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CULVER CITY GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CULVER CITY GENERAL PLAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

September 10, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Call To Order & Roll Call

The special meeting of the Culver City General Plan
Advisory Committee (GPAC) was called to order at 7:03 P.M.

Members	Patricia Bijvoet, Member
Present:	Cicely Bingener, Member
	Peter Capone-Newton, Member
	Diana Hernandez, Member
	Yasmine Imani McMorris, Vice-Chair
	Scott Malsin, Member
	Ken Mand, Member
	Wally Marks, Member
	David Metzler, Member
	Jeanne Min, Member
	Paavo Monkkonen, Member
	Freddy Puza, Member
	Denice Renteria, Member
	Frances Rosenau, Chair
	Laura Stuart, Member
	Kristen Torres Pawling, Member
	Claudia Vizcarra, Member
	Jamie Wallace, Member
	Noah Zatz, Member
Members	Andrew Weissman, Member
Absent:	
Staff	Ashley Hefner, Advance Planning
Present:	Manager(Secretary)
	Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development
	Director
	Lauren Marsiglia, Associate Planner
	Christopher Minniti, Planning Intern
Consultants	Eric Yurkovich, Raimi and Associates
Present:	Martin Leitner, Perkins & Will
	Carrie Latimer, Perkins & Will

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Public Comment for Items NOT On the Agenda

Secretary Hefner invited public comment. No speakers came forward and no cards were received.

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Consent Calendar Items

Item C-1

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 13, 2020 GPAC MEETING

MOVED BY MEMBER MALSIN, SECONDED BY MEMBER BINGENER AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF AUGUST 13, 2020 ARE APPROVED (ABSENT MEMBER WEISSMAN; NO MEMBERS ABSTAINED).

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Action Items

Item A-1

1. PRESENTATION ON AND DISCUSSION OF LAND USE AND GROWTH ALTERNATIVES IN CULVER CITY.

Martin Leitner of Perkins & Will introduced himself and his associate, Carrie Latimer; complimented the prior meeting's high level of conversation and acknowledged the concerns that were raised, ranging from preserving the scale and quality of life in Culver City to ensuring the city grows equitably and sustainably; explained that the meeting and presentation would be delivered in two parts with each part followed by comment and discussion; explained that the purpose of the presentation is to introduce concepts of change that can be used to paint a picture for the city's future; summarized the main, desired General Plan outcomes underpinning the change strategies being presented; revisited the discussion from the previous meeting regarding the city's scale as outlined in the corresponding Existing Conditions Report; described the range of sizes in buildings and parcels in the city, from very large parcels and buildings to very small parcels and buildings, and how those affect a person's perceived experience of the city; described how many cities typically follow the "usual

approach” to development which protects and preserves single-family neighborhoods; described how the “usual approach” applies two key strategies: designating areas for no growth and concentrating growth onto a limited number of locations; described how following the “usual approach” results in predominately large, dense projects that are abruptly imbalanced with the scale and character of the immediately adjacent areas; provided real world examples of development that followed the “usual approach” in neighboring cities; explained why it is important to reconsider the “usual approach;” explained that Culver City is missing middle-scale housing that was more common during the 1920s and 1930s, such as townhomes, triplexes, fourplexes, walk-up garden apartments, and courtyard bungalow apartment buildings, and that adding missing middle housing often aligns with the city’s character; defined “densification” and explained how it can be used to scale up development; explained that the menu of strategies that presented at the beginning will serve as alternatives to the “usual approach,” and involves blending three general categories of development strategies: preservation, incremental growth, and significant growth; provided a simplified concept of four prototypical place types: single unit residential, low density residential, commercial corridor, and large commercial or mixed-use sites, and discussed what opportunities and challenges may result from the corresponding policy in the strategy menu to the place types.

Leitner invited public attendees to comment on and discuss the information presented before proceeding with the second half of the presentation. Secretary Hefner clarified that Members would discuss the first part of the presentation at that time and that public comment would follow the second part of the presentation.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff regarding what percent of the city’s existing residential is zoned for higher density residential and whether that would offer a meaningful opportunity for the city; suggested that parcels currently zoned as Residential Two Family (R2) could be used to address missing middle housing; explained that

Culver City is a low property tax city compared to other cities, meaning that the city receives a small percentage of funds from property taxes to support services the city requires; suggested that commercial uses on mixed use parcels along commercial corridors would be beneficial for generating property taxes; noted how the high quality streetscape in Culver City is special and unique to the city; explained in efforts to densify Culver City, the city should maintain its high quality streetscape to keep the city's character; suggested that Fox Hills commercial areas could be opportunities for larger scale residential and commercial development as the visual impact on that neighborhood would be low, although the traffic impact could be high. Martin Leitner explained that he would have to look into the data regarding the percentage of parcels zoned for higher density residential.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff on how to preserve characteristics of the city that residents like as the city densifies, for example, from the impact of the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance on residential neighborhoods and how single-family zoning (R1) will look when an ADU and junior ADU are allowed and the State expands permitted uses in single-family zones in the future; what the community response has been to and what the effects have been of removing R1 zoning in cities such as Minneapolis, and how that relates to Culver City; how to add mixed use to existing areas in Culver City; and how it is challenging to access amenities in Fox Hills without driving compared to other neighborhoods in Culver City that are more walkable. Leitner explained how historically, cities separated uses, which required driving and parking; how this affected development by increasing lot sizes to accommodate parking; and asked how we can retrofit existing amenities to reduce dependence on automobiles.

A Member suggested that staff review case studies of infill programs elsewhere, such as in Portland, Oregon; discussed how different land use types have tradeoffs related to public health or racial or socioeconomic inequality, explained that cities with higher concentrations of single family zoning tend to be more racially segregated; discussed the importance of being critical about general calls in a city to protect single family neighborhoods as that generally means codifying inequality in the physical landscape; and explained the importance of asking who likes low density zoning.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff about precedents in other places to create incentives for landowners of large, single-tenant commercial sites to pursue lower scale multi-tenant land use patterns. Leitner explained that there may be something precluding the owner from acting (e.g., there is a mismatch in the financial return or the process will be onerous); how cities are evaluating frameworks to allow these developments to occur by-right; explained how Los Angeles has a framework towards affordable housing; and suggested that the GPAC brainstorm on what the community would like to see and develop strategies to reach that.

A Member commented on Leitner's proposal for gradual development changes; wants to see Culver City maintain a quality streetscape; asked about how to achieve incremental changes in R1, R2, and missing middle housing; asked how people in Culver City can share lots and build on them together, similar to what Amsterdam is doing, which leads to community building; and discussed how important trees are to Culver City's character and quality of life and whether the Green Plan can be part of the city's structure.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff about how one challenge with mixed use projects is ensuring those sites have the necessary transit connections to reduce car dependency, which is one of the city's goals; how Culver City can prioritize transit connectivity around mixed use housing; whether there are examples of this working; how to improve mobility in an area where mixed use housing might make sense; and how Fox Hills offers many opportunities for mixed use housing, but there is minimal transit connectivity. Leitner stated that Nelson Nygaard has experts who can address this; discussed the possibility of experimenting with connection options, such as Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft, how to provide mobility options for people with limited mobility; the challenge with ensuring land uses do not require auto trips and can be accessible by bike or walking; and the importance of thinking of long-term solutions.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff about the “usual approach” not working for Culver City, the possibility of creating a task force dedicated to developing unusual ideas; the need to update zoning codes to reflect general plan recommendations; how mobility infrastructure should lead development; and the importance of allowing adaptive reuse in cities in light of COVID’s influence on many people’s work situations. Leitner explained how many places do not move forward on projects until traffic or mobility studies are in place, but has not seen cities building land uses around bus lanes and other mobility infrastructure; cautions against approaching development in this way as transportation infrastructure may not attract the necessary uses to support it.

Leitner pointed out a GPAC Member’s eComment related to ownership, rent, and racial injustice; discussed how zoning and land use has been used to segregate people; stated that ownership is an important question.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff about parking maximums and whether the GPU would address that in its land use or mobility elements. Leitner explained that it is an important consideration throughout both elements as parking affects the physical environment.

Secretary Hefner advised that GPAC Members and members of the public who submitted eComments that they want documented in the public record to read them aloud.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff about converting unused or underused commercial spaces through adaptive reuse; discussed Fox Hills abutting dense areas of unused or underused commercial spaces; and asked if the tenancy in common model, as seen in Los Angeles, is prevalent in Culver City. A Member stated they believe the tenancy in common model will work in Culver City.

Leitner discussed small lot subdivisions and how they relate to the missing middle housing conversation; explained how having more parcels creates more ownership opportunities; discussed the impact of the pandemic on how people use cities and how it is difficult to predict the future; noted how in this pandemic, areas that have suffered most seem to be single-use areas that do not have

many people living in them, such as downtown areas and office parks, which indicates that mixed use districts not only offer mobility benefits but may also lead to more robust and resilient neighborhoods; and discussed opportunities to retrofit residential neighborhoods to accommodate new ways of living in cities.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff about the cost of building housing and whether developers can make a profit building affordable housing. Leitner explained that allowing ADUs has led to an increase in housing development activity and discussed the role of incentives, such as density bonuses, in making affordable housing construction financially feasible. A Member confirmed that incentives and a site on or near transit is key to reducing the costs of building affordable housing.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff about resources the city is considering to encourage affordable housing through the ADU process, such as grants for properties that enter into covenants related to affordability.

Members discussed the relationship between place types, who owns versus rents housing and how that is affected by historical racial covenants, how to fix past racial injustices in land uses, the importance of creating more opportunities to build wealth, how to engage with neighbors, particularly those in the R1 zone, who oppose constructing affordable housing when that may prevent the city from meeting the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirements; and how people are unable to live where they work.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff on how residents with political power may influence local officials' decisions to keep R1 neighborhoods; the relationship between public health, air quality, and developing on highly-trafficked corridors; and how conversations related to development and land uses do not typically consider pollution exposure. Leitner apologized for not framing his quote that "people like [single-family zoning]" well, discussed developing who will live along corridors with greater air pollution exposure.

Secretary Hefner closed the discussion between Members and staff and suggested that the meeting proceed to the final

part of the presentation before inviting public comment and discussion.

Leitner proceeded with the final half of the presentation and showed how much land area would be required to accommodate residential units; presented simplified, visual models showing how four combinations of development scenarios from the menu of growth strategies could look when applied to the prototypical place types discussed earlier; described four growth development scenarios: concentrated growth or the usual approach strategy (lowest intensity) at one end, a city-wide incremental growth strategy (highest intensity) occupying the opposite end of the spectrum, and two, separate mid-points along the spectrum representing a combination or hybrid approach, referred to during the presentation as “opportunity sites + citywide low” (lower intensity hybrid) and “opportunity sites + citywide med” (moderate intensity hybrid).

Secretary Hefner invited public comment on the information presented and started it off by reading an eComment that Clyde Williams submitted before the meeting.

Clyde Williams suggested that the General Plan include zoning, conditions, and land uses consistent with the Blair Hills and Jefferson corridor developments; stated that the Inglewood Oil Field’s (IOF) current surface industrial uses are inconsistent with the surrounding and general uses; suggested that the IOF’s operator, Sentinel Peak Resources (SPR) consolidate and enclose its industrial uses as they are in many of its facilities in the City of Los Angeles for the La Cienegas, Salt Lake, Los Angeles, and Beverly Hills oil fields; and suggested that this plan be developed within the context of an updated General Land Use Development Plan.

Stephanie Osorio thanked Leitner for the presentation and discussion, and suggested promoting environmentally sustainable public transit solutions by coordinating with neighboring cities on light rail, which has racial justice implications, and considering carbon neutral options; and asked whether the IOF would be accessible and beneficial to the public when it is shut down in the distant future. Secretary Hefner explained that the comments could be addressed during the discussion.

Eric Shabsis complimented Leitner on the presentation and stated that while he appreciated the incremental growth strategy for the R1 and R2 zoned areas, the best way to significantly increase the affordable housing supply in Culver City would be at certain opportunity sites that have not yet been developed and are generally located near the city's periphery, like Culver center, Target center, Pavilions center, Big Lots, the former OSH store, and Howard Industries; acknowledged that such actions would require discussing density and height to accommodate the many affordable units desired that can be accommodated at those sites under existing regulations; and stated that this is the only way to meet the city's goals.

Secretary Hefner closed the public comment period and explained that part of the General Plan Update process is to consider land use alternatives, including the IOF alongside the IOF's amortization study; stated that there will be opportunities to discuss environmentally sustainable public transit solutions during the November GPAC meeting; and explained that the City's Public Works and Transportation Departments are working on short-term, environmentally sustainable improvements to the city's bike, pedestrian, bus, and rail systems.

Discussion ensued between Members and staff about how to see renderings of actual sites in the city that illustrate the different development scenarios discussed rather than relying on the prototypical place type model. Eric Yurkovich explained the meetings on land use alternatives was split so that the Committee could have a more in-depth conversation; that this meeting is more general and that staff will present renderings for specific sites or areas of the city and have a more detailed discussion during the October meeting .

A Member stated that the monthly payment for a 30-year home mortgage on a \$250,000 loan is about \$1,200, and, assuming \$250,000 is how much it costs to build a typical ADU, there would be a financial incentive to build ADUs since the unit could likely be rented out for twice the monthly debt service payment; support for the concept that renters may be able to go in together to buy land and add ADUs, which might be a path for renters to move into ownership if they

can pool their resources which has been done in other countries; asked how to expand housing and maintain the city's character; and support for locals making these investments rather than larger developments that require outside investors.

A Member thanked the presenters for providing illustrative graphics because they clearly showed developments that are out of scale and character with the immediately adjacent neighborhoods; discussed keeping that image in mind for the October meeting conversation and considering what character of the city means since it can mean different things to different people; shared that to her, character means beautiful, leafy streets, and knowing neighbors; and discussed the relationship between density, equity, and the amount of housing that needs to be built.

Leitner noted that the public realm is as important as individual buildings, though people tend to emphasize the importance of buildings in influencing how people experience the city; many places have been spent decades perfecting single-family neighborhoods and there are very few recent examples of high quality neighborhoods at different density levels; Culver City has an opportunity to capture the GPAC's creativity and desire for innovation; and he repeated the importance of imagining together what Culver City's future might be and how that might be different from how it looks now.

Secretary Hefner thanked all participants for attending and contributing to the meeting explained that next meeting will be at 6 PM with the Chief's Advisory Panel.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Secretary Hefner stated that staff received one correspondence on item A-1 before the meeting and that she read it into the record.

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Items from Members/Staff/Consultants

Secretary Hefner noted that she will briefly present the UCLA Report and new and modified engagement strategies for the GPU to City Council on September 14, acknowledging that in-person public engagement opportunities are not an option now; stated that she will let the GPAC know what the City Council approve; reminded attendees that the survey asking for TAC member recommendations is out and due by the next Friday, September 18; shared that the goal for the TACs is to have first orientation in October and to meet with the TACs before the end of the year.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 9:19 PM, the General Plan Advisory Committee adjourned to a special meeting on September 17, 2020, at 6:00 P.M.

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Ashley Hefner
SECRETARY of the Culver City General Plan Advisory Committee
Culver City, California

APPROVED _____

Frances Rosenau
CHAIR of the Culver City General Plan Advisory Committee
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 Green
CITY CLERK

Date