REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

March 23, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Lachoff called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:04 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 Jose Mendivil.

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Comments for Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Lachoff invited public input.

The following members of the audience addressed the Commission:

Ken Mand, Arts District Residents for Responsible Development, discussed direction given at the March 14, 2016 City Council meeting to staff to prepare a plan for the review of all Washington/National projects prior to approving additional projects in the area; he discussed staff response; projects in the pipeline; incomplete applications; making the item a priority; understanding impacts to the environment as a whole vs. project by project; and he urged Commissioners to move forward quickly on the item.

Jan Skaarstaad discussed the Culver Studios parking structure; unresolved issues with the parking garage; softening of the façade facing Van Buren Place; Condition

#106; assertions that no City trees will be harmed; plan review; excavation up to the sidewalk property line; damage to tree roots; removal of the largest tree for the safety gate; the inability of the proposed landscaping to support the softening of the façade; meaningful step backs of upper garage parking levels; concern with such a large structure in a neighborhood; preserving neighborhoods; and she asked that staff take mitigation seriously before granting the building permits.

Steven Michael expressed support for comments made by the previous speaker; reported delivery of a letter listing concerns of 44 residents about the impact of the parking structure on the neighborhood; he questioned how to mitigate visual impact, noise, fumes and lighting; discussed the proposed shrouding of the lights; the threat to the City trees; consulting the City arborist and engineers about the trees; replacing the large tree proposed to be removed for the safety gate with two pines at least 25 feet tall; he suggested Canary Island pines such as those planted along Jefferson Boulevard in the Playa Vista project; he felt that a solid wall facing Van Buren would address concerns; and he emphasized the importance of preserving parkway trees.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding changes and updates from Culver Studios; the parkway issue; garage encroachment; efforts to modernize; efforts to keep the height down; the importance of keeping the street trees; original direction; the ability to take action; addressing concerns; conformance review; concerns voiced by Arts District residents at the March 14, 2016 City Council meeting; the Transit Oriented District; the request for projects to be assessed collectively rather than in a piecemeal fashion; City Council direction to return with ideas for visioning; the General Plan update planned for next year; advance planning work; Reimagine Fox Hills; and the Surface project.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Meeting Minutes

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR VONCANNON AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF MARCH 9, 2016.

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Public Hearings

Item PH-1

Site Plan Review, P2016-0034-SPR; Tentative Tract Map, P2016-0034-TTM; and Variance, P2016-0034-VAR, for the development of ten (10) proposed for-sale single family dwellings on five R2 Zoned lots (two units per lot) at 4044 to 4068 Globe Avenue in Residential Two Family (R2) Zone

Jose Mendivil, Associate Planner, provided a summary of the material of record noting that he had distributed a letter of support for the project as well as draft amendments to conditions 24 and 26E as submitted by Chair Lachoff that he read into the record.

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

Chair Lachoff invited public comment.

The following members of the audience addressed the Commission:

Robert Dwelle, Habitat for Humanity, provided background on the organization; thanked staff for their help with the project over the years; presented designs for the units; discussed lowered density; fitting in with the neighborhood; the timeline for completion; statistics for average inhabitants; and Homeownership Program Criteria.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Dwelle and Commissioners regarding the number of applicants; sound conditioning in the back of the houses; proximity to the freeway; height of the freeway wall; Conditions #58-59 regarding waiver of Parks and Recreation fees; actionable items for City Council; Planning Commission recommendations; clarification that donations of time or money to Habitat for Humanity do not constitute a conflict of interest; window insulation; resale; covenant agreements; Transfer of Title; annual monitoring; continued income qualification; and requirements for affordable rentals vs. affordable ownership.

Daniel Guzman expressed concern that the item is a foregone conclusion rather than open for public input and consideration; he reported receipt of an invitation to the ground breaking for the project; he asked that variances be denied; he discussed state mandates; he expressed concern with density; excessive concentrated low income housing in the area; requirements that new developments set aside a certain percentage of low income housing in each development; he expressed concern with bait and switch tactics; and he asked that the original agreement be honored.

Bobby Wade discussed traffic in the area; alternatives; his work with Habitat for Humanity; and he asked that anyone approving the project sign an affidavit accepting responsibility and liability for deterioration of the neighborhood and diminishment of property values.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification that the parcel was formerly under Caltrans jurisdiction; zoning for the street; the proposed density is equivalent to existing density; the number of units permitted under the zoning; the requested variance due to the substandard lot size created by the freeway expansion; standard lot size; public outreach; background on the project; the original proposal for 14 units; the current proposal for 10 units; changes to affordability levels; and clarification that the design has remained the same.

A discussion ensued between Commissioners and Mr. Guzman regarding the understanding of the project by residents; lot width standards; the fight over the quantity of units; and the original agreement.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification that there has been no Planning Commission discussion of the project prior to the current meeting; community meetings; original City Council approval of the DDA in 2012; Commissioner notification of community meetings; legally permissible zoning for the area; the net increase; approval of a preferential parking district; and monitoring of the Volvo dealership.

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 balancing concerns; architectural consistency; the timeline for the project; support for fee waivers; the variance; resident feedback; concern with pollution from the freeway; air filtration; cut through traffic; the parking district; a feeling that the positives outweigh the negatives; support for the design; the importance of diversity in the City; accommodating different income levels; support for the organization; the net increase of units on the street; the design of the project; noise concerns; adding a condition to add triple paned windows if financially feasible; by right development; the proposed modification to Condition 26E; the mature Chinese Elm trees; increase to the value and neighborhood feel; volunteer hours for construction; parking restrictions; offsite parking; providing a shuttle bus; site rules and regulations; reducing the impact to the neighborhood; the flier sent to the neighborhood; timing of the ground breaking; City Council consideration; the tract map; and commercial area parking.

Further discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners and Robert Dwelle regarding offsite parking and shuttles; regular weekday construction; specification regarding the number of people that would trigger offsite parking requirements; two-hour parking in the area; and onsite parking.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the floor plans; location of the bedrooms; the need for the SDC rating on the exterior wall for the entire perimeter of the back room; triple paned windows; concern with overburdening the project; the way sound travels; air flow; measures to be evaluated vs. items to be evaluated; long-term success of the buildings; building quality structures; agreement that noise and air filtration be suggestions rather than conditions; tying group shuttling requirements for volunteer groups of more than 20 to a location through the permitting process in the Construction Management Plan; and agreement to add a new condition 35F to describe submittal of an off-site parking plan.

Commissioner Wyant moved to approve Site Plan Review P2016-0034-SPR, Variance P2016-0034-VAR, the Tentative Tract Map P2016-0034-TTM with the addition of Conditions 24 and 26E in Attachment A and the further addition of the condition with regard to more than 20 laborers on the site at the same time.

Heather Baker, Deputy City Attorney, clarified that the Commission would be approving a recommendation to the City Council to approve the Tentative Tract Map.

Chair Lachoff pointed out that the categorical exemption to the California Environmental Quality Act should also be part of the motion.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER WYANT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION: APPROVE SITE PLAN REVIEW P2016-0034-SPR, VARIANCE P2016-0034-VAR AND THE TENTATIVE TRACT MAP P2016-0034-TTM WITH THE ADDITION OF CONDITIONS 24 AND 26 E AS SUBMITTED ON ATTACHMENT A AND THE FURTHER ADDITION OF THE CONDITION WITH REGARD TO MORE THAN 20 LABORERS ON THE SITE AT THE SAME TIME.

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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

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, indicated that staff would be distributing copies of the draft Work Plan for 2016-2017 for Commission input and he noted that the year would be busy with the General Plan update.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the Affordable Housing item coming forward for City Council consideration; working to provide affordable housing programs without Redevelopment funding; market driven or mandatory affordable housing projects; incentives; state law; combining SB1818, State Density Bonus law with the City's Mixed Use Community Benefits Incentive Zoning; tax credits; Cap and Trade; adding flexibility to Live Work restrictions; and the timeline for Commission applications.

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Items from Planning Commissioners

Vice Chair Voncannon reported that he would not be in town during the last week in April and the first week in May.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the next meeting date.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:57 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to the next regular meeting on Wednesday, April 13, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

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YVONNE D. HUNT
SECRETARY of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED ______________________

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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.

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Martin R. Cole Date
CITY CLERK