



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
May 21, 2015

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:** John Keho led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners Present: Buckner, DeLuccio, Lightfoot, Shink, Yeber, Vice-Chair Altschul, Chair Huebner.

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Antonio Castillo, Associate Planner, Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, Peter Noonan, Rent Stabilization & Housing Manager, David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager, Stephanie DeWolfe, Community Development Director, Christi Hugin, Assistant City Attorney and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.

5. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission Agenda of Thursday, May 21, 2015 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Shink and unanimously passes.**

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

A. April 16, 2015 (Verbatim Transcription)

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission regular meeting minutes of Thursday, April 16, 2015 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Yeber and unanimously passes.**

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT.**

MICHAEL WOJTKIELEWICZ, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on height, massing and neighborhood compatibility.

STEPHANIE HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on height, massing, neighborhood compatibility and drought conservation alternatives.

JESSE SLANSKY, LOS ANGELES, Director of Real Estate Development, West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, stated there will be an open house of the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation on Tuesday, June 16, 2015; 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the community room of the Laurel Norton property at 1217 N. Laurel Avenue, West Hollywood. R.S.V.P at info@whchc.org

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Stephanie DeWolfe, Community Development Director presented the Director's Report.

City Council Meeting - Monday, April 20, 2015:

She stated it was the Oath of Office for new incoming councilmembers.

City Council Meeting - Monday, May 4, 2015:

She stated the City Council directed staff to pursue a Net Zero Sustainable Practices Policy. It will be coming to the Planning Commission, and will include a large public participation process.

City Council considered a series of potential revisions to parking policies; which was continued to the June 1, 2015 council meeting.

Regarding 826 N. Kings Road project, the city council asked the applicant to consider paying the in-lieu fee for affordable housing, rather than building the in-lieu housing on-site. This would result in a smaller project. The applicant agreed and stated they would come back with a redesigned project.

City Council Meeting - Monday, May 18, 2015:

The City Council directed the Community Development Department to initiate a study of residential seismic safety issues and return to council with an initial report in sixty days.

9. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS. None.

10. CONSENT CALENDAR.

A. 948-954 N. San Vicente Boulevard:

Proposed is a request to demolish three multi-family apartment buildings consisting of thirteen residential units on two contiguous lots, merge both lots, and construct an eighteen-unit, four-story apartment building over a subterranean parking garage.

Antonio Castillo, Associate Planner stated changes to the project plans have been proposed and still must be fully analyzed prior to a public hearing.

Staff recommends a continuation of the item to a date uncertain.

Vice-Chair Altschul questioned the permit streamlining date. He recommended the item be continued to June 18, 2015.

ACTION: 1) Continue to Thursday, June 18, 2015. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

B. Consolidated Public Hearings

1008, 1016 and 1020 N. Ogden Drive:

Antonio Castillo, Associate Planner provided an oral and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, May 21, 2015.

He stated the projects are proposed by the same applicant team, the three applications are presented as a consolidated public hearing – each with their own entitlements.

The proposal includes the demolition of four single-family residences on three 6,500-square-foot lots and construction of three separate, 4-story, 7-unit condominiums – each with a fully subterranean parking garage with 12 spaces. Each project will provide one inclusionary unit. The applicant is requesting a density bonus per the City's Affordable Housing Ordinance to allow an additional story for each building.

1008 N. Ogden Drive:

12,818 square-foot, seven-unit, four-story condominium building over a subterranean parking garage with one affordable housing unit.

1016 N. Ogden Drive:

12,261 square-foot, seven-unit, four-story condominium building over a subterranean parking garage with one affordable housing unit.

1020 N. Ogden Drive:

12,491 square-foot, seven-unit, four-story condominium building over a subterranean parking garage with one affordable housing unit.

Two detached single-family dwellings exist at 1008 Ogden and a single residence exists on each of the other two properties. While each must be considered as an individual project, all three will have a combined effect on the urban design and landscape of the street and neighborhood. They were analyzed as a group, while also noting the individual building designs.

He provided a history of the current properties and spoke on neighborhood compatibility.

The projects will be constructed with one- and two-bedroom units on the first three floors and a single three-bedroom unit on the fourth floor.

Each project qualifies for two concessions from the W.H.M.C. as a bonus for providing on-site affordable housing. The applicant has requested to take advantage of one concession for an additional story not to exceed ten feet of total project height and a second concession to apply a ten percent reduction in the minimum front yard setback for each of the projects. The fourth story is stepped back approximately eight feet from the rest of the floors to create additional articulation.

Each project exceeds a minimum 90 Green Building points. The Green Building Points earns the project one incentive, which the applicant has selected to use towards the requirement for common open spaces. In this case, the minimum 500-square-foot common open space will be divided and added to each unit's private open spaces.

He suggested the Commission consider revising two conditions in the draft Resolutions, including Condition No. 5.8 for each, which would emphasize the requirement for the sites to be fully maintained, including and specifically after the units become vacant and through its demolition and construction phase.

Condition 5.8:

Existing: During the demolition of the building and new construction, the site shall be maintained in a safe manner so as not to threaten the public health, safety, or general welfare.

Revised: The site shall be maintained in a safe manner so as not to threaten the public health, safety, or general welfare, including routine maintenance from the time the building becomes vacant through the demolition and construction phases.

Condition 10.7:

All residential projects shall provide off-street parking for their residents and visitors. Off-street parking shall be provided as shown on the approved plans. For projects located within an identified permit parking district, ***no annual residential or guest parking permits will be granted*** to the occupants, whether lessees, renters or owners, of the project. Each individual unit within the project may be granted up to fifty (50) one-day visitor parking passes annually. This condition of approval shall be reflected within all lease/rental agreement(s) and/or CC&Rs for the project. Prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, proof of the inclusion of this condition of approval in the lease/rental agreement(s) and/or CC&Rs as required shall be provided to the Director of Community Development.

He clarified three typos in the following resolutions:

Resolution No. PC 15-1125

Condition 2.2: correct the hearing date to reflect Thursday, May 21, 2015.

Resolution No. PC 15-1126

Condition 2.1: correct the project address to reflect 1016 N. Ogden Drive, West Hollywood, California.

Resolution No. PC 15-1128

Condition 2.1: correct the project address to reflect 1020 N. Ogden Drive, West Hollywood, California.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer presented the design review report. She stated the three projects were brought before the Planning Commission Design Review Subcommittee on three separate occasions, on October 9, 2014, February 12, 2015, and April 23, 2015.

All three buildings function as an ensemble, but each is individually designed. Even though the buildings are bigger than what is directly next to them, they are broken up in a way to relate well to the context. The three separate buildings combine the open area; in front and in between the buildings to improve the quality of the streetscape, as well as quality of life for the residents' to make the most usable open space possible.

The language of elements from one to the other, the material palette and the different design elements make the project unique, but function as an ensemble that will fit nicely into the neighborhood and enhance the streetscape in a variety of ways.

Antonio Castillo, Associate Planner stated overall, each proposal is well suited for its respective site and the three projects combined are compatible with the surrounding medium-density neighborhood. These projects will provide seven condominium units each, and twenty-one units total combined, including one on-site inclusionary unit per building (three total). This represents a net increase of seventeen housing units to the City's housing stock.

The proposed projects provide high-achieving green building designs, are complementary to the context of the neighborhood, and meet the intent of the development standards and General Plan goals for residential buildings in this area. As proposed and as conditioned, all the required findings for each of the three separate projects can be satisfied.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve each project request separately, subject to the findings and conditions.

Chair Huebner presented the Design Review Subcommittee report. He reiterated this project came before the subcommittee three times. The subcommittee worked diligently along with the applicant and architect, too really work on the materials and the language; how it addresses the street; and worked on the setbacks.

Commissioner DeLuccio disclosed for the record he drove by the site.

Commissioner Shink had no official disclosures.

Vice-Chair Altschul had no official disclosures.

Chair Huebner had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Lightfoot had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Buckner had no official disclosures.

Commissioner Yeber disclosed for the record he drove by the site.

Commissioner DeLuccio requested clarification regarding the setbacks on the fourth floor.

Commissioner Yeber requested clarification regarding the landscaping.

Commissioner Lightfoot commented and requested clarification regarding the inconsistencies regarding the General Plan zoning map, neighborhood zoning, CEQA exemptions regarding Infill projects, cumulative impacts, neighborhood meeting comments, in-lieu fees, individual unit prices, density bonuses, and RHNA numbers.

Christi Hogin, Assistant City Attorney clarified and detailed CEQA, in-fill projects, environmental review and impacts, and RHNA numbers. She reiterated the schematics of the public hearing process. She suggested staff would look into a future training and public education regarding the actual public hearing process.

Commissioner Shink questioned how many people will be ellised out of their dwellings.

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

DEAN LARKIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD architect presented the applicant's report. He provided a history of the properties and spoke regarding amenities, open spaces, landscaping, water features, and wider sidewalks.

Commissioner Yeber questioned why the applicant chose the approach of three separate buildings, instead of one building that's spans the entire site.

DEAN LARKIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD architect stated this is a neighborhood of individually developed lots and believes putting a building spanning three lots would be out of context for the neighborhood.

Discussion and clarification was held regarding the massing, height, square-footage, affordable housing units, parking, driveways, and side yards.

Commissioner Lightfoot requested clarification regarding the articulation of the livable space of the ground floor units facing the street.

DAN MORIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

LYNDIA LOWY, WEST HOLLYWOOD opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

GEORGE BUJARSKI, WEST HOLLYWOOD has concerns regarding this item. He spoke regarding height, massing, setbacks, traffic, and neighborhood compatibility.

ADAM BASS, WEST HOLLYWOOD has concerns regarding this item. He spoke regarding the maintenance of the current properties, and residential street parking.

CATHY BLAIVAS, WEST HOLLYWOOD recognized Commissioner Lightfoot for her questions on the project.

Vice-Chair Altschul requested staff arrange for a forum or seminar for those members of the commission and public that wish to know more about planning and the public hearing process.

ALEX VALENTE, WEST HOLLYWOOD spoke in support of staff's recommendation of approval.

MICHAEL WOJTKIELEWICZ, WEST HOLLYWOOD opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

LYNN RUSSELL, WEST HOLLYWOOD opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

CYNTHIA BLATT, WEST HOLLYWOOD opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

COLE ETTMAN, WEST HOLLYWOOD has concerns regarding this item. He spoke regarding displacing residents, losing current rent stabilized tenants, neighborhood compatibility, and drought measures.

STEPHANIE HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD opposes staff's recommendation of approval.

TIFFANY MITSCHKE, TOLUCA LAKE has concerns regarding this item. She spoke regarding the transparency of historic buildings.

THE FOLLOWING DID NOT PUBLICLY SPEAK, BUT OPPOSE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION APPROVING THE PROJECT:

TAASEEN QURESHI, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.

DEAN LARKIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD architect presented the applicant's rebuttal. He spoke regarding the density bonuses, streetscape, parking, and fourth floor setbacks.

Vice-Chair Altschul questioned the [lack of] maintenance at 1021 N. Ogden Drive.

STEVE TAYLOR, LOS ANGELES, developer, commented on the gardener, and stated they have hired a security guard to prevent any further issues until construction is started.

ACTION: Close public hearing for Item 10.B. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

Commissioner Yeber stated he finds as a result of the three buildings, several objectives are not met. The internal courtyards; which will be in constant shadow for most of the year. There is no opportunity for the sun to reach in-between the three buildings. The landscaping plan is not designed to provide way finding, or to get people circulating efficiently throughout the site. The three curb-cuts are not efficient. If there was a single parking structure, there could have been one curb-cut; which could have gained extra parking spaces, both on street and off-street.

He spoke regarding height and massing, and stated the shadow impacts will be significant on those remaining single-family houses. He does not find this responds in any way to the rhythm or datum to all those remaining single-family houses. There is no strong element to the design where this is an improvement to the neighborhood. He could not support this project at this time.

Commissioner Buckner commented on the design review subcommittee findings and stated this developer has complied with the requirements. It isn't the time at this point to punish him simply because he has chosen to take advantage of the allowances that are available under the current laws and policy. She spoke regarding drought concerns, and commented the three buildings are better than one large massive building. She reiterated the commission needs to decide if this project meets the code, if it is a reasonable design and if it's a project the commission should or should not approve.

Commissioner Lightfoot stated her support of a project that would have utilized one building across all three parcels; instead of three separate buildings. She stated there could have been more flexibility in the height and massing, and commented on neighborhood character and compatibility. The projects as they are presented do not accomplish this.

Vice-Chair Altschul stated the design is good. He spoke regarding current zoning, neighborhood compatibility, and drought concerns. He stated it is a project that pretty much conforms to the code, the incentives that are allowed in the code, and the General Plan. It is discretionary. The discretion should fall in the favor of providing housing for people. He spoke in support of staff's recommendation of approval.

Commissioner Shink spoke regarding neighborhood compatibility, and stated this project fails to conform to the neighborhood. She stated the massing, scale and architecture detract greatly from what is really a unique street. She stated that it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to try and retain the unique character of the urban village. She stated the landscape of the neighborhood would be detrimental to the block, the change in the nature of the street frontage would be detrimental, and she commented on water usage, traffic trips, amount of units; four lost and three gained. She stated the street needs to be protected and preserved. She could not support the project.

Commissioner DeLuccio questioned the shade and shadow study and stated the applicant could have done more work regarding an in-depth study. He commented on the three curb cuts and stated if it was one building, there could have been more available parking spaces allocated. He does not believe these buildings are compatible with the neighborhood, citing all the single-family homes. He questioned the zoning inconsistencies. He could not support the project at this time. He suggested either a continuation, or if it was to be denied; it should be denied without prejudice.

Chair Huebner commented on the items of concern the Design Review Subcommittee members looked at regarding this project. He stated the applicant has abided by all the current zoning rules. He commented on the drought concerns and spoke regarding the current available housing inventory. He stated he likes the design, and reiterated the design review subcommittee worked very hard on the iterations. He acknowledged this is a good development and supports the three building design. It has a nice rhythm, vocabulary, a nice expression, and will provide nice housing to future tenants. He stated his support of the project.

Commissioner Yeber expressed his concerns regarding the shade and shadow study, and indicated this site could use more exploration to come up with a best possible solution for the neighborhood. He reiterated he has no problems with the design or strategy, but clarified it just does not fit into the neighborhood.

Vice-Chair Altschul questioned, if the applicant comes back with a design with one curb cut, and has additional courtyard and open space, if there could be a consensus.

Commissioner Yeber agreed to those two concessions, but also stated he still has concerns regarding the shade and shadow issues. He suggested the applicant could tie the three together and still do individual buildings that cut through north-south.

Commissioner Shink stated there is still going to be a neighborhood compatibility concerns. She could not support a motion reflecting that.

Commissioner DeLuccio moved to: 1) continue the hearing; and 2) direct staff to work with the directions given by Commissioner Yeber.

Seconded by Commissioner Yeber.

Christi Hogin, Assistant City Attorney clarified the motion: 1) continue the consolidated hearings on the three applications to a date uncertain; 2) provide the applicant an opportunity to submit a redesign; and 3) the applicant shall take the totality of the conversations at tonight's proceedings and proceed to the best of their ability.

ACTION: 1) Continue the consolidated public hearings on the three applications to a date uncertain; 2) provide the applicant an opportunity to submit a redesign based on the totality of the issues and concerns brought forward by the commission; and 3) Close Public Hearing Item 10.B. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Yeber and passes; noting Commissioner Shink and Chair Huebner voting NO.**

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 and confirmed the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, June 4, 2015 has been cancelled.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT.

STEVE MARTIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the unique character of West Hollywood and spoke regarding the future development of the City of West Hollywood.

CYNTHIA BLATT, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on drought concerns and the cumulative impacts of ongoing development.

LYNN RUSSELL, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the possibility of community seminars regarding planning and zoning issues in order to educate the public.

MICHAEL WOJTKIELEWICZ, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the public comment by-laws and housing concerns.

COLE ETTMAN, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on development and contributions.

16. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Commissioner DeLuccio commented on properties that need to be maintained and reminded developers of their responsibilities.

Commissioner Shink commented on decorum in commission meetings.

Commissioner Lightfoot suggested some type of forum for educating the commissioners and public on the planning process.

Commissioner Yeber affirmed that training is needed for new commissioners and re-training for existing commissioners. He stated the next local APA State Conference will be in Pasadena in 2016.

David DeGrazia, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager confirmed training will be provided as soon as the full commission is seated after City Council appointments.

- 17. ADJOURNMENT:** Noting the cancellation of the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, June 4, 2015, the Planning Commission adjourned at 9:25 P.M. to a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, June 18, 2015 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.**

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of West Hollywood at a regular meeting held this 18th day of June, 2015 by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner: Buckner, DeLuccio, Lightfoot, Shink, Yeber,
Acting Chair Altschul.

NOES: Commissioner:


ABSENT: Commissioner: Chair Huebner.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner:



JOHN ALTSCHUL, ACTING CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:



DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY