

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

August 28, 2024
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Reilman called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. in Council Chambers and via Webex.

Present: Andrew Reilman, Chair
Darrel Menthe, Vice Chair
Jackson Brissette, Commissioner
Jen Carter, Commissioner
Stephen Jones, Commissioner

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Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Brissette led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Current Planning Secretary, indicated that no requests to speak for Items NOT on the Agenda had been received.

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Presentation

Item P-1

Presentation: Appreciation of Nancy Barba for Service on the Planning Commission

Chair Reilman reported that Item P-1 had been tabled.

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Receipt of Correspondence

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR MENTHE AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECEIVE AND FILE CORRESPONDENCE.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of July 24, 2024

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR MENTHE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BRISSETTE AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 24, 2024.

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Public Hearings

Item PH-1

PC - Consideration of an Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map to allow the demolition of an existing one-story single-family dwelling and the construction of a new two-story, four-unit attached condominium development with subterranean parking at 4233 East Boulevard (Project)

William Kavadas, Assistant Planner, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the small portion of the driveway that falls within the city of Los Angeles; mailers sent to Los Angeles residents; and clarification regarding purview of the Planning Commission.

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

Aaron Brumer, Architect, discussed design intent; ensuring that the building did not look like a monolithic apartment building; materials; outdoor spaces; private spaces; respecting the privacy of the neighbors; window spacing; maintaining structural integrity; shoring design; ensuring no disturbance of the grading on adjacent properties; plan check by the Building Department; and construction logistics.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding shoring; the pedestrian pathway; and clarification that a four-unit detached project would not fit on the lot.

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Pam Donesley indicated living to the west of the building; noted that half of her property is in Culver City and half is in Los Angeles; discussed existing infrastructure problems; concerns with the sewer line with the increase from one toilet to 12-15; previous explosion of the sewer line on the lower portion of her property several times; she questioned whether a new pipe would be put in to handle the stress of the additional usage; discussed location of the sewer line and concern with a potential rupture during shoring; rooftop access; planters planned on the westside of the building for privacy and to act as noise shields; differences in renderings; vinyl fencing vs. the agreed upon block wall; concern with privacy or noise control; and egress from underground parking.

Tracy Harnell indicated living behind the proposed development; discussed privacy; line of sight; the roof deck; balconies; concern with affects to her pool with dust pollution during construction; concern that mature trees along the property line would be harmed; potential diminished value of her property due to a large condo looming over her home; negative factors for potential buyers; she asked that the Planning Commission reconsider the project design and execution; suggested that alternative designs be explored that prioritize the privacy and well-being of her family; she proposed eliminating the roof deck that looks directly into

her yard; and she hoped that concerns would be taken into consideration as the project moves forward.

Michelle Ford with one minute ceded by Steve Harnell was called to speak but was not present in Council Chambers or on Webex.

Cecilia Cardwell indicated being a neighbor; reported that it was not widely known that the property was zoned R-2; discussed loss of her view and light; comments she made four years ago in support of keeping the park-like setting; concerns raised about privacy and excavation; she questioned whether four units were necessary; discussed maximizing profits and property taxes; trees not shown in the drawings; protection of City trees in the greenbelt; designing to preserve the trees; talk of carbon and cleaning up the air; negative effects of the proposed project; and she expressed disappointment that the project would be allowed.

Michelle Ford with one minute ceded by Steve Harnell, reported being the tenant next door; discussed concerns raised over the past 4-5 years about height, privacy, and windows; care taken on the condo side while all the balconies and bedroom and bathroom windows face their backyard; maxing out the lot; concern with damage to the magnolia tree; subterranean parking going up to the property line; the elaborate proposal for a modest-width property; insufficient parking provided; noise issues related to the large roof decks; and concern with loss of privacy.

Aaron Brumer, Architect, discussed zoning requirements to provide a certain amount of open space for multi-family buildings; use of the roof top decks; use of planter boxes; keeping roof top decks separate from the edge of the property; the five-foot buffer zone between the occupiable roof deck and the neighboring property; restrictions on rooftop deck usage; acknowledgement of privacy issues; openness to screening or making changes to the balconies; parapets; sightlines; acknowledgement of privacy issues with infill development; the buffer zone between the parapet and the roof deck; acknowledgement of concerns regarding shoring and the trees; ensuring that care is taken; communication to ensure a minimum impact on the neighbors; and the importance of being cognizant and communicative with the neighbors.

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

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding CC&Rs (Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions) related to night time hours of roof top usage; standard Conditions of Approval; smoking requirements; noise requirements; Code Enforcement; Police Department response to noise complaints; standard shoring rules; the Building and Safety process; the sewer line; Public Works Department requirements; the sewer fee to help upgrade the sewer line; existing sewer lines on site that will have to be redone as part of onsite improvement plans; signing off on shoring plans that meet requirements; and clarification that the property has been zoned RMD (Residential Medium Density) since the last comprehensive zoning code update in 2000.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BRISSETTE AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION: ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2024-P003 ADOPTING A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO CEQA AND APPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE SITE PLAN REVIEW P2022-0187-ASPR AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 82719, P2022-0187-TPM, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL.

Chair Reilman expressed appreciation for public comment, and he noted that Building and Safety should be able to address concerns raised.

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Item PH-2

PC - Consideration of a Site Plan Review and Administrative Modification (P2024-0082), to allow a three-story, 46,309 square-foot commercial/office development, with subterranean parking, and associated project design features and site improvements at 5813-5835 Washington Boulevard (Project) and a Class 32 CEQA Exemption

Gabriela Silva, Associate Planner, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification on the amount of square footage; office vacancies; background on the land use even though the use is permissible in the zone; the caretaker unit; records

indicating that there is a space in the second story of the structure that was a caretaker unit; SB8 provisions; whether the housing unit has to be replaced; the option to replace the housing offsite; the bike lane conflict; anticipated Phase 2 for the bus and bicycle lane project in the neighborhood; the amount of parking provided; concern with adding traffic to an already congested area; and the number of EV chargers provided.

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

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Sara Houghton, three6ixty, Land Use Representative, discussed the caretaker's unit; compliance with updated state law; inapplicability to the caretaker's unit; accessory use; and additional information to be provided.

Michael Namba, Redcar, introduced the support team.

John Frane, HGA, provided a presentation on the project; discussed the project location; urban infill; bringing street life to the neighborhood; indoor/outdoor relationship; the half landscape and half building concept; sustainability measures; support for the local economy; curb cuts; the future bike lane; loading and deliveries; the central courtyard; enhancements to parkway landscape; providing a buffer between the sidewalk and the bike lane; overflowing greenery; cooling effects; the streetscape; public circulation; the entry; landscaping; open terraces to relieve the mass; lighting; and creating a bridge to bring an active visibility and street life to the project.

Discussion ensued between project representatives, staff, and Commissioners regarding appreciation for the details; minimizing parking and increasing EV chargers; the current parking ratio proposed for the project; leasing; market demand; proximity to the Metro; repurposing parking space as the demand goes down; current insufficient parking provided; parking impact; staggered work hours; tenant usage of parking; compliance with the code for EV parking; and meeting demand.

Jackie Rea, Redcar, discussed the amount of bike parking provided and she noted that shower and locker facilities were provided.

Additional discussion ensued between project representatives, staff, and Commissioners regarding proposed off-site bicycle parking in the public right of way; necessary approval by Public Works; addressing feedback from the community; the community meeting; concerns around construction activity; retail vs. office use; potential for vacant office space; activity level; care that goes into the product that differentiates the project from others; articulation; private outdoor areas; street engagement; the successful formula used at Redcar; adjustments made after the second community meeting; ensuring that every bay was open and transparent from the street; the alley setback; the private entry via a visually transparent gate; safety; and visibility.

Brian Bartelt indicated being present with neighbors to express concerns; he discussed shadowing; traffic; parking; construction dust; noise; environmental concerns; loss of habitat for the red-haired parrots who live in the coral trees; the trend toward increased office vacancies in the area; declining demand; and he felt that neighbors would endure disruption from construction and would only end up with more traffic.

Lilia Cane was called to speak but was not present in Council Chambers or online.

Stephen Keim discussed vacancy rates; nuisance; the fact that the project would add no value to the community; the caretaker unit being used as an Airbnb; lack of redevelopment benefit; current conditions; the number of vacant office spaces in the area; the street on the border of Los Angeles and Culver City; concern with comments from Commissioner Carter about parking; and concern with adding to existing issues with insufficient parking that causes overflow in the neighborhood.

Matthew Cervantes indicated sending written comments; reiterated major concern with construction traffic; discussed previous construction in the area; ensuring that residents have access for the entirety of the day; plans for alley way rehabilitation; parking; gym users who prefer to park in the area because it is free; exacerbating a difficult situation; people who may prefer parking in the neighborhood rather than deal with the tandem parking proposed for the project; public

safety; and concern that the project could bring in additional transients.

George Jaeger echoed comments made by previous speakers; discussed parking issues; construction that brings their street to a halt; overflow parking from the gym; access during construction; and he hoped that the developers would reconsider the project and do better.

Barbara Bridges provided background on herself; discussed the narrow dead-end street; providing provisions for the neighbors; and lack of walkability.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER BRISSETTE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER JONES AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding dead end streets; the effects of construction on a neighborhood; street access; the absence of street closures in the final construction management plan; coordination to provide parking for the construction crew; closure of the sidewalk and alley only when being repaired; required repairs; planned alley repair at the end of the project; planned length of construction; the construction relations officer ; project design features; coordination with the community; considering the Airbnb use in the SB8 analysis; income level of occupants; rent control; the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) exemption; and parrots in the coral trees.

Luci Hise-Fisher, Environmental Science Associates; discussed Class 32 and she noted lack of criterion as a habitat for endangered species.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding required compliance with federal law regarding migratory birds; restrictions on construction, demolition, or tree removal during a certain period; overarching federal regulations; clarification on the process; restrictions on construction during the migratory season; the ability of the developer to remove the trees outside of the nesting season; the development as resembling an update to some of the older office buildings on Washington; support for what is currently on the site; neighbor feedback; the fabric of the community; concern with neighbors who feel like there are no benefits in the project for them; lack of a retail component; office

vacancies; type of offices being built; companies that are downsizing; offices that are vacant most of the time; best use of space; General Plan discussions; the corner that will be zoned MU-1; adjacency to MU-2; future increases to the number of residents in the neighborhood; what the project brings to the neighborhood now and in the future; housing near creative office space; getting cars off the street; the 15 minute community; the jobs/housing imbalance; pockets of retail further down the street; work to build a new neighborhood in the Blackwelder area with more density; concern with the approval of more office projects than housing projects; finding ways to mitigate downsides; the inability to fix parking on a project-by-project basis; traffic that comes with building more parking; projects that are building parking below the previous minimum; the feeling that building less parking will result in less traffic; other ways to mitigate effects on the neighborhood; mitigating impacts by putting more housing in the area; providing more things for people to walk to; and easing growing pains that cannot be stopped.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding appreciation for neighbor feedback; the neglected neighborhood; parking intrusion; those who drive because it is close to the freeway; lack of parking in the area; proximity to Metro; disappointment with the lack of amenities; the nearby Arts District; lack of great choices; the feeling that the plan is not as bad as it could be; shadows in the morning; the nice building; work done to ensure that there are not a lot of bright lights at night; Commission purview; future projects that may bring in amenities; trade-offs; making the neighborhood work as part of Culver City; lack of infrastructure in the area to support bike riding; support for saving the trees; administration of the code; acknowledgement of parking difficulties; potential residential across the street; disappointment that there is no retail; providing a gateway to compress the district and increase the vibrancy; office comments; the flight to quality; demand for smaller boutique product; tenants that are not high density users; parking peaks; and other projects built by the company.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER BRISSETTE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2024-P012 ADOPTING A CLASS 32 CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO CEQA AND APPROVING SITE PLAN REVIEW AND ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION, P2024-0082, FOR

A NEW COMMERCIAL/OFFICE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, WITH SPECIFIED PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL.

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Action Items

None.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Current Planning Secretary, reported no requests to speak.

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Emily Stadnicki, Current Planning Manager, reported that the General Plan Update and the Zoning Code Update had been approved by City Council; noted that the second reading would be on September 9 and would take effect on October 9; she reported that there were no agenda items for September 11; and she discussed agenda items for the September 25, 2024, meeting.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the status of the amendments.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:54 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on September 25, 2024.

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RUTH MARTIN DEL CAMPO
SECRETARY of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED _____

ANDREW REILMAN
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.

Jeremy Bocchino
CITY CLERK

Date