

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

April 13, 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 7:08 p.m. in person and via Webex.

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

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Pledge of Allegiance

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Heather Baker, City Attorney, introduced Christina Burrows, the new Deputy City Attorney for the City.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, introduced Current Planning Manager, Erika Ramirez.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, explained procedures for making public comment.

Chair Sayles discussed meeting procedures and noted differences in procedures from the previous Webex-only meetings.

Jeremy Bocchino, City Clerk, discussed procedures for Commissioner motions, voting, and comments, and availability of staff reports and attachments.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Sayles invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Planning Commission:

Karim Sahli indicated difficulty accessing the chat function; discussed the importance of installing bicycle infrastructure all around the City; and he expressed hope that staff would take bike infrastructure into consideration when considering projects.

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Receipt of Correspondence

None.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

PC: Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of February 23, 2022

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 23, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING.

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Item C-2

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

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

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: BARBA, CARTER, OGOSTA, SAYLES
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: 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: Continuation of the Public Hearing for 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)

Commissioner Reilman indicated that while he had missed the previous meeting, he had read the record and felt ready to participate in the item.

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

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding a request for a materials board; the change to in-person meetings; graphic examples provided; and application and function of the materials.

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Clive Wilkinson, Clive Wilkinson Architects, discussed the site location; parking; scale; proving the viability of a site of that size; maximizing floor area; challenges; breaking down the building mass; interesting articulation for pedestrian scale; respecting the adjacent residential scale; providing visual interest; perforation to allow air into the parking area; concealing parking areas from the street; activation of the area; expressing interior office use;

dramatizing the meeting rooms; exploring views from the interior; shielding the offices from the western sun and glare; landscape integration; nighttime transparency of the interiors; appreciation for the Planning Commission input to make a better building; art intervention on the elevator tower; short-term bike racks; the perforated staircase cladding; the fire rated wall; visual interest on the façade; the terraces; and bicycle parking.

Discussion ensued between Clive Wilkinson, staff, and Commissioners regarding the representation of the art piece on the elevator tower; the process for review of the art component; rare instances where the art would be a material change to the design; Commission consideration of the change in materials for the Haven project; the Public Art component; and clarification that the applicant priced a mural to determine a reasonable budget

Chair Sayles invited public comment.

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

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding long-term bike lockers; ensuring that lockers stay in place; Code Enforcement; the desire of the project team to maximize bike parking; articulation; changing heights and plane in the building elevations; designs that will not be coming in front of the Planning Commission; the improvement on the existing site; reenforcing the Gateway condition on Washington Boulevard; bringing in activity and reinvigorating that part of the City; addressing bigger design issues; items baked into the project; bringing the elevator out onto the street; hope that the mural is appropriate to the area rather than being a band-aid; items requested by the Commission that were related to the variance; accommodation of the bicycle parking; appreciation for efforts made; whether additional materials went too far; the Public Art piece on the elevator tower; lack of a rendering last time; and the difficulty of understanding what the project will look like from a rendering on a piece of paper.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, indicated that staff had missed a request for Karim Sahli to speak.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the elevator tower; appreciation for the approach to the challenging site; and support for the Public Art component.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RE-OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Karim Sahli noted that speakers must register separately for each item they want to speak on and since he did not have access to the participant list, he could not submit comment to let staff know that he had not been called to speak; he expressed concern that it would be too difficult for many people to use the top bike rack; wanted to see any infrastructure be available for all cyclists; discussed green walls; water resistant plants; the 20-year lifespan of the mural; and he suggested making the project interesting during the day and during the evening by using the same kind of skin that is used around the building with lighting between the wall and the metal structure.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding use of an artist that reflects the diversity of the community; the choice of what goes on the elevator; approval of the art concept by Cultural Affairs Commission; the need to repaint; use of durable materials; requirements for drought-tolerant landscaping; and clarification that no modification to the conditions are needed.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT A CLASS 32 CEQA CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION, APPROVE A SITE PLAN REVIEW, ADMINISTRATIVE USE PERMIT, AND ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION FOR A 3-STORY, 16,900 SQ. FT. OFFICE DEVELOPMENT, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL PER THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION.

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Action Item

Item A-1

PC - Review and Discussion of Proposed Design Guidelines (Guidelines) Associated with a Zoning Code Amendment to Streamline the Residential Development Entitlement Process

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding streamlining of residential guideline standards for additional homes and single-family vs. mixed-use; single family objective design standards related to larger buildings; determining what constitutes something that should be ministerial; helping the production of mixed-use and multi-family; the agenda item vs. the design packet; history of the project; the applicability of standards depending on location and size of the project; determining the threshold for a ministerial project; design criteria; and the discussion document.

William Kavadas, Assistant Planner, provided a summary of the material of record.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the regulatory element; reducing bulk and mass; the issue of setbacks and step-backs; unusable open space; design features; actual definitions vs. guidelines; objectivity of the guidelines; compliance with objective standards; the Housing Accountability Act; SB 330; ensuring that anyone looking at the standards comes to the same conclusion; application of the standards to more than just those projects that are required to be streamlined under state law; the opportunity to create separate standards; applying objective standards to streamlined projects; discussion points; and regulatory items.

MOVED BY VICE CHAIR BARBA, SECONDED COMMISSIONER OGOSTA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Chair Sayles invited public input.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

Stephen Jones noted that SB 330 specifically prohibited imposing standards on land where housing is an allowable use; discussed other land uses; consistency with what was adopted in the Housing Element; the Housing Accountability Unit; authority to enforce compliance; and he felt it did not make sense to implement something that would have to be changed.

Karim Sahli was called to speak but was not present in Council Chambers or on Webex.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding existing standards and policy integration; codification of guidelines as a section of the zoning code vs. creating a standalone document; the fact that all sites are not created equal; deviations; support for a standalone document; how much weight guidelines have; discretionary review of the project; having guidelines to add teeth to; concern with adding doubt into the development process; the intent to streamline the process; Commission bandwidth to review additional projects; staff workload; concern with creating guidelines that are not objective; the threshold issue; providing a one page checklist; the feeling that anything that conflicts with zoning parameters has no place in design guidelines; concern with dictating that all buildings look the same way; items that require clarification that could be dealt with in code amendments; the checklist previously provided to the Commission; serial and successive code amendments; projects currently in process that will not have the benefit of streamlining; reliance on code provisions; creation of design standards vs. making the building meet building and codes; ensuring a sense of quality; Los Angeles as a city developed without any guidelines; the need for a comprehensive, planned look for the City; and small ways to provide a baseline to ensure a language of architecture and structure for the City to maintain what exists.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding problematic elements; defining the most important items to create a discernable set of guidelines; appropriate form and mass; things that will be in direct conflict with what was adopted; accommodating the intensity of development in the General Plan; the Gateway Design Guidelines; reductions to the Floor Area Ratio (FAR); SB 330; guidelines

from the city of Sacramento; the need to eliminate the many steps required to create housing; the spirit of the item to streamline and help development move forward; maintaining control of what is in the Commission purview; the Commission as a design review body; the threshold in the City that anything that is 3 units or more has to come before the Commission; making it easier for certain kinds of projects; treating a 10-unit project differently from a 200-unit project; defining the threshold for ministerial review; size and scale of the project; different variables depending on location; imposing setbacks and step-backs depending on location; helping right-sized projects move forward in a more comprehensive manner; projects that are categorically exempt; guidelines that vary by district or relate to projects of a certain size; including a timeline for disposition; aspirational goals vs. objective standards; threshold of units that are housing in mixed-use retail; the definition of housing projects under the law; going further than requirements; streamlining residential as much as possible; mixed-use and multifamily developments; the missing middle project size; changes to the law; significant design considerations for larger scale projects; by-right development for projects of less than 20-30 units; concern with preventing development with too many restrictions; the actions of the city of Sacramento; and the upcoming Comprehensive Zoning Code Update.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the voter initiated height limit in the City; creation of an interim solution; the General Plan Update; the timeline for the zoning code implementation; amending the zoning ordinance to conform to the General Plan; the interim solution; conformance with state law; AB 1398; streamlining that would compel developers to create a lot of housing; the interpretation of AB 1398 by HCD; cities without a compliant Housing Element; the ability of cities in California to meet the timeline; the period of time where the City will not have a comprehensive rezoning in place; the ability to adopt streamlining; SB 10; AB 2345; ministerial state density bonuses; tools that allow for flexibility within state provisions; meeting minimum affordability thresholds; larger projects that would not have to be quantified; determining a number independent of other allowances; the feeling that all 100% affordable projects should be ministerial; ministerial approval for any 10-unit project containing 20% affordable housing; scales of equivalency that increase numbers; the threshold for market-rate development; conventional

financing; ministerial approval of parcel map projects; the need to conform to state law; uniform application of standards; and placing the focus on relevant items.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding consensus that projects with 10-units or less containing 20% or more affordable units receive ministerial approval; ADUs vs. JADUs; base density; density bonuses; units per acre; the difficulty of assembling an acre in the City; other items affected in the process; the need for the City to adopt an SB 10 ordinance; state requirements for affordability; codification of the ministerial parcel map process; workforce housing; local density bonus law to reach the missing middle in housing production; clarification that the 20% affordable housing would have to be based on local density bonus law; testing the change to see if it is enough of an incentive before the zoning code update is made; the trade-off of going through the public process; the experience of the city of Santa Monica; consideration by the Commission as recourse for an instance where someone refuses to abide by the guidelines; getting through the process; providing flexibility; concern with being over-proscriptive; challenging sites; acknowledgement that anything that comes to the Commission is subject to appeal by the City Council; the regular public hearing process; and CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act).

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding concern with vague language such as: "new projects are encouraged to..."; the difficulty of determining that someone has tried and failed; inserting requirement language; requiring that new projects have to meet a certain number of guidelines; elements to require on the checklist; existing zoning standards, FAR and lot coverage requirements; prevailing setbacks and prevailing height; conflicts with the underlying zoning standards and the Housing Element; lack of objectivity for language encouraging the development to be considerate of neighbors; multi-family design guidelines; staff efforts to consider issues of privacy; requiring plans to show window alignment to the neighboring property; adding to the length of the review process; adding quantifiable privacy concerns on the checklist; concern with language indicating "to the extent feasible"; specifying a percentage; rear-site parking requirements; single family design guidelines; neighborhood character; changing the feasibility of lots; material requirements; added costs; deleting language regarding parking; inserting language to limit the

percentage of frontage that is garage; Gateway conditions; front subterranean parking garages for multi-unit projects; a suggestion to add language regarding carport and garages to indicate: "no more than three deviations in material color or detail from the main building"; language regarding limits to the percentage of subterranean parking; allowing space for trees to grow; carports in the front of the building; the soft-story ordinance; integration of the carport into the architecture; screening; landscaping; language regarding drought tolerant plants with water efficient irrigation; quantitative standards; other provisions governing the amount of green open space; the feeling that landscaping does not need to be regulated; lighting; mass and scale; multi-family guidelines for Gateway and Gateway Adjacent; typologies for the blocks within neighborhoods; second story setbacks to emulate the design in one-story typologies; consistent street-frontage; adoption of the standard as part of the mansionization ordinance; consistent street frontage; agreement to strike language for second story setbacks; crafting checklist types of sentences; intent; the previously considered over-articulated project; building clarity; background buildings; empty gestures; practical housing; tying accessory structures to the primary structure architecturally; language to allow a maximum of four variations in color and opaque materials across all variations; changes in plane; minimum balcony size; inset vs. usability; concern with mandating inset recessed windows; vertical projections; language regarding architectural features in the code; the vernacular of the building culture of the City; applicability of language regarding passageways, arcades and colonnades; placement of the street frontage definition; qualifying the applicability of standards; corner lots; block to block development; frontage requirements around ADUs; state law governing ADU setbacks; bay windows; distribution of step-backs; things that are fine on a big project, but do not work on smaller ones; language from the East Washington Overlay Zone; architectural details to provide three-dimensional relief; the importance of materials vs. planes; deletion of arbitrary language; signage and parking; amenities that serve residents for projects over a certain size; refuse and collection; encouragement to staff to assign numerical values where possible; better designs with less variation; and staff agreement to return with a revised version for additional Commission consideration.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Sayles invited public comment.

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

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Chair Sayles indicated that she and Commissioner Reilman would not be available for the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting.

Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, discussed upcoming items for Commission consideration.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding holding a special meeting rather than delaying the meeting about parking; the need for printed materials with in-person meetings for large projects; a request to get the parking presentation further in advance of the meeting; presentation of the parking survey results; presentation of research; and drafting of the code after Commission input has been received.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 10:38 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a regular meeting on April 27, 2022.

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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.

Jeremy Bocchino
CITY CLERK

Date