

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

January 25, 2023
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Barba called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 7:05 p.m. in Council Chambers and via Webex.

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

Absent: Ed Ogosta, Vice Chair

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk , reported that Vice Chair Ogosta had recused himself from the meeting due to living within 500 feet of the proposed project.

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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.

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

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Receipt of Correspondence

Ruth Martin del Campo, Administrative Clerk, reported that email for Item PH-1 had been distributed to Commissioners and staff prior to the meeting for review.

Chair Barba confirmed that Commissioners had received the distributed correspondence.

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Consent Calendar

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER REILMAN AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE ITEMS C-1 AND C-2.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

Item C-1

Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2022

THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE DRAFT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 19, 2022.

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Item C-2

Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2022

THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE DRAFT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 14, 2022.

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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 Tentative Parcel Map No. 83986 Consisting of the Creation of Two Air Space Units for Condominium Purposes Located at 4464 Sepulveda Boulevard; the Development is Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act as a Ministerial Project Pursuant to Government Code 65913.4

Andrea Fleck, Planning Technician, provided a summary of the material of record; discussed public comment received from the neighboring property, Culver Palms Family YMCA, requesting that a Condition of Approval be adopted to require that the shared driveway be maintained clear during and after construction to allow access in and out of the YMCA parking lot; requirements that the easement be maintained in full effect; applicant commitment expressed to staff to work with the YMCA to maintain vehicle access to and from the YMCA; the development process; and the required Construction Management Plan.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES 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 Planning Commission:

Tara Barauskas, Community Corporation of Santa Monica, reported working with Culver Palms United Methodist Church to provide the 95-unit affordable housing development; discussed creation of the parcel map; funding sources needed for the

project; and she asked the Planning Commission for their support.

Amy Kim provided background on herself; asked the Commission not to approve the parcel map; discussed the City Council commitment to provide a loan on the condition that Community Corp of Santa Monica work with the immediate community; limited interaction; lack of interest in taking input from the neighborhood; design input; she requested that the City help facilitate engagement as Community Corp had no intention of working closely with the neighborhood; and she expressed concern that moving forward with the approval would limit the ability of the neighbors to have input into the design.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding clarification regarding City Council vs. Planning Commission purview and the process.

Jeanne Black expressed support for approval of the tentative parcel map; discussed the importance of providing permanent affordable housing; and she commended the church for carrying out their mission to serve the community.

Mark Herscovitz provided background on himself; expressed opposition to the approval of the item; requested a thorough staff review of the ministerial exemption approved for the development; cited 2020 California Code Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 4.2, Section 65913.4; questioned how a six-story housing development bordering numerous private parcels was exempted from a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis; discussed significant impacts on local traffic; virtually non-existent public outreach; zoom presentations; lack of consideration or acceptance of public input; dismissal of public input when the presenter thought the public was not in the meeting; lack of opportunity for the public to provide input; significant impacts to neighbors; lack of transparency; concern with streamlining the permitting process for the largest development in the area; underground parking; the need for a seismic study; impacts to property values and safety; sightlines; visual impacts; he expressed support for low-income housing; and he wanted to be included in the process to mitigate impacts and reduce impacts on adjacent homes.

Commissioner Jones received clarification on the Government Code cited.

Deanna Newell provided background on herself; stated that the First United Methodist Church had been a good neighbor until this project; discussed statements made by the church about being a good neighbor and not wanting to build up to the property line; original plans shown vs. current plans; acknowledgement of the need for more affordable housing; traffic and noise issues; forever changing the neighborhood; the elimination of single-family zones; concern that the City would turn into Palms; blockage of light and air; line of sight into bedroom windows; promised landscaping; she asked that the building be tiered and that the City require setbacks to accommodate greenery and air; questioned why the apartment building could not be located at the front of the parcel instead of the back; observed a lack of interest in resident feedback; expressed concern that construction and running of the business would not be done in cooperation with the neighbors if the parcel is approved; and she asked that the Commission not approve the plans without further discussion and review of the plans to make sure it is not harming the City.

Edward Park expressed appreciation to the Commission for hearing resident input on the project; discussed working with Culver Palms United Methodist Church; misdirection, misrepresentation, and false promises; having the footprint of the development respect the footprint of the church; shadow-casting; the feeling of being lied to; an email exchange with Current Planning Manager Erika Ramirez who indicated that meaningful interactions with the developers were required; developer zoom meetings where the neighbors were not allowed to provide input; and he cited the December 2, 2022 City Council meeting where Mayor Vera implored Community Corp to work with the neighbors.

Ken Palmer provided background on himself; discussed the presentation made to the neighbors on the project; unwillingness of the developers to engage with the neighbors who they deemed against the project; Culver Boulevard; commuters; light blockage; City Planning; he expressed frustration with the lack of opportunity to provide input; he noted that the proposed building was larger than a television studio and would be taller than many of the buildings in Culver City; asked that the Commission not approve the project until the neighbors have been heard; and he expressed concern about what would happen to the 7-11 and setting precedent.

Lori Siegel, Culver Palms YMCA, expressed support for the City and the church in providing affordable housing; discussed unclear public notice; parking; shared easement agreements; ingress and egress during construction; active operation of the YMCA from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.; the current shared parking agreement with the church; parking demand created by the project; overflow parking; trash and deliveries; and she questioned when in the process issues would be clarified.

Disa Lindgren, Culver Palms United Methodist Church, expressed support for the project; thanked the Commission for their consideration; discussed using the property to benefit the community; and she indicated that the Church Pastor would be happy to answer any questions.

Johanna Gullick provided background on herself noting her experience in the affordable housing process; urged approval of the item; expressed support for Community Corporation of Santa Monica; discussed current neighbor discomfort; zoning; and she indicated that she was available to answer questions.

Mary Daval spoke in favor of the item; expressed concern with length of the process; thanked Culver Palms for their work; discussed the project as an example of creative solutions to the housing crisis; and she wanted to see less red tape and more green lights.

Tara Barauskas, Community Corporation of Santa Monica, addressed speaker concerns; noted that Zoom community meetings had been required due to the pandemic; discussed efforts to take community comment into consideration; setbacks; landscaping; window orientation; and providing varied elevations.

Discussion ensued between the applicant, staff, and Commissioners regarding offering extremely-low and low-income units; sightlines; agreement to meet with the neighbors; the design review planned with the neighbors; changes to the size of the project; serving more families; allowable number of units; the iterative design process; number of units added; working to reconcile the voices of disappointed neighbors; the importance of public outreach; additional outreach; checks and balances to ensure that concerns are being addressed; the fact that the required number of community meetings were met; the process; staff review of sightlines in Plan Check; the SB (Senate Bill) 35 project; bonuses received;

concessions and waivers; limited application of certain standards; ministerial review; staff discretion; application of design standards and objectives; availability of project information on the City website; required community meetings; purview of the City and the Commission; and parameters of the agenda item.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER 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 support for the ambition of the project; the need for affordable housing; addressing homelessness; traffic reductions; the actions of other religious institutions; appreciation for systemic changes being made for housing in the City; terms of the loan; eligibility for City funding; requirements in the section cited by the speaker; compliance with SB35; commitment of the applicant; insufficient housing built in the area; consistency with objective zoning, subdivision, and design review standards at the time of project submittal; the need for communication; lack of a way to remedy the genuine pain and frustration being heard with the process between the developer and the community; acknowledgement of potential negative effects to the neighbors; the importance of the development to the City; providing needed housing; the importance of developer engagement with the community; disappointment in the process; lack of perceived outreach from the development community; conveying intent to the lay public; following the letter of the law; encouragement to the church and the developer to do a better job of communicating with the neighbors; ensuring that sightlines into the neighbors' windows are taken into consideration; the amount of proposed setback in relationship to the side of the building; consideration of putting the church in the back; equivalent structures; the Culver Palms YMCA; concerns with the shared driveway; the Site Plan Review (SPR); lack of plans included in the staff report; coordinating in and out traffic with residents and children coming to preschool at the YMCA; acknowledgement of speaker concerns; the total number of comments received in opposition vs. the number received in support; community engagement done

by Community Corp; money and resources spent by Hackman Capital to gain support for their projects; commercial development by the Expo; input submitted but not acted upon; required community meetings; other projects that have come through with more opposition; the difficulty of community engagement; the additional community meeting planned; finalizing project details; exemption from discretionary review; the Planning Commission as the acting body on the proposed subdivision; requirement of consideration of maps for approval at a public hearing; planned revision of the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) to include an administrative process for certain types of subdivisions; Commission purview; the State request to relax constraints and reduce fees and process time to speed up construction of affordable housing; tentative parcel map expiration; length of time to finalize the project; the ability to request more time without the project having to return to the Planning Commission; encouragement for the project team and the church to work with the neighbors; and the need for the project in the City.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARTER THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION: APPROVE TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 83986, P2022-0335-TPM, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS STATED IN RESOLUTION NO. 2023-P001.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

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

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Action Items

None.

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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 upcoming agenda items; the meeting schedule; attendance of meetings by the new Director; the electrification study and ordinance; the Land Use Element; the draft General Plan Update; the RFP to complete the comprehensive zoning code update in conjunction with the General Plan; upcoming projects; and the timeline for moving forward.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:25 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on February 8, 2023.

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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