

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

February 14, 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 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers and via Webex.

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

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Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Carter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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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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Receipt of Correspondence

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

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Consent Calendar

None.

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

PC - (1) Receive an Update on the Draft General Plan and (2) Discuss and Provide Comments as Appropriate

Troy Evangelho, Advance Planning Manager, introduced the presentation.

Eric Yurkovich, Raimi + Associates, provided an overview of their work with the City to develop the General Plan; discussed setting the 20 year vision for the community; establishing a pattern of future development of the City; policy development; the Zoning Code; work on an Environmental Impact Report (EIR); potential impacts of the full General Plan; the discovery phase; review of existing policies and programs; work with the General Plan Advisory Committee to draft the vision statement and core values of the General Plan; assessing the tradeoffs of land use and mobility alternatives; creation of policy frameworks; stakeholder, community, and Council meetings; public review of the General Plan; feedback received at in-person and hybrid meetings and at Fiesta La Ballona; comments collected online; the summary of engagement published at pictureculvercity.com; in-person open houses; the vision for the future; key pieces of the community vision; core values; flexibility with topics taken on as part of the General Plan; mandatory and optional elements of the General Plan; the Land Use and Community Design Element; the focus on creating walkable mixed-use spaces; meeting climate goals; goals and policies; land use and transportation improvements; reducing reliance on automobile travel; transit oriented communities; the focus on housing production; transitioning into mixed-use districts;

the land use designation map; the policy framework; implementation; and next steps.

Chair Jones invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Andrew Flores expressed concern with the public engagement over the past four years; noted that he heard more of the voice of the consultant in the report rather than the voice of the community; expressed concern that tension, contention, and debate in the community about proposed density is not being addressed; discussed inadequate outreach for the once in a generation event; the goal to approve the project rather than to build relationships within the community; potential solutions; opportunities moving forward; Specific Plans planned for next winter; deadlines; the importance of showing work; concern that the thread is not clear enough about what the community has spoken about; and the feeling that response to comments could have been done sooner or stronger.

Kevin Brogan spoke representing owners of a portion of the Inglewood Oil Field (IOF); discussed the proposed zoning ordinance and planning; and he suggested that the area be zoned multi-family.

Jack Walter was called to speak but was not present in Council Chambers or online.

Hilary Haran agreed with earlier comments that there was not enough discussion of community feedback; reported hearing much opposition from Fox Hills residents to plans for building six story buildings; expressed concern with airflow; she felt the TikTok building was horrendous; proposed focusing building on the north side of Slauson Ave; discussed keeping uniformity with three story heights in the area; traffic; the fact that most people are car-reliant; and concern that development is based on an idea that parking is not needed because people will ride bicycles which is not realistic.

Jack Walter expressed support for the General Plan and Zoning; indicated being a property owner in the Fox Hills area; felt that Fox Hills was a good choice to place the highest density housing; stated the area was convenient to everyone and would not be displacing residents; discussed meeting regional

housing requirements; and he wanted to see the General Plan codified as written.

Discussion ensued between Eric Yurkovich, Raimi + Associates, and Commissioners regarding the potential Metro expansion; the Sepulveda Corridor Transit Study; confusion with the change from units per parcel to units per acre; a suggestion to create a guide to help people understand that the change is not as significant as it seems; staff efforts to prepare responses to comments; the Engagement Summary Report posted on the website; retention of the existing designation for the Inglewood Oil Field (IOF); the mismatch in the current Zoning Code; deference to the City Council or outside processes for IOF zoning; the IOF Termination Ordinance; the settlement agreement; future focus areas in the City; Fox Hills; the pause on the original grant awarded; and available approved City funding for the Fox Hills Specific Plan and the Hayden Tract Specific Plan.

Additional discussion ensued between Eric Yurkovich, Raimi + Associates , and Commissioners regarding reconciliation of mismatched areas in the City; clarification that a property owner could build a single family home on their IOF land with an R-1 designation; the General Plan as the guiding document for anything except residential; use of the Zoning Code or the General Plan; application of new state legislation; clarification that there are currently no development applications for the IOF; other areas in the City; the reconciliation process; public hearings; August hearings for review and adoption; the planned update to the City Council; differences between policies, goals, and administrative actions; policies without a corresponding implementation action; ensuring projects are consistent with policy; items for implementation in a specified time period; and a request from staff to forward any disconnect between policy and implementation to allow staff to determine whether there has been any oversight.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding appreciation to those who have worked on the process; the pandemic; policy items that are supposed to last 20 years but already feel dated; the importance of public engagement; disruption to engagement as a result of the pandemic; examination of the comments received and response to the comments; the process; people who would like to understand the differences between the original General Plan

and the new one; an observation that the proposed increase in population would be the first increase since World War II; documents from re-envisioning the downtown area in 1991; undoing what was done in the last General Plan; robust trainings about different topics in 2019; the hopeful vision for what Culver City can become; consequences of land use restrictions; development of housing in open spaces; urban sprawl; additional Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and increased emissions; housing that did not keep up with additional jobs created in the City; negative impacts to marginalized communities; inviting more housing development to the City; and a suggestion to recommend that the City Council align the Zoning Code with the General Plan on all land use, state law, and allowable uses.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the importance of alignment to provide a level of vision and certainty for the future; concern with ambiguity providing unexpected opportunities; misalignments; the amount of feedback received; the Community Engagement Summary; feedback demographics that skew in specific ways; finding a way to engage more of the community during the Public Hearing process; benefits of having feedback earlier in the process; issues with traffic and commuting; the broken system in Culver City and Los Angeles; the ineffectiveness of additional roads and traffic lanes to alleviate traffic; the importance of more details for the safety and sustainability vision statement; a suggestion to indicate that zoning for the IOF will be determined to ensure that the area does not accidentally become R-1 due to oversight; and appreciation to staff for their work.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding lack of a value statement in the previous General Plan; MU-1 vs. MU-2 designations; examples of small apartments on small lots; older examples of higher density that what would not be allowed today under the base density of MU-1; height and massing; concern that areas are not being up-zoned; density bonuses with affordable housing; commercial feasibility; and a suggestion to increase allowable density.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding making a summary recommendation to increase density; caution regarding conversations about specific properties that have not been noticed; the importance of discussing the matter in a general framework corridor

fashion; the 35 dwelling units per acre designation; incentives that can be layered on top; larger parcels that have been increased to MU-2 with a base density of 50 dwelling units per acre; recalibration of density bonuses to new higher densities found throughout the City; acknowledgement that 35 dwelling units per acre is the same as what is allowed today; proposed development applications with affordable housing on the corridors being built at higher densities; the amount of by-right residential land area in the City; the need to address the missing middle; workforce housing; a suggestion to change MU-1 to 50 units per acre; the fact that most of MU-1 is smaller lots; opportunities for affordable housing on larger lots; ensuring feasibility; goals of the General Plan not to concentrate certain things in certain areas; concern with 100% affordable housing by the freeway; density; and aligning the Zoning Code with land use.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding concern with changing the definition of MU-1 to make everything MU-2; the fact that things can get big quickly; the need to work with the community before making such a change; the revolutionary nature of what is being proposed; imposing large changes on the commercial districts; the need to recalibrate the environmental study to consider the proposed increase; concern with meeting the October 15, 2024 deadline if those changes were made; aligning the General Plan with the Zoning Code; the IOF settlement recently signed; leaving the matter to the City Council; additional work to be done; City Council purview; community engagement; providing a rubric to help people understand the changes; commercial vs. mixed-use; the feeling that the changes would not result in as much added housing as one would think; the Greenhouse Gas Element; placing focus on adding a staff position for a Sustainability Manager for Culver City; and majority Planning Commission direction on the Land Use Element that includes increasing the 35 unit per acre density in MU-1 to something more substantial, and fixing the reconciliation between the land use map and the zoning map for the Inglewood Oil Field.

Commissioner Menthe voiced his opposition to the recommendation.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the equity statement; SB1000 priority neighborhoods; adding emphasis to mobility and parks; ensuring that other processes and documents separate from the

General Plan such as the Short Range Mobility Plan and the comprehensive study of the transit system are included in an implementation action or a policy; connecting the Fox Hills Transit Center to the neighborhood; lack of bicycle and pedestrian connections; the west Washington area; adding specificity in coordination with other agencies with regard to SB1000 neighborhoods; connections to Ballona Creek and the Ballona Creek Bike Path; improving walkability; missing sidewalks; lack of policy or implementation action; the pedestrian network map that does not include SB1000 neighborhoods; support for work to interweave state law throughout the General Plan; referencing SB1000 neighborhoods in connections to parks; appreciation for involvement with other agencies in SB1000 neighborhoods; the Safety Element; other cities with a Chief Sustainability Officer; staff openness to ideas to improve public engagement; a suggestion for an information tent at The Steps; the need to connect with SB1000 neighborhoods; lack of neighborhood associations for apartment dwellers on Washington Boulevard; collaboration and outreach to schools; targeting an event to La Ballona Elementary due to its proximity to heavily affected areas; online feedback; opportunities for public input at Public Hearings; augmenting communication efforts; decisions made in earlier discussions to not make notification about changes to R-1 zoning very visible; determining the type of engagement desired; mild communication about the General Plan; people who show up at the last minute; and reluctance to recommending staffing to the City Manager.

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Item A-2

PC - (1) Receive an Update on the Draft Zoning Code Framework for Implementation of the Draft General Plan and (2) Discuss and Provide Comments as Appropriate

Troy Evangelho, Advance Planning Manager, introduced the presentation.

Simran Malhotra, Raimi + Associates, provided an overview of the zoning framework; discussed proposed zones and overlays; the draft zoning map; high-level uses and development standards; height densities; objective design standards; inconsistencies between the General Plan and the Zoning Code; SB330; mixed-use designations; overlays; and changes to the

General Plan Land Use Map to ensure consistency with existing uses and compatibility with surrounding uses.

Alessandra Lundin, Raimi + Associates, provided details on different zones and General Plan designations; discussed densities; FAR (Floor Area Ratio); regulating the intensity of non-residential development; height; the move toward mixed-use zones in the City; differences within the mixed-use zones; examination of minimum unit sizes and ground floor commercial requirements; base densities; incentives; accommodating increased densities and intensities; Special Purpose zones; the new Institutional Zone; Planned Development zones; the draft zoning framework; allowed uses; proposed changes to the use tables; and non-conforming uses.

Troy Evangelho, Advance Planning Manager, indicated that the Mixed-Use High category was spread out throughout the City.

Simran Malhotra, Raimi + Associates, discussed next steps for the Zoning Code in the General Plan.

Chair Jones invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Judi Sherman discussed the City's targeting of the Fox Hills area south of Slauson for the high density designation of 100 units per acre; current developer proposals totaling 1,709 units; she pointed out that the south side of Slauson was the densest part of Fox Hills with 2,800 units; she recommended putting the high density designation on the north side of Slauson; acknowledged that housing is needed; discussed the need for equitable distribution of housing; high density proposed for other areas that are not as dense as Fox Hills already is; concern that comments submitted to lower the density were not included in the engagement summary; the importance of recommending to lower the density designation in Fox Hills before the General Plan is adopted; two more cycles of state housing requirements that are coming; penciling out a lower density to examine what actual numbers would look like with density bonuses and other incentives included; concern with making an expedient decision rather than a sensible one; the importance of considering unique areas of the City on a case-by-case basis; the rigid mantra of high density all over the City; lack of common sense; City awareness of community concerns regarding density;

discrimination for the ethnically diverse area in the City; and the resident generated petition circulated.

Deborah Wallace, Fox Hills Alliance, discussed the discriminatory practice of redlining in Culver City; neglect of the Fox Hills area; Fox Hills residents barred from Culver City schools until 1984; placing the burden of providing affordable housing on the Fox Hills community; other areas that evade their responsibilities; and she asked that the City be fair by equitably distributing resources.

Andrew Flores discussed permitted housing; the potential for reducing costs for the missing middle in R-3 and larger zones by allowing for ministerial approvals; comments from the previous speakers that illustrate unbalanced community outreach; the need to center outreach in the APA Equity and Zoning Policy Guide and the APA Planning Equity Policy Guide; comments on the draft EIR; alternatives to choose from; lowering dwelling units per acre in Fox Hills; and the need for community voices to support alternatives to meet the needs of the community.

Kevin Brogan spoke representing owners of a portion of the Inglewood Oil Field (IOF); discussed the zoning map; designation of county property as open space; A-2 zoning; property outside of Culver City's jurisdiction; and he pointed out issues with designating the privately owned property as open space.

Jack Walter reiterated his earlier comments; asserted that Fox Hills was surrounded by hills and a cemetery and was one of the lower density areas in the City; discussed creating affordable housing by creating inventory; bonuses and incentives; market-rate housing; private developers driven by profits and sustainability; developers working on thin margins; meeting regional housing requirements; inventory brought in to help stabilize rents; and he expressed strong support for development in Fox Hills to create a small city unto itself.

Hillary Haran felt that people who live in Fox Hills were not being included in the process of making decisions noting the lack of diversity in people speaking; she questioned how much time was spent in Fox Hills; proposed setting up an informational session in Fox Hills Park or approaching residents to be involved in the decision-making process;

pointed out that few people were going to attend a meeting on Valentine's Day at 7:00 p.m.; she asserted that the proposed density was too much for the neighborhood and would negatively impact residents; and she asked the City to focus on other areas and not to burden Fox Hills with the full density of what the City was proposing.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding five areas proposed for Zoning Code changes to maintain auto uses; changes to the General Plan vs. changes to the Zoning Code; the referendum regarding height limits in certain areas of the City; the need for action by the voters to change height limits in certain areas; inconsistencies; the municipal code; what parcels the height limit applies to; preliminary analysis; current proposals that are higher than 56 feet; exploration of where the 56 foot height limit applies; the Hayden Tract; the Jefferson Corridor; areas adjacent to transit; heights to be finalized after site testing; options to accommodate density; parking requirements; units per acre plus FAR; clarification that state density could require the height limit to be broken; and instances where R-1 or R-2 are eliminated.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding community engagement for the Fox Hills community; the Fox Hills Specific meeting that was not held in Fox Hills itself; residents who do not feel heard; the need to look for opportunities to allow residents to be heard; clarification that state housing mandates would be met; RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Assessment) allocations; appreciation to Fox Hills residents for calling in; acknowledgement that density is bunched up in the area; the fact that a meeting could not be held in Fox Hills as illustrating that SB1000 neighborhoods lack resources; residents asking for more equitably distributed housing; references to RLD, RMD, and RHD zones; MU-1 along Washington Boulevard; ensuring there are programs for SB1000 neighborhoods; the limitation to no more than four units per lot in R-1; affirmatively furthering fair housing; adding housing to industrial areas; and areas of the City that are off-limits.

Further discussion ensued between staff, Simran Malhotra, and Commissioners regarding clarification that most cities are retaining their R-1 designations; use of SB9 to get up to four units per lot; separate conveyance; relaxed minimum standards and expedited processes; allowing 4 units per lot as effectively putting 35 units per acre; pre-approved ADU

(Accessory Dwelling Unit) plans and instructions on the City website; and outreach.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Jones invited public comment.

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

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Mark Muenzer, Planning and Development Director, discussed the upcoming meeting schedule and agenda items; the presentation to the City Council on Zoning Code amendments to the draft General Plan Update on February 26, 2024; and the City Council Strategic Planning session on February 16, 2024 at the Senior Center.

Vice Chair Reilman indicated that he would not be available for the March 27, 2024 Planning Commission meeting.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 9:38 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on March 13, 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