



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
September 4, 2014

West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California 90069

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Huebner called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:35 P.M.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Todd Elliott led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **ROLL CALL:**
Commissioners Present: Altschul, Buckner, DeLuccio, Shink, Yeber, Vice-Chair Aghaei, Chair Huebner.

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Emily Stadnicki, Senior Planner, David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager, John Keho, Assistant Community Development Director, and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**
ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission Agenda of Thursday, September 4, 2014 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Shink and passes.**
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**
 - A. **July 31, 2014 (Special Meeting)**
ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission special meeting minutes of Thursday, July 31, 2014 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Yeber and passes.**
 - B. **August 7, 2014 (Verbatim Transcription)**
ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission regular meeting minutes of Thursday, July 31, 2014 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Shink and passes.**
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT.**
GENEVIEVE MORRILL, MARINA DEL REY, President/CEO, West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, congratulated Vice-Chair Aghaei on his recent nuptials, and encouraged the public to “Eat, Shop, Play West Hollywood”. Further information can be found at eatshopplay@weho.com

She stated the West Hollywood Chamber Gala will be held on Wednesday, November 5, 2014, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at The London. Lifetime honoree is Lou Adler.

LARRY BLOCK, WEST HOLLYWOOD, requested the meeting adjourned in memory of Clint Bowns and Joan Rivers. He spoke regarding crosswalk safety and future development.

7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

John Keho, Assistant Community Development Director presented the Director's Report.

At the City Council meeting on Monday, August 18, 2014, the City Council certified the Environmental Impact Report, and continued the project entitlements for the Melrose Triangle Mixed-Use Project to Monday, October 6, 2014. Staff was directed to look at additional neighborhood traffic calming issues, parking issues and possible incentives regarding Metro users.

He encouraged public participation regarding new regulations and draft guidelines for the West Hollywood West neighborhood. The public meeting will be on Saturday, September 6, 2014, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the West Hollywood Library, Community Meeting Room.

He reminded the commission the Annual Congress for Commissions and Advisory Boards will be on Wednesday, October 8, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. at the West Hollywood Library. He wished Stephanie DeWolfe, Community Development Director a happy birthday.

8. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Commissioner DeLuccio encouraged participation in the Sunset Strip Farmer's Market on Thursday evenings.

9. CONSENT CALENDAR. None.

10. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

A. 536 West Knoll Drive:

Emily Stadnicki, Senior Planner, provided an oral and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, September 4, 2014.

She stated the applicant is requesting demolition of a single-family residence and an amendment to the City of West Hollywood zoning map, to place the property in the Parking Overlay Zone; for the construction of seventeen parking spaces within an established R3C-zoned residential neighborhood.

She provided a history of the property and detailed the surrounding parcels, overlay zoning, general plan policies and goals. An overlay zone is a regulatory tool that creates another zoning district, placed over an existing base zone, specifying special provisions in addition to those in the underlying base zone.

A proposed zoning map amendment application must be consistent with the General Plan.

There are multiple General Plan goals and policies that emphasize neighborhood integrity and underscore the retention of existing housing. The General Plan also encourages stable, livable neighborhoods and prioritizes maintaining and enhancing their character.

She stated this proposal is in conflict with the General Plan and not suited for the site or the surrounding neighborhood.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend the City Council deny the amendment to the zoning map and associated permits.

Commissioner DeLuccio requested clarification why staff is recommending denial.

Emily Stadnicki, Senior Planner, stated there are multiple General Plan goals and policies that outline neighborhood integrity and encourage the retention of existing housing:

- *Goal H-2: Maintain and enhance the quality of the housing stock and residential neighborhoods.*
- *Policy H-2.4 Require construction to maintain compatibility with existing buildings.*
- *Goal H-3: Encourage a diverse housing stock to address the needs of all socioeconomic segments of the community.*
- *Policy H-3.1 Facilitate the development of a diverse range of housing options including, but not limited to, single-family homes, second/accessory units, multi-family rental housing, condominiums and townhomes, live/work units, and housing in mixed use developments.*

Further, the General Plan includes numerous goals and policies that deal with urban form and its impact on the quality of life. There is a recurring theme that encourages stable, livable neighborhoods and prioritizes maintaining and enhancing their character:

- *Goal LU-1: Maintain an urban form and land use pattern that enhances quality of life and meets the community's vision for its future.*
- *Policy LU-1.2 Consider the scale of new development within its urban context to avoid abrupt changes in scale and massing.*

- Policy LU-1.4 *Continue to maintain regulations that encourage preservation of existing housing and development of new housing that accommodates households that are diverse in size, type and income.*
- Policy LU-2.2 *Consider the scale and character of existing neighborhoods and whether new development improves and enhances the neighborhood when approving new infill development.*
- Policy LU-4.3 *Continue to implement parking strategies and standards that ensure parking areas do not dominate street frontages and are screened from public views whenever possible.*
- Goal LU-8: *Maintain and enhance residential neighborhoods.*
- Policy LU-8.1 *Consider the scale and character of existing residential neighborhoods during the approval of new development.*
- Policy LU-8.2 *Consider historic lot patterns and the surrounding building fabric during the approval of new development.*
- Policy LU-8.3 *Encourage residential renovations and buildings to complement existing buildings – including setbacks, heights, materials, colors, and forms – while allowing flexibility in architectural design and innovation.*

Vice-Chair Aghaei questioned if this has ever been done before.

Emily Stadnicki, Senior Planner, stated since incorporation of cityhood, the city has not demolished any single family housing for parking. A similar proposal came forward was in 2000. That request was denied.

Commissioners Buckner, DeLuccio, Yeber and Chair Huebner had no official disclosures for this project.

Commissioner Shink disclosed for the record she received an email from the applicant's representative. There was no discussion.

Vice-Chair Aghaei disclosed for the record he spoke with the applicant's representative. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Chair Huebner opened the public hearing for Item 10.A.:

TODD ELLIOTT, LOS ANGELES, applicant's representative, presented the applicant's report. He stated they had a neighborhood meeting and heard from neighbors on either side of the property. He specified they did not want to see a three-story building built on the property, which is allowed in this zoning district.

To ease the neighbors' concerns, they would provide landscaping around the perimeter, there would be no pedestrian entrance in the front, it would be un-invasive to the neighborhood, and consider the rights and the views of the people immediately adjacent to the property.

He provided clarification from the General Plan why they feel the commission can recommend approval.

- Policy LU-4.3 *Continue to implement parking strategies and standards that ensure parking areas do not dominate street frontages and are screened from public views whenever possible.*
- Policy LU-1.9 *Allow city management of land use designations through the use of overlay districts.*
- Policy LU-7.5 *Promote the use of drought tolerant and native plants throughout the city*
- Policy LU-8.1 *Consider the scale and character of existing residential neighborhoods during the approval of new development.*
- Policy ED 3.2 *Create parking strategies that support existing businesses and economic growth and provide for opportunities for new businesses to locate in West Hollywood.*
- Policy M 8.4 *Pursue strategies that reduce the circling of parking by visitors, including the following: user friendly informational and way finding signage, shared valet program, technology and real time, and standardized price information*
- Policy M.9 *Utilize alleys for access of parking and delivery and unloading and trash collection more possible to provide additional green space and pedestrian amenities.*

He stated they are trying to be respectful of the neighborhood. However, this property will be developed. The existing use as a one-story house is not what is appropriate. He believes the neighbors do not want a three-story building, but if that is the position of the neighborhood, the applicant will reconsider their position going forward.

He requested the commission recommend approval to the City Council.

Commissioner DeLuccio requested clarification regarding the height limits and SB 1818 if this property was developed to code.

Commissioner Altschul stated this appears to be a trade-off in lieu of multi-family residences in a predominantly single-family neighborhood. It appears staff is suggesting this is not the goals the city has historically wanted to promote. He questioned the applicant if this promotes the goals of the general plan; better than keeping it a primarily residential street.

Todd Elliott, applicant's representative, stated the General Plan is simply - a general plan. Every property is unique and there has to be a balance between what neighbors and businesses in this community would like to see. He stated they have tried very hard to listen to the neighbors and clarified they are trying to be sensitive.

Commissioner Shink stated this would be setting a precedent.

Todd Elliott, applicant's representative, stated not every neighborhood is suitable for a PK Overlay. He acknowledged it would be a precedent, but it would be a narrow precedent.

LAUREN MEISTER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of staff's recommendation of denial.

RICHARD GIESBRET, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of staff's recommendation of denial.

GENE TOLESIAN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, has concerns regarding this item. He stated he has no major issues with this request, as long as the landscaping is done appropriately and reflects the other parking lot in the neighborhood. He stated if this is developed as a residential use, it will increase parking and traffic concerns.

MARGO SEGAL, WEST HOLLYWOOD, has concerns regarding this item. She questioned what will keep the value of her residence; the parking lot or a three-story building.

BRENDA LEE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of staff's recommendation of denial.

THE FOLLOWING ARE IN SUPPORT OF STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION OF DENIAL, BUT CHOSE NOT TO PUBLICLY SPEAK:

LESLIE KARLIS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, RICHARD KARLISS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, MANNY RODRIGUEZ, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CATHY BLAIVAS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, STEPHANIE J. HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, VICTOR OMELCZENKO, WEST HOLLYWOOD, and BARBARA MELTZER, WEST HOLLYWOOD.

TODD ELLIOTT, applicant's representative, presented the applicant's rebuttal. He spoke regarding the landscape buffer on the south side. He reiterated the recommendation to City Council can be made. The least impactful development on this site would be parking. The loss of one market rate housing unit would not be tremendous, and this would not set a precedent citywide. He respectfully asked for a recommendation of approval to the City Council.

Commissioner DeLuccio requested clarification from the applicant regarding the findings on this site, versus other sites in the neighborhood. He questioned the lot size, and how many units could be built on this site if developed.

TODD ELLIOTT, applicant's representative, stated the lot size is 50' x 125'. Under the code, you could build five units. With SB 1818 you could build seven units.

Commissioner Yeber requested the language regarding multi-family development; up to 90% allowable density.

Emily Stadnicki, Senior Planner, read into the record the following Section:

- **19.06.080 R3 and R4 Zoning District Development Standards – Required Density.**

All new residential projects in the R3 and R4 zoning districts shall be built to a minimum of 90% of the density allowed by the zoning district. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 19.22.040(A), if the maximum allowable density allows 11 units, an on-site inclusionary unit shall be incorporated into a project consisting of 10 units. This provision shall apply only if all existing dwelling units on the site are demolished and new dwelling units are constructed.

Commissioner DeLuccio stated his support of staff's recommendation of denial. This is clearly a commercial encroachment on a residential piece of property. He spoke on PK Overlay zoning, and specified this is clearly not compatible with the residential neighborhood.

Commissioner DeLuccio moved to: 1) support staff's recommendation of denial to City Council.

Seconded by Commissioner Altschul.

Commissioner Shink stated this is a very dangerous precedent when we start allowing commercial to encroach into the residential neighborhoods. It is incumbent upon us to be very careful in terms of making those kind of recommendations. She stated there is preponderance of reasons that are outlined in the General Plan; that this request is very inconsistent with. She stated her support of staff's recommendation of denial.

Vice-Chair Aghaei stated this is not the right fit for what we are going for in that area. He stated his support of staff's recommendation of denial.

Commissioner Buckner stated her support of staff's recommendation of denial. She commented regarding the views from both sides, and stated this is not the right fit for a parking facility in this area.

Commissioner Yeber stated this proposal could not be any more contrary to the spirit and letter of both the General Plan and Goals, and also the Zoning Ordinance. He spoke regarding neighborhood capability. He support's staff's recommendation of denial.

Chair Huebner stated this sets a bad precedent and does not adhere to the General Plan and goals of the city. He supports staff's recommendation of denial.

ACTION: 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 14-1096 as presented: "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL DENY A DEMOLITION PERMIT, DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, AND ZONING MAP AMENDMENT TO DEMOLISH A SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSE AND PLACE THE PROPERTY IN THE PARKING OVERLAY ZONE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PARKING LOT, FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 536 WEST KNOLL DRIVE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA"; and 2) Close Public Hearing Item 10.A. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Altschul and unanimously passes.**

11. **NEW BUSINESS.** None.

12. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS.** None.

13. **EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR.** None.

14. **ITEMS FROM STAFF.**

A. Planning Manager's Update.

David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager, provided an update of upcoming projects.

He reminded the commission there is required ethics training for all commission members. The training will be held on Monday, September 29, 2014, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Council Chambers.

The next Planning Commission and Long Range Planning Projects Subcommittee meetings have been cancelled for Thursday, September 18, 2014.

The West Hollywood West Neighborhood Community Meeting, regarding the West Hollywood West Overlay Zone and Design Guidelines, will be held on Saturday, September 6, 2014 at the West Hollywood Library, Community Meeting Room, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT.

STEPHANIE HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, commented on historic surveys of commercial buildings, and the accuracy and time delay of closed captioning.

VICTOR OMELCZENKO, WEST HOLLYWOOD, commented on commercial encroachment into residential neighborhoods, and current residential developments.

16. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Chair Huebner congratulated Vice-Chair Aghaei on his recent marriage.

- 17. ADJOURNMENT:** Noting the cancellation of the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, September 18, 2014, the Planning Commission adjourned in memory of Joan Rivers and Clint Bounds at 7:35 P.M. to a regularly scheduled meeting which will be on Thursday, October 2, 2014 beginning at 6:30 P.M. until completion at West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers, 625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ON THIS 2ND DAY OF OCTOBER, 2014.



ROY HUEBNER, CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:



DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY