

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

June 10, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Vice Chair Lachoff called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Kevin Lachoff, Vice Chair
Ed Ogosta, Commissioner
Dana Sayles, Commissioner
David Voncannon, Commissioner

Absent: Andrew Reilman, Chair

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Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Lachoff led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Vice Chair Lachoff invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, discussed procedures for making public comment.

The following individual addressed the Commission:

Earl Hager discussed excessive construction noise on La Salle Avenue; the difficulty of working at home during the pandemic; providing alerts so that people can work around the situation; being unable to speak on the phone due to noise volume;

conversations with the contractor for possible work arounds; and long-term solutions.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, discussed necessary permitted construction during the pandemic; providing a schedule to allow neighbors to work around the project; and a request to Mr. Hager for additional information.

Earl Hager asserted that he was not interested in shutting down construction; indicated that the situation was not optimal, but could be managed if he had a schedule; and discussed solutions to take care of everyone's interests.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Approval of Draft Joint City Council/Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of May 13, 2020

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER VONCANNON THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING ON MAY 13, 2020.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, OGOSTA, SAYLES, VONCANNON
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: REILMAN

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Order of the Agenda

Item PH-2 was brought forward on the agenda.

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Public Hearings

Item PH-2
(Out of Sequence)

PC - Modification to a Previously Approved Administrative Site Plan (P2016-0121-ASPR), Consisting of a Four (4) Unit Condominium Subdivision in the Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential (RMD) Zone

William Kavadas, Assistant Planner, provided a summary of the material of record; discussed proposed modifications including to the rooftop railing and windows; discussed design guideline goals; and existing Conditions of Approval.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the reason the item is before the Commission; changes to discretionary permits allowed by the zoning ordinance; and inconsistency with approved drawings.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER VONCANNON AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, OGOSTA, SAYLES, VONCANNON
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: REILMAN

Vice Chair Lachoff invited public comment.

Paul Crane, Aero Collective, (Applicant), provided background on himself; discussed the reason for making the changes; changes made with the homeowner in mind; submission of the changes to Building and Safety in January; the Title 24 calculations; window glazing; making homes more efficient; he provided a presentation on the project; discussed the approved design; privacy issues with the floor to ceiling windows; maintaining the existing tree in the front; impacts from different angles of the street; neighboring and adjacent buildings; softening the impact on the community; key objectives; living space; integration with the neighborhood; resolution with Conditions of Approval; window heights; and congruency with design language.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, read public comment submitted by:

Lauren Blankenship: wrote to express strong support for the proposed changes and increased privacy; discussed eco-efficiency, functionality, and improved aesthetics; support for the builder; and she provided contact information for anyone who required more information.

Allen Blankenship: wrote in support of the proposed changes to the project; discussed the pandemic; hardship to businesses; risk taken by the developer; adding much needed homes in the City; the fishbowl effect on Duquesne; increased privacy; retaining the mature tree; continuity with the surrounding area; keeping economic impacts within the City; and support for the integrity of the developer.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Robert Combs reported being an adjacent neighbor; expressed support for the changes due to increased privacy; he reported that other neighbors support the changes as well; and he indicated that the developer had been very respectful.

Discussion ensued between the applicant, staff and Commissioners regarding reasons for not addressing privacy and energy issues when the project was first submitted; the initial planning process for the project; changes made without consulting the Planning Department; developer experience; minor changes made that did not affect structural integrity or design massing; compliance with building standards; challenges for homeowners; privacy issues; window coverings; differences between staff suggestions and the developer proposal; design language of the structure; the roof railing; being attentive to Commission approvals; concern with changes being made late in the process; triggers that bring projects back to the Commission; changes in the front façade; history of design changes; concern regarding diminishing appeal with changes to the façade; support for changes to the side of the building; and the feeling that the change to the front is significant.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, OGOSTA, SAYLES, VONCANNON
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: REILMAN

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding concern that the quality of the project is lowered with the change; appreciation to staff for bringing the change to the attention of the Commission; changes made to the project on Duquesne; concern that project changes were made without staff authorization; the feeling that the change was made to save money; other ways to achieve Title 24; the style of the building; achieving light, space, and ventilation; concern with sending a message that supports changes without approval; acceptance of changes on the side; support for retaining the original front windows; the real estate listings that reflect the old renderings; not wanting to reward making changes far into the process; support for the staff recommendation; design choices; appreciation to staff for their diligence; Community Development guidelines; bringing the building in line with staff recommendations; acceptance of the change in materials from metal to wood painted in neutral tones consistent with the building and keeping the height to 42 inches; support for modification to windowing around the stairwell at the roof level; allowing for reduction to window size on the side and rear of the building to allow for privacy; and keeping the original size of the windows on the front of the building in order to create and activate the street front on Duquesne per the original plan.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR LACHOFF THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION: ADOPT A CLASS 3, CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION AND APPROVE AN ADMINISTRATIVE SITE PLAN REVIEW MODIFICATION, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL STATED IN THE PROPOSED PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION WITH CHANGES AS DISCUSSED.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, OGOSTA, SAYLES, VONCANNON
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: REILMAN

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding anticipation of seeing the finished project; a request for a copy of PowerPoint presentations provided to Commissioners in advance of hearings; the representation of the façade in the drawings and proposed changes; appreciation for looking back at the original packet; staff agreement to try to provide materials in advance; and appreciation for staff efforts.

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Item PH-1

PC - Consideration of an Administrative Site Plan Review and Tentative Tract Map No. 82562 for the Construction of a Five (5) Unit Condominium Subdivision at 3906 Tilden Avenue in the Residential Medium Density (RMD) Zone

Commissioner Voncannon indicated the need to recuse himself from item PH-2 and he disconnected from the teleconference.

William Kavadas, Assistant Planner, provided a summary of the material of record noting that the matter would be going before the City Council for the final decision.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification that the code did not include anything regarding minimum balcony depth; the need for a zoning code text amendment to implement a standard; the ability to require more restrictive measures; and discretionary permits.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, OGOSTA, SAYLES
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: REILMAN
RECUSED: VONCANNON

Vice Chair Lachoff invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Robert Thibodeau, DU Architects, (Applicant), presented an overview of the project; discussed work with staff to come up with a project they supported; vertical vs. horizontal formats; massing; rooftop solar; setbacks; landscaping; elevations; neighboring buildings; window offsets; materials; and time spent on the project.

Andrew Weissman, (Applicant), congratulated Kevin Lachoff for his eight years of service on the Planning Commission; provided background on the project; expressed support for the design;

discussed conformance with multi-family guidelines; and the need for additional housing.

Lewis Futterman, (Applicant), discussed time spent on the project; previous projects; providing as much house as possible within the zoning envelope; concern about the façade; and willingness to work with Planning staff to address concerns.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, read written comment submitted by:

Lisa Miller: discussed impacts of the project on her family; inconsistency of the project with the neighborhood; noise concerns with the gate and increased traffic; parking issues; privacy concerns with the roof deck; limits to fence height; trash; second hand smoke; felt the development encroached upon their ability to enjoy their property; discussed homeschooling due to COVID-19; concern that demolition and construction would impede their ability to rent out their front unit; concern with vibrations as a result of excavation; and she indicated that they are not developers, but live next door.

The following individual addressed the Commission:

Richard Mar discussed remodels in the area and he felt the project would be good for the area.

Discussion ensued between the applicants, staff, and Commissioners regarding applicant agreement to expand the balconies from two feet to three feet; construction noise; staff recommendations to address issues; bulk and mass of the interior property line; setbacks; allowing for a reasonable rooftop terrace; wind patterns and small amounts of second hand smoke for neighboring properties; and the ban on smoking in multi-family development projects.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, OGOSTA, SAYLES
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: REILMAN
RECUSED: VONCANNON

Commissioner Sayles disclosed that she had met with the applicant and that some of her initial feedback had been incorporated into the latest design.

Vice Chair Lachoff reported providing feedback to the applicant in an earlier conversation.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding support for creative unit plans; elevation variation; the south elevation; the windows; neighbor concerns; single family home sales in a multi-family neighborhood; the fact that the building meets the code; the subdivision request; design changes; support for adding housing; height requirements; the mezzanine; a request to staff to work with the applicant to expand the balconies to three feet; rear articulation; providing a sense of depth and shadow; adding character; siding; support for putting in a minimum 3-foot depth for balconies in the zoning code; willingness of the applicant to work with staff on the southern façade; well-articulated sides; adding something visual to change the blank wall; re-doing curbing and stop sign painting at the corner; fire extinguisher enclosures; and refining language in the Conditions of Approval to address the balconies and further development of the south elevation and to indicate that staff will work with the applicant on surface treatments for the south elevation that may include alternative materials or extrusions and to modify the balcony to a depth of not less than three feet.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

1) ADOPT A CLASS 32, CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AND APPROVE AN ADMINISTRATIVE SITE PLAN REVIEW P2019-0046-ASPR, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL STATED IN THE PROPOSED PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION WITH THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS; AND,

2) RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF THE TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 82562, P2019-0046-TTM, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, OGOSTA, SAYLES
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: REILMAN
RECUSED: VONCANNON

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding having a comprehensive discussion on a zoning code amendment regarding balconies and unintended consequences.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Vice Chair Lachoff invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, indicated that no additional public comment had been received.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, indicated that no additional correspondence had been received.

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Michael Allen, Current Planning Manager, discussed upcoming items to be considered; continued virtual meetings during the pandemic; and he agreed to provide information on the new Commissioner.

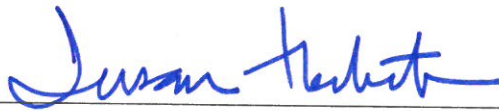
Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding a request to enable video for Vice Chair Lachoff's last meeting; protocol to provide presentations to Commissioners in advance of the meeting; and last minute changes.

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Adjournment

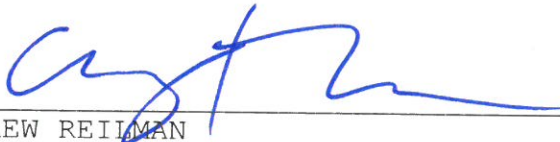
There being no further business, at 9:21 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a meeting to be held on June 24, 2020.

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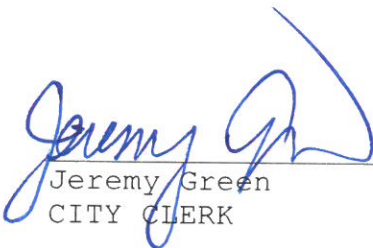
SUSAN HERBERTSON
SENIOR PLANNER of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED 07/22/2020



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 Green
CITY CLERK

30 JULY 2020
Date