



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, May 14, 2024, 6:30 PM  
Amedee O. "Dick" Richards Jr. Council Chambers  
1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

A Regular Meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Padilla on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was held at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Chair: Lisa Padilla  
Vice-Chair: Amitabh Barthakur  
Commissioners: Jason Claypool, Laura Dahl, and Mark Gallatin

**City Staff**

**Present:** Stephanie Cao, Assistant City Attorney  
David Snow, Assistant City Attorney  
Matt Chang, Planning Manager  
Ben Jarvis, Interim Senior Planner  
Braulio Madrid, Associate Planner  
Lillian Estrada, Administrative Secretary

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**Decision:**

Chair Padilla moved, seconded by Commissioner Gallatin, to modify the Agenda, as recommended by Staff, regarding the Public Hearing portion of the Agenda for the Commission to hear Item 9 (Proposed Zoning Text and Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP) Amendments) prior to hearing Item 8 (Project No. CPU24-0002).

Chair Padilla directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Claypool	Yes
Commissioner Gallatin	Yes
Commissioner Dahl	Yes
Vice-Chair Barthakur	Yes
Chair Padilla	Yes

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

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

Commissioner Gallatin visited the site for Agenda Item 8, 1129 Fair Oaks Avenue.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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

None.

**PRESENTATION:**

**2. Commission Analysis Revisit - City Manager's Office**

Mary Haddad, Management Analyst, City Manager's Office, gave an update and provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Commission Analysis Project.

**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:**

**3. Minutes from the Special Joint Meeting with Design Review Board of September 20, 2023**

**4. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of November 14, 2023**

**5. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of December 12, 2023**

**6. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of January 9, 2024**

**Decision:**

Vice-Chair Barthakur moved, seconded by Commissioner Dahl, to approve the minutes.

**Approved, 3-0. Commissioners Claypool and Gallatin abstained.**

**PUBLIC HEARING – CONTINUED ITEM:**

- 7. Project No. 2461-HDP/DRX/VAR**– A request for a Hillside Development Permit (HDP) and Design Review Permit (DRX) for a 234 square-foot first-story addition and a 605 square-foot second-story addition, to an existing 1,990 square-foot single-family dwelling located at 2089 Hanscom Drive (APN: 5308-0220-010). The project includes a raised deck, a one-car garage, and a carport. The request also includes a Variance (VAR) for a fence, located within the front yard setback, exceeding three (3) feet in height. In accordance with the California

Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities).

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission continue this item to a future meeting date to be determined.

Decision:

Chair Padilla moved, seconded by Commissioner Gallatin, to continue Project No. 2461-HDP/DRX/VAR to a future meeting date to be determined.

Chair Padilla directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Claypool	Yes
Commissioner Gallatin	Yes
Commissioner Dahl	Yes
Vice-Chair Barthakur	Yes
Chair Padilla	Yes

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**9. Proposed Zoning Text and Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP) Amendments –**

The Planning Commission will consider proposed amendments to the South Pasadena Municipal Code, Zoning Code and the DTSP to implement the programs in the City's 2021-2029 (6<sup>th</sup> Cycle) Housing Element. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65759, the amendments are not subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review beyond the Environmental Assessment (EA) previously completed for, and adopted in conjunction with, the City's adoption of the Housing Element on May 30, 2023.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution recommending the following to the City Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution to amend certain text portions of the Downtown Specific Plan to implement the 2021-2029 Housing Element including revisions to incorporate a twenty dwelling unit per acre minimum density for Housing Element inventory sites, clarify that 100% residential projects are permitted in the Downtown Specific Plan area, require certain mixed use projects to include a minimum of fifty percent residential square footage, and provide additional incentives for projects that include at least twenty percent of the

- residential units reserved for lower income households including exemption from public art requirements.
2. Approve a Resolution to make the required findings in Government Code Section 65583.2(g).
  3. Adopt an Ordinance to approve Zoning Text Amendments to implement the 2021-2029 Housing Element including revisions to establish a minimum density of twenty dwelling units per acre for sites on the Housing Element inventory (Housing Element Table VI-50), including those in the RM (Residential Medium) zone, provide additional incentives for projects that include at least twenty percent of the residential units reserved for lower income households, and clarifying that employee housing is allowed within existing single-family residences located at the Residential Medium (RM) and the Residential High (RH) zones.

**Staff Presentation:**

Interim Senior Planner Jarvis gave a PowerPoint presentation.

**Questions for Staff:**

The Commissioners inquired about several issues, including the definition of Employee Housing; a minimum density bonus; a request for an update to the corrections to Housing Element Table VI-51; housing on church properties; any progress to design and development standards which may be considered constraints on development (per the HCD letter of February 2024); the building height ballot initiative; and ministerial approval of inclusionary housing applications.

Assistant City Attorney Snow and Interim Senior Planner Jarvis addressed the Commissioner's questions and concerns, and discussed the amendments to be adopted by the City that would make the Housing Element eligible for certification.

**Public Comments:**

Josh Albrektson, resident, provided comments.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

The Commissioners discussed the editing changes needed to satisfy HCD's comments and the recommended amendments to the Zoning Code and the Specific Plan supportive of the intentions that the City is committed to in the Housing Element. The Commissioners recommended that the Resolution move on to City Council based on the presentation and the information included in the Agenda Packet.

**Decision:**

Commissioner Dahl moved, seconded by Chair Padilla, to approve Resolution 24-05 as attached in the Staff Report.

Chair Padilla directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Claypool	Yes
Commissioner Gallatin	Yes
Commissioner Dahl	Yes
Vice-Chair Barthakur	Yes
Chair Padilla	Yes

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

8. **Project No. CUP24-0002** – A request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the off-sale of beer, wine, and distilled spirits (Type 21 ABC license) for a proposed supermarket (Trader Joe’s) located at 1129 Fair Oaks Avenue (APN: 5315-004-084). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities).

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution taking the following actions:

1. Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis based on State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1).
2. Approve Project No. CUP24-0002, subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval.

**Staff Presentation:**

Associate Planner Madrid provided a PowerPoint presentation.

**Questions for Staff:**

The Commissioners inquired about the hours of operation, the square footage numbers; the ABC license; the delivery hours; the tenant for the vacant space in the proposed property; over-concentration of the license in the census area; the free-standing monument sign used by the previous tenant; and the loading dock.

**Applicant’s Presentation:**

Annie Cheung Massart, Regional Vice-President of Trader Joe’s, spoke on behalf of the Applicant and answered questions from the Commissioners, including a discussion of delivery times and questions about the site plan.

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

The Commissioners engaged in a robust discussion about Condition of Approval P-9 related to hours of deliveries and operations. The Commissioners were supportive of the Staff recommended delivery hours.

**Decision:**

Chair Padilla moved, seconded by Commissioner Dahl, to adopt a Resolution to find this project exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities, and approve Project No. CUP24-0002, Conditional Use Permit, for the off-sale sale of beer, wine and distilled spirits (Type 21 ABC license) for a proposed supermarket (Trader Joe's) located at 1129 Fair Oaks Avenue (APN: 5315-004-084), subject to the Conditions of Approval attached, with a modification to Condition P-9, as follows:

P-9. All deliveries shall occur only during the hours of 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, daily. These hours for deliveries may be reduced by the Planning Commission in response to *verified* complaints of noise or other disturbance to the adjacent properties, *as determined by the Director of Community Development.*

Chair Padilla directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Claypool	Yes
Commissioner Gallatin	Yes
Commissioner Dahl	Yes
Vice-Chair Barthakur	Yes
Chair Padilla	Yes

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

**10. Proposed Zoning Text Amendment** – The Planning Commission will consider a proposed amendment to the South Pasadena Municipal Code Chapter 36 (Zoning Code) related to temporary signs and signs on public property. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project is exempt from environmental review under CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution recommending the following to the City Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution amending Chapter 36 (Zoning Code) of the South Pasadena Municipal Code related to temporary signs and signs on public property.
2. Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

**Staff Presentation:**

Assistant City Attorney Cao presented the proposed Zoning Text Amendment regarding the City's sign regulations.

**Questions for Staff:**

The Commissioners inquired about signs that are political, but not tied to an election; how long a sign could stay up; the definition of a temporary sign, in general; how the proposed ordinance would control all temporary signs in an election period; removal of a sign with consent from a sign owner or a property owner; and notification requirements to the owner of a sign displayed for longer than the allowable period.

Assistant Attorney Cao explained that the ordinance was drafted in response to signs being placed on private property and City parkways and other City rights-of-way without permission from the property owners or City and is very specific - for any federal, state or local government election.

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

The Commissioners had a robust discussion, including, but not limited to, how the ordinance would apply to a multi-tenant building; and if there is a limit to the number of signs on a property.

The Commissioners expressed support for the proposed ordinance and thought it permitted reasonable exercise of constitutionally protected, free speech, while at the same time, addresses some of the aesthetic implications of a proliferation of temporary signs which could be quite detrimental to a City's streetscape.

Assistant Attorney Cao remarked that during an election period each parcel may only display one temporary sign per office or measure to be submitted to the voters at the election.

**Decision:**

Commissioner Gallatin moved, seconded by Commissioner Claypool, to adopt a Resolution recommending the City Council adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 36, Zoning Code, of the South Pasadena Municipal Code to update sign regulations and approve a CEQA exemption determination.

Chair Padilla directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Claypool	Yes
Commissioner Gallatin	Yes
Commissioner Dahl	Yes
Vice-Chair Barthakur	Yes
Chair Padilla	Yes

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

**DISCUSSION**

**11. 2024 Annual Commission Report**

**Recommendation:**

Discuss and approve 2024 Annual Commission Report.

**Staff Presentation:**

Planning Manager Chang spoke about the upcoming Commissioner Congress scheduled on June 20, 2024, which will celebrate the accomplishments of the Commission, and identify the Work Plan for the next fiscal year. Staff requested any feedback or corrections.

The Commissioners discussed the suggested Work Plan items, a strategy for items to consider for future work plans, and voiced support for refining the draft objectives and development standards.

**ADMINISTRATION**

**12. Comments from City Council Liaison:**

Mayor Pro Tem Donovan provided an overview of the most recent City Council meeting, including the purchase of two (2) buses, making the fleet completely electric. There was also a discussion about the Library – a multi-year project with the ultimate goal of building a new library.



**13. Comments from Planning Commissioners:**

Commissioner Gallatin shared that he spent a part of last week virtually attending the American Planning Association National Conference, which sessions were interesting and informative.

Chair Padilla remarked that she, too, virtually attended the American Planning Association Conference and agreed that there were very good sessions this year.

**14. Comments from Staff:**

Planning Manager Chang announced that the Commissioners Congress is scheduled for June 20<sup>th</sup>. Regular Commission meetings are scheduled through the summer. He invited the Commissioners to please provide Staff with any dates they will be unavailable to attend to ensure there is a quorum for each meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**6. Adjournment to the Regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled on June 11, 2024 at 6:30 pm:**

There being no further matters, Chair Padilla adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.



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Lisa Padilla, Chair