



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
October 16, 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 6:30 P.M.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Manny Rodriguez led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **ROLL CALL:**
Commissioners Present: Altschul, Buckner, DeLuccio, Shink, Yeber, Chair Huebner.

Commissioners Absent: Vice-Chair Aghaei.

Staff Present: Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager, Lauren Langer, Acting Assistant City Attorney and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**
ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission Agenda of Thursday, October 16, 2014 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Altschul, seconded by Commissioner Buckner and passes; noting Vice-Chair Aghaei absent.**
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

A. **October 2, 2014**

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission regular meeting minutes of Thursday, October 4, 2014 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Buckner and passes; noting Commissioner Altschul abstaining and Vice-Chair Aghaei absent.**
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.
7. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT.**
John Keho, Assistant Community Development Director presented the Director's Report.

He reported at the City Council meeting on Monday, October 6, 2014, the mixed-use project located at 9040-9088 Santa Monica Boulevard, known as Melrose Triangle was approved. There was a consent calendar item regarding an update on the development feasibility considerations for the Metro Division 7 and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Station site. He stated there will be additional public input regarding the city's goals and views regarding this site.

City Council directed staff to move forward with West Hollywood Park Phase II Master Plan, and a hearing was held regarding the signalization of crosswalks on Santa Monica Boulevard. This item was continued to the next City Council meeting on Monday, October 20, 2014.

8. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Commissioner Shink questioned staff regarding about the valet parking operations for the project at 8650 Melrose Avenue.

David DeGrazia, Planning Manager stated staff would look into this and return with an update.

9. CONSENT CALENDAR.

A. Non-Residential Jobs-Housing Nexus Study and Residential Nexus Study:

The Planning Commission examined the Non-Residential Jobs-Housing Nexus Study and Residential Nexus Study; which informed the members of the commission and public of the legal requirement to perform such analyses and the process undertaken.

Recommendation: 1) Receive and file. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Yeber and passes; noting Vice-Chair Aghaei absent.**

Commissioner DeLuccio recused himself from the meeting at this time; due to having a residence within 500' of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood.

10. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

A. West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay Zone:

This public hearing item was officially continued from the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, October 2, 2014. This item is regarding new zoning regulations and design guidelines for the R1B zoned area known as the West Hollywood West Neighborhood, to consider placing an Overlay District over the West Hollywood West neighborhood with associated Design Guidelines.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, introduced the consultants who worked on the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

Gerdo Aquino, CEO of SWA provided an oral and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, October 16, 2014.

He provided a project history, timelines and updates; including the moratorium. He spoke regarding new construction applications, community concerns; which included 1) size, height and massing, 2) lack of differentiation on design; insensitive design, loss of privacy because of proximity of buildings and windows, and destruction of neighborhood character.

He emphasized potential approaches and spoke regarding the revisions in response to the October 2, 2014 planning commission meeting:

- 1) 18" setback from the sidewalk for fence/hedge; removed from code, included as a strong recommendation in the Design Guidelines; and
- 2) Revisions to the "findings" language.

John Lesak, Page and Turnbull, spoke and detailed the Design Guidelines content. He stated the purpose of the West Hollywood West Design Guidelines is to provide clear guidance for property owners, developers, builders, and design professionals, as well as residents and other stakeholders, when preparing applications for new construction, additions, and exterior alterations within the West Hollywood West Overlay District.

He detailed the design guidelines in relation to stakeholders, neighborhood concerns and guiding principles, guiding principles and findings. The required findings are:

Neighborhood Fit: the massing, scale, and proportion, as well as landscape, site, and streetscape design of the proposed project complement the existing neighborhood;

Variety in New Construction: for new construction, that the building is a unique design and not identical to others on surrounding parcels; and

Quality Materials and Details: the proposed project exhibits use of quality materials and details appropriate to the design concept that will ensure proper execution of the design.

He provided an overview of the West Hollywood West Design Guidelines as they currently stand in draft form. He detailed the following:

Site planning and design objectives, mass and scale objectives, mass and scale accessory objectives, mass and scale parking objectives, design and detailing materials objectives, design and detailing style objectives, design and detailing roof, windows, and doors objectives, design and detailing privacy objectives, design and detailing lighting and sound objectives, landscape design objectives; which include driveways and parking, and sustainable materials.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, reiterated the planning commission should focus on the design guidelines and give any comments and feedback. It is scheduled to be heard by the City Council on Monday, November 3, 2014. Staff anticipates new rules for development in West Hollywood West if adopted by City Council will be in effect on January 1, 2015.

Commissioner Altschul questioned if the design guidelines really address or attack the issue that is the underlying concern. He spoke on “big box” development, granny flats and floor area ratios (FAR).

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, stated the proposal before the Commission attempts to address the issues in a number of ways. The Zoning Code that has been developed for the area has a three-pronged approach to the issue of the “big boxes”. Changes in modulation of the primary structure, changes to required parking, and changes to accessory structures. Staff believes all of those pieces will amount to a primary building structure in front that looks smaller. With those code changes are design guidelines. Very often, it is not the actual size of a structure, but it is the scale and proportion. Through design, staff does their best to make sure the design of the project fits into the neighborhood. Those components are designed to work hand in hand to address all the issues that the neighborhood has raised.

Commissioner Altschul commented on roof lines and roof heights. He questioned if those extra heights could be included into the FAR.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, stated they looked at the height of the structures and compared it to other municipalities. The height of 25’ in West Hollywood West is significantly lower than any other municipality.

Staff looked at potentially reducing that height, however it was thought it would make design opportunities rather inflexible. Staff wanted to leave that height in, but attack it with design guidelines and request for lower plate heights in certain areas.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer stated there had not been enough vetting for the 18” provision at the front yard. Staff moved that piece into the Design Guidelines. Staff looked again at all the input that was received regarding subterranean parking; it was a challenge to modify it at this point.

She stated the lighting provision is focused on the accessory structures only.

Commissioner Shink questioned if there is too much room for discretion regarding the neighborhood fit, variety of new construction, and quality of materials, or if this is enough.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, stated staff attempted to find a balance that would enable the most creative solutions come to the City of West Hollywood. Staff's role is to make sure fundamental architectural design and urban design principles are followed.

Commissioner Buckner commented on the overall style of the amended code sections, stating her support of the photographs. She stated this is the type of subject matter you will not know is going to work until you implement it. She stated her support.

Commissioner Altschul disclosed for the record he had a conversation with Richard Giesbret and Manny Rodriguez. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Chair Huebner disclosed for the record he had a conversation with Richard Giesbret and Manny Rodriguez. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Commissioner Yeber disclosed for the record he had a conversation with Richard Giesbret and Manny Rodriguez. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Commissioner Buckner had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Shink had no official disclosures.

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

CARLETON CRONIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

MANNY RODRIGUEZ, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

LAUREN MEISTER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

BRADLEY KRAMER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, has concerns regarding this item. He spoke about the timing of the Moratorium and submittal of plans.

EDWARD LEVIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, has concerns regarding this item. He stated the zone text amendment is too specific and the design guidelines are too vague.

MARTIN STRUDLER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

JIM PERKINS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

CYNTHIA PHAGOS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, has concerns regarding this item. She stated the guidelines have not addressed duplexes and four-plexes and how they would fit into the neighborhood. There should be some further discussion how the neighborhood could maintain its mix of units and homes.

COLE ETHMAN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

CATHY BLAIVAS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

DOUGLAS BERNARD, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

RICHARD GIESBRET, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

STEPHANIE J. HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

JEANNE DOBRIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

WILLIAM DOEBLER, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines.

THE FOLLOWING CHOSE NOT TO PUBLICLY SPEAK, BUT OPPOSE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL TO CITY COUNCIL:

ELEANOR HSU, WEST HOLLYWOOD, BEN CREIGHTON, WEST HOLLYWOOD.

THE FOLLOWING CHOSE NOT TO PUBLICLY SPEAK, BUT SUPPORT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL TO CITY COUNCIL:

MICHAEL ZANNELLA, WEST HOLLYWOOD, RICHARD BLONS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, RICHARD KARLISS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, LESLIE KARLISS, WEST HOLLYWOOD, DANIEL RODRIGUEZ, WEST HOLLYWOOD, LYNN RUSSELL, WEST HOLLYWOOD, SIAN LEONG, WEST HOLLYWOOD.

Commissioner Yeber requested clarification regarding duplexes, quadplexes, required parking and how it impacts the subterranean parking. He questioned the 18" setback of hedges and fences.

Stephanie Reich Urban Designer, stated there are currently no four-plexes allowed in the R1B Zone and they would not be allowed going forward. There may be a couple of existing, non-conforming four-plexes that were built prior to cityhood, and the allowance for duplexes has not changed.

She stated staff was looking at the 18" setback of hedges and fences more as a pedestrian orientation element.

Commissioner Yeber questioned and requested clarification regarding the timelines for the zone text amendment and moratorium.

Lauren Langer, Acting Assistant City Attorney, stated staff has presented this item to the Commission as the best way to move forward. She suggested the commission can either make a recommendation tonight, or choose to continue the item.

Discussion was held regarding timelines and questioned if more time was needed to corroborate any additional vetting.

Commissioner Shink stated this is a great reflection of the community and specified it can provide an actual template for other parts of the city. She indicated the 18" setback for the hedges and fences should be relocated back into the code. She affirmed this is an evolving document and when we go from the theoretical to the practical, there will be things which will need to be repaired. She stated her support and moving this item forward to City Council.

Commissioner Altschul stated this has been a marvelous process. He commented on the location of the 18" setbacks and stated it can go in either the code or the Design Guidelines. He specified this is a wonderful product and confirmed his support.

Commissioner Buckner moved to: 1) adopt staff's recommendation to City Council of the West Hollywood West Neighborhood Overlay District and Design Guidelines with the following amendment: a) the 18" setback regarding hedges and fences shall be removed from the Design Guidelines and placed in the West Hollywood Municipal Zoning Code.

Seconded by Commissioner Altschul.

Commissioner Yeber stated his full support of the objectives and the content that is laid-out. He has concerns with the zone text amendment and the design guidelines as presented. As a practitioner, he stated this is very vague; it is not clearly defined and would create uncertainty. He stated the designers are going to be using this document on a daily basis, and for them the pictures (photographs) present more conflict and contradictions than they do clarity.

He had concerns regarding the terms used in the design guidelines; architectural concept and eclectic. He stated you can't argue about the architectural concept, but what you can argue about is the architectural language or vocabulary. He believes this is a better choice of words to use wherever you're using design concept. Anyone can argue a design concept, but language and vocabulary have a much more objective framework to them.

There are a lot of areas that could be afforded to the consultant to flush out; that we are not creating these trap doors in the guidelines and zoning. With the zone text amendments; the diagrams are very difficult to read and understand, even for someone who is trained. He stated they could have a bit more detail; or some of them could be three-dimensional form; so they are clearer in terms of zoning.

He stated his preference would be if City Council would at least entertain extending the moratorium for at least two months, so the commission could flush out some of these problematic items. He had concerns with the organizational and structural aspects of the document. He affirmed his trouble reconciling the current document as it is. He would like to move forward, but is not comfortable with what has been presented.

Chair Huebner stated the document is not perfect, it is evolutionary. It does provide a really good frame work and adequate direction for creative architecture to achieve the objectives. He stated his support of the 18" setback for hedges and fences into the zoning code section and his support of the document. It is a great template to be used for the future.

Commissioner Altschul stated this is a document that will evolve. This is sufficient enough.

ACTION: 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 14-1102 as amended: *a) the 18” setback regarding hedges and fences shall be removed from the Design Guidelines and placed in the West Hollywood Municipal Zoning Code: “A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT RELATING TO WEST HOLLYWOOD WEST NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLAY DISTRICT (WHW NOD) AND TO RECOMMEND ADOPTION OF ASSOCIATED DESIGN GUIDELINES, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA;”* 2) Adopt Resolution No. PC 14-1103 “A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT ESTABLISHING THE WEST HOLLYWOOD WEST NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLAY ZONE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA;” and 3) Close Public Hearing Item 10.A. **Moved by Commissioner Buckner, seconded by Commissioner Altschul and passes; noting Commissioner Yeber voting NO, Commissioner DeLuccio as recused and Vice-Chair Aghaei absent.**

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.

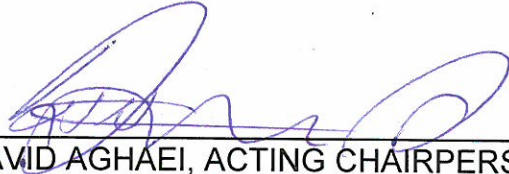
He stated for the record the Planning Commission meetings on Thursday, November 6, 2014 and Thursday, November 20, 2014 have been officially cancelled. The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, December 4, 2014.

15. **PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.

16. **ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.**

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** Noting the cancellations of the Planning Commission meetings on Thursday, November 6, 2014 and Thursday, November 20, 2014, the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:05 P.M. to a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, December 4, 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 4TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2014.



DAVID AGHAEI, ACTING CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:



DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY