

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

March 9, 2022
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Sayles called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. via Webex.

Present: Dana Sayles, Chair
Nancy Barba, Vice Chair
Jennifer Carter, Commissioner
Ed Ogosta, Commissioner

Absent: Andrew Reilman, Commissioner

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Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Sayles led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Sayles invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, indicated that no requests to make public comment had been received for Items NOT on the Agenda.

Heather Baker, City Attorney, announced the hiring of a new Deputy City Attorney who would be taking over as Legal Counsel for the Planning Commission.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

PC: Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2022

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 9, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Public Hearing Item

Item PH-1

PC - PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of a Site Plan Review, Administrative Modification, and Administrative Use Permit (P2021-0171-SPR/AM/AUP) for the Construction of a 3-Story, 16,900 Square Feet of Office Structure and Subterranean Parking at 5861-5863 Washington Boulevard (Project)

Deborah Hong, Planning Technician, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the exemption of valet requirements for the tandem parking; justification for the height; the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) exemption; alignment with the current General Plan; project fees; exemption from the mobility fee; clarification that the site is in a designated Transit Priority Area (TPA); Transportation Study Guidelines; mobility measures built into the project in addition to required code parking; retention of Condition 9 to allow for

additional discussion of more measures; deletion of Condition 11; removal of the words "prior to C of O"; and items included in the project in Condition 12.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

Ben Kalenik, Wilkinson Architects, provided a presentation on the architectural ambitions for the project at 5861-5863 Washington Boulevard.

Discussion ensued between project representatives, staff, and Commissioners regarding LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification; solar panels; drought tolerant landscaping; parking requirements for the ground floor space on the Washington side; building concept; plans for parking management with the lack of an onsite parking manager; balancing parking between the two tenants; the Public Art requirement; materials used for the third floor; balcony trim; sun glare; and articulation for the stair tower.

Chair Sayles invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Jamie Wallace was called to speak but was not present on Webex.

Patricia Rhee indicated that she did not wish to speak on the item.

Karim Sahli expressed concern with missing documents; he proposed delaying the project to allow time for proper document review; discussed proximity of the project to the Metro; adding bicycle parking and amenities; concern with the amount of parking provided; the elevator design; concern with signage opportunity; the connection between the building and the neighbors; lack of privacy for the neighbors; concern that bicycle and pedestrian access would be blocked during construction; fines; setbacks; and softening the back of the building.

Jack Walter expressed support for the project and for the architect.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification about the TPA and height limits; Condition 25 regarding accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists; areas in the City that have been closed for years during construction; the importance of keeping sidewalks open; and appreciation for the parking reduction.

Additional discussion ensued between project representatives, staff and Commissioners regarding bicycle parking spaces provided; the Art in Public Places requirement; the Condition for tandem parking; reevaluation of conditions after the building is open; consultation with the City Traffic Engineer; requiring other measures as necessary; addressing the need for designated parking areas for individual tenants; mobility measures; adding a Condition; concern with the applicant request for a parking reduction but not providing a plan to manage it; the experience of the Brick and Machine project; adding other mobility measures in exchange for parking reductions; lack of justification for the reductions; non-standard conditions relative to mobility; end of trip facilities; the need for a full discussion of robust mobility measures; revising Condition 12 to include additional bicycle parking to make the project more attractive to a tenant; clarification that the current plan does not propose Bike Share for employees; a suggestion to require one shared bike onsite to encourage someone that drives to not have to get in their car to get around town, and ten additional bikes in any combination of long and short-term in exchange for the request to reduce vehicular parking spaces; secured parking spaces; helping people to feel comfortable bringing their bikes; accommodations being asked for by the developer; bike in-lieu reduction measures used by other cities; space constraints in the small project; concern with imposing a condition that can't be met; support for improving mobility in the project;

and concern with being able to accommodate the additional bicycle parking in the design without reducing automobile parking.

Clive Wilkinson, CWA, discussed the compact project; reducing the size of retail units; other sites in the City; support for adding as many spaces as possible without compromising the plan; and, responding to inquiry, he discussed typical bicycle usage in a similar building in the area of theirs noting that he did not see the demand for four additional bicycle parking spaces.

Further discussion ensued between project representatives, staff and Commissioners regarding current City bike rack requirements; the ability to find space for another short term bike rack; potential short-term bike parking on the sidewalk; upgrades currently included in the project scope; clarification that two bicycle lockers fit in one vehicle parking spot; bike locker standards; long-term bicycle requirements vs. short-term bicycle requirements; security; visibility; stackable bikes at Ivy Station; other possibilities for secure bicycle parking; distance requirements to the elevator for long-term parking; the objective to add more bicycles in the project; reconciling City requirements; flexibility in the code; the ability to add to the minimum requirements; the need for a study by the applicant to see how the parking could occur; the need for a conformance review; establishing a floor for the number of parking spaces required; requiring 10 bike parking spaces; ensuring that requirements are feasible; whether on-street bike parking can count as short-term bike parking; the floor minimum as 10 additional bicycle parking spaces above the proposed four spaces with the goal to be getting to an extra 20 with half short-term and half-long term parking and one of the long-term spaces to be a Bike Share space for the employees; accessibility requirements for bicycle parking spaces; the typical practice to request reduced vehicular parking due to lack of space; and the impracticality of requiring bicycle parking that takes up the same amount of space as the amount reduced.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, proposed language to indicate: "the applicant shall study providing not less than ten additional bike spaces and more as feasible, one half short-term, one half-long-term onsite and offsite and one as a Bike Share."

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding concern with giving the approval before coming back with the result; concern that the applicant will say that it cannot be done; consideration of path of travel; operation and function of the building as related to bike parking and open space; clarification that the opposition is not to the parking reduction, but to the fact that there is nothing in return to encourage mobility; concern that an attendant is not proposed for the tandem parking; the inability to regulate tenants; the fact that a project with unregulated tandem parking has not come before the Commission before; the location within the TPA; the circulator; the feeling that minimal parking encourages use of public transportation and that the City does not need to impose valet parking requirements; leaving it up to the tenants to negotiate tandem parking spots; the height exception; concern with the blank surfaces on the building; mediocre architecture in the east end of town; support for the articulation, landscaping and open air stairwell; the Conformance Review; the fine line between elegant and boring; issues that would not be quick to remedy; and the sign ordinance in the zoning code.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding adding to Conditions: the standard Valet Condition Parking Operations Plan; development fees, elimination of Condition 12, subsection 9 regarding prior to Certificate of Occupancy language, and eliminating subsection 11 from the resolution; adding standard parking plan valet language; modifying the condition regarding the required number of bikes; and agreement to delete subcondition 11 and add a new condition to indicate: "the applicant shall study providing not less than ten additional bike spaces and more as feasible with one half short-term, one half-long-term onsite and offsite and one as a Bike Share for employees and shall return with a revised Bike Parking Plan at the next regular Commission meeting. If providing bike parking on the public right of way, the applicant shall work with Public Works to determine whether it is feasible."

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification regarding applicant availability; encouragement that the elevator tower be revisited; concern with requiring ten additional spaces if the study indicates that cannot be achieved; latitude to provide onsite and offsite parking; adding flexibility by not requiring half long-term and half short-term since long-term parking spaces are not generally allowed in the public right of way; allowing

the Condition to be flexible due to unknown factors; consultation with Public Works staff; providing a mix of spaces; allowing the applicant to do the study; providing leniency; a suggestion to continue the hearing; the intent that extra bikes be provided; understanding the scope of the problem and the solution; encouraging the applicant to come back with a few options to consider; and difficulty making the findings to approve the developer requests.

Chair Sayles proposed a motion requesting that the applicant return on April 13 with design modifications and a revised parking plan. Vice Chair Barba seconded the motion and the discussion continued.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding making affirmative findings based upon the request in front of the Commission; the request for an updated bicycle parking plan from the applicant that accommodates up to 10 parking spaces with alternatives if it is not feasible and making improvements to the design on the upper floors where the extra height appears to be adding to an imposing blank wall on the elevator tower; and the intent that the large series of blank walls on the upper floors that are exacerbated by the extra height be addressed.

MOVED BY CHAIR SAYLES AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CONTINUE THE HEARING UNTIL APRIL 13, 2022 TO ALLOW TIME FOR THE APPLICANT TO REVISIT THE FAÇADE DESIGN, ELEVATOR TOWER, AND UPPER FLOOR BLANK WALLS, AND BIKE PARKING TO ADDRESS THE REDUCED PROJECT AUTOMOBILE PARKING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

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Recess/Reconvene

Chair Sayles called a brief recess from 10:12 p.m. to 10:17 p.m.

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PC - Consideration of a City-Initiated Zoning Code Amendment Regarding Ground Floor Uses in the Commercial Downtown (CD) Zone

Jose Mendivil, Associate Planner, provided a summary of the material of record.

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

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

Chair Sayles invited public input.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Karim Sahli expressed support removing parking requirements downtown but felt that more could be done; discussed making changes to the table on page 8 to reflect parking maximums rather than minimums; and the importance of responding to the climate crisis.

Bubba Fish expressed appreciation for efforts to address parking surpluses; discussed the number of downtown parking facilities; cities that have abolished parking minimums; increases to housing costs with parking minimums; harm to people who need housing the most; pushing "Mom and Pops" out of the equation by requiring amenities that not everyone needs; studies indicating that without maximums, more parking is built in areas with the highest density and the best transit service; and developers building for luxury.

David Voncannon expressed support for the amendment; discussed allowing flexibility of services; activating the street-level; and allowing for a greater variety of businesses in the downtown area.

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding seizing the opportunity to activate the ground floor with commercial spaces downtown; sufficient parking in the downtown area; addressing changes in the retail world and changes in the public right of way in the downtown area; providing more outdoor dining space; origin of the proposed changes and whether they are enough to make a difference for the businesses; difficulty with tenancing due to restrictive standards; alternative uses; in-lieu fees; taking the opportunity to inform future developments in the downtown area; Brick and the Machine; instituting parking maximums rather than parking minimums; the objective of the code amendment; the need to complete research before moving forward; meeting the objective to accommodate outdoor dining with the MOVE Culver City project and address tenancing issues; concern with adding in other issues at the same time; base parking; solving the problem of change of use; City Council policy; onsite parking for smaller retail uses; legal non-conforming uses; alternative parking provisions; off-site parking agreements; parking requirements for financial institutions; the Downtown Overlay Zone created in the early 1990s; the conversion from square footage to a ratio; Board of Zoning Adjustment consideration; what is considered the downtown area according to the Land Use Element; issues being addressed by the proposed changes; support for anything that does not hinder businesses; the actions of Santa Monica to eliminate parking standards for businesses; implications of changes; the parking amendment; concern with addressing items in a piecemeal fashion; clarification that the current item is to address usage and parking is incidental; the need for City Council approval of the code amendment; further amending parking standards including the downtown standards; the potential for the change to be temporary or permanent; modifications to the comprehensive parking code amendment that would not change the intent of modifying uses to allow businesses to move forward; serving the City in the best way by reducing parking as much as possible; other reasons that people cannot tenant; case studies and research that show that reducing parking works; concern that supporting the item limits the ability to campaign for less parking in the future; and the evolution of code changes over time.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION: APPROVE A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT A ZONING CODE AMENDMENT.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Sayles invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Karim Sahli expressed appreciation for the speed of which Item PH-2 came on the agenda; he thanked staff for their efforts; and he expressed hope that parking amendments and parking maximums would come forward with the same speed.

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Receipt of Correspondence

None.

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, indicated that he would send Commissioners a schedule of upcoming items.

Vice Chair Barba questioned whether the upcoming items included mixed use residential streamlining and the parking code.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 11:04 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned.

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RUTH MARTIN DEL CAMPO
ADMINISTRATIVE CLERK of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED _____

DANA SAYLES
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.

JeremyBocchino
CITY CLERK

Date