



**City of South Pasadena
Planning Commission
Special Commission Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

A Special Meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Vice-Chair John Lesak on Tuesday, April 28, 2020, at 3:12 p.m. This meeting was held via Zoom webinar, in accordance with AB 361.

ROLL CALL

Present: Laura Dahl, Commissioner;
Richard Tom Commissioner;
Lisa Padilla, Commissioner; and
John Lesak, Vice-Chair

Absent: Janet Braun, Chair

City Staff

Present: Teresa L. Highsmith, City Attorney
Joanna Hankamer, Planning and Community Development Director
Kanika Kith, Planning Manager

Council

Present: Diana Mahmud, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Liaison

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Lesak moved to approve the agenda as submitted to the Planning Commission. Roll call was taken. Motion carried 4-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

All Commissioners present disclosed site visits in March and no contact.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice-Chair Lesak opened public comment and announced two written comments had been submitted. The letters were posted and available for review on the city website located under the additional documents section for this commission meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. **Project No. 2164-DBR/AHR/DRX/TRP – Density Bonus Review, Affordable Housing Review, Design Review, and Tree Removal Permit for a senior housing development of 86 rental units at 625 Fair Oaks Avenue.**

Planning Manager, Kanika Kith, began item by stating that she spoke to the owner of Shakers who is in support of project. The owner also provided comments to the project, expressing concerns about access and parking Ms. Kith proceeded to the presentation to review details for the project.

Ms. Kith stated, this item was brought to the Commission agenda in March and continued to a special meeting that did not occur, due to COVID-19 outbreak. She went on to discuss the project site consisting of an office building and parking lot, explaining the housing development will replace the existing parking lot. Ms. Kith continued her presentation by giving detail on each of the four applications. She then proceeded to allow for questions or comments from the commission.

Commissioner Dahl stated for the record that the project is an apartment project not a condo project. In addition, Commissioner Dahl had questions regarding pedestrian improvement that the traffic study recommends due to the increase in senior pedestrians.

Commissioner Tom wanted to address the state density bonus rules on height limitations compared to those of the City. In addition, he wanted to know how far we can push the limit in feet.

Kathy Head from Kaiser Marston, addressed the height limitation issue. Ms. Head stated, per section 65915, the developer is allowed to ask for a statutorily set number of concessions, as it plays back to the percentage of the affordable units. In this case, they were entitled to three concessions or incentives. The burden of proof of those incentives/concessions not being met is on the City.

The Commission meeting continued with the applicant presentation, which gave details on the project, building, and plans for future tenants. The applicant urged Commission to pass the entitlement package. Vice Chair Lesak opened the floor for questions on the presentation.

Commissioner Dahl inquired about parking for tenants and whether tenants will have the option of leasing a parking space for an additional fee, as well as whether the developer would be open to providing incentives to those who choose not to use a parking space. The applicant informed Commissioner Dahl of the excessive amount of parking available and the plans of a three-story parking garage. He added that he would be open to an incentive.

Commissioner Padilla requested clarification on the proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The applicant confirmed 3.5 is the current total proposed FAR.

Vice Chair Lesak requested the number of affordable units in the project. It was stated that there was a total of 13 affordable housing units total.

Mayor Pro Tem Mahmud, requested confirmation of separation from office building tenants and parking structures. She received confirmation from the applicant.

Commissioner Dahl stated 1.) nice project, 2.) would like to see attention paid to pedestrian crosswalks on Fair Oaks Avenue and hopes the City can request the project developer to assist with this. 3.) addressed the possibility of Chair of the commission or a committee review the covenant prior to approval. 4.) noted that for upcoming zoning code revision to consider residential underground floor in mixed-use projects.

Commissioner Tom agreed with Commissioner Dahl on her comments regarding pedestrian safety and the covenant.

Commissioner Padilla commented on the height and massing issue. She stated she believed the height is okay and the way it has been handled is very smart and that she supports affordable housing. She believes this project would benefit the City of South Pasadena and it is a need. In addition, she seconded Commissioner Dahl's concerns with pedestrian safety and crosswalks.

Vice Chair Lesak stated the team has done a great job in finding the right location for this project and added that the pedestrian crosswalk is an issue and hopes something can be done by City or applicant. It was stated by City staff that a traffic study was performed and it was concluded that there will not be any additional vehicles in the location, instead there will be more pedestrian traffic. In conclusion, recommendation was provided to improve sidewalk conditions, and adding an ADA ramp in intersection crosswalks. Staff also suggested painting the crosswalks to make the lines more visible to cars.

Commissioner Dahl, Tom, and Padilla agreed on the revised condition P-21.b. regarding walkways, to allow more flexibility to the applicant.

Commissioner Dahl, Padilla, Tom, and Vice Chair Lesak, was in consensus for the Affordable Housing Covenant to come back to a designee/committee for review.

Vice Chair Lesak reopened public hearing to hear from the applicant on the Fair Oaks improvement. Applicant representative, Doug Yokomizo, addressed the following: 1.) A process currently exists pertaining to the approval of the covenant. 2.) The applicant has already committed to re-striping the crosswalks to make them more visible. 3.) The applicant is not prepared to accept the undefined condition of reviewing the covenant as a meeting and allowing public comment and revisions, as it will stall the construction and cost the applicant additional funds. Vice Chair re-closed public comment at the conclusion of the applicant's comment.

Council liaison Mahmud stated the applicant is given 24-month period and questioned if this project would take that long. Director Hankamer stated the time frame of 24-months was requested by the applicant with COVID-19 in mind.

Commissioner Padilla motioned that the Planning Commission adopt resolution approving project number 2164 DBR/AHR/DRX/PRR, with the addition of the new condition P27, as discussed with commission, with the amendment to condition P2 and P21.b. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tom.

The motion carried 4-0.

ADMINISTRATION

2. Comments from Council Liaison

Congratulations to the applicant for presenting the project and very excited for this beautiful housing project in South Pasadena. Looking forward to commencement of construction.

3. Comments from Planning Commissioners

Commissioner Padilla, Tom, and Vice Chair Lesak extended a thank you to Planning staff for their hard work as well as the applicant.

Vice Chair Lesak added the awareness of public meetings held by the applicant and how the engagement with the public assisted with the applicants changes and results to the project.

4. Comments from Staff


Director Hankamer congratulated Commission for their first virtual meeting and their patience. In addition, she stated the Commission should be aware of the following: 1.) Commission will resume regular meetings in May. 2.) Commission will resume with the Downtown Specific Plan and General Plan presentations. 3.) First virtual housing element community meeting coming up in May.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Lesak adjourned the special Planning Commission meeting on April 28, 2020, at 5:29 p.m.



John Lesak, Vice-Chair



Lisa Padilla, Secretary to the Planning Commission