



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Planning Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 6:30 PM
Amedee O. "Dick" Richards Jr. Council Chambers
1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030**

CALL TO ORDER

A Special Meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Barthakur on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was held at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vice-Chair: Amitabh Barthakur
Commissioners: Jason Claypool, Arnold Swanborn, Mark Gallatin

Council Liaison: Mayor Pro Tem Sheila Rossi

City Staff

Present: Roxanne Diaz, City Attorney
Alison Becker, AICP, Acting Community Development Director
Elizabeth Bar-El, Interim Community Development Deputy Director
Robert (Dean) Flores, Acting Planning Manager
Ben Jarvis, Interim Senior Planner
Lillian Estrada, Administrative Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved, 4-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

Commissioner Gallatin had a conversation with a resident on tonight's agenda item.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Public Comment – General (Non-Agenda Items)

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Consideration of a Resolution Recommending to the City Council the Adoption of Proposed Amendments to South Pasadena Municipal Code (SPMC) Chapter 36 (Zoning), to Revise Multiple Sections of Articles 1-7 of the Zoning Code for Consistency with State Housing Law, Increasing Public Noticing, Streamlining the Design Review Process, and Implementing Policies of the City's General Plan and Housing Element

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission conduct a Public Hearing and adopt the draft Resolution recommending that the City Council adopt an ordinance to amend SPMC Chapter 36 (Zoning) as included in draft Resolution Attachment A.

Staff Presentation:

Interim Deputy Director Bar-El introduced the team (Dean Flores, Acting Planning Manager and Ben Jarvis, Senior Planner) working on this item and gave a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation reviewed proposed changes to all seven Articles in SPMC Chapter 36, noting that Articles 1, 2 and 7 do not have substantive changes and only reflect removal of obsolete references.

Questions for Staff:

The Commissioners made in-depth inquiries and requested clarification on many items, including, but not limited to: the role of the Planning Commission in light of the dissolution of the Design Review Board (DRB); the importance of objective design standards; the inclusion of live-work units in commercial zones, emphasizing the need for flexibility and inclusionary requirements; and the need for clear criteria for approval and appeal processes; the impact of parking and noise from generators and battery storage; and the threshold for Director review.

The Vice-Chair called a short intermission.

Public Comments:

Harry Knapp, resident – expressed the need for greater public participation.

Joanne Nuckols, resident – spoke about the importance of the objective design standards process that should also consider the historical context.

Clarice Knapp, resident – spoke about historic preservation and the need for greater public participation.

Vice-Chair Barthakur acknowledged receipt of additional written comments received by the Commission.

Commissioner Discussion:

Interim Deputy Director Bar-El outlined the comprehensive changes proposed to the Zoning Code, including the replacement of the DRB with a Planning Commission Chair review process. The Commissioners reviewed the proposed Code Amendments article by article and engaged in a robust, productive and detailed discussion with Staff and the City Attorney. As a result of the discussion, Commissioners concurred on a number of amendments to the Staff recommendation, to be included in the Planning Commission's recommendation to the City Council.

Acting Planning Manager Flores, with City Attorney Diaz, summarized the Commission's recommendations following the discussion (shown below) to verify and be reflected in their decision.

Decision:

Commissioner Swanborn moved, seconded by Commissioner Gallatin, to adopt the draft Resolution recommending that the City Council adopt an ordinance to amend South Pasadena Municipal Code (SPMC) Chapter 36 (Zoning) as included in draft Resolution Attachment A, per the Staff recommendation, with the addition of the following:

Section 36.320.030.B - (page 13 of 60)

Change language for this from *designated historic buildings* to *buildings listed as a historic or cultural resource in the City's inventory list*.

Section 36.400.020 - (page 33 of 60)

Change *Cultural Heritage Board* to *Cultural Heritage Commission* .

Table 4-1 – (page 34 of 60)

Under *Minor Hillside Development Permit – Modifications to existing structures* - Strike out *DECISION* under DRB; add *DECISION* under Director as Review Authority.

Under *Ministerial Review* – Add an *Appeal* option to Planning Commission (for project applicants).

Section 36.410.040 Design Review - (page 39 of 60)

(page 39 of 60) D.1 - Add a new subsection - *f. The Planning Commission is the Review Authority for construction of new single-family homes.*

(page 40 of 60) D.4.2 – Move the parenthetical (“Chair”) to read as follows: *The Planning Commission Chair (“Chair”) or a Planning Commissioner delegated by the Chair who is a State-registered architect or retired from that status shall be responsible for Design Review of the developments listed below.*

(page 40 of 60) - 4.2.b.1 - Add language: **For residential structures:** Exterior modifications to existing structures that propose to substantially change the architectural style of the structure through changes in materials such as, *but not limited to*, new siding materials, windows, and new roofing materials.

(page 41 of 60) - 4.2.b - **For commercial and industrial structures:** Exterior modifications *including, but not limited to*, new siding materials, windows, and new roofing materials.

(page 41 of 60) - 4.2.c.1 - **For residential structures:** Exterior modifications *including, but not limited to*, new siding materials, windows, and new roofing materials.

(Page 41 of 60) - 4.2.c.2 - Remove suggested changes.

(page 41 of 60) - Remove original subsection c.

36.420.040 (Time Limits and Extensions) - (page 46 of 60)

Based on input from the Commissioners, it is proposed to increase the amount of time that an entitlement is valid from twelve (12) months to twenty-four (24) months and to allow the Director to grant two (2) one-year extensions based on the same findings already included in the Code that demonstrate valid reasons for the delay.

36.500.060 - Article 5 Subdivisions - (page 48 of 60)

Table 5-1 - Authority for Subdivision Decisions - Under Tentative Maps for Ministerial Projects, add *Recommend* under Director of Public Works and *Appeal* under City Council.

Approval of Applications

The Commission recommended Staff review and propose more workable review time requirements for approving, reviewing and rendering applications.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Claypool, Swanborn, Gallatin, Barthakur

Noes: None

Abstentions: None

Motion carried, 4-0.

ADMINISTRATION

3. Staff Comments:

Acting Director Becker shared the memo prepared for City Council referenced by Interim Deputy Director Bar-El at the previous meeting, as requested. Since the beginning of the Housing Element Cycle a total of 880 housing units, of which 92 are affordable, have been entitled or are currently undergoing ministerial review, which is promising for the goal to get close to our RHNA allocation.

She also announced that there had been a request for copies of the boards that were presented at the *Open House for Housing and Density Standards*. They have been posted on the City's website.

ADJOURNMENT:

4. Adjournment to the Regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled on March 11, 2025, at 6:30 pm:

There being no further matters, Vice-Chair Barthakur adjourned the meeting at 10:06 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Padilla', written over a horizontal line.

Lisa Padilla, Chair