

REGULAR MEETING
OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF CULVER CITY,
CALIFORNIA

June 22, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order
at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Linda Smith Frost, Chair
Anthony Pleskow, Vice Chair
John Kuechle, Commissioner
Scott Wyant, Commissioner

Absent: Marcus Tiggs, Commissioner (excused)

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Pledge of Allegiance

Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, led the Pledge of
Allegiance.

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Comments for Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Smith Frost invited public participation

The following members of the audience addressed the
Commission:

Terry Silberman expressed concern with construction of a
1,500 foot accessory to a 1,300 foot residence in the
Carlson Park neighborhood; discussed area zoning;
distributed photos; asked about the opportunity for public
comment; discussed parking; the size of the project and
designation; approved plans vs. actual height; concern with
a lack of attention to intention and specifics of the
existing code by the City; and she questioned how new
guidelines would be applied, incorporated and implemented.

Lyndon Stambler noted that any design or zoning changes for
the Gateway Neighborhood would affect other neighborhoods;

expressed disappointment that other neighborhoods were not notified of the hearing; questioned outreach related to the second story addition built by his neighbor; asserted that the structure violated zoning codes; reported that the Planning Director indicated that the structure was not a dwelling as there was no kitchen; he defined the word accessory and provided examples from the zoning code; and he questioned approval process for zoning permits noting the difficulty of tearing structures down.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, reported that amendments to the Zoning Ordinance would be coming forward in August; asserted that a permit was lawfully issued and no zoning or standards had been violated for the addition; he explained that the improvements would be allowed to continue as the current ordinance allowed such an addition; and he indicated that the information was background to the text amendment that will be considered.

Commissioner Kuechle received clarification that the text amendment would include new restrictions to construction on legal nonconforming buildings and making improvements to accessory structures.

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Study Session

Review and Discussion of Draft Multi-Family Neighborhood Residential Design Guidelines for the "Gateway Adjacent" Neighborhood

Chair Smith Frost clarified that no formal action would be taken.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, presented the next set of draft recommendations and noted that the purpose of the guidelines was to provide a better fit with new development in multi-family neighborhoods. He indicated the intent to provide a detailed survey of prevailing conditions to align development with patterns in the neighborhoods.

Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, presented a summary of the material of record.

Chair Smith Frost invited public input.

The following members of the audience addressed the Commission:

Tom Camarella discussed the ability to build R-4 on Braddock and LaSalle and he questioned why the zoning had not been changed to what the Master Plan had originally designated.

A discussion between staff, Mr. Camarella, and Commissioners ensued regarding previous proposals for the area; clarification that the area could not be developed R-4 without a General Plan amendment; concern with time and resources wasted by zoning that is not clarified; the Zoning Consistency Project; clarification that new projects were not approved that did not conform to the General Plan; the purpose of the meeting to consider multi-family guidelines; the General Plan; use of the guidelines; concern that the builder or property owner could build to what is legal and choose to ignore staff suggestions; the purpose of the guidelines; use of the guidelines to help the Commission make decisions; clarification that zoning provides minimum development standards to be used in evaluating projects; environmental consistency and development standards; and guiding the development to go beyond the minimum standards.

Jessica Seaton expressed support for the Gateway Plan and hoped that it would be adopted for her neighborhood.

Donna Frand did not want to see more development; expressed support for preserving Culver City as it was originally; she expressed concern that large apartments would be built in any available space; and she did not want to see large buildings interspersed among single-family homes.

A discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding regulations in place regarding unit density; the purpose of the guidelines; areas susceptible to change; and clarification that the guidelines are not a substitute for the zoning or an amendment.

Christine Johnson received clarification regarding the General Plan and zoning; discussed inconsistencies; and she expressed concern that existing street widths, sewer, gas and parking were not being taken into consideration.

A discussion between staff, Commissioners and Ms. Johnson ensued regarding the purpose of the guidelines to create a better aesthetic fit between development and prevailing conditions in the neighborhood; density; how decision making affects use patterns; clarification that the ordinance is not being changed; whether the guidelines take existing infrastructure into consideration; the study as a snap shot of what the neighborhood looks like now; appropriate development; preserving current conditions; concern with having apartments put in to maximize profits; and advocacy for the residents.

Cameron Spencer expressed concern with development in the area; with traffic and parking issues; and that the area would be developed to full capacity which would negatively affect the character of the neighborhood.

A discussion ensued between staff, Commissioners and Ms. Spencer regarding development of the multi-family guidelines; whether the proposed conditions would restrict development to what is zoned; clarification that the guide is not a substitute for existing zoning; the intent to create a guide because future development is not precluded in the existing zoning; clarification that two homes can be built on an R-2 lot even if there is a single home there now but the guidelines can be used to make that acceptable and fit in with the neighborhood; an observation that without the guidelines there is no input toward creating a more harmonious development; concern that the guidelines could get hazy and zoning does not always protect the people; concern with the choice of vocabulary allowing inappropriate projects to go through; the necessity of residents to keep the Planning Commission on task; guiding the continual development of the community; clarification that multi-family dwellings are legal unless the zoning changes; clarification that zoning was not on the current agenda; the intent of the guidelines to create more than the minimum standards that can be applied to decision making regarding discretionary projects; and an observation that a Zoning Consistency or General Plan Amendment could take years.

Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, read the intent of the guidelines noting that they were to complement the zoning, promote desirable design, and maintain consistency and the character of the neighborhood, not to allow more density.

Cameron Spencer asserted that was the same argument for the building built across from the City Hall that she felt did not fit in with the character of the neighborhood and she questioned why the guidelines were for more than the minimum zoning.

Commissioner Kuechle clarified that the guidelines were more restrictive than the minimum zoning and he discussed the genesis of the item.

Cameron Spencer thanked the Commission for their efforts.

Vice Chair Pleskow discussed the guidelines, the code and building height.

Jane Brockman thanked the Commission for the survey and the attention to detail.

Andrea Goodwin underscored the message of the neighborhood against increased density; noted the intention of the study to keep in mind existing characteristics and the charm of the neighborhood; she explained that the language of the letters sent out motivated her to come as it sounded as though density would be increased; she expressed concern that while it sounded as though the Committee wanted preservation, it was not clear; and she noted that the speakers represented the opinions of many.

Terry Silberman requested the return of her photo; discussed guidelines to enhance the codes and questioned language used; encouraged everyone to see the accessory structure erected at 4213 Vinton that is inconsistent with the surrounding single family homes in the neighborhood; she felt the Planning department signed off on the project without considering what was being proposed; and she indicated that she would appeal to have the structure torn down.

Chair Smith Frost closed the public hearing.

Thomas Gorham, Planning Director, read statements into the record from absent Commissioner Tiggs.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and the Commission regarding zoning as the law; rights of property owners; the intent to set a negotiation framework and create a collaborative project; the time spent on the

guidelines; appreciation for the public input; encouragement of suggestions to make the document better; whether there should be one set of guidelines for Gateway and Gateway adjacent; survey documents; a suggestion for interested parties to investigate the final guidelines which contain pictures; corrections to typos; the number of neighborhoods with zoning designations different from the General Plan designation; typology; clarification regarding density in an RMD zone; concern that the prevailing condition in some cases is not a good condition and should not be relied upon for the benchmark for future development; significant concern about what is allowable under the zoning regulations; guiding principles for how decisions are made; generic comments made by the public; and clarification that the document would come back to the Commission for adoption at a later date.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Secretary's Report

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER KUECHLE, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR PLESKOW, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED (ABSENT COMMISSIONER TIGGS) THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECEIVE AND FILE THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY REGARDING POSTING OF THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING.

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Item C-2

Meeting Minutes

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR PLESKOW, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WYANT, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED (ABSENT COMMISSIONER TIGGS) THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FOR MARCH 15, 2011 AND APRIL 27, 2011.

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Items from Staff

Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, discussed upcoming meetings and items to be discussed.

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Items from Commissioners

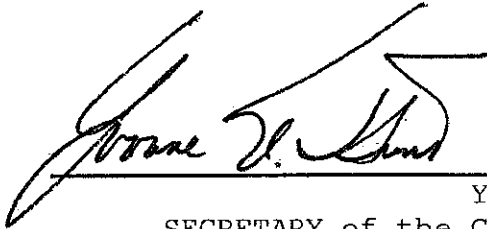
None.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:45 p.m. the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to the next regular meeting on Wednesday, July 13, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. in the Mike Balkman Council Chambers.

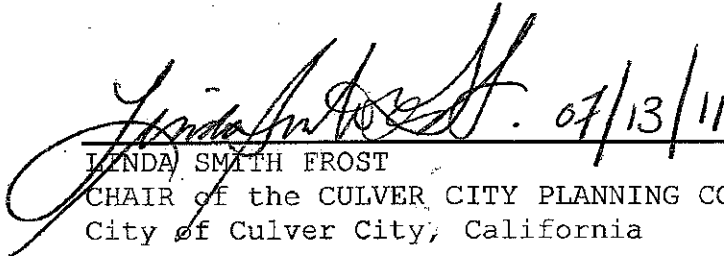
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YVONNE D. HUNT
SECRETARY of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED

7/13/2011



LINDA SMITH FROST
CHAIR of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
City of 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, City of Culver City, California and constitute the Official Minutes of said meeting.

7-14-11

Martin R. Cole
CITY CLERK

Date

By: Ela Valladares
Ela Valladares
Deputy City Clerk
