



Monday, March 25, 2019
Minutes of the Regular Planning Commission Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Kelly M. Koldus on Monday, March 25, 2019, at 8:00 p.m., in the Amedee O. "Dick" Richards, Jr., City Council Chamber, located at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

ROLL CALL

Present: Kelly M. Koldus, Chair; Janet Braun, Vice-Chair; Steven Dahl, Commissioner; John Lesak, Commissioner; and Richard Tom, Commissioner

City Staff

Present: David Bergman, Interim Director of Planning and Building; Holly O. Whatley, Assistant City Attorney; Darby Whipple, Senior Planner and Edwar Sissi, Assistant Planner were present at roll call.

Council

Present: Richard D. Schneider, MD, Council Liaison

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Kelly M. Koldus

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

CONTINUED HEARING

1. 817 Orange Grove Place (Appeal)

Associate Planner, Edwar Sissi presented staff's request to deny the appeal and uphold the Design Review Board (DRB) decision. Mr. Sissi reviewed the history and the details of the appeal and the project. Mr. Sissi pointed out that a new project was submitted, due to the Planning Commission comments from last month's meeting. The massing of the project was

reduced to two structures instead of one, which resulted in a project consisting of a single story detached front unit and a two story town home style consisting of two units in the rear. Unit A was reduced substantially to 880 sq.ft. Unit B increased to 1,800 sq. ft. Unit C increased to 1,800 sq. ft., therefore, the project was reduced in coverage and floor Area Ratio. There are concerns about the project in relationship to parking, since only two covered parking spaces and one guest parking space were indicated on the plans, which does not meet the requirement of two guest parking spaces and four covered parking spaces. Mr. Sissi noted that the application failed to comply with DRB standards. At the conclusion of his presentation. Chair Koldus inquired if the project included a General Plan Amendment, a zone change or variance. Mr. Sissi responded in the negative. Vice-Chair Braun verified with Mr. Sissi that the project change included a 500 sq. ft. difference.

Chair Koldus declared the public hearing open. Mr. De Maria, project architect introduced himself to the Commission and noted that he met with staff to select a design that would be compatible with the neighborhood. The front structure of the project has a one-story appearance from the street level, which is approximately 880 sq. ft. The materials consist of stone, wood columns and stucco. The two-story structure is located in the back of the property. Parking is located behind the front unit where there are two covered parking spaces and one regular parking space. A drought resistance landscape including creeping fig was included to soften the appearance of the proposed project. The parking spaces are accessible from the alley. The presence of the building is diminished by including parallel gables with the street.

The following people spoke in opposition to the project and requested a denial of the appeal: 1) Jane Schermeister, 816 Orange Grove Pl. expressed her concerns about alley use, and possible increase in street/driveway traffic; 2) Elizabeth Hollingsworth, 813 Orange Grove Pl. expressed her concerns about the new project and requested to have it noticed as such since there was a significant change to the project drawings; 3) Tara Kawakami, 825 Orange Grove Pl., noted that the building was too high for the neighborhood and it did not fit in with the street scape along with the massing of the project; 4) Saik Chou, 1038 Orange Grove Ave., pointed out that the applicant should submitted a new plans and start all over with the process, including a traffic study; 5) Mike Hollingsworth, 813 Orange Grove Pl., noted that he did not like the original project and does not like the new project.

The following people spoke in support of the project: 1) Mr.Gary Sewell, 2919 Maiden Ln., liked the scale of the front unit and the rooflines in the back of the project and loved the design of the project; therefore, he requested approval for the project; 2) Patrick Perry, the appellant's representative, noted that the applicant has complied with the requirements; therefore, he requested that the Commission approve the project as submitted by staff or approve the original project if the revised project is not appealing to the Commission. Chair Koldus declared the public hearing closed.

David Bergman, Interim Planning and Building Director, verified with Mr. Sissi that the new project did not meet the parking requirement; therefore, the newly submitted project is an incomplete project.

Comm. Tom reviewed the general project process for applications in general with Holly O'Whatley, Assistant City Attorney.

Vice-Chair Braun pointed out that the DRB and the Planning Commission found that the project was out of character with the neighborhood; therefore, in response to their findings, the applicant has made attempts to address the concerns of the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board by changing their plans. Vice-Chair Braun noted that the Commission should take the applicant's efforts into consideration.

Comm. Dahl pointed out that the front unit was altered to look like a one story house from the street level, which is a nice feature but the bulk of the massing was pushed to the rear of the project. The back units are larger in size, resulting in higher walls on both sides of the units, facing the neighbors', which is overwhelming in the scale and massing in the rear of the project. The amount of bedrooms displayed on the plans were misleading by designating that there were less bedrooms as there really were. Comm. Dahl suggested that the Commission uphold the DRB decision or send it back to the DRB for comments.

Comm. Tom inquired about the decision options that the Commission was given for the new project and discussed them with Holly O.Whatley and Mr. Bergman.

Comm. Lesak noted that considerable progress has been made, since the last submittal but the covered parking issue still needs to be resolved. The front revisions are more compatible with the character of the neighborhood than with the design of the original submission but the height of the rear units needs to be adjusted.

Chair Koldus inquired if a condition could be designated to ensure that the one and two bedroom units will stay as they are designated. Mr. Bergman and Mr. Sissi noted that it would be difficult to monitor such a condition.

To remedy the parking situation, Chair Koldus noted that subterranean or "tucked under" parking could be an option to satisfy the Zoning Code. She also reviewed the options for the Commission: 1) deny the appeal; 2) uphold the appeal with conditions; 3) sending this item back to the DRB for review; or 4) issue a continuance.

Comm. Braun was in favor of moving forward with the new design, including conditions.

Comm. Tom. Noted that progress has been made, regarding the plans but due to the size of the lot, they have to fit parking in by reducing the open space and the landscaping. The design works and is it compatible with the neighborhood but the units are stacked together in the lot.

Vice-Chair Braun noted that parking is an issue in the neighborhood. The small unit in front decreases the massing of the project. Project complies with the Zoning Code.

Regarding the Zoning Code, Comm. Dahl noted that the parking requirement has been met for the project but additional covered parking is needed and can be created by a simple trellis.

The Commission discussed the pros and cons of this project and what decision they should make. Discussion ensued.

The Commission took a five minutes break to allow the applicant to discuss with his family, whether he was amenable to a continuation.

After considering the staff report and draft resolution, a motion was made by Comm. Lesak, seconded by Comm. Dahl to continue this item to the next regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, 4/9/19 to provide the applicant with additional time to resolve the following issues: 1) the need for four covered parking spaces; 2) the need to reduce the bulk of the rear units; and 3) to resolved the parking issues and make them consistent with the Zoning Code.

Discussion continued regarding direction for the applicant and the lack of completeness of the application.

Comm. Lesak amended his motion to include the following wording in his motion: “the addition of a complete application submission”, seconded by Comm. Dahl.

Mr. Bergman noted that staff has a full work load; therefore, he could not ensure that staff would be able to review the item in time for the next regularly scheduled meeting, since progress is contingent upon a timely submission.

Chair Koldus, reviewed the motion by pointing out that it is a motion for a continuance to the next regularly scheduled meeting on April 9, 2019 with the understanding that the following will be addressed: 1) parking; 2) bulk reduction [rear units] and 3) a complete application submittal.

The motion carried 4-1 with Chair Koldus as the dissenting party.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. 1337 Oak Hill Place (Hillside Development Permit)

Associate Planner Edwar Sissi presented his staff report and reviewed the details of the project via a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Sissi noted that ¼ of the lot is located in South Pasadena and ¾ of the lot is located in Los Angeles; therefore, the house is in South Pasadena and the garage and swimming pool are located in Los Angeles. One California Native Walnut tree will be removed by the city of Los Angeles and will be replaced by four trees. Two large trees will not be removed, since they are located in the city right of way. At the conclusion of his presentation, Chair Koldus verified with Mr. Sissi that the home address will have a South Pasadena mailing address and the children’s schools will be under the jurisdiction of the South Pasadena Unified School District. Regarding the dual jurisdiction of the property, Vice-Chair Braun inquired as to how taxes will be paid for the house. In response, Chair Koldus noted that the Los Angeles County Assessor’s office would be the determining agency, regarding the matter. Comm. Dahl pointed out that a power pole

is located in the middle of the property, which will be resolved by the applicant and Edison and a condition may be added at the end of the discussion to address the matter.

Chair Koldus declared the public hearing open. The applicant, Robert D. Weide, introduced himself to the Commission and noted that a modern/split step design was selected for the project to blend in with the streetscape. The single story portion of the project is located in the city of South Pasadena with an open floor plan. Mr. Weide made a correction to Mr. Sissi's presentation by pointing out that the tree that straddles the property line is a protected tree for both cities, which will be removed and replaced with three new trees on the South Pasadena side and four new trees on the Los Angeles side. Grading will be kept to a minimum. The project includes a through lot split between two cities. The third story structure is located in the City of Los Angeles, which includes the highest part of the house. Changes were made to the design of the project due to neighbors' concerns regarding their scenic view as follows; 1) all three floors were pushed back; 2) open metal railings were selected in place of the previously selected wood railings; and 3) the window spaces were reduced in size.

The following speakers expressed concerns about the project: 1) Robert Conte, 1335 Oak Hill Pl., pointed out that all houses on the subject street are on top of the hill and are single story homes. Mr. Conte noted that incompatibility of scale and massing with the other single story homes in the neighborhood should be addressed. He noted that the viewing deck of the proposed project will look down into his home. Satsuki Yamashita, 1339 Oak Hill Pl., expressed concerns about possible noise traveling from the new home to the neighbors' homes.

The following speakers spoke in support of the project: 3) Karolyn Clemens, 3676 Corte Cancion, requested that the Commission approve the project; Jim Pajuhersh (project architect), 6826 Louise Ave., noted that he complied with the design guidelines, the requests of the Commission and the requests of the neighbors as to not obstruct their view. The applicant, Robert D. Weide, spoke in rebuttal and noted that the tallest point of the project is in the back of the property; therefore, the house will not block the scenic view of his neighbors. He also noted that the existing tree on the property is taller than the proposed project. Mr. Weide pointed out that all of the homes located on the street are not single story homes, since there are multi-story homes on the South Pasadena side of the street. The Conte house sits high upon the hill which will be above Mr. Weide's proposed house. Chair Koldus declared the public hearing closed.

Chair Koldus viewed the topographical map with Mr. Sissi and noted that the subject property is located on a steep sloped lot and that the next-door lot is located on a gradual sloped lot. Comm. Lesak reviewed the driveway material (porous concrete) with Mr. Sissi. Comm. Dahl expressed his concerns about the roof elements such as a pop-up lip [the lip is to obscure the vent pipe]; 2) the roofline, which projects over other roofline increases the height of the building; and 3) the garage roof in the rear looms high over the street. Referring to the rendering, Comm. Lesak inquired as to how far the cantilevered awning projects outward above the window. In response, Mr. Sissi noted that the awning would have to project less than 30 inches into the property line. Chair Koldus noted that the applicant has made considerable changes to the project to comply with the requests of the neighbors and the Commission. Comm. Dahl noted that modern homes have texture to them; therefore, he inquired if the applicant would consider stone or siding. Comm. Dahl pointed out concerns about the roof elements of the front balcony,

since it will obtrude onto the neighbor's privacy. Comm. Lesak pointed out the following: 1) there are elements that he liked and elements that he did not like about the project; 2) the applicant did a good job noticing that the property is located on a street with a mix of single story homes and multi-story homes; 3) he had concerns about the parapet screen; 4) the side walls are sharp and tall; 4) the garage on top is good feature; 5) regarding the rendering, the free standing planters need clarification; 6) the depiction of neighboring houses in the rendering is missing; and 7) he had additional questions regarding elevations, stucco joints etc...

Regarding Comm. Lesak's question regarding planters, Mr. Bergman noted that the rendering does not completely match the plans. The planters are detailed on the landscape plans. The Commission continued discussion on whether this item should be continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting and pointed out discrepancies of the project. It was suggested to have the raining pushed back. Regarding the deck on the north property line, planter boxes were suggested.

After considering the staff report and draft resolution, a motion was made by Vice-Chair Braun, seconded by Comm. Dahl to continue this item to the next regularly scheduled meeting on April 9, 2019 to work with staff to address issues brought up by the Commission.

The motion carried 5-0

3. 191 Monterey Road (Tentative Tract Map)

Senior Planner, Darby Whipple, presented his staff report and reviewed the details of the map and the project, via a PowerPoint presentation for the tentative tract map for 191 Monterey Road. At the conclusion of his presentation, Comm. Lesak inquired if any changes were made to the tentative tract map. Mr. Whipple responded in the negative.

Chair Koldus declared the public hearing open. The applicant, Jason Lee noted that this will be the last request for an extension, since the county has approved the tentative tract map, the condo plans and the CC&Rs. Seeing that there were no speakers in favor of or in opposition to this item, Chair Koldus declared the public hearing closed.

After considering the staff report and draft resolution, a motion was made by Vice-Chair Braun, seconded by Comm. Tom to approve the project as submitted by staff

The motion carried 5-0.

Resolution 19-04

4. Bank Street – Street Vacation

Senior Planner, Darby Whipple presented his staff report regarding the details of the project. Mr. Whipple noted that the school district has maintained the street. The vacation will help the school expand. One public inquiry was received by staff, regarding if access to and across the high school property would be limited. Chair Koldus verified with Mr. Whipple that access to

the campus was the main concern. Comm. Lesak verified with Mr. Whipple that the easement was requested because there are existing utility lines at the location. The city will not be compensated for the easement. At the inquiry of Vice-Chair Braun, Mr. Whipple noted that the property by the easement will be transferred but the easement will remain and one of the utility pipes will be moved but it will reside in the easement at the developer's cost.

Chair Koldus declared the public hearing open. School Board Member, Jon Primath, 1537 Ramona Ave., requested an adjustment to the easement so the school district can utilize the Stem building that has been constructed. Mr. Primath noted that the district working with city staff to relocate the utilities has been very productive. Mr. Primath invited everyone to attend the opening of the Stem building on April 24, 2019. Seeing that there were no other speakers in favor of or in opposition to this item, Chair Koldus declared the public hearing closed.

After considering the staff report and draft resolution, a motion was made by Comm. Lesak, seconded by Vice-Chair Braun to approve the item as submitted by staff.

The motion carried 5-0.

Resolution 19-05

5. Comments from Council Liaison

Dr. Richard D. Schneider thanked everyone that attended the Commissioner Congress.

6. Comments from Planning Commissioners

Comm. Lesak noted that he would like to see neighborhood compatibility issues agendized and to have neighborhood buildings included in the renderings for streetscape compatibility. Comm. Lesak went to Washington D.C. to participate in the National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week, where he was able to meet with congressmen. While he was there, Congress was asked to fund the National Historic Preservation fund, which is funded by off shore oil drilling revenues. South Pasadena has benefitted by several grants through the fund throughout the year.

Chair Koldus attended the League of CA Cities Planning Commissioners Academy held at the Queen Mary, where wild fires, Scott Weiner's Bill and proposals to deal with the housing emergency were discussed.

Comm. Dahl noted that he has a chair review scheduled for tomorrow morning in the Planning and Building department, regarding Spruce St.

7. Comments from Staff

Mr. Bergman noted that during the month of April scheduled meetings will occur, regarding housing initiatives and the economic development strategy. The restructuring of the General Plan outreach process will return to the City Council during April or May.

Chair Koldus verified with Mr. Bergman that staff is working on available grants for conformance with SB2. Mr. Bergman also noted that there may be a way to fund the permitting system in the Planning and Building department, via available grants.

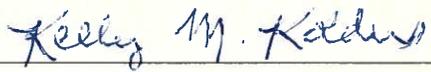
Holly O. Whatley, Assistant City Attorney, thanked the Commission for attending the Brown Act training.

ADJOURNMENT

8. Chair Koldus adjourned the meeting at 11:00 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled on April 9, 2019.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of South Pasadena at a regular meeting held on May 14, 2019.

AYES: BRAUN, DAHL, KOLDUS & TOM
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: LESAK
ABSTAIN: NONE



Kelly M. Koldus, Chair



Richard Tom, Secretary to the Planning
Commission

ATTEST



Elaine Serrano, Recording Secretary