



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
Special Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes**

**November 18, 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 Chair Padilla on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 6:31 p.m. The meeting was held at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair: Lisa Padilla
Commissioners: Mark Gallatin, Jason Claypool, James Martin
Council Liaison Sheila Rossi, Mayor Pro Tem

City Staff

Present: Roxanne Diaz, Esq., City Attorney (via Zoom)
Travis Kaya, Esq., Assistant City Attorney
Erika Ramirez, Community Development Department Director
Jasmin Kim, Planning Manager
Tatianna Marin, Assistant Planner
Lillian Estrada, Administrative Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved, 4-0.

DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS

Commissioners Claypool, Gallatin and Martin reported site visits referenced in Agenda Item 4.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS

2. **Minutes from the Regular Meeting of August 12, 2025**
3. **Minutes from the Regular Meeting of October 14, 2025**

Approved, as amended, 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM

4. **1016 El Centro Street, Project No. CUP25-0001** – A request for approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Type 75 (brewpub restaurant) alcohol license for a brewpub restaurant (Whiskey Park) located at 1016 El Centro Street (APN: 5315-008-047); and making the determination of exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, 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 review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities).
2. Approve Conditional Use Permit No. CUP25-0001 subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval.

Staff Presentation:

Assistant Planner Tatianna Marin gave a PowerPoint presentation providing the project's background and history.

Questions for Staff:

The Commissioners inquired about the split of the parcel and the hours of operation.

Applicant Presentation:

Co-Owners Vahe and twin brother Vache Garabedian presented a PowerPoint presentation of the project, detailing their background in craft brewing and the concept of Whiskey Park. Vache Garabedian introduced architect CJ Keeley.

Questions for Applicant:

The Commissioners asked about the possibility of earlier operating hours on weekends for brunch service. Vache Garabedian introduced Aram Avagyan, head of operations on the restaurant side, who addressed weekend operating hours.

The Commissioners inquired about loading and unloading procedures, including hours, parking and noise management. Architect Keeley addressed the Commissioners' concerns, explaining the current plan and potential adjustments for the Fairview Court project, and confirmed there would be no amplified sound in the arcade area.

Public Comments:

Andrew Berk, resident, one of The Giddy Ostrich partners, former Chairman and current member of the Board of Directors of the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce and a Principal with Avison Young Commercial Real Estate, spoke in support of the project.

Andrew Berk spoke on behalf of Dean Serwin, member of the Library Board of Trustees (who was attending a Library Board meeting) and expressed support for the project.

Bianca Richards, resident, spoke in support of the project. However, she voiced concerns about the pedestrian crosswalk at Fairview Avenue and Mission Street.

Applicant's Rebuttal:

No rebuttal.

Commissioner Discussion:

The Commissioners raised concerns about loading and parking, suggesting the need for organized loading procedures and additional bike parking.

The Commissioners discussed the potential impact of the project on the surrounding neighborhood, including noise levels and pedestrian safety.

The Commissioners discussed changes to the weekend hours and amending the Conditions of Approval with guidance from Assistant City Attorney Kaya.

Commission Motion and Action:

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CLAYPOOL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GALLATIN, to adopt the Resolution presented before the Planning Commission, finding Project No. CUP 25-0001 exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities, and to approve the Project, subject to the Conditions of Approval as stated in the Resolution, and upon revision to Conditions of Approval 49 as follows:

- 49.** The sales of beer, wine and spirits shall be 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. on weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. on weekends; the operation of the restaurant shall be 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. on weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. on weekends; and the hours of brewery operation shall be limited to 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

AYES: Claypool, Martin, Gallatin, Padilla
NOES: None
ABSENT: Swanborn, Barthakur
ABSTAINED: None

Motion carried, 4-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5. Dissolution of Design Review Board and Planning Commission Chair Review Process

Recommendation:

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

1. Discuss and provide feedback related to the number of Commissioners on the Planning Commission as a result of the dissolution of the Design Review Board; and
2. Discuss and provide feedback related to the Planning Commission Chair Review Process.

Staff Presentation:

Director Ramirez gave a PowerPoint presentation providing background and history, discussing the increase in Chair reviews, noting 20 reviews have occurred since May with over 50% related to additions. Director Ramirez requested feedback on Chair reviews, including process, projects, criteria and lessons learned.

Commissioner Discussion:

The Commissioners engaged in a robust, detailed discussion regarding the dissolution of the Design Review Board and the composition of the Planning Commission, including a discussion of the review process for Chair reviews. The Commissioners shared their experiences and challenges, including the workload, the potential benefits of a larger Commission, time management, and mechanisms to use to process projects.

The Commissioners debated the qualifications of Planning Staff, the need for objective design standards and the qualifiers to implement a Chair review. The Commissioners entertained a proposal to remove rooftop mechanical equipment from Chair reviews, a suggestion to implement a subcommittee process for complex cases and enhancing the Staff training budget.

Director Ramirez suggested implementing a memo to provide clear guidelines for Staff.

The Commissioners highlighted the need for objective design standards to improve the review process, the importance of training Staff to build design review competencies. Director Ramirez mentioned ongoing training with the City architect and plans to enhance Staff training.

Mayor Pro Tem Rossi and the Commissioners discussed the need for balance between Staff competency and community trust. She proposed using the Open Gov module to automate and improve the review process.

Director Ramirez suggested Staff could provide a one-pager or a brief meeting for a handoff when passing Chair review projects on to Commissioners.

6. 2026 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Recommendation:

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

1. It is recommended that the Planning Commission approve, receive, and file the Planning Commission meeting schedule for the 2026 calendar year.

Staff Presentation:

Director Ramirez introduced Planning Manager Jasmin Kim, who presented the 2026 Planning Commission meeting schedule, noting a Special Joint meeting with City Council on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, regarding SB 79.

Approved, 4-0.

ADMINISTRATION

7. Comments from City Council Liaison

City Council Liaison Mayor Pro Tem Rossi discussed the impact of SB 79 on the City's permitting process and expressed excitement about a new permitting

platform proposed by Director Ramirez which aims to streamline processes for residential and commercial projects, addressing challenges in the current system.

Mayor Pro Tem Rossi expressed concerns about potential community backlash due to the proximity of large commercial projects to nearby residential neighborhoods, noting the importance of community feedback and consideration of the broader community impact beyond direct property lines.

Mayor Pro Tem Rossi acknowledged this is the last meeting for Chair Padilla and thanked her for her six (6) years of service, especially her leadership during the past year.

8. Comments from Subcommittees

Commissioner Martin provided an update on behalf of the Objective Design Standards Subcommittee (with Commissioner Swanborn) remarking that applicants had been interviewed, with a potential agreement expected in December.

9. Comments from Planning Commissioners

Commissioner Claypool thanked Chair Padilla for her service, noting her contributions over the past two years.

Commissioner Martin expressed gratitude for Chair Padilla's leadership and mentorship during her tenure.

Commissioner Gallatin thanked Chair Padilla for her exemplary handling of meetings, especially during challenging moments with difficult attendees with grace and civility.

Chair Padilla reflected on the challenges and rewards of her tenure, expressing gratitude for her colleagues and the opportunity to contribute to the City's planning efforts. She expressed appreciation for the Commission, having great Staff, and offered to assist with onboarding new members. She remains committed to supporting the Commission in the future.

10. Comments from Staff

Director Ramirez welcomed new Planning Manager Jasmin Kim to the team and announced the upcoming City Council agenda which includes a software agreement regarding a new permitting platform and the Public Art Policy Handbook.

ADJOURNMENT

11. Adjournment to the Regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further matters, Chair Padilla adjourned the meeting at 9:33 p.m.



Lisa Padilla, Chair