



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 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, September 13, 2022 at 6:30 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 and Janet Braun

Absent: Commissioner: Lisa Padilla

City Staff

Present: Angelica Frausto-Lupo, Community Development Director
Ted Gerber, Public Works Director
Ephraim Margolin, Deputy City Attorney
Matt Chang, Planning Manager
Braulio Madrid, Associate Planner
Susana Martinez, Associate Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Approved, 4-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS:

Commissioner Braun disclosed that she visited the site on tonight's agenda and exchanged emails with two residents regarding it. Chair Lesak disclosed that he also visited the site and acknowledged the Commissioners had received emails and written public comments regarding the site.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Public Comment - General (Non Agenda Items)

Lourdes Denato - Resident and member of the South Pasadena Loves Our Library Committee - spoke about the importance of the library to the community and supporting Measure L.

Josh Albrektson – Resident – (via Zoom) - asked when the Commission would be making a presentation on the recently released Housing Element.

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:

2. Minutes from the Special Meeting of April 28, 2020

3. Minutes from the Special Meeting of May 12, 2020

4. Minutes from the Special Joint Meeting with the Cultural Heritage Commission on September 2, 2021

Chair Lesak motioned, seconded by Vice-Chair Dahl, to approve the minutes as submitted.

Chair Lesak called for Roll Call:

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

Motion carried, 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

- 5. 1020 El Centro Street, Project No. 2441 COA-DRX-DBR-AHR-CUP-TTM-SIGN-TRP** – A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, Design Review, Density Bonus Review, Affordable Housing Review, Conditional Use Permit, Tentative Tract Map, Sign Program and Tree Removal Permit for a proposed mixed-use development consisting of 108 residential condominiums, of which 19 will be affordable units; approximately 22,032 square feet of food service and retail uses; two (2) incentives/concessions for an increase in the allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and an increase in the permitted number of stories from two (2) stories to four (4) stories; removal of 25 trees for the property located at 1020 El Centro Street (APN 5315-008-047). The Cultural Heritage Commission reviewed this

project at its August 18, 2022 meeting and recommended an approval to the Planning Commission.

Recommendation:

Adopt a Resolution approving the project subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval.

Vice-Chair Dahl excused herself from this project because she owns property within 500 feet of the project site as she could be perceived to have a conflict of interest. She left the Chambers.

Staff Presentation:

Associate Planner Martinez presented a PowerPoint presentation, along with Jessie Fan and Heidi Rous, City consultant from Kimberly-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Questions for Staff:

Chair Lesak asked if Staff had reviewed the Mission Street Specific Plan (MSSP) regarding storefronts and signage in addition to the development standards. Associate Planner Martinez identified the section of the project plans where the Applicant met those requirements.

Applicant's Presentation:

Frank Gangi, President of Gangi Development, introduced his brother, Mark Gangi, FAIA, of Gangi Architects. He thanked Planning Manager Chang and Associate Planner Martinez for their patience and expertise throughout this project. Mark Gangi introduced his team – Joe Catalano AIA, Jenna Snow, Mia Lehrer, FASLA at Studio-MLA, and Dawn Dyer, Associate Principal and Landscape Architect at Studio-MLA. The Design Team is headed by Ayahlushim Getachew of FYM Sopas, LLC, and Frank and Matthew Gangi. The Project Team – Paul Anderson (Project Law LA), Pat Gibson and Tracey Lee of Gibson Transportation, Tracey Lund, Civil Engineer at Lund and Associates Engineering, utility consulting, Structural Focus at Kosmont Companies, Eco Tierra Consulting, and Southwest Group. Mark Gangi gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation with input from the various team members, as appropriate.

Questions for Applicant:

Commissioner Barthakur inquired about aligning the elevations to the units, fenestrations, and clarification of the central courtyard as a publicly accessible space. He also asked whether the first-floor parking area would be open to the public, how the retail would be curated, how to ensure consistency in perpetuity, and the difference between an incentive and a waiver.

Commissioner Braun asked about: property taxes on each condo; an easement for the public area; how to ensure that area stays available to the public; the public

arts requirements and collaboration with the arts community in South Pasadena; EV charging stations; common area maintenance and care of the landscaping, etc.; the traffic study; the driveway for the project is across the street from the Mission Bell project and the Fremont and Mission project; and whether outreach could be extended to public employees for affordable housing and how that process would unfold.

Chair Lesak remarked on the openness of the site and added that it be kept that way as a Condition of Approval. He also noted the developers' interest in the historic preservation tax credit and wanted to consider adding that as another Condition. He also asked about the plans for the auditorium; the brick screen wall and its design influence; and the open notch at Mission and Fairview. He remarked that in the historic report he did not see an analysis of the impact of the project on the historic district.

Commissioner Barthakur inquired about the responsibility for the operations and management of the common area.

Commissioner Braun referenced a recommendation by the CHC of the creation of a task force to manage all the upcoming construction in the area – noise, dirt, traffic, etc. The developers indicated they would be happy to be a part of that task force, coordinated with Public Works Department.

Public Comment:

Sally Kilby – Resident and Resident of Golden Oaks - spoke about the project and that it is a beautiful design which enhances a gathering place for the community. She agreed with the appointment of a task force and the concerns expressed about the garage entrance on Diamond Avenue.

Doreen Seadmac – Resident of Golden Oaks - spoke about the access to the Golden Oaks underground parking garage entrance on Diamond Avenue.

Mark Dunning – Represented a local coffee roaster, a hopeful, excited tenant, who shared that his company tailors every space to the location they serve.

Ann Miller – Resident – expressed concerns against the plans for the development of the lot.

Rebecca Carr – 12-year community member, music teacher and owner of a music school in the City and a prospective tenant in the retail space - expressed enthusiasm and excitement for the project.

Luis Ramirez – Resident – expressed excitement for the project and commended the efforts of the Gangi Group for their community outreach efforts and the potential contributions of the project to the community.

Emily Klein – art teacher - commended the Gangi Group for its contribution to the creativity and wellness community across all ages and is thrilled that they are keeping the space *The Hive* in the building.

Staff acknowledged that written public comments were received today and included in the agenda packet.

Public Comment Via Zoom:

Gail from South Pasadena/Los Angeles – her family moved to South Pasadena 35 years ago. She thanked the Gangi organization for putting so much thought and love into developing this remarkable project which will be a great asset to the community. She suggested having a fountain or several water features in the public space and questioned having an arcade through the entire space.

Josh Albrekton – Resident – agreed with the suggestions of a water feature and expressed his support for the project.

Dana Barbera – Resident – commended the historical folks for maintaining the integrity of the original building and supporting boutique types of retail. He liked the project in general, but expressed concerns about the articulation of the scale and what the courtyard will look like.

Adrian – 33-year Resident who lives within 300 feet of the project - has been negatively impacted by noise, traffic, parking, and robust pedestrian activity. She objected to the increase in the number of stories from two (2) to four (4) and remarked that there is no architectural design continuity with the existing historic resources. She cautioned that this project is alarming, not charming.

Applicant Rebuttal:

Mark Gangi remarked that sustainability is always a key to their projects and to their design. There are solar panels on the roofs and dual piping for greywater systems in landscape areas. The units themselves are passively designed. To meet the housing demands, they also must meet sustainability, which is very important to them.

Discussion:

Commissioner Braun commended the architects. She expressed concerns for: the proposed elevated planters in the public area; the proposed brick wall; public easement and/or common area maintenance responsibility; traffic issues, including the residents' issues about Diamond Avenue, and a traffic light at Fairview Avenue and Mission Street; the process of who gets the affordable units, and the importance of the task force in coordinating all the construction over the next two (2) years. She remarked that she generally thinks this is a great project.

Commissioner Barthakur remarked that the project could be a positive and beneficial asset to the City.

Chair Lesak asked Staff about current traffic studies. Planning Manager Chang introduced Public Works Director Gerber who provided an overview of the traffic projects and the coordination of the projects around the City.

Chair Lesak commented that the project is an exciting, powerful enhancement to the City and knits together the historic fabric with new development. He suggested additional Conditions be added, including: a task force recommended by the staff, mandatory application for the historic tax credit, public access and maintenance requirement for the public open space, construction signage, post occupancy traffic report and a mock-up of the brick screen wall.

Commissioner Braun inquired about the brick wall, the exterior lighting plan, and management of the affordable units. Planning Manager Chang and Public Works Director Gerber referred the Commission to several Conditions of Approval attached to the staff report which readily addressed some of their concerns.

The Commission and Staff discussed the area open to the public, including the community courtyard, the breezeways to El Centro Street and to the east and west, and a breezeway off Fairview Avenue that runs between the auditorium and the building, and its maintenance. Staff recommended the following language: *The Community Courtyard, courts, breezeways, and brick archway providing access to the site as depicted on Sheet L-1 providing access from El Centro Street to Mission Street shall remain accessible to the public and that the management company for the commercial properties shall provide maintenance for the community courtyard, courts, breezeways, and brick archway. They must provide a plan to the Planning Department for review and approval of how that would be maintained in perpetuity.*

The Commission discussed three design elements to be reviewed by Chair Review prior to issuance of a building permit – the brick wall, the courtyard landscaping at grade, and the height of the architectural feature at Mission Street and Diamond Avenue.

The Commission and Director Gerber discussed Condition of Approval PW-41 regarding construction signage and agreed to amend it to also require posting of three project signs: one at the entrance of the project site and one on each side street.

Commissioner Braun referenced a public comment received regarding the CEQA exemption and asked Planning Manager Chang about the various levels of CEQA analysis. Planning Manager Chang explained that Staff required the Applicant to submit technical studies, which included a traffic study, air quality, noise, and historical resource evaluations. In addition, the City hired its own consultant,

Kimley-Horn, experts in CEQA analysis, to perform its own analysis, and conduct a peer review and analyze the details. They found that this project qualified for Class 32 exemptions and, therefore, Staff is comfortable in supporting this project with Class 32 exemptions.

Planning Manager Chang mentioned the Conditions of Approval to be amended: (i) the Applicant shall apply for Federal Historic Preservation tax credits and, if unfeasible, the Applicant shall notify the Commission of the stalemate and reasons why the tax credits are no longer being pursued; (ii) maintenance of the public common areas shall be provided by the management company for the commercial properties and a maintenance plan shall be submitted to the Planning Division for review and approval; (iii) modification of Condition PW-41, post construction signage –to add *shall require three (3) project construction signs*; (iv) modification of Condition PW-42, (v) a Planning Commission Chair Review is required for: the courtyard landscape design and maintenance; the brick wall design facing Fairview Avenue; and, the architectural building feature (including the height) at the corner of Diamond Avenue and Mission Street.

Paul Anderson, attorney for the Applicant, addressed the Commission, thanked the Commission for their diligence, and agreed with the proposed Conditions of Approval as modified and amended.

Decision:

Chair Lesak motioned, seconded by Commissioner Braun, to approve Project No. 2441 COA-DRX-DBR-AHR-CUP-TTM-SIGN-TRP – consisting of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Design Review, Density Bonus Review, Affordable Housing Review, Conditional Use Permit, Tentative Tract Map, Sign Program, and Tree Removal Permit for a proposed mixed-use development consisting of 108 residential condominiums, of which 19 will be affordable units; approximately 22,032 square feet of food service and retail uses; two incentives/ concessions for an increase in the allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and an increase in the permitted number of stories from two stories to four stories; removal of 25 trees for the property located at 1020 El Centro Street (APN 5315-008-047). The Commission can make the findings within the Resolution. The Conditions of Approval, as amended and accepted by the Applicant, are also approved.

Chair Lesak called for Roll Call:

Commissioner Barthakur:	Aye
Commissioner Braun:	Aye
Vice-Chair Dahl:	Recused
Chair Lesak	Aye

Motion carried, 3-0-1.

ADMINISTRATION:

6. Comments from City Council Liaison:

None.

7. Comments from Planning Commissioners:

None. Chair Lesak remarked that he had a difficult time with the digital package.

8. Comments from Staff:

Director Frausto-Lupo reported that the public draft of the updated Housing Element was released on Thursday, September 8th and is available on the City's website. This third draft will be submitted to HCD this Thursday. A comment letter is expected back within 45 days.

She also provided an update on Staff recruitments which included: an offer extended to a Deputy Community Development Director, second interviews and an offer extended to a Senior Housing Management Analyst, and active recruitment for a full time Planning Counter Technician and a part time Code Enforcement Officer.

ADJOURNMENT

9. Adjournment to the Planning Commission meeting scheduled for October 11, 2022 at 6:30 pm:

There being no further matters, Chair Lesak adjourned the meeting at 10:20 pm.



John Lesak, Chair