

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

January 24, 2024
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Jones called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 7:02 p.m. in Council Chambers and via Webex.

Present: Stephen Jones, Chair
Andrew Reilman, Vice Chair
Nancy Barba, Commissioner
Darrel Menthe, Commissioner

Absent: Jennifer Carter, Commissioner

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Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Menthe led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Mark Muenzer, Planning and Development Director, introduced Current Planning Division Manager, Emily Stadnicki, and Advanced Planning Manager, Troy Evangelho.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Jones invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, indicated that no requests to speak had been received.

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Presentations

Item P-1

Receipt and Discussion of a Report from Johnson Favaro Regarding the Future of Veterans Memorial Park and Bill Botts Fields at Culver City Park

Jim Favaro, Johnson Favaro, provided a presentation on the draft of the final recommendations to the community and the City Council; discussed Upper and Lower Bill Botts and Veterans Memorial Park; recommendations to reconfigure space and existing facilities; proposed facilities; feasibility; site plans; parking; finding alternate locations for ball fields at Veterans Memorial Park; passive and active uses; accommodating maintenance and operations; and preservation of Veterans Tower.

Chair Jones invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, indicated that no requests to speak had been received.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Favaro, staff, and Commissioners regarding the process; the General Plan; the need to engage in a level of design to fully articulate the process in order to go through an environmental review process if moving forward; stakeholders; presentations made since last September; presentations available for review; the Little League Fields at Bill Botts; Fiesta La Ballona; feasibility of retaining Vets Tower as a landmark; the need for a structural analysis; The Plunge; costs; escalating costs over time; usefulness of the visualization; the park selection process; fields at Veterans Memorial Park as detrimental to the quality of the park; incompatibility of the fields with each other or with the City park; the children's playground; ensuring that Little League and AYSO no longer share facilities at Bill Botts; adult soccer fields; the geo-technical report for the area; recommendations; accommodating pickleball, paddle tennis, and tennis; providing options at Bill Botts; ensuring that there is always a pool open; work being done on relocation of the ball fields; costs to implement all proposed projects at each park; and direction given to the consultants as to what should be accomplished.

Additional discussion ensued between Mr. Favaro, staff and Commissioners regarding growth of the City, but not the parks facilities; the design phase; the importance of reflecting gender equity in sports; input from Parks, Recreation and Community Services staff; individual cabanas for changing areas rather than gender separated areas; comparable cities that have undertaken a similar process; public infrastructure improvements in West Hollywood; changes in Culver City; taking control of civic infrastructure that supports the growth and prosperity of the City; clarification that changes would be a service, not a profit-making endeavor; endowments; increased operating costs; the arts and aquatics facilities; the amphitheater; market feasibility; the ability to implement portions of the concept or the entire thing; addressing other needs in the City; clarification that there is no zero cost option; millions of dollars spent each year maintaining dilapidated facilities; Planning Commission purview; the General Plan; planning for increases to the population; appreciation for the visioning process; use of Veterans Park as a true city park; the General Plan policy framework; SB 1000; priority neighborhoods; expected growth in Fox Hills; accessibility; transportation; the bike/hike trail; the Mobility Element; providing a dedicated lane for the circulator; proximity of Veterans Park to the Clarkdale neighborhood; encouraging access to the parks; the goal to reduce reliance on cars; difficulty parking at Bill Botts; well-used parks with low parking; ensuring complimentary design; open space protection; consistency of goals; blocking the view with the amphitheater; use of the hill if the amphitheater is not implemented; appreciation for reviewing something the City has control over; the Parks Master Plan; neighborhood parks vs. regional parks; ensuring connections to the regional parks; relocation of the fields; Bill Botts as the center for soccer; geography of the City; different issues at different parks; centralizing resources; making improvements to all the parks; equity; access; providing parking on Jefferson with a shuttle to the park; making use of the topography to hide the parking; the Santa Barbara Bowl; the Housing Element; current zoning; the mixed-use nature of the Jefferson Corridor; limited options for pedestrians and bicyclists; density bonuses; development interest along the corridor; the large number of potential residences in close proximity to Bill Botts; and next steps.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, reported that two emailed comments for Item P-1 had been received and distributed to Commissioners.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

PC - Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of November 8, 2023

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR REILMAN AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BARBA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE DRAFT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 8, 2023, AS WRITTEN.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: BARBA, JONES, MENTHE, REILMAN
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: CARTER

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

PC - (1) Discussion of Draft Written Report to City Council Regarding Planning Commission's 2023 Accomplishments and 2024 Proposed Activity/Upcoming Agenda Items for the Next Six Months; (2) Authorize Transmittal to City Council

Emily Stadnicki, Current Planning Manager, provided a summary of the material of record.

Troy Evangelho, Advanced Planning Manager, discussed upcoming meetings; proposed recommendations to the City Council; and the Advanced Planning Work Plan.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the SCAG (Southern California Association of Governments) grant; the amount accomplished in 2023; the workshop on objective design standards; projects that were pulled or fell into a different time period; Preliminary Project Review; items that are in the development pipeline; mixed-use developments that have started their Community Meeting processes; upcoming work in 2024; updates to the Sign Code; kiosks; the Westfield Mall; Economic Development; adding a statement recognizing that there were not a lot of housing project entitlements approved in the last year; generation of more projects with completion of the Zoning Code; number of units coming in the near future; projects that will not be going through the Planning Commission in the future, i.e., projects utilizing SB 35; the need for more staff; residential streamlining; state laws allowing staff-level approval of tract maps; updating the Subdivision section of the Code; ministerial approvals; important in-progress Zoning Code amendments; the comprehensive Zoning Code update; encouraging affordable housing; Commission review of the Density Bonus and other incentives draft in March; Objective Design Standards; timeline for the General Plan Update; the Environmental Impact Report (EIR); level of interest in large developments in the City; the Westside Urban Forum; the split project with the city of Los Angeles; capital markets; ability to build projects; the Administrative process to extend entitlements; regulations regarding site maintenance; impacts to surrounding communities; and Conditions of Approval.

Chair Jones invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Andrew Flores expressed appreciation for the presentation; noted that many of his questions had been answered during the discussion; discussed the distinction between an official application and a potential Project Preliminary Review; the Objective Design Standards meeting; frustration expressed by former Commissioner Ogosta; deadlines pushed into the future; and concern that lack of certainty impacts proposals and development of housing, projects, and amenities that could improve the community.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER BARBA AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR REILMAN THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE TRANSMITTAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND 2024 PROPOSED ACTIVITY/UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS TO THE CITY COUNCIL.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: BARBA, JONES, MENTHE, REILMAN
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: CARTER

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Jones invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Ron Asher indicated that there was only one adult film theater left in Los Angeles; acknowledged the changing industry; asked the Commission for help in preserving the last theater; discussed preservation of the communal experience; mental health issues in the country; and he requested that the Planning Commission establish the Tiki Theater as a historical landmark.

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Vice Chair Reilman asked for additional information about the FAR (Floor Area Ratio) rollback mentioned in an email.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding results of the lawsuit that YIMBY had filed; loss of the appeal; and the City Council staff report that outlines elements of the ordinance that have to be repealed.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:51 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on February 14, 2024.

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RUTH MARTIN DEL CAMPO
SECRETARY of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED _____

STEPHEN JONES
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