



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 6:30 PM  
Amedee O. "Dick" Richards Jr. Council Chambers  
1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

A Regular Meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Dahl on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 6:33 p.m. The meeting was held at the Council Chambers located 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Chair: Laura Dahl  
Vice-Chair: Lisa Padilla  
Commissioners: John Lesak, Amitabh Barthakur, Arnold Swanborn  
(arrived after Item 8).

**Absent:** None.

**City Staff**

**Present:** Stephanie Cao, Assistant City Attorney  
Matt Chang, Planning Manager  
Dean Flores, Senior Planner  
Sandra Robles, Associate Planner  
Mackenzie Goldberg, Assistant Planner  
Lillian Estrada, Administrative Secretary

**Council**

**Present:** None.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Approved, 4-0.

**DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS:**

Chair Laura Dahl and Vice Chair Padilla visited the 4931 Harriman Avenue project site.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

1. **Public Comment.**  
None.

**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:**

2. **Minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 11, 2021**
3. **Minutes from the Special Meeting of May 26, 2021**
4. **Minutes from the Regular Meeting of July 13, 2021**
5. **Minutes from the Regular Meeting of August 10, 2021**
6. **Minutes from the Special Meeting of August 25, 2021**
7. **Minutes from the Special Meeting of August 21, 2023**
8. **Minutes from the Special Meeting of August 23, 2023**

Approved, 4-0

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

9. **Project No. 2565-CUP** – A request for a Conditional Use Permit for the on-site sale of beer and wine (Type 41 ABC license) for an existing, bona fide restaurant (Rice & Nori) located at 901 Fair Oaks Avenue, #D (APN: 5315-003-058). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities).

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution taking the following actions:

1. Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis based on State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 – Existing Facilities.
2. Approve Project No. 2565-CUP, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Staff Presentation:**

Assistant Planner Goldberg delivered the staff presentation for project No. 2565-CUP.

**Questions for Staff:**

Commissioners asked about the proposed hours of operation related to the alcohol sales, if the outdoor seating area had protective railing, and clarification regarding if the proposed project was reviewed under the previous General Plan and zoning designations.

**Public Comment:**

None.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

Vice Chair Padilla mentioned stated that she did not oppose to the project. Commissioner Swanborn also stated that he had no objections to the project.

**Decision:**

Commissioner Lesak moved, seconded by Commissioner Swanborn, to adopt a Resolution to take the following actions:

1. Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis based on State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 – Existing Facilities.
2. Approve Project No. 2565-CUP, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

Chair Dahl directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Swanborn	Aye
Commissioner Barthakur	Aye
Commissioner Lesak	Aye
Vice-Chair Padilla	Aye
Chair Dahl	Aye

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

- 10. Project No. 2592-CUP** – A request for a Conditional Use Permit for the on-site sale of beer and wine (Type 41 ABC license) for an existing, bona fide restaurant (Modan Ramen) located at 700 Fair Oaks Avenue, #G-H (APN: 5318-004-024). In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities).

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution taking the following actions:

1. Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis based on State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 – Existing Facilities.
2. Approve Project No. 2592-CUP, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Staff Presentation:**

Senior Planner Flores delivered the staff presentation for project No. 2592-CUP.

**Questions for Staff:**

Commissioners asked for clarification if the alcohol sales will occur within the outdoor dining area.

**Public Comment:**

None.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

Commissioner Barthakur stated that he supported the project.

**Decision:**

Vice Chair Padilla moved, seconded by Commissioner Swanborn, to adopt a Resolution to take the following actions:

1. Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis based on State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 – Existing Facilities.
2. Approve Project No. 2592-CUP, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

Chair Dahl directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Swanborn	Aye
Commissioner Barthakur	Aye
Commissioner Lesak	Aye
Vice-Chair Padilla	Aye
Chair Dahl	Aye

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

- 11. Project No. 2500-HDP/DRX/VAR/PM/TRE** – The proposed project is for a Hillside Development Permit (HDP) and Design Review Permit (DRX) for the construction of a new 3,214-square-foot, two-story, single-family dwelling along with a Parcel Merger (PM) application of the two existing lots within the Southwest Monterey Hills area, located at 4931 Harriman Avenue (APN: 5312-016-016 & 5312-016-017). The project includes two Variance (VAR) requests: 1) for a side yard setback of five feet in lieu of required seven feet and 5 inches, and 2) for an attached garage in front of the main structure. The project includes a Tree Removal Permit (TRE) for the removal four (4) trees. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution taking the following actions:

1. Finding the project exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis based on State CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.
2. Approve Project No. 2500-HDP/DRX/VAR/PM/TRE, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

**Staff Presentation:**

Associate Planner Robles delivered the staff presentation for project No. 2500-HDP/DRX/VAR/PM/TRE.

**Questions for Staff:**

Commissioners asked if an arborist report was prepared, clarification on how height is measured for the proposed home and clarification about how many trees are being removed as part of the application.

The applicant's representative, Taylor Francis, delivered a presentation on their proposed project. Commissioners Swanborn, Barthakur, and Vice Chair Padilla asked for clarification about the proposed trees to be removed. Chair Dahl asked whether the application provided a brochure for the proposed garage door.

**Public Comment:**

The City received one written comment from Yung Jin Lee. Eric Moore, resident gave public comments in person asking about clarification about the proposed project and a previous iteration of the project from years prior that never materialized. Sophia Lee, resident, commented in person about the proposed height of the project.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

Commissioners discussed the project plans for the solar panels and the north side elevation of the proposed home. Vice Chair Padilla raised concerns about the status of the tree removal permit. Commissioner Swanborn raised concerns about the tree removal permit and solar panels. Commissioner Lesak questioned whether the Variance for the side yard setback was warranted.

Chair Dahl asked for a motion to continue the item due to concerns about the tree removal permit (tree numbers 6 and 7 on the plans) and Variance request for the side yard setback. Vice Chair Padilla also requested that the applicant consider the proposed cut and fill during the grading process and how it effects the proposed tree removals and Variance for the side yard setback.

**Decision:**

Vice Chair Padilla moved, seconded by Commissioner Swanborn, to continue item #11 to the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on December 12, 2023.

Chair Dahl directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Swanborn	Aye
Commissioner Barthakur	Aye
Commissioner Lesak	Aye
Vice-Chair Padilla	Aye
Chair Dahl	Aye

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**12. Comments from City Council Liaison**

None.

**13. Comments from Planning Commissioners**

Commissioner Lesak praised the restaurants from Agenda Items 9 and 10 for expanding their services.

**14. Comments from Staff**

Planning Manager Chang announced that the former Vons shopping center is undergoing renovations and master sign program. He also announced a training being available for any interested Commissioner offered by the League of California Cities.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**15. Adjournment to the Regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled on  
December 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm:**

There being no further matters, Chair Dahl adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura Dahl, Chair