

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

February 17, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Lachoff called the meeting of the Planning Commission
to order at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Kevin Lachoff, Chair
David VonCannon, Vice Chair
Ed Ogosta, Commissioner
Dana Amy Sayles, Commissioner
Scott Wyant, Commissioner

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Pledge of Allegiance

~~The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Thomas Gorham.~~

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Comments for Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Lachoff invited public input.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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Public Hearings

Item PH-1

Proposed Comprehensive Plan, Height Exception and Tentative Tract Map (P2015-0141-CP, HTEX, and TTM) to allow a mixed use development consisting of a 148 room hotel, approximately 57,700 gross square feet of retail and restaurant uses, 196,300 gross square feet of office use and 200 residential dwelling units located at 8824 National Boulevard

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, provided background on the parcel.

Susan Yoon, Senior Planner, provided a summary of the material of record.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, discussed the building height exception request; City policies; precedent; developer arguments; he described the project; discussed financial feasibility criteria; advancing regional mobility; the triangle shape of the site; parking requirements; and required findings by the Commission.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER WYANT, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR VONCANNON AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding acknowledgement of the amount of work done by staff; improvements to National Boulevard; the agreement with Metro regarding the number of parking spaces for replacement parking; concern with fluctuations to the availability of Ince parking; the Walker Parking study; peak demand time; net parking demand; measures to eliminate the parking deficit; addressing temporary and future parking needs; Parcel B; current Culver Studios parking usage; differentials in the square footage; dual jurisdiction; permitting and taxes generated from the project; recommended traffic mitigations for the National/Washington intersection; whether adding a turn lane is achievable; alternate mitigation measures; level of service; guidelines; criteria; what constitutes significant impact; the projected annual growth of traffic; the build out year of the project; defining the line between a feasible and a non feasible project; Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) vs. a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR); California Environmental Quality Act provisions;

mitigation measures available to reduce impacts; usable area vs. units; data that drives the traffic studies; gross numbers in the staff report; evolution of the project; leasable numbers; City Council adoption of the MND; ambient growth; conservative estimates; the La Cienega and Jefferson project; impacts to 7 intersections; variances in traffic counts; flexibility; evolution of the development; segregated parking; bundled parking; and shared parking.

Chair Lachoff invited public comment.

The following members of the audience addressed the Commission:

Tom Wolfe, Lowe Enterprises, introduced the project team; discussed development objectives; local amenities; open space; art components; the site plan; architecture; parking; sustainability; the widening of National Boulevard; streetscape improvements; and transit and mobility.

Jonathan provided a presentation on the site plan and architecture; discussed open space; programming; zoning; landscaping; outside work space; hotel, residential, retail and office uses; parking and circulation; corner elements; the gateway to the City; providing ballroom and meeting rooms; the height diagram; cross breezes; using height to create open space; site coverage; open public spaces of meaningful dimensions; the appropriateness of height next to the train station; public access to the hotel courtyard; and the pool on the hotel roof deck.

Tom Wolfe, Lowe Enterprises, discussed parking; the new signalized intersection at National Boulevard; access; LEED designation; landscaping; sustainability; sun and shadow studies; the height exception; the priority of the community and open space; program goals; Biderman Redevelopment; focus groups; appropriate size and scale; and building massing and height.

Steven Rose, Chamber of Commerce, discussed conditions in the area when the project began; massing; the height exception; setbacks; and he reported Chamber of Commerce support for the project.

Chair Lachoff reported that he is a member of the Chamber of Commerce but had recused himself from the discussion of the project by the Chamber of Commerce.

Ken Mand spoke representing a large group of residents in the Arts District Neighborhood, discussed expanding Condition #151, Use of Public Space; Condition #190, Neighborhood Parking Permits; impacts to the neighborhood; the car share and Uber component; whether the pool at the hotel would be open to the public; specifics to environmental impacts; responsibility for mitigation efforts; a collective review of Transit Oriented Development; the livability of the Arts residential neighborhood; the traffic study; the Cumulus project; looking out for residents; and taking a global review of all the Washington/National development prior to approving any more building.

Seth Horowitz spoke on behalf of the Culver Hotel owners, expressing support for the development and for connectivity.

Thomas Small provided background on himself; expressed support for the developer; he encouraged innovation in transportation options; discussed alternative transportation ideas; transit from the downtown area to the development; and City collaboration on support for implementation of the systems.

Bill Feldman expressed support for the development; discussed transportation hubs; the gateway to downtown; and he asserted that the development would be an asset to the City.

Steven Coker, Helms Neighborhood Association, expressed concern with parking; he presented a chart illustrating the number of people parking at the station; discussed parking capacity; increased parking needs, decreased parking provided; and he asked that the Commission deny the height waiver.

Greg Segres expressed support for the project; discussed walkability; free parking vs. pay parking; supply and demand; and encouraging people to get out of their cars.

Michael Donovan, Reliable Properties, expressed support for the project; discussed open space opportunities; felt it was a great location for density; expressed support for the shared parking solution; and he felt an EIR was not necessary.

Roman Chiu expressed support for the project; discussed frustrated drivers; effects of the project located at La

Cienega and Jefferson on the current project being discussed; he emphasized the importance of safety issues; cut through traffic; connections to the Arts District; connecting the project to downtown Culver City; additional crosswalks; lights; and responding to the community.

Yvonne Hunt, Administrative Secretary, read comments submitted by:

Marta Zaragoza

Michael Monagan expressed concern with traffic and parking issues; felt the issue should be considered realistically; discussed the bike path; changes to projects due to budget constraints; money and interest; and he noted that it was the job of the Planning Commission to protect residents and their quality of life.

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR VONCANNON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WYANT AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Discussion ensued between the staff and Commissioners regarding appreciation for the diligent work and design; appreciation for the cohesion of design and open spaces; shade and shadow; the project concept; articulation; elevations; sustainability features; signage; the height exemption; use of recycled water for irrigation; the walk from Ince to the transit station; shared modes of transportation; over parking the project; accommodation for shared transportation during construction; concern with the missed opportunity for affordable housing; proximity to transit; ensuring that the project is accessible to the public and not overly exclusive; the importance of maintaining accessibility for everyone in the community; the location in the community and in the region; a suggestion to allow all-walk crossing at the intersection; the National frontage; the primary vehicular entrance; adding an iconic element to the entrance; concern with the exclusion of the Cumulus project from the traffic study; recertification of the MND; phasing; staging measures being contemplated; addressing the most impactful periods of construction; expanding the parking permits for the length of the construction; and appreciation to City staff for their efforts.

Responding to Commissioner inquiry, Ken Mand reported that a few blocks in the area currently have parking permits and other blocks are beginning to see what is coming.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding gray water irrigation; articulation; reducing the massing; adding parking; discussions regarding MTA charging for parking; the Construction Traffic Management Plan; keeping traffic lanes open as much as possible; noticing regarding closures; and texture in elevation in landscaping and open spaces.

Chair Lachoff called a short recess from 9:58 p.m. to 10:16 p.m.

Tom Wolfe, Lowe Enterprises, addressed Commissioner comments regarding residential permit parking, Condition 190; agreement by the developer to provide permit parking for three years if residents elect to have it; clarification that the pool area is open to the public but the pool itself is for hotel guests; transportation options during and after construction; construction phasing plans; offset locations for other shared transportation options; the walk from Ince; working with City staff regarding shared transportation; including zip cars in the short term parking area; the drop off area; the loading area to accommodate an Uber or Lyft pool; working with Metro and Edison for an electric vehicle shuttle service; perimeter locations; signage; water use and gray water; drought tolerant and low water use plants; providing real turf for people to utilize; offsetting water use on the lawn; storm water collection and cisterns; improvements to streetscape around the site; developing the project as one; reducing the impact for the duration of the development; the excavation process; and frontage on National Boulevard.

Barry Kurtz, City Traffic Consultant, addressed comments on the Cumulus project noting that while it had not been included on the list of related projects, the results of the study would not have been affected if it had been included as incremental increases in traffic of the project determine whether or not there would be an impact; he discussed deltas considered at each intersection; he reported that the Cumulus applicant had agreed to pay for several mitigation measures; he discussed the feasibility of an all-way crossing; implementation of state of the art traffic signal synchronization; bicycle infrastructure; public input; the

Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee; the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan; studying the link between downtown and the Expo area; improving bicycle travel on the route; and bike sharing programs.

Tom Wolfe, Lowe Enterprises, discussed support for construction noticing and email alerts.

Frank Ching, Parking Manager for Expo, discussed development of a parking master plan; construction parking; implementing pricing to manage parking; determining demand; the parking guidance system; enhancing the parking experience; Walker Parking; and retaining parking resource to encourage people to use transit.

Tom Wolfe, Lowe Enterprises, discussed the operation and ongoing longevity of the park and full public access; programming; the advisory board for the open space; collaboration to eliminate conflicts with other events in the City; landscape design; lighting design; integrating the Metro station into the property; the height variance; and key findings to be made.

Jonathan discussed site planning; articulation; massing; adding height to get additional light; ways to diminish the height; textures; adding open space; features; and creating a strong architectural concept.

Tom Wolfe, Lowe Enterprises, discussed creating open space; the scale needed to create open space programming; lot coverage; clarification that only 19% of the total project square footage exceeds the standard height limit; avoiding filling in articulations and openings; financial feasibility; review of the financial models by the City consultant; cost of the project; outside investors; the lender; return requirements; risk factors; public benefit; feasibility of adjusting or reducing the height; and middle ground.

Vice Chair VonCannon received clarification from Tom Wolfe regarding pre-leasing.

Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, clarified the revised resolution noting that the motion is a recommendation to the City Council.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, discussed Commission recommendations regarding signage; amending

Condition #9; submission of the master signage program to the Commission for review prior to permit issuance; incorporating gray water irrigation for the great lawn; re-wording Condition #153; cisterns for storm water capture and supplementary onsite irrigation; the requirement to use gray water if available; applicant agreement on the extension of parking permits from one year to three years; and applicant agreement to amend construction notification to include email notification, Condition #31.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WYANT AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND THE MITIGATION AND MONITORING REPORTING PROGRAM.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WYANT AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015-0141 CP HEIGHT EXCEPTION P2015-0141 HTX HEIGHT EXCEPTION TENTATIVE TRACT MAP P2015-0141 TTM SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL STATED IN RESOLUTION 2016-P002 WITH RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS TO CONDITION #9, THE APPLICANT SHALL SUBMIT SIGNAGE PROGRAM BACK TO THE COMMISSION FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL, CONDITION #31 TO ADD EMAIL NOTIFICATION AND EMAIL LIST FOR THE NEIGHBORS; CONDITION #153: THE DEVELOPER SHALL INSTALL CISTERNS FOR STORM WATER CAPTURE AND SUPPLEMENT ONSITE IRRIGATION TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE; AND MODIFY CONDITION #190 FROM ONE YEAR TO THREE YEARS.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDED CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, HEIGHT EXCEPTION AND TENTATIVE TRACT MAP TO ALLOW A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF A 148 ROOM HOTEL APPROXIMATELY 57,700 GROSS SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL AND RESTAURANT USES, 196,300 GROSS SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE USE AND 200 RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS LOCATED AT 8824 NATIONAL BOULEVARD SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS AS AMENDED.

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Item C-2

Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Chair Lachoff invited public comment.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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Receipt of Correspondence

None.

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Items from Staff

Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, provided an update on upcoming meetings and agenda items.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the Culver Studios item, and Major League Softball.

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Items from Planning Commissioners

None.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 11:04 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to the next regular meeting on Wednesday, March 9, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

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YVONNE D. HUNT
SECRETARY of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED _____

KEVIN LACHOFF
CHAIR of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Culver City, California

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that, on the date below written, these minutes were filed in the Office of the City Clerk, Culver City, California and constitute the Official Minutes of said meeting.

Martin R. Cole
CITY CLERK

Date