



**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**March 17, 2016**

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

*THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD HAS ADOPTED SUMMARY AND ACTION MEETING MINUTES; WHICH PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN AND POINTS OF DISCUSSION ONLY. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR DISCUSSION REGARDING ANY ITEM SUMMARIZED IN THESE MINUTES MAY BE OBTAINED BY VIEWING THE ARCHIVED VIDEOS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS AT [www.weho.org/weho-tv/other-city-meetings](http://www.weho.org/weho-tv/other-city-meetings)*

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Altschul called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 P.M.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Stephanie Reich led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **ROLL CALL:**  
Commissioners Present: Buckner, DeLuccio, Huebner, Jones, Lightfoot, Vice-Chair Aghaei, Chair Altschul.  
  
Commissioners Absent: None.  
  
Staff Present: Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner, Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer, Garen Srapyan, Associate Planner, 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, March 17, 2016 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Buckner, seconded by Commissioner DeLuccio, and unanimously passes.**
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**  
**A. February 4, 2016**  
  
**ACTION:** Approve the Planning Commission regular meeting minutes of Thursday, February 4, 2016 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Lightfoot and unanimously passes.**
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT.**  
STEPHANIE HARKER, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on the multifamily development study and outreach strategy and encouraged participation.  
  
MICHAEL WOJTKIELEWICZ, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on comments made by Councilmember Heilman regarding the functionality of a building.

CATHY BLAIVAS, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on ADA non-compliance issues at Sierra Bonita Apartments and questioned the accountability. She also spoke regarding the multifamily development study and had concerns regarding the outreach strategy, building scale and design, and height averaging. She encouraged participation.

VICTOR OMELCZENKO, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on ADA compliance issues at William S. Hart Park and spoke on the multifamily development study and outreach strategy.

**7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.**

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

City Council Meeting - Monday, February 16, 2016:

She stated there was a joint meeting between City Council and the Planning Commission. Several issues were discussed; which included sustainability, multifamily development study, multifamily design, design review process, and legal context. She acknowledged each one of those issues is being studied and will be brought back to the planning commission within its own context.

City Council Meeting - Monday, March 7, 2016:

She stated there was a consent calendar item about a Memorandum of Understanding with Metro regarding the Division 7 property on Santa Monica Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard. The agreement is between the City of West Hollywood and Metro to look into improvements to activate the street fronting the property.

City Council approved a forty-five day moratorium on the demolition and alteration of craftsman structures on the eastside.

**8. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS. None.**

**9. CONSENT CALENDAR.**

**A. Housing Element Annual Progress Report for Calendar Year 2015.**

The Planning Commission received a draft of the 2015 Annual Progress Report on the Status of the Housing Element of the General Plan.

The Housing Element Annual Progress Report was provided for informational purposes and will be scheduled for review by the City Council at a public hearing on Monday, April 4, 2016. Once City Council has reviewed the report, staff will request approval to submit the report the State of California.

The Housing Element is one of the required components of the General Plan, and establishes the City's goals and programs for housing. The State requires all jurisdictions in California to update the Housing Element every eight years according to a State established planning cycle. The current planning cycle is for 2013 through 2021. West Hollywood's current Housing Element was adopted by the City Council on December 2, 2013 and certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on January 14, 2014.

The West Hollywood 2013-2021 Housing Element includes six goals and 26 programs to address the community's housing needs. The goals and programs were developed through extensive community outreach and involvement over the course of 2012 and 2013, and the City continues to outreach and involve the community in design and implementation of the programs. In January 2016, the City held two community meetings to share the housing element goals and programs and to solicit feedback. Over 100 community members attended the events and provided comments. The City has also developed a housing needs survey and had that survey available at the events and available online. Results of the meetings and the survey indicate that the City's goals and programs continue to address the community's housing needs.

Commissioner Lightfoot provided an updated to the public on the highlights of the report.

**ACTION:** Receive and file. **Moved by Commissioner DeLuccio, seconded by Commissioner Lightfoot, and unanimously passes.**

## 10. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

### A. 916 Westbourne Drive

Officially continued from Thursday, February 4, 2016. Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner provided a verbal and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, March 17, 2016.

She stated this item was originally continued to allow the Historic Preservation Commission to review the project due to its proximity to two cultural resources on Westbourne Drive. The Historic Preservation Commission did not find the project would detrimentally affect either of the resources nearby.

The project is proposed as four stories, forty-five feet , contains eight units of multi-family residential housing, and eighteen parking spaces, including two guest parking spaces. Sixteen are provided in tandem configuration and two are single.

It includes requested variances for the southern side yard setback, and to eliminate the required additional six foot setback above the first floor on the front of the building. The project site is irregularly shaped. Staff finds there are grounds to grant the variance.

The project meets the current zoning standards with one exception; since the project was deemed complete in 2008, it was prior to the maximum average unit size requirement. Therefore, that requirement does not apply to this project.

There are some gaps remaining in the plan set submitted by the applicant. While the gaps need to be filled prior to the building permits, staff believes there is enough information to recommend approval of the project.

Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer presented the design review report. She stated the project was heard by the design review subcommittee twice, and at both meetings the subcommittee found the design to be unique and interesting, as well as positive comments. They also thought the project needed further development to ensure proper execution of the project. One of the conditions of approval would be another meeting with the design review subcommittee to ensure quality implementation of the project.

Generally the project is a very interesting response to a unique site condition and staff and the design review subcommittee looked at the design and thought it was worthy of support.

Chair Altschul suggested the applicant perhaps can articulate the findings for the variance.

Commissioner Lightfoot commented on the various concerns which were stated in the staff report regarding the design. She stated she specifically requested the applicant submit a more complete set of plans and questioned staff if the applicant was aware of this.

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner agreed the details and execution of the design is problematic and confirmed the applicant was aware of the request.

Commissioner DeLuccio had concerns regarding the variances and questioned staff if the design is satisfactory.

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner stated they are not asking for a waiver for exemplary design. There would need to be more development in the design, materials and execution to get to exemplary design. Instead they are requesting the variance.

Commissioner Lightfoot questioned the lot size and irregular shape.

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

DON RANDALL, WEST HOLLYWOOD, applicant, presented the applicants report. He provided a history of the property and detailed the substandard lot size and irregular shape.

KAMIL KAYAT, LOS ANGELES, designer, continued the applicants report. He detailed the design of the building and spoke regarding the massing, elevations, floor plans, individual roof top decks, exterior materials, windows, and landscaping.

MATSON WALTER, MARINA DEL REY, landscape architect, continued the applicants report. He spoke regarding the elevations, and detailed the landscaping, stating they are trying to protect as many of the trees as possible and use more color. He detailed the roof top deck landscaping, and spoke regarding shade and shadow, and the plant palettes.

Commissioner Lightfoot requested clarification regarding the submitted plans and questioned why the plans were not updated as requested.

DON RANDALL, WEST HOLLYWOOD, applicant, stated they did not make the deadline.

Commissioner Lightfoot questioned the applicant if there are any particular mitigating reasons why they should appear before the Planning Commission without a complete set of plans, when other applicants provide detailed and accurate plans.

DON RANDALL, WEST HOLLYWOOD, applicant, stated they have the requested changes now.

Commissioner Lightfoot stated there are no plans for the commission to look at to determine what is actually being presented, and affirming there is no rendering for the front of the building. She expressed her displeasure regarding the incomplete set of plans that have been submitted for review.

Chair Altschul requested a break for staff to confer with the applicant regarding a possible continuance of the item.

**THE COMMISSION TOOK A TEN (10) MINUTE RECESS AT 7:10 P.M. AND RECONVENED AT 7:20 P.M.**

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner stated the applicant has agreed to continue the item to Thursday, April 21, 2016.

DONALD ELMBLAD, WEST HOLLYWOOD has concerns regarding this item. He spoke regarding the massing, increased water usage, subterranean parking, and increased traffic.

ANN MC MELLOMY, WEST HOLLYWOOD has concerns regarding this item. She spoke regarding the massing.

VICTOR OMELCZENKO, WEST HOLLYWOOD has concerns regarding this item. He commended the Historic Preservation review process and spoke regarding the incomplete set of plans, and neighborhood outreach,

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

Commissioner Huebner stated this project has been to the Design Review Subcommittee twice and stated the subcommittee was relatively supportive of the design. It is a nicely designed building on a challenging lot. The renderings and elevations have addressed the concerns that were expressed in design review. He addressed his concerns and disappointment regarding the incomplete set of plans, stating the applicant has had sufficient opportunities to submit a complete package. He hopes when this project comes back again, there will be a complete package the commission will actually be able to vote on.

Commissioner Jones commented on the time everyone has taken to attend this public hearing. She advised the applicant to make the best use of this extra time to ensure everything is in order when they return. She stated aesthetically it is beautiful, but design is also about livability and functionality on a daily basis. She had concerns about the current parking design and stated she would like to see this reworked and functional for future tenants.

Commissioner Buckner has concerns with the current parking configuration and massing. She encouraged the applicant to address all the issues and concerns that have been brought forward, which would allow the planning commission to make an informed decision.

Commissioner DeLuccio advised the applicant to do their best with the extra time allotted.

Commissioner Lightfoot stated this is a big building, and squeezing a gigantic building into an undersized lot is not necessarily the purpose for a variance.

**ACTION:** Continue this item as mutually agreed to Thursday, April 21, 2016. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

## 11. NEW BUSINESS.

### A. Multifamily Development Study Community Outreach Strategy.

Garen Srapyan, Associate Planner provided a verbal and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, March 17, 2016.

He stated the City Council directed staff to undertake a study to evaluate multifamily development in the City of West Hollywood. The purpose of the study is to engage in a dialogue with the community to identify issues around multifamily development and prepare a report summarizing key findings and identifying actionable, implementable recommendations.

The six month study will be completed in three phases and will include:

1. Assessment: analyzing and synthesizing data on multifamily projects in zones R2, R3, and R4 Zoning Districts. Develop easy-to-read infographics that explain City and State Zoning code standards;
2. Engagement: educating and engaging a diverse range of community members through in-person and mobile workshops to understand community expectations around multifamily housing; and
3. Prioritization: compiling the findings from phases one and two into a final report, with specific list of recommended next steps.

The goal of the community outreach is to develop unique and creative events to educate the community and to reach out to a diverse demographic of stakeholders. The outreach strategy will be aimed for reaching neighborhood groups, property owners, and renters from a wide spectrum of housing typologies, potentially displaced residents from apartment buildings, local architects, designers, and developers.

The primary goals for the outreach study will be to: 1) establish a common knowledge base; 2) reaching out and gathering feedback from a diverse range of community members and stakeholders; and 3) ensuring a fully transparent and inclusive engagement process.

To achieve these goals, the comprehensive outreach components will include:

- Project Website (meetings updates, minutes, agendas, online engagement tools, ensuring a fully transparent process)
- Community Workshops
- Speaker Series
- Walking Tours
- Pop-up Workshops
- Focus Groups
- Stakeholder Interviews and
- Workshop Toolkit (which will be made available to community groups and constituents)

The outreach activities are flexible and additional outreach may be added midway through the process if deemed necessary.

Upon completion of the final report and City Council directions, staff will develop the next phase of the multifamily study that will include implementation of the approved recommendations.

Commissioner Lightfoot requested clarification on the two community engagement workshops.

Commissioner Huebner requested confirmation on analyzing and synthesizing the data; that historical data will be looked at within West Hollywood and other jurisdictions, and impacts. He proposed a mobile app should definitely be included in the outreach. He stated this is an amazing effort and thanked staff for putting this together.

Vice-Chair Aghaei requested further clarification on the pop-up workshops and the engagement process. He requested assurances that every subset of the community will be included.

Commissioner Jones requested the unique community engagement workshops be recorded and viewable on-line. She would like to see live broadcasts of the meetings and archived on-line; or at least accessible in some way. She requested more information in a public forum, if possible, regarding Phase One.

Chair Altschul opened public comment for Item 11.A.:

DONALD ELMBLAD, WEST HOLLYWOOD had concerns with the Citywide Multifamily Development Study Community Outreach Strategy, and spoke on walking tours, rent control, and excessive building.

VICTOR OMELCZENKO, WEST HOLLYWOOD spoke in support of the Citywide Multifamily Development Study Community Outreach Strategy.



MICHAEL WOJTKIELEWICZ, WEST HOLLYWOD spoke in support of the Citywide Multifamily Development Study Community Outreach Strategy.

**ACTION:** Close public comment for Item 11.A. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

Commissioner DeLuccio stated his approval of the historical data, commented on height averaging and suggested this needs to be a fluid process.

Chair Altschul encouraged participation in all events when they come forward.

Jennifer Alkire, Senior Planner stated staff can bring an update regarding the Phase One process.

Commissioner Lightfoot suggested the benefits of 3-D modeling and spoke regarding neighborhood compatibility, and requested the balancing of focus groups.

12. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS.** None.

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

14. **ITEMS FROM STAFF.**

A. **Planning Manager's Update.** None.

15. **PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.

16. **ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.**

Commissioner Lightfoot wished everyone a Happy Saint Patrick's Day.

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** The Planning Commission adjourned at 8:10 P.M. to a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, April 7, 2016 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.**

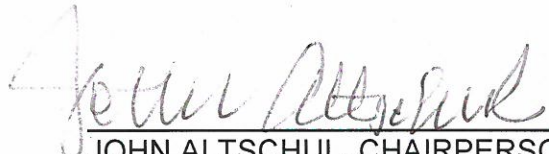
**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** by the Planning Commission of the City of West Hollywood at a regular meeting held this 5<sup>th</sup> day of May 2016 by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner: Buckner, DeLuccio, Jones, Lightfoot, Vice-Chair Aghaei, Chair Altschul.


NOES: Commissioner: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner: Huebner.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner: None.

  
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JOHN ALTSCHUL, CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

  
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DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY