun spoke about needing a schedule for community meetings and outreach – including constituency meetings, not just reaching out to developers one on one, but having a roundtable discussion to get feedback from a lot of different groups.

Interim Deputy Director Bar-El informed the Commission that it is required that the Housing Element will first come to the Planning Commission for their recommendations before it goes before the Council for adoption.

ADMINISTRATION:

4. Comments from City Council Liaison:

Councilmember Mahmud spoke about the difficulty that local government is encountering in developing compliant Housing Elements. She thanked the Commission for their input, hard work, and dedication.

5. Comments from Planning Commissioners:

Commissioner Padilla hoped this discussion was helpful for the City Council. She looked forward to their meeting tomorrow night.

Commissioner Barthakur thanked the Staff and appreciated all their hard work.

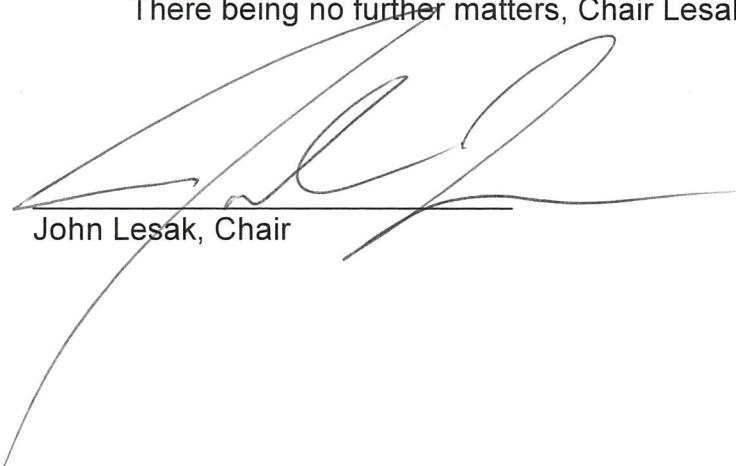
6. Comments from Staff:

Interim Deputy Director Bar-El thanked the Commission for a great discussion and appreciated its insights. She thanked the consultant team – EPS and PlaceWorks - for their past work and the work they are doing currently.

ADJOURNMENT:

7. Adjournment to the Planning Commission meeting scheduled on August 9, 2022:

There being no further matters, Chair Lesak adjourned the meeting at 9:08 p.m.



John Lesak, Chair