

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

October 19, 2022
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Barba called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers and via Webex.

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

Absent: Ed Ogosta, Vice Chair

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Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barba led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Barba invited public comment.

The following members of the public received clarification that this portion of the agenda was to make comment on Items NOT on the Agenda and indicated that their comments were for Item PH-1:

Sean Silva
Pedro Toscano
Enrique Fernandez

Chair Barba discussed procedures to make public comment and encouraged anyone who wanted to speak and had not signed up, to do so.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, reported that 33 emails received for Item PH-1 had been forwarded to Commissioners and Staff.

Chair Barba confirmed that Commissioners had received the distributed correspondence.

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Public Hearing Item

Item PH-1

PC - Consideration of a Site Plan Review to allow the demolition of an existing one-story and two-story office building and surface parking lots and the construction of a new four story, 145,751 square foot office building with three subterranean parking levels at 3817-3855 Watseka Avenue (Project)

William Kavadas, Assistant Planner, presented a summary of the material of record and he discussed project details.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding parking requirements; parking spaces historically allocated to 3840 Watseka; the agreement between the developer and the property owner; replacement parking; parking across the street; and meeting the current code.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

Chair Barba invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Marcos Velayos, Park and Velayos, introduced the item.

Rob Kane, LPC West, discussed other developments they had in the City and he provided background on the organization.

Allan Lee, LPC West, provided a presentation on the project; discussed location; size; zoning; current conditions; proposed use; transportation and site access; and parking.

Michael White, Gensler, discussed community and pedestrian engagement; enhancing the pedestrian experience; public seating; landscaping; lighting; green energy; proximity to transit; infiltration systems; rainwater capture; use of natural materials; below grade parking; sustainability; Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels; increasing natural light and fresh air; terraces and balconies; air filtration; and bicycle facilities and amenities.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding sidewalk width; increasing the courtyard size; setback; benches; bike racks; accommodating deliveries; and the study of pedestrian travel.

Chair Barba reported meeting with the project team.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding amount of storage for rainwater capture; proposed usage of the water for irrigation; and plans for the building to be all electric.

Sean Silva, Creed LA, expressed support for the high quality project; discussed the location; responding to needs; elegant design; and he asserted that the project addressed land use and environmental needs.

Pedro Toscano, Carpenters Local 661, expressed support for the project; discussed the commitment from the developer to

hire responsible contractors that will provide family-supporting wages and benefits; jobs created; use of local employees; the need for retirement options for workers; and he asked that the Commission approve the project.

Paula Gerez was called to speak but was not present online.

Crispin Carrasco indicated being a local union carpenter; provided background on himself; wanted to see the local project approved; discussed gas prices; commuting; use of local contractors; and he noted that the developer was committed to hiring union carpenters, paying wages, and providing benefits.

Enrique Fernandez provided background on himself; discussed his work with at-risk youth; jobs; Local 300; empowering youth with employment and a better life; employment opportunities; and he expressed support for the project.

Omar Galindo, UA Plumbers Local 78, discussed long-term economic benefits for the City; use of local, responsible contractors; beneficial economic impacts; and he asked the Commission to support the project.

Jose Radillo, Laborers International Union North America (LIUNA); provided background on himself; discussed commuting to work; his desire to work in the City; union jobs brought to the community; and he expressed support for the project moving forward.

Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers' Local 300, discussed developers providing a career path to give people a second chance; providing jobs for returning veterans and women; providing the opportunity to build a life; benefits; pensions; and he urged the Commission to support the project.

Jose Garcia, LIUNA, expressed excitement about the project; discussed working with skilled labor; he expressed support for the developer; and he urged the Commission to move the project forward.

Keith Ponce, Local 661, expressed support for those involved with the project; discussed the architecture; solar panels; water conservation; other projects in the City by these developers; keeping money in the City; he commended the

developer for bringing in local hires; and he asserted that union carpenters fully supported the building.

Nicolas Reyes was called to speak but was not online.

Brian Germain, Union Local 105, discussed the solar panels; rainwater capture; indoor air quality; impressive architectural features on the project; add-ons; adapting to new technology; using mass transit; living close by to work; and he asked the Commission to support the project.

Gus Torres, Union Local 250, discussed the commitment to hire responsible contractors who pay living wages for quality work; community; partnerships; strengthening the economy and society; and he expressed support for the project.

Samuel Ortiz felt the project was a step in the right direction for the area; noted the benefits for small business owners with all the workers in the area; and he asked the Commission to approve the project.

Jayson Baiz, LIUNA, provided background on himself; discussed good jobs in the City; the project site; and he felt the proposed project would be a beautiful addition to the City.

Vi Vyas discussed concerns with direct impacts of the project to his family; he asked that permit parking be provided for residents in the area and that later construction hours be considered; reported meeting with the developer; and he urged union members not to forget residents.

Isaac Gallegos provided background on himself; discussed the opportunity to work on the project; being a good leader in the community; he indicated that he is one of the youths that Enrique Fernandez spoke of helping to find jobs; and he asked the Commission to approve the project.

Stuart Freeman provided background on himself; expressed support for the project; discussed concerns with being ignored as a small business owner; closure of the sidewalk without notification; the process to bring cable into the Brick and the Machine for Apple; and concern with negative impacts to the businesses.

Kevin Lachoff expressed support for the project; discussed parking; future employees; and project benefits.

Nicolas Reyes was called to speak but was not present online.

Paula Gerez provided background on herself; expressed excitement about the project; discussed parking; LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification; time spent planning; support for hiring local union workers; creating a good pedestrian experience; and she hoped that the Commission would approve the project.

Maria Jacobo, Chamber of Commerce, reported support from the Chamber of Commerce and asked the Commission to approve the project.

David Singerman, LIUNA, provided background on himself and his family; discussed positive effects of a single project on a life; giving back to society; second chances; and he asked the Commission to allow the project to move forward.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding appreciation for the community support; outreach; adding to the sidewalk and public space; public retail application; location of onsite trip facilities; foundation and shoring challenges related to the hospital with the Brick and the Machine; appreciation for the feedback from those who will be building the project; support for the sawtooth design and solar panels; concern that the amount of parking provided would induce demand; support for the pedestrian-friendly project and for getting rid of curb cuts; proximity to public transportation; projected trip generation; the required parking minimum; whether the project could be approved with 394 parking spaces; issues for the other building; ensuring that the City is not interfering in a contract between other parties; and concern that the amount of parking is not justified in light of the best interest of the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Marcos Velayos, Park and Velayos, discussed the need to provide parking for the second building so that they can be in compliance; he asserted that if parking were not provided, there would be no project and the area would continue to be a parking lot; he indicated that parking had been provided according to code and there was no practical or legal way to provide less; discussed market development; recent leases; sensitivity to pushing parking rates lower; elimination of parking minimums; peak hour numbers; use of the appropriate methodology; partnerships; and concern with affecting the practicality of the project.

Additional discussion ensued between project representatives, staff, and Commissioners regarding code requirements; the TDM (Transportation Demand Management) exemption; the legal range of parking; ensuring project viability; Site Plan Review (SPR) findings; lack of justification to reduce parking; the draft ordinance for parking minimum reductions; the provision of off-street parking; lack of legal authority to impose parking maximums; and work to balance competing interests to bring the best project forward.

Commissioner Carter reported that she had met with project representatives.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding support for the commitment to work with local union labor; Commission purview; providing space for rideshare services and deliveries; concern with overparking; concern with compatibility with the scale and design of surrounding developments; detrimental effects to public life and quality of life in the City; findings for design and layout interference with existing or future neighborhood development; lack of open air or anything inviting for the public; the new Housing Element; concern that the developer and the architect owe the City a better project; concern with putting a standard glass office building in the middle of the charming area; making changes to improve quality of life in the City; the need to make changes quickly in order to allow the construction team to get to work; current parking requirements; options moving forward; and continuing the item to allow all Commissioners to consider the project.

Marcos Velayos, Park and Velayos, requested that the item be continued to allow for full Commission consideration.

Further discussion ensued between project representatives, staff, and Commissioners regarding construction hours; sound mitigation; the analysis prepared by ESA; the agreed upon construction noise barrier for 3816 Watseka; bicycle parking; utilization of the parking stackers; concern with being able to attract a high quality user in the building with the parking that is provided; practical realities; ensuring the viability of the project; parking intrusion into the neighborhoods; finding alternative parking to ensure the viability of the project; providing additional resources for bicycle facilities around the site and offsite; appreciation for offsetting parking with more TDM measures; and ensuring that a full Commission is available for consideration of the item.

Marcos Velayos, Park and Velayos, requested a brief recess to allow the applicant time to evaluate concerns brought up at the meeting and make an effort to address them.

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Recess/Reconvene

Chair Barba called a brief recess from 8:03 p.m. to 8:11 p.m.

Item PH-1
(Continued)

PC - Consideration of a Site Plan Review to allow the demolition of an existing one-story and two-story office building and surface parking lots and the construction of a new four story, 145,751 square foot office building with three subterranean parking levels at 3817-3855 Watseka Avenue (Project)

Rob Kane, LPC West, reported willingness to reduce parking by 20 spaces.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN AND SECONDED BY CHAIR BARBA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT THE RESOLUTION ADOPTING A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION AND APPROVING A SITE PLAN REVIEW FOR P2022-0190 SPR SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL INCLUDING A MAXIMUM OF 531 PARKING SPACES.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: BARBA, JONES, REILMAN

NOES: CARTER
ABSENT: OGOSTA

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Barba invited public comment.

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

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the upcoming meeting schedule and agenda items.

Chair Barba indicated that she would need to attend the October 26, 2022 meeting remotely.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:14 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on October 26, 2022.

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RUTH MARTIN DEL CAMPO
SECRETARY of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED _____

NANCY BARBA
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