



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 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 Padilla on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 6:31 p.m. The meeting was held at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair: Lisa Padilla
Commissioners: Jason Claypool, Laura Dahl, Mark Gallatin

Absent: Vice-Chair: Amitabh Barthakur

City Staff

Present: Stephanie Cao, Assistant City Attorney
Matt Chang, Planning Manager
Dean Flores, Senior Planner
Braulio Madrid, Associate Planner
Lillian Estrada, Administrative Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Approved, 4-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS:

Commissioner Claypool visited both project sites on tonight's agenda and spoke to a local resident who lives within a 300-foot radius of the Fremont Avenue site. Commissioner Dahl and Commissioner Gallatin visited the Fremont Avenue site. Chair Padilla visited the Fremont Avenue site and the Peterson Avenue site.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- 1. Public Comment – General (Non-Agenda Items)**
None.

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEM:

2. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of March 12, 2024

Approved, 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING – CONTINUED ITEM:

- 3. 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 the required seven feet and six inches, and 2) for an attached garage in front of the main structure. The project includes a Tree Removal Permit (TRE) for the removal of 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 continue this item to a future meeting date to be determined.

Staff Presentation:

Planning Manager Chang reiterated Staff's recommendation to continue this item to a future meeting date to be determined whereby notification in the newspaper and to the surrounding property owners will be made once again at that time.

Decision:

Chair Padilla moved, seconded by Commissioner Dahl, to continue Item No. 3, Project No. 2500-HDP/DRX/VAR/PM/TRE, to a future meeting date to be determined.

Chair Padilla directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Claypool	Yes
Commissioner Gallatin	Yes
Commissioner Dahl	Yes
Vice-Chair Barthakur	Absent
Chair Padilla	Yes

Motion carried, 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

4. **Project No. 2571-DRX/HDP/VAR/TRP** – A request for Design Review and Hillside Development Permits to construct a new 3,010 square-foot single-family dwelling with an attached 495 square-foot garage at a vacant property located on Peterson Avenue (APN: 5308-031-042). The project site is located within the Southwest Monterey Hills area. The project includes two (2) Variance requests: 1) for building height exceeds the maximum height of 24 feet, and 2) downhill building walls requirements and a Tree Removal Permit for the proposed removal of two (2) trees. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Section 15393, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).

Recommendation:

Staff recommends 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).
2. Approve Project No. 2571-DRX/HDP/VAR/TRP, subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval.

Staff Presentation:

Associate Planner Madrid gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Questions for Staff:

The Commissioners asked several questions, including, but not limited to, concerns regarding height limitations; the Southwest Monterey Hills notification area; the floor area ratio (FAR) calculations; the geology report regarding grading and no-grading options; whether any applications had been received by the Planning Division for other vacant lots in the neighborhood; if requested variances had been approved historically; and why variances for guest parking and setbacks were not requested.

Applicant's Presentation:

Architect Yung Kao with The Architect Group gave a presentation on behalf of the property owner.

Questions for Applicant:

The Commissioners inquired about the choice of non-grading option; clarification of the measurement of the downhill building walls; control joints; pitched roof; water capture and conveyance; downspouts; possible consideration of solar panels; the

three (3) light fixtures for the exterior; the guest parking area dimensions, natural vegetation percentage requirement, and replacement trees.

Public Comments:

Darby Whipple, resident, spoke about the scope of the project and reduction of the FAR.

Angelo Gladding spoke about the selection and placement of the replacement trees.

Scott Sadler, neighbor and homeowner of the property directly south of the property, spoke about limiting the effect on the houses downhill.

Josh Albrektson (via Zoom), resident, spoke about the height limitation and in support of the project.

Dr. Mathias (via Zoom), a resident on Peterson Avenue, expressed concern that construction for a house of this size would preclude access for ingress and egress for emergency vehicles during times of construction.

Applicant's Rebuttal:

Architect Kao addressed the landscaping concerns and the questions regarding the height measurement.

Commissioner Discussion:

The Commissioners had a robust discussion including using the Hillside Design Guidelines as precedent or point of reference by which this development should be judged in consideration of the two (2) variances; when variances should be approved; the height limit; the landscaping plan; floor area ration (FAR); setting a precedent at a 50% increase in height; and discussed ways to mitigate some of the height.

The Commissioners also expressed concern that some of the existing homes in the neighborhood used as examples were cited as examples of what not to do in the guidelines.

Planning Manager Chang offered to have Staff to work with the Applicant regarding the massing and house square footage issues and the guest parking concerns.

The Commissioners discussed design details, including the FAR; consideration of higher quality materials; shading devices and other ways the terraces could be more usable to the homeowners, including the rain or rainwater, storm water conveyance, rain coverage at doorways or on the decks and ways to address water intrusion; and consideration of the garage design.

Planning Manager Chang suggested the Commission continue the project to the June 11, 2024 Planning Commission meeting. The Applicant agreed.

Assistant City Attorney Cao recommended that the Chair reopen the public hearing and continue this matter to the June 11th date.

Decision:

Chair Padilla moved, seconded by Commissioner Dahl, to reopen the Public Hearing and continue this item to the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on June 11, 2024.

Chair Padilla directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Claypool	Yes
Commissioner Gallatin	Yes
Commissioner Dahl	Yes
Vice-Chair Barthakur	Absent
Chair Padilla	Yes

Motion carried, 4-0.

5. **Project Nos. PLR24-0002/CUP24-0001/DRX24-0004** – A request for a Conditional Use Permit for a proposed restaurant and accessory use to serve beer and wine for on-site sale and consumption (Type 41 ABC license) at 702 Fremont Avenue (APN: 5315-002-012). The project includes an Administrative Use Permit for the proposed outdoor dining in conjunction with the restaurant and a Design Review Permit for the proposed wall sign. 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).
2. Approve Project Nos. PLR24-0002/CUP24-0001/DRX24-0004, subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval.

Staff Presentation:

Senior Planner Flores provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Questions for Staff:

The Commissioners inquired about bike parking; whether customers are permitted to enjoy beer and wine without purchasing food; clarification of the outdoor seat count; and if the restaurant was going to provide table service or a restaurant where you order at the counter.

Applicant's Presentation:

Applicant Mimi Ahn introduced herself as one of three (3) women embarking on this project and noted that her mom is Anne of Mike and Anne's. She provided an overview of the project.

Commissioner Discussion:

The Commissioners discussed the proposed fencing intended to act as a noise buffer; wall signage; ramps indicated on the plans; the requirement for a grease interceptor; replacement street trees and the landscape plan; loading; trash pickup; bike racks; and parking concerns.

Chris Warren, Architect for the project, addressed the Commission's concerns.

The Commissioners also considered written comments submitted in opposition to the project expressing concerns, including whether the changes proposed to this site were considered modifications to the structure or to the site; the lack of parking; vendors or business deliveries for a *loading only* curb; potential noise from rooftop or exterior equipment; the accuracy of the number of replacement trees and the caliper size of the trees; and the number of employees.

Applicant Ahn remarked that they intend to minimize the number of employees necessary and approximated 5 or 6.

Public Comments:

Cecilia and Nick Pyszow, neighbors to the site, spoke in opposition to the project and voiced the need for more housing and remarked it was a great idea in the wrong location. They expressed concern about the noise levels, the parking, and the trash issues.

Odom Stamps, a resident and business owner, spoke in support of the project as a lovely addition to the town.

Sam Hernandez, project contractor, past Commissioner for Public Works Commission, spoke in support of the project.

Chester Kano, an architect and a local resident, spoke in support but thinks the project violates the spirit of the regulations. He remarked there was no community outreach or input available and was surprised by the scale.

Tim Gastony, neighbor, spoke of concerns about the scale and possible expansion to a breakfast, lunch, dinner-type place, landscaping concerns and street parking issues.

Ming Dai, neighbor, loved the rendering of the design, is happy that somebody will occupy the property, but expressed concerns about the traffic, parking and trash pickup.

Josh Albrektson (via Zoom) – local resident, spoke in support of the project.

Rachel Irwin (via Zoom) – neighbor, spoke in support; however, she works from home and is concerned about parking, the scale of the project and noise.

Applicant's Rebuttal:

Applicant Ahn responded that they would do their best to address the concerns of the neighborhood and community.

Commissioner Discussion:

The Commissioners discussed the hours of operation, noting that the hours cannot be changed without the Applicant revisiting the Commission at another noticed public hearing; the arrangements for employee parking; and consideration of more than one day's trash pickup, depending on need.

They expressed concern about no community outreach as mentioned by one of the commenters and discussed the zoning designation for the area; the possibility of adding bike parking; consideration of a drought tolerant parkway on Fremont Avenue; and insulation of the roof equipment.

The Commissioners applauded the Applicant for adapting this location, restoring the building, and maintaining a residential use in the back.

Based on the Commissioner's discussion, Assistant City Attorney Cao proposed the Commission consider several additional conditions: Condition P25 – Applicant shall install bike parking, subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission Chair and the Public Works Department; P26 – Applicant shall modify landscaping plans to incorporate drought tolerant plants subject to the review and approval by the Planning Commission Chair and Public Works Department; and P27 – Applicant shall install insulation material for roof equipment to minimize noise subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission Chair.

Decision:

Commissioner Claypool moved, seconded by Commissioner Dahl, to adopt the resolution as stated in the Planning Agenda Staff Report, amended with the following three (3) additional Conditions of Approval:

P25 Applicant shall install bike parking, subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission Chair and the Public Works Department.

P26 Applicant shall modify landscaping plans to incorporate drought tolerant plants, subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission Chair and Public Works Department.

P27 Applicant shall install insulation material for roof equipment to minimize noise, subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission Chair.

Chair Padilla directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Claypool	Yes
Commissioner Gallatin	Yes
Commissioner Dahl	Yes
Vice-Chair Barthakur	Absent
Chair Padilla	Yes

Motion carried, 4-0.

ADMINISTRATION

6. Comments from City Council Liaison:

Mayor Pro Tem Donovan provided an overview of the most recent City Council meeting, including consideration of an Ordinance proposing a Zoning Overlay; consideration of charging a fee for use of the golf course to cover City expenses; public reaction to implementation of the City's Slow Streets project; and reopening of the City's newly remodeled batting cages.

7. Comments from Planning Commissioners:

Commissioner Gallatin spoke about making a recommendation to the City Council regarding preparation of a staff report reviewing the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for consistency with the City's General Plan. Assistant City Attorney Cao and Planning Manager Chang provided background for the City's posture historically.

Commissioner Dahl remarked about ways to make it easier for the Commissioners to review material and inquired about the possibility of getting the written materials earlier than at the dais and getting full size plans.

Commissioner Claypool encouraged everyone to attend the SPEF Fundraiser and support the awesome schools here and to start swinging the bat at the batting cages.

Chair Padilla asked about a Work Plan for the year and how the Commission could foresee their priorities related to all the changes with the Housing Element, the General Plan update, and the Downtown Specific Plan. She requested an update at the next meeting of what the Commission's priorities should be and what might be coming up for the Commission to be better prepared and helpful.

Planning Manager Chang remarked that staff will bring this item, Planning Commission Annual Report, to the May Planning Commission meeting to have a further conversation with the Commissioners.

8. Comments from Staff:

Planning Manager Chang spoke about the availability of the Commissioners for a potential Planning Commission meeting for April 29. Staff will reach out to the Commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT:

9. Adjournment to the Regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled on May 14, 2024 at 6:30 pm:

There being no further matters, Chair Padilla adjourned the meeting at 10:14 p.m.



Lisa Padilla, Chair