

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

November 28, 2007
7:00 P.M.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Present: Marcus Tiggs, Chair
David Rockwell, Vice Chair
John Kuechle, Commissioner
Andrew Weissman, Commissioner
Linda Smith-Frost, Commissioner

Staff Present:
Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director
Thomas Gorham, Deputy Community Development
Director & Planning Manager
Heather Iker, Assistant City Attorney

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Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Heather Iker.

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Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Chair Tiggs invited public participation.

Bill LA Pointe, Director, City of Culver City Parks and Recreation, announced the schedule of public workshops pertaining to the Parks & Recreation Master Plan (December 6, 2007 and January 26, 2008)

C. Yardin will submit written comments regarding the Christmas tree lot located at 9900 Culver Boulevard.

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PUBLIC HEARING PH-1

Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map for the Construction of Three Condominium Townhouses located at 4048 Lincoln Avenue.

Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, gave a brief summary of the project including two proposed options relating to the location of structural columns, and outlined issues related to a zoning code interpretation regarding obstructions in drive aisles as it pertains to the project.

Chuck Couey was present for the applicant and asked the Commission to consider approving Option #1 allowing the structural columns to be located within the drive aisle.

Public Speakers

- Jon Andersen-Miller
 - space is inadequate for four units
 - project does not maintain the ambiance of the neighborhood
 - massing concerns
- Gusta Van Driel
 - project height
 - wants full subterranean parking
 - increase setbacks
 - entrance to units should be at street level
 - hours of construction should be included in the Conditions of Approval (Monday-Friday 8-6; Saturday 9-5; no construction on Sunday)
 - parking for construction crew concerns
 - construction noise issues
 - no new construction should be commenced until construction in progress is completed

Eric Pascarelli submitted comments to be read into the record.

Motion to close the public hearing was moved by Commissioner Weissman, seconded by Commissioner Kuechle.

Comments and Concerns of Commissioners:

Commissioner Weissman

- Requested clarification of applicant's comment regarding "no control over entryways".
- Supports the detached nature of the project.
- Stated that lowering the height of the building with full subterranean parking is preferable for compatibility with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Kuechle

- Resident concerns regarding density should be addressed to the City Council.
- Has density concerns regarding cubic footage being compatible to the area; inquired whether there are guidelines.
- Inquired whether the project would come before the Commission again if there are substantial changes.
- Inquired about reduced plant options.

Thomas Gorham responded by stating the project is in compliance with the Zoning Code and that staff is in the process of developing new commercial and residential design guidelines.

- Safety and architectural concerns of structural columns should be addressed.
- Suggested lowering the level of the ground floor to the grade of the lot to make the project less intrusive and more compatibility.
- Agrees with the hours of construction as an addition to the Conditions of Approval.
- In order to deal with the safety concerns raised by the applicant in his submittals made to the Commission and to reduce somewhat the height of the

project, the level of the ground floor should be lowered to the grade of the lot thereby making it less intrusive to the immediate neighbors and more compatible with other homes on the street.

- Cannot support project without addressing safety and height reduction.

Vice Chair Rockwell

- Asked for, and received, confirmation from Staff that the new interpretation of the code not to allow I-beams to obstruct the driveway area was in force and applied to this project, and that the City informed the applicant of that fact.
- Supports detached units.
- Option #2 is the only acceptable option.
- Expressed concerns about the square footage of each unit in relation to the square footage of land.
- I-beams should be moved closer to the property line.
- Suggested more resident involvement earlier in the process.
- Would prefer less massing as opposed to reducing height.
- Suggested adding balconies, or other architectural treatment on the horizontal beams.
- Inquired about the applicant's flexibility regarding removal of the fencing on the front lawn.

Commissioner Smith Frost

- Suggested hours of construction are slightly more restrictive than normal.
- Hours of constructions should be included in the Conditions of Approval.
- Stated that there are similar projects in the area relative to Option #2.

Chair Tiggs

- Questioned whether the applicant would be opposed to Option #2.
- I-beam, patio and open space issues should be addressed by the applicant with area residents.

- Supports the project.

Following review and discussion of the project a motion to:

- (a) Adopt the Site Plan Review and Tentative Parcel Map was moved by Commissioner Smith Frost, seconded by Vice Chair Rockwell. **Vote: 3-2.** Commissioners Weissman and Kuechle - No.
- (b) Motion to adopt Resolution P2007-017, as amended was moved by Commissioner Smith Frost, seconded by Vice Chair Rockwell. **Vote 3-2.** Commissioners Weissman and Kuechle - No.
- (c) Motion to approve the Categorical Exemption was moved by Commissioner Smith Frost, seconded by Commissioner Kuechle. **Vote 5-0.**

PUBLIC HEARING PH-2.

Zoning Code Amendment to Amend Section 17.400.065 of the Culver City Zoning Code pertaining to Mixed Use Development Standards.

Thomas Gorham, Planning Manager, and Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, outlined the item for the Commission.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Paul Slye, Developer, Brentwood Capital Partners

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Weissman

- No material was included regarding minimal square footage with regard to commercial use.
- Stated that the intent of the mixed use ordinance was to revitalize commercial uses not residential.
- Stated that this amendment appears to be more of a correction to the ordinance adopted.
- Stated that commercial use provides 60-70% of General Fund income.

- Suggested encouraging residential development with an established minimum of commercial uses.
- Asked if the Washington National Specific Plan is included in this ordinance.
- Has concerns regarding "community benefit" and dedicated funds not being allocated for the purpose they were intended.
- Suggested establishing a minimum for commercial use.

Commissioner Kuechle

- Inquired about the merit or lack of merit for the developer to decide what commercial uses would be located on the ground floor.
- Requested that the amount of required ground floor commercial space be increased.
- Has "community benefit" and split jurisdiction concerns.
- Building height and setbacks rules differ with respect to alleys.
- Requested clarification changes to the Building Height and Setback Tables.

Vice Chair Rockwell

- Recommended establishing a minimum for commercial space in mixed use projects.
- Suggested voting on controlling density by establishing a limit on floor area ratio rather than dwelling units per acre.
- Has concerns regarding the viability and risks associated with the concept of a "community benefit" and suggested agendaizing that issue to explore such concerns.
- Asked for and received confirmation from Staff that although both the City and State offer applicants the possibility of a density bonus, in no case would a combination of City and State bonuses allow the density to exceed fifty (50) dwelling units per acre.
- Has density concerns.

Commissioner Frost

- Foresees decline in property value as a result on mixed use projects.
- Asked if there is a comparison report with other communities with a drop in land value and time required to recover from the drop.
- Project is on the right track with "community benefit"; guidelines should be established to guarantee the community receives the benefit.

Chair Tiggs

- Stated that other cities use floor area ratios for addressing massing issues.
- Suggested that in-lieu funds be placed in a trust for "community benefit".
- Suggested that across-the-board guidelines be established to protect the community.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Rockwell, seconded by Commissioner Kuechle to increase the amount of required ground floor commercial space to approximately one third of the total project square footage. **Vote 5-0.**

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2007-P019, as amended to include recommended changes to the required ground floor commercial space and the Building Height and Setback Table was made by Commissioner Rockwell, seconded by Commissioner Kuechle. **Vote 5-0**

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Secretary's Report

THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE SECRETARY'S REPORT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER ROCKWELL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUECHLE AND WEISSMAN. **Vote 5-0**

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ITEMS FROM STAFF

Thomas Gorham, Planning Director gave staff comments regarding the upcoming Commission meetings

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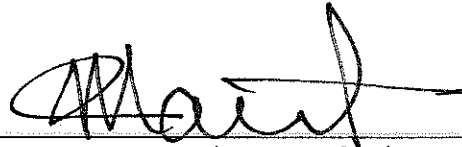
ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Kuechle had the following concerns:

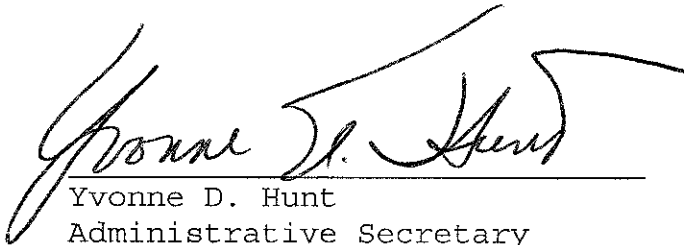
- Requested that staff send the Commission an electronic version of the Agenda, Resolution and Staff Report in .pdf form to enable the commissioners to perform a search within the document.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at 11:20 P.M., the Planning Commission adjourned its meeting to an Adjourned Regular Meeting to be held on December 12, 2007.



Marcus Tiggs, Chair
City of Culver City
Planning Commission



Yvonne D. Hunt
Administrative Secretary