JOINT MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

May 8, 2019
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Mayor Sahli-Wells called the joint meeting of the City Council/Planning Commission to order at 7:06 p.m. in the Mike Balkman Chambers at City Hall.

Present: Meghan Sahli-Wells, Mayor
Göran Eriksson, Vice Mayor
Alex Fisch, Council Member
Daniel Lee, Council Member
Thomas Small, Council Member

Present: Ed Ogosta, Chair*
Andrew Reilman, Vice Chair
Kevin Lachoff, Commissioner
David Voncannon, Commissioner

*Chair Ogosta arrived at 7:28 p.m.

Absent: Dana Sayles, Commissioner

Staff: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director
Michael Allen, Current Planning Manager
William Kavadas, Assistant Planner

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Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Hope Parrish.

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Community Announcements by City Council Members/Information Items from Staff

Jeremy Green, City Clerk, reported that Culver City is moving from polling locations to vote centers; discussed the work of Los Angeles County with Voting Solutions for All People

(VSAP); differences between polling locations and vote centers; vote by mail ballots; efforts to encourage voting; and a community meeting on May 17 to discuss changes to voting by 2020.

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Joint Public Comment - Items Not on the Agenda

Mayor Sahli-Wells invited public comment.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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Receipt and Filing of Correspondence

MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER SMALL, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR ERIKSSON AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECEIVE AND FILE CORRESPONDENCE.

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

CC:PC - Joint Study Session to Review, Discuss and Provide Direction on the Single-Family Residential Design Study Recommendations as Prepared by John Kaliski Architects (JKA)

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, introduced the item.

John Kaliski, John Kaliski Architects (JKA), provided a presentation on their efforts to address issues of concern in single family neighborhoods; he discussed the first phase in Culver Crest; safety concerns; other neighborhoods considered; the process; outreach; prevailing conditions; garages; square footage; Floor Area Ratio (FAR); lot size; single story construction; designing recommendations to address different

sizes; unique issues with different sized lots; generic recommendations; extreme examples in the 1970s; flexibility of where mass and bulk is placed; practices of other area cities; public meetings; the non-scientific method used; opinions gathered; the online survey; smaller houses vs. larger houses; side yard setbacks; preferences for matching the style, materials and roof forms of the neighborhood; overall dislike for homes that maximize the existing zoning envelope; second story additions; residents who do not maintain their homes; permits; character and style; context; striking a balance between individual needs and community interest; and support for the status quo.

Chair Ogosta joined the meeting.

Discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners, and Council Members regarding the relationship between length of time living in the neighborhood vs. lifestyle and size of the home, and concern with restricting the rights of others.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, indicated that staff would present draft text amendments intended to reflect the conditions described by Mr. Kaliski.

William Kavadas, Assistant Planner, presented a slide show reviewing proposed items; discussed the R-1 Hillside Zone; noted the need for direction on whether to define specific geographic areas or apply to properties on a slope of greater than 15%; establishing a standalone R-1 hillside vs. combining with the Culver Crest Hillside ordinance; FAR; Slope Band Methodology; FAR reductions in the R-1 zone; lot coverage standards; increases to open space on properties; determining how garages and ADUs count toward FAR calculations; the 2016 Mansionization Ordinance; lot coverages; special conditions in hillside neighborhoods; minimum unit size in hillside neighborhoods; additional setback provisions for R-1 zones; distance between main and accessory structures; parapet height; optional standards; new definitions; community requests that did not easily translate to quantifiable standards; and the Hillside Exception Process for setbacks to address special circumstances.

Discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners and Council Members regarding protocol; the process for moving forward; and public comment.

Michael Allen, Planning Manager, discussed components of each recommendation and the methodology for crafting the language and developing the standards, and email received.

Discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, Commissioners, and Council Members regarding the definition for R-1 hillsides; slope conditions; the Hillside Grading Ordinance; the study done for Culver Crest; items taken into consideration; roadway width; safety issues; ADU requirements; the proposed combined standards; existing houses in the Crest and on other hillsides; percentage of existing homes out of compliance with the proposed standards; exceptions; past construction; parcels grandfathered in; unusual conditions in Culver Crest; Blair Hills; geographic vs. performative standards; building code standards; hillside grading requirements in Los Angeles; input from the Blair Hills meeting; different concerns in Blair Hills vs. in Culver Crest; concern with making decisions about certain questions without specific feedback from residents; differences between the existing standards and proposed standards based on feedback received; the change in the dwelling unit definition; minimum by-right floor area; the national average; fairness; interior access requirements; permitting; enforcement; rear setbacks; exceptions for setbacks adjacent to undevelopable land; privacy issues; appeal rights; applicable standards; unique situations; whether to create a new geographic area or adopt a 15% threshold and create a new overlay zone with carve-outs; the need for a topographic survey; putting the onus on the owner; simplicity; administration; benefits of using a slope percentage; slopes and cross slopes; feedback from residents; feedback from specific neighborhoods; lot coverage and the FAR; determining whether garages and accessory units should count toward the FAR; concern with incentivizing second story construction; resident concern with massing and overbuilding of second story additions; design components; setbacks and articulations to alleviate concerns; the 30 foot rear yard setback; preserving space for other utilization of the yard; encouraging building up front with more area in the back for yards or accessory structures; consistency with existing homes; the reasoning behind the recommendation for a .45 FAR; surrounding communities; typical home sizes; home size vs. household size; need vs. development; average lot size; front porches; a suggestion to exclude ADUs and rear garages, include front garages, and encourage the construction of front porches by modifying FAR; homes that abut alleyways; concern with excluding ADUs and garages from lot coverage; neighborhood character; concern

with enacting a lot coverage requirement that prevents building ADUs; decision points; incentivizing rear garages; impacts to the Culver Crest standards; revisiting the issue of providing credit for detached garages; changes to proposed standards for setbacks; the philosophy behind front setbacks; creating landscaped areas to separate the building line from the street; aesthetics; tradition; community standards; environmental analysis; General Plan issues; pedestrian experience; support for the urban forest; building envelope; height standards; including parapet walls in height standards; current standards; a suggestion to reduce heights; being respectful of the existing pattern of development in the City; updates to older houses; crawl spaces; clarifying the distinction between sloped roof conditions vs. flat roof houses; people who took advantage of the parapet not counting toward height; controlling bulk and mass; optional standards; façade articulation; drought tolerant landscaping; landscape plans in lieu of specific requirements; tree plans with second story and new construction; requirements for information on water consumption, carbon footprint and the amount that a structure taxes a sewer system; three tiered plantings; requiring garages in back alleys; driveway setbacks; clarifying that drought tolerant means living plants that take less water; American Society of Landscape Architects standards; clarification that there is no requirement to engage an architect; providing choices with a guidebook; new definitions; basements; primary entries and building orientation; windows, balconies and roof decks; garage placement; building facade and design; visual appeal; the Hillside Exception Process; and addressing natural hardships on a lot that do not affect the health, safety, and welfare of those nearby.

Mayor Sahli-Wells invited public comment.

The following members of the audience addressed the City Council and Planning Commission:

Philip Lelyveld complimented JKA on their work; discussed the process; large homes that have been built over the last several years; and he encouraged action to finalize regulations.

George Dougherty expressed appreciation for the report; felt that residents had been heard; expressed support for the 30 foot rear setback, the 40% land usage, and height restrictions; he felt ADUs should not be included; expressed

concern with a large home being built next to his; and thanked the City Council for their efforts.

Nicholas Cregor expressed support for the original proposal from JKA for a 200 square foot exemption for garages; he expressed concern with the code being overly restrictive; discussed protecting the rights of owners; and the intent to stop speculators.

Ken Mand discussed driveways between houses; front garages; second story step backs; mitigating concerns; other policies to incentivize the natural rhythm of the neighborhood and space between houses; and he wanted to see the standards applied to all single family, low density areas including R-2 homes.

Daniel Mayeda discussed garages in the Culver Crest Overlay; opposition to the exclusion of detached garages from the FAR calculation; support for exempting up to 200 square feet for attached garages and for not incentivizing detached garages; including garages and ADUs in the 40% lot coverage maximum calculation; existing construction that is grandfathered in; and concern that an existing massively overbuilt house can rebuild to prior specifications.

Hope Parrish expressed support for the study and fairness to new and existing residents; discussed setbacks; concern with proposed landscaping requirements; line of sight issues; and support for the process.

Jeremy Green, City Clerk, read written comments submitted by:

Steven Gourley

Discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, Commissioners, and Council Members regarding ADUs and attached garages at the rear third of the property; excluding up to 200 square feet of the front garage from the FAR; support for front porches; distance between buildings within a property; unintended consequences; state ADU laws; setback standards; consistency; concern that requiring a 30 foot setback encourages people to build up; increasing lot coverage to 45%; maximizing privacy; major renovation projects vs. teardowns; ensuring that single additions are not precluded; the feeling that people would prefer a one story house closer to the property line vs. a second story house; tear downs being rebuilt into two story houses; balconies; the wedding cake

effect; 5 foot setbacks for rooftop patios; concern that second story setbacks incentivize decks; and challenges of massing and privacy.

Art Perez expressed concern that the City would be taking away property owner rights; asserted that the changes would be creating planned urban development; indicated that people would not build decks and balconies if they would be counted toward FAR; and he assumed the City was adopting a 45% lot coverage.

Additional discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, Commissioners and Council Members regarding concern with being too restrictive; controlling those who overbuild; understanding the implications of proposed changes; striking a balance between new construction and those who already live in the area; due diligence; covered porches and covered patios; state law with regard to FAR and ADU; support for ADUs while being respectful and responsive; converting garages to ADUs; the number of people who actually use garages for their cars; taking away space used for storage or illegally converted garages; establishing realistic community goals for the future; having a trigger for an exclusion from the rules; massing and privacy concerns; controlling massing; second level massing; landscape designers; storm water; standards for back yard landscaping; Reach Codes; CALGreen Standards; the intent to address new construction; providing landscaping guidelines; developers vs. neighbors wanting to add additions; setting the threshold for new construction; side setbacks; appreciation to staff for their work; support for a reduction in height to be more compatible with neighborhoods; maximizing height by developers; support for incentivizing ADUs; dis-incentivizing double wide garages; encouraging single loaded garages with tandem parking; national standards; lot size; the housing industry; off street parking requirements; encouraging houses with a smaller carbon footprint; changes to the FAR depending on what is included; changes to space associated with an elimination of covered parking requirements; concern with the small amount of public input received; location of uncovered parking; choosing between a garage and an ADU; state law; above garage ADUs; and incentivizing ADU garage conversions.

Further discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners, and Council Members regarding banning vs. dis-incentivizing double wide garages in front of homes; side loaded front garages; nonconforming situations; lot configuration; Culver Crest;

agreement that houses on a lot with a grade of 15% have to work with the City; enforcement; the Building Code; requiring an owner-submitted topographic survey; flagging areas; getting a rough idea of affected areas; boundary surveys; corner second story setbacks; addressing massing concerns; asymmetric side yard setbacks; creating light and air opportunities; providing distance from the neighbor next door; including garages as part of the FAR; allowing Culver Crest to have a 200 square foot credit for attached garages; and clarification that detached garages already do not count toward the FAR.

Paul Asai wanted to see detached garages dis-incentivized in the Culver Crest due to the added bulk; he discussed lack of space; and he expressed support for excluding attached garages from the FAR as an incentive.

Additional discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners, and Council Members regarding distinguishing between hillside areas and the rest of the City.

Hope Parrish discussed effects of changes to the design of streets in the neighborhood; lot size; and unique conditions in the Carlson Park neighborhood.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, noted mapping work to be done; answers to be provided to Council Members and Commissioners; and the need for several more meetings.

Discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners and Council Members regarding streamlining the process; the Culver Crest Overlay garage credit; the resident proposal; incentivizing rear garages; Blair Hills; noticing; providing maps for clarity; prohibition of double wide garages in the front yards; Gateway Neighborhood guidelines; providing flexibility; and inclusion of garages in the FAR.

Daniel Mayeda questioned whether existing houses would have to meet new construction standards.

Discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners, and Council Members regarding addressing issues related to calamities; the legal non-conforming ordinance; the spirit of the code; the need for legal analysis; height; the timeframe for staff to gather information; the Planning Commission recommendation; the process moving forward; support for expediting the process; concern with developers rushing to do projects before new rules take effect; changes to R-2 neighborhoods as a

result of the initial regulations; options for R-2; discretionary actions; and expanding the universe for multi-family guidelines.

MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER SMALL, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LEE AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL RECEIVE AND FILE THE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS.

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Public Comment - Items Not on the Agenda

Mayor Sahli-Wells invited public comment.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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Items from Council Members

None.

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Council Member Requests to Agendize Future Items

None.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 10:51 p.m., the City Council and Planning Commission adjourned.

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Jeremy Green
CITY CLERK of Culver City, California
Culver City, California

MEGHAN SAHLI-WELLS
MAYOR of Culver City

ED OGOSTA
CHAIR of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Culver City, California