



Community Development
Department

Memo

DATE: May 12, 2026
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Robert (Dean) Flores, Senior Planner
RE: Additional Documents, Items No. 3, 4, and 5

Please accept this Additional Documents Memo as described below:

- **Attachment 1:** Item No. 3 – Public Comments received by noon on May 12, 2026.
- **Attachment 2:** Item No. 4 – Revised Remediation Plan/Calculation to replace page Agenda packet page numbers **4-49** and **4-65**.
- **Attachment 3:** Item No. 5 – Public Comments received by noon on May 12, 2026.

Attachment 1

Revised Item No. 3 – Public Comments received by noon on
May 12, 2026

Attachment 2

Item No. 4 – Item No. 4 – Revised Remediation
Plan/Calculation

Attachment 3

Item No. 5 – Public Comments received by noon on May 12,
2026

From: [Josh Albrektson](#)
To: [PlanningComments](#)
Subject: Public Comment Item 3
Date: Sunday, May 10, 2026 12:10:10 AM

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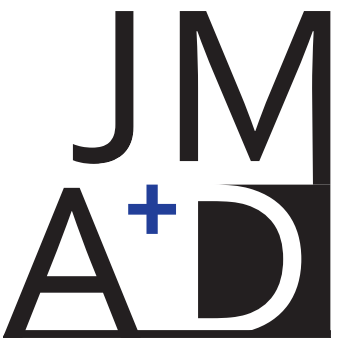
The idea of putting a 6 foot high fence on the front property is extremely unfriendly to the neighborhood aesthetics and was rightly rejected. This would create a wall in a place that the neighbors walk and make it a hostile walk. You don't see this kind of thing with the bungalows that Calvary owns on Brent Street. Calvary places the fence between each structure. That is exactly where Holy Family should place any fence they want.

Their examples of schools on 3-19 to 3-23 are schools that contain the whole block. They don't have people living next to them.

Holy family wants to claim the front yards of single family homes and turn it into school grounds. That doesn't happen anywhere else in SoPas and should not be allowed here.

--

Josh Albrektson MD
Neuroradiologist by night
Crime fighter by day



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 323-523-4417
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ARCHITECTURE
 DESIGN
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 INTERIORS

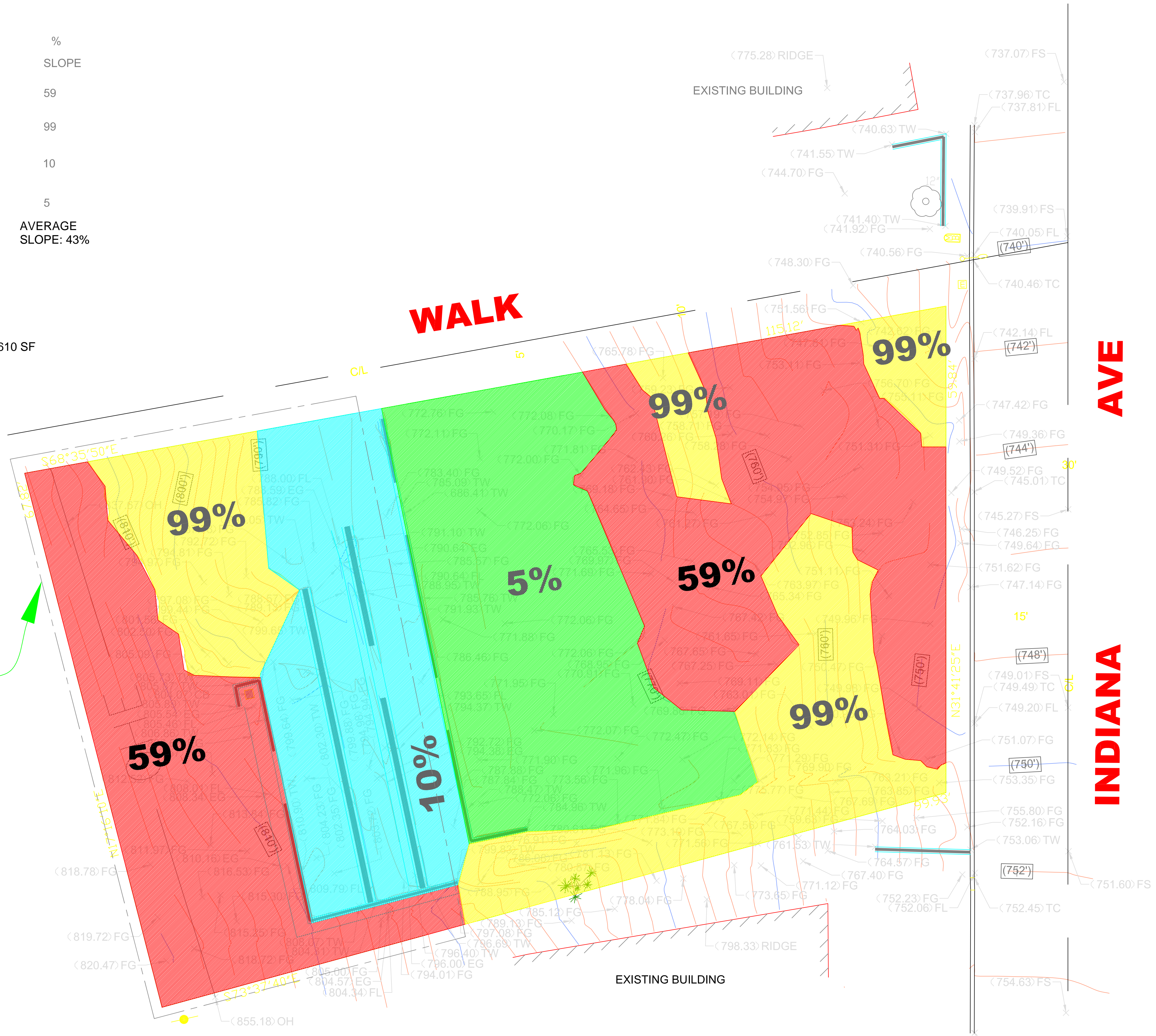
These drawings are the instruments of service and are the property of JMAD. All designs and other information contained on these drawings are for use on the specified project and shall not be used on other projects, or for additions to this project, or for completion of this project by others without first obtaining the expressed written permission and consent of JMAD. These drawings shall not be reproduced, changed or copied in any form or whatsoever without first obtaining the expressed written permission and consent of JMAD, nor are they to be assigned to any third party without said written permission and consent.
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Stamp

HATCH	SQ. FT. AREA	% SLOPE
	2589	59
	1548	99
	1135	10
	1508	5
	6780	AVERAGE SLOPE: 43%

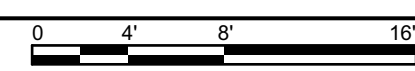
43%+25% = 68%
 MIN. REQUIRED REMEDIATION AREA: 4610 SF
 TOTAL REMEDIATION AREA: 4890 SF

REMEDATION AREA = 4890 SF



A PLANNING PLAN

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



1327 INDIANA AVE. RESIDENCE
 1327 INDIANA AVE.
 SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030

Job Number #Pln Drawn JLI

REMEDICATION PLAN

A102

From: laurie.southpasadena.net
To: [PlanningComments](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 5 for 5/12/2026 Planning Commission Meeting
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 11:26:52 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-bs2ow222.png](#)
[SPCC-OppositiontoZoningCodeAmendments 5.12.26.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Planning Commissioners,

On behalf of the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, local business owners, stakeholders, and commercial property owners, we would like to share that we recently submitted **the attached** formal letter to the City Council expressing our opposition to the proposed Zoning Code and Downtown Specific Plan amendments related to new community meeting requirements and transferring Conditional Use Permit authority for alcohol and live entertainment uses from the Planning Commission to the City Council.

We appreciate the opportunity to share with the Planning Commission the reasons for our opposition and our concerns regarding the long-term impact these changes may have on South Pasadena's business environment and economic vitality.

While we support thoughtful community engagement and responsible land use planning, we believe the proposed changes will unintentionally create additional costs, delays, and uncertainty for small businesses and prospective tenants considering South Pasadena.

Specifically, we are concerned that:

- Requiring an additional mandatory community meeting before the CUP process will increase upfront expenses and extend timelines for applicants before a project is even deemed viable.
- Shifting CUP authority from the Planning Commission to the City Council changes what is currently a technical, quasi-judicial review process into a more political process, creating uncertainty for business owners, landlords, lenders, and investors.
- Adding a two-step approval process — Planning Commission recommendation followed by City Council action — will lengthen entitlement timelines and make it harder for independent and small businesses to succeed in South Pasadena's already challenging retail environment.
- Expanding Council review of live entertainment permits may discourage restaurants and retailers from investing in the vibrant, walkable downtown environment envisioned in the Downtown Specific Plan.

We also respectfully encourage the Commission to closely evaluate comparisons being made to neighboring or peer cities regarding enhanced community engagement requirements. We believe it is important that policy decisions be based on accurate context about how similarly situated small cities administer these types of land use

approvals.

We also want to emphasize that the current CUP process already includes public noticing, public hearings, and opportunities for community input. Responsible operators are already engaging neighbors and stakeholders under the existing system, and the existing process already provides meaningful opportunities for public participation.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Planning Commission to recommend preserving the City's current, well-functioning processes by:

- Keeping CUP review authority with the Planning Commission;
- Maintaining the existing 300-foot noticing radius;
- Preserving the Administrative Use Permit process for accessory live entertainment uses; and
- Instead focusing on creating clear operational guidelines and standards that can be consistently applied to all businesses within the Downtown Specific Plan area.

In short, we ask the Commission to keep what is working and avoid adding burdens that may discourage the small businesses and local operators our community says it wants to support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signed: Karie Reynolds
Chair of the Board

Laurie Wheeler
President/CEO

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
1121 Mission Street
South Pasadena, CA 91030
Office: 626-441-2339
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Jesse Torres
ArroyoWest LLC

Gabriel Vazquez
Institute for the
Redesign of Learning

May 4, 2026

The Honorable Sheila Rossi and Members of the City Council
City of South Pasadena
1414 Mission Street
South Pasadena, CA 91030

**Subject: Opposition to Proposed Zoning Code Amendments Affecting CUP
Review Authority and Community Meeting Requirements (Item No. 19 –
March 18, 2026)**

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers:

On behalf of the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce and the undersigned stakeholders, commercial property and business owners, we write in opposition to the policy direction reflected in the draft ordinances presented under Item No. 19 from March 18, 2026 council meeting.

The proposed amendments - as currently drafted - will raise costs for applicant tenants, and respective landlords, extend timelines, introduce political variables into a quasi-judicial process, and discourage new retailers including small, locally owned operators who South Pasadena has historically supported and encourages on Mission Street, El Centro, Fair Oaks, and throughout the Downtown Specific Plan.

While we share the City's commitment to thoughtful community engagement and responsible land use, we believe the proposed amendments will harm the existing and future businesses central to South Pasadena's economic vitality. Our concerns track the policy questions staff has placed before the Council.

- 1. The community meeting requirement for a CUP, as drafted, front-loads additional costs and delays onto applicants who are least able to absorb either.** The draft ordinance requires applicants to host a minimum of two community meetings – one before application submittal and one after – and to bear the full cost of notification mailings, venue rental, and presentation materials. The staff report confirms applicants will incur the additional time and costs, and that the City itself will incur additional Community Development Department overtime to staff evening meetings for most projects. For a restaurant operator considering a lease, this front-loaded burden is paid before the City has even confirmed the application is viable. The result is predictable: marginal projects don't pencil and operators will look to other nearby retail focused communities that are less burdensome such as Eagle Rock, Highland Park, Alhambra, and Pasadena, instead.

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SOUTH PASADENA, CA 91030
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2. **Transferring CUP authority from the Planning Commission to the City Council converts a technical, criteria-based process into a political one.** The Planning Commission is specifically designed to apply zoning standards in a quasi-judicial manner. Council review introduces variables that have nothing to do with the merits of an application. Lenders, investors, and operators will all read that change the same way – as a risk that they will need to price in or avoid. The six findings required for CUP approval, codified in Section 36.410.060(F) are technical land-use determinations. There is no policy gap that requires Council to take them over.
3. **The two-step approval process will deter new retailers from considering coming to our city as it adds to much additional time and expense to every entitlement.** Requiring Planning Commission recommendation followed by City Council action means CUP applications will wait behind budget hearings, contract approvals, and policy discussions for floor time. For an applicant/proposed tenant and/or a landlord working to get a commercial lease finalized, every month of delay is a month of rent, insurance and financing costs absorbed before a single customer walks in. That math is what kills thin-margin and independent projects – the type of small and local projects that our South Pasadena staff, council, and community has communicated it wants here. Our challenging, overly regulated increasing costly for retail environment for owners of the business has been decimated in many towns, and this would be a further weakening of business development.
4. **The signal sent to operators is the wrong one – particularly given recent context.** Section 1 of the draft ordinance amends the Downtown Specific Plan to route CUP approval for live entertainment to City Council. Combined with the staff-posed question of whether to elevate Administrative Use Permits for accessory live entertainment - a soloist at a restaurant, for example - to full Council-approved CUPs, the practical reach of this policy could extend to nearly every restaurant or retailer in the DTSP that wants any live music.

Coming on the heels of the Sid The Cat Auditorium opening - and staff's recommendation to reopen its CUP - the timing is hard to miss. Rather than reading as a sign of a vibrant cultural economy, this change suggests that even approved projects remain vulnerable to political review long after significant investment has been made. Businesses, lenders, and investors rely on the finality of approved entitlements. Any erosion of that certainty sends capital and operators to neighboring cities.

Further, the changes imply this operator did not proactively engage the community prior to its hearing before the Planning Commission. This is not the case here. The owners met with city leadership, multiple neighborhood groups, and dozens of neighbors - after publicly posting and mailing the required CUP notice to all properties within the 300-foot boundary as required. The CUP and Planning Commission process already solicits public comment at every stage. The operator's obligation is to create the opportunity for engagement, the responsibility to participate rests with the public. Asking the operator to do more is redundant, punitive, and brands our retail environment as unfriendly to small businesses. It will further erode the activated retail landscape we have worked so hard to

build in the City of South Pasadena.

For these reasons, the Chamber and the undersigned respectfully request that the City Council provide the following direction to staff. Our requests are simply to preserve the City's existing, well-functioning processes:

- A. **Keep Conditional Use Permits with the Planning Commission**, including those involving alcoholic beverage sales and live entertainment. The Commission's quasi-judicial process is the appropriate venue for these decisions, and appeal rights to Council already preserve Council oversight without displacing Commission authority. This is the existing process and it works.
- B. **Maintain the existing 300-foot notification radius**, consistent with the City's standard public hearing notice requirements, rather than expanding to 500 or 1,000 feet.
- C. **Preserve the Administrative Use Permit process for live entertainment** when accessory to a primary permitted use, as currently structured.

The single substantive change we are requesting is to ask Council to **develop standard guidelines for businesses within the DTSP serving alcohol or hosting live music**. These standards will enable city staff to provide business owners guidelines prior to their CUP hearing and allow the planning commission to be consistent in applying them to all applicants.

In setting these standards, we also respectfully encourage the Council to consider what problems they will resolve and what impact they will have on implementing the DTSP, which was adopted on September 27, 2023 after multiple community engagement sessions.

In short: keep what is working, and do not burden on operators who are already engaging the public through the established CUP process.

The Chamber has long worked constructively with the City and stands ready to participate in the staff and stakeholder process before any ordinance is proposed or returns for formal adoption.

Respectfully submitted,



Karie Reynolds
Chair of the Board of Directors



Laurie Wheeler
President/CEO

From: [Josh Albrektson](#)
To: [PlanningComments](#)
Subject: Item 5 Public comment
Date: Monday, May 11, 2026 8:01:48 AM

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Do we want new businesses to open in South Pasadena, or not??? I've watched MANY planning commissions in other cities and watched many CUP processes, and I have never seen anything this insane.

It will add Thousands of dollars to any person considering opening a restaurant in South Pasadena. Having them cover the cost of the mailings and a community meeting that will be attended by the same people 10 people who don't want anything new in South Pasadena.

Has Staff consulted with ANY business about this process??? After what they tried to do to Villas Tacos, I doubt it.

Does the planning commission think the kind of people who would go to Giddy Ostrich would show up to this meeting before it has it's first public meeting??? Do you think there will be actual constructive input from people who would actually attend the business???

Or is it just forcing anybody who wants to consider opening a business to spend thousands of dollars to give every NIMBY a chance to try to tank the business before it even opens. Or they pay tons of money and nobody shows up. Regardless, this is not the kind of policy that a cities that wants good businesses in their city should adopt.

These kind of reforms proposed by our planning department are designed to make sure Mission street sucks.

--

Josh Albrektson MD
Neuroradiologist by night
Crime fighter by day