

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

January 22, 2020  
7:00 p.m.

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

Chair Reilman called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 7:03 p.m.

Present: Andrew Reilman, Chair  
Kevin Lachoff, Vice Chair  
Ed Ogosta, Commissioner  
Dana Sayles, Commissioner  
David Voncannon, Commissioner

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Reilman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda**

Chair Reilman invited public input.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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**Consent Calendar**

Item C-1

**Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of  
October 9, 2019**

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER VONCANNON AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OGOSTA THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 9, 2019.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: OGOSTA, REILMAN, VONCANNON  
NOE: NONE  
ABSTAIN: LACHOFF, SAYLES

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Item C-2

**Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2019**

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR LACHOFF THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 13, 2019.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, REILMAN, SAYLES  
NOE: NONE  
ABSTAIN: OGOSTA, VONCANNON

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**Order of the Agenda**

No changes were made.

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**Public Hearings**

Item PH-1

**PC - Consideration of a City-Initiated Zoning Code Amendment Modifying Development Standards for the Single-Family (R1) Residential Zone**

Michael Allen, Planning Manager, introduced the item and thanked John Kaliski and his team for their work.

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

John Kaliski, John Kaliski Architects (JKA), provided background on the study; discussed neighborhood fit; maintaining the existing scale; he summarized the ten draft recommendations; discussed bulk and mass studies; definitions developed for Culver Crest; concern with bootlegging attic spaces; porches; the nexus between the allowable buildable amount and lot size; better utilization of square footage if parking is put in the back; and clarification that Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are not counted toward the Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding ADUs on top of garages; moving the City toward acknowledging public and private right of way; encouraging people to put their new construction toward the back; changes to the neighborhood; preserving the right to make changes; setbacks for the second story; and acknowledging that people are going to build second stories.

John Kaliski, JKA, discussed initial height recommendations; flat roof buildings; affecting perception of the building from the street; design issues; addressing two story buildings that overlook another house; creative solutions; the encroachment plane; equity for surrounding property owners; light, air and spatial issues; modulating the side yard; having people consider where volume is placed; parking requirements; unintended loopholes; the uncovered parking objective; front yard facing garages; achieving less car-centric architecture; design guidelines and providing a design resource to applicants.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER SAYLES, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER VONCANNON AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

The following members of the audience addressed the Commission:

Nicholas Cregor expressed appreciation to those who worked on the item and support for the long overdue reforms; he discussed the 200 square foot allowance; coming into line

with neighboring communities; and he apologized to anyone he might have offended in the process.

Amy Levit expressed appreciation for the work done and hope that the City would listen to the work of the consultants; discussed developers who flip houses; and the loss of air, sunlight, and privacy to over-development.

Chair Reilman noted that Ms. Levit was his fourth grade teacher.

Marla Koosed expressed support for the work of the consultants and the 0.45 FAR whether there is an ADU or not; discussed affects to City services with increases to the population on the same lot size; City planning and design; long term affects to public infrastructure and services; the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and affects to long term planning.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding CEQA; environmental review for projects; mandatory requirements by the state to provide ADUs and exempt them from further environmental review; staff consideration of affects to services; the General Plan Update; and increased density.

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

Discussion ensued between JKA representatives, staff, and Commissioners regarding private space and privacy; placing development in the back; street view; impacts to the neighbors; incentives for creative solutions; concern with creating homes that do not have yards; support for existing context; balancing concerns; making the traditional backyard work; the ability of cities to impose restrictions; having an ADU that is larger than the original structure; predominant single family home types; side garages; preserving the side driveway with garages in the back; the offset configuration vs. filling the back yard with the driveway and garage; offering the same protections for those building a new house with the garage in the back; concern with being more restrictive than state law; designing standards that signal to people where certain development features are preferred; comparing net area between the side driveway and the double garage in the front; area lost with the driveway down the

side vs. a front loaded two-car garage; having more habitable square footage with the garage in the back; building to the maximum envelope; loss of FAR by staying to one story and parking two cars; uncovered parking; incentivizing rear garages; not including a garage in the back in the FAR; the incentive of not requiring covered parking; attitudes of surrounding cities; allowing flexibility for garage location at the rear of the primary structure; visibility from the street; the definition of the rear portion of the lot; alternative lot shapes; the Board of Zoning Adjustment discretion in unusual circumstances; and clarification that language be included indicating: "with the exception that garages located in the rear half of the lot from the front property line"; mechanical screening; criterion for height limitation; adding language to indicate: "mechanical equipment on the roof shall be screened with screening set back from the roof edge"; previous provisions; allowances for higher screening including the parapet when necessary to screen mechanical equipment; including setback requirements; solar equipment; multi-family and commercial requirements vs. single family home requirements for roof mounted mechanical units; the revised text amendment for solar installations; support for reintroducing the one to one ratio for roof mounted equipment; distinguishing between a parapet and screening; addressing a mansard roof; addressing cases where there is a blended roof; interpreting when a wall becomes a roof; setbacks; concern with creating a wedding cake house; the importance of side yard setbacks; massing and privacy concerns along the side; the five foot setback in the front; concern with piling on too many restrictions; feedback from the public that the buildings still look too large; emphasizing the one story character from the street; attempts to respond to feedback; pitched roof expressions vs. flat roof expressions; resident opposition to two story houses; the perception of two story massing whether there is a setback or not; concern with legislating design; concern with a physical preclusion that could have large unintended consequences on design in the future; pushing massing to the rear of the property; the design guideline handout; the developers; and Commission consensus against recommendation #4.

The Commission took a straw vote which reflected opposition to recommendation number 4.

Additional discussion ensued between the consultants, staff and Commissioners regarding protecting the neighborhood;

plate height at the building edge on a standard side yard setback; clarification on the drawings; second story volume; the 250 square foot double height floor exemption; volumetric expression; communities that want to create volume; constraints; not imposing an outright restriction for double height area; mansionization ordinances in other cities; standard tools; concern with giving people ideas and inadvertently encouraging taking advantage of the opportunity; removing restrictions; design; having staircases count toward the exemption; volume consideration; allocating an area for a staircase rather than volume for the sake of volume; staircase calculations; the feeling that the 250 square foot double height floor exemption is not needed; current standards; clarification that no parking is required if the garage is converted to an ADU; incentivizing parking in the rear; consistency with the law; the diagrams; illustrating the Height Ordinance; concern with inadvertently encouraging 1200 square foot ADUs; creating a situation where, in order to gain square footage, one needs to build multi-family on single family lots because what is proposed is too restrictive; allowing people discretion on how to use their property; support for the average person who owns a house; the process to get to the 0.6 FAR; lot sizes in other cities; lot flipping; depth vs. width; efficiency; addressing automobiles; survey and meeting response; community standards; concern with reducing property values; reacting to what is happening in Los Angeles; variation in zones based on lot size; typical lot sizes in Culver City; current inventory; need vs. want; providing flexibility with the primary residence; the intent of the ADU; living smaller; sustainability; support for a 0.4 FAR; bringing Culver City into alignment with changes in other communities; bringing an end to having a 0.6 FAR house in Culver City; the point of ADUs to provide additional housing; the need to live smaller and use less resources; smart design and doing more with less; freedom of choice; changing attitudes about living large; sustainable living; concern with large ADUs resulting in 0.7 coverage on lots; concern with penalizing existing homeowners; concern with a boon to developers who will put at 1200 square foot ADU and 2500 square foot main house on every lot they can buy; concern with a 0.68 FAR being built in the majority of cases and a suggestion to err on the lower side; people who just want to remodel and stay part of the community; the national median home size; a suggestion to allow an FAR of 0.45 but in no case less than 2500; the Culver Crest; not counting ADUs toward the FAR; consistency with the consensus reached at the study session; other

suggested changes to reduce the massing and appearance of massing; protecting surrounding neighbors, protection of side yards; the issue on both sides of the argument; differing points of view on what is considered a large house; the overall envelope; appreciation to the consultants for their work on the item; clarification that the diagrams are based on 0.45; ensuring fairness and responsiveness; the ADU factor; ensuring that the City Council is aware of the difference of opinion; and appreciation to Nicholas Gregor for his participation throughout the process.

Michael Allen, Current Planning Manager, reviewed recommended changes:

- Item 2b: revising language for the location of the garage to the rear of the midpoint of the property from the front
- Item 3a: including a one-to-one ratio for the rooftop mechanical equipment related to the screening
- Item 4: removing the 30 foot second story setback requirement and maintain the 25 foot setback requirement
- Exhibit A: rotating the image to include the 45 degree angle so that it is visible from all sides
- Ensuring that the 14 foot plus internal height is counted twice with the 250 square foot credited to clarify that anything above 14 feet is counted twice up to 250 square feet.

The Commission agreed to vote on the staff recommendations with agreed upon changes with the exclusion of item 2a.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER VONCANNON, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR LACHOFF AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION: ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2020-P001 RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF ZONING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT P2019-0036-ZCA MODIFYING STANDARDS FOR THE SINGLE-FAMILY (R1) RESIDENTIAL ZONE AS AMENDED AND WITH ITEM 2A ELIMINATED FROM THE MOTION FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION.

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER VONCANNON AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR LACHOFF THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE ITEM 2A WITH THE AMENDED 0.5 FAR.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: LACHOFF, SAYLES, VONCANNON

NOES: OGOSTA, REILMAN

Heather Baker, Assistant City Attorney, indicated that the ordinance with the zoning code amendment based upon the majority vote in its entirety would be presented to the City Council with clarification regarding Commissioner positions.

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**Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda**

Chair Reilman invited public input.

No cards were received and no speakers came forward.

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**Receipt of Correspondence**

Staff indicated that no correspondence had been received.

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**Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff**

Michael Allen, Planning Manager, provided a presentation on the General Plan Update from the Advanced Planning Division; discussed public engagement and upcoming events; and provided handouts to Commissioners noting that additional information was available.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding Commission involvement; key decision points; the official recommending body on the General Plan Update; data collection and documentation; production of recommendations; distillation of information; and upcoming presentations to the Commission.

Michael Allen, Planning Manager, discussed the Planning Commissioners Academy in Sacramento and upcoming Planning Commission meetings.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding scheduling and a suggestion not to schedule a Planning Commission meeting on the same night as the annual Homeless Count.

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 9:38 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a meeting to be held on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

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SUSAN HERBERTSON  
SENIOR PLANNER of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

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ANDREW REILMAN  
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.

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Jeremy Green  
CITY CLERK

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Date