



**PLANNING COMMISSION  
SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES  
Regular Meeting  
September 21, 2023**

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

THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD HAS ADOPTED BRIEF SUMMARY AND ACTION MEETING MINUTES, WHICH PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN AND POINTS OF DISCUSSION ONLY. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR INDIVIDUAL DISCUSSIONS 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)

Land Acknowledgment: “The West Hollywood Planning Commission acknowledges that the land on which we gather and that is currently known as the City of West Hollywood is the occupied, unceded, seized territory of the Gabrieleño Tongva and Gabrieleño Kizh peoples.”

**A.A. TELECONFERENCE MEETING ATTENDANCE REQUEST PURSUANT TO AB 2449:** The Planning Commission will consider a request under AB 2449 to allow attendance via teleconference for Planning Commissioner (Chair) Rogerio Carvalho.

**Commissioner Matos moved to: 1) approve Chair Carvalho’s participation via video conferencing.**

**Seconded by Commissioner Copeland.**

**ACTION:** 1) Officially allow Chair Carvalho to participate in the Planning Commission meeting of Thursday, September 21, 2023 via teleconference, per the guidelines as outlined in AB 2449 and read into the record by Isaac Rosen, Legal Counsel. : **Moved by Commissioner Matos, seconded by Commissioner Copeland and passes, noting Chair Carvalho abstained.**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Carvalho called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:37 p.m.
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Commissioner Copeland led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3. ROLL CALL:**  
Commissioners Present: Copeland, Edwards, Gregoire, Jones, Matos, Vice-Chair Lombardi, Chair Carvalho (via teleconference).

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Roger Rath, Associate Planner, Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner, Ric Abramson, Urban Design & Architecture Studio Manager, Jennifer Alkire, Current and Historic Planning Manager, Isaac Rosen, Legal Counsel, and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

**ACTION:** Approve the Planning Commission agenda of Thursday, September 21, 2023 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Gregoire, seconded by Commissioner Jones and unanimously passes.**

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

Due to an appeal recently filed regarding the project located at 8025 Santa Monica Boulevard, staff recommended a continuance to allow time to have an official court transcription administered.

**A. September 7, 2023**

**ACTION:** Continue to Thursday, October 5, 2023. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

**THE COMMISSION TOOK A TEN (10) MINUTE RECESS AT 6:45 P.M. TO CORRECT AUDIO ISSUES AFFECTING CHAIR CARVALHEIRO'S OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION VIA TELECONFERENCE, AND RECONVENED AT 6:55 P.M. WITH ALL TECHNICAL ISSUES CORRECTED. THIS ALLOWED CHAIR CARVALHEIRO TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCEEDINGS.**

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.

**7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.**

Nick Maricich, Community Development Director introduced himself and provided a brief history of his background and stated he is looking forward to working with the commission and members of the community.

He confirmed there will be several community meetings taking place to meet him and the city's executive team:

1) Business focused meeting on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, City Hall, Community Meeting Room at 6:00 p.m.;

2) General community meeting on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, Aquatic and Recreation Center La Cienega Room at 1:00 p.m.; and a

3) Resident focused community meeting on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, West Hollywood Community Meeting Room at 6:00 p.m.

He stated at the next City Council meeting on Monday, October 2, 2023 there will be two cultural resource designation proposals for 7900 and 7906 Santa Monica Boulevard.

He encouraged public participation in the remaining two upcoming community meetings for LA Metro's proposed rail links serving West Hollywood: 1) Saturday, September 23, 2023, Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza Mall Community Room, 3650 West Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard at 10:00 a.m. and 2) Tuesday, September 26, 2023, West Hollywood Aquatic and Recreation Center Doheny Room, 6750 El Tovar Place at 5:00 p.m.

8. **CONSENT CALENDAR.** None.

9. **PUBLIC HEARINGS SECTION I:  
PROJECTS SUBJECT TO THE HOUSING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.** None.

10. **PUBLIC HEARINGS, SECTION II:  
OTHER ITEMS THAT REQUIRE A PUBLIC HEARING UNDER THE LAW.**

**A. 8465 MELROSE AVENUE:**

Roger Rath, Associate Planner provided a verbal presentation and background information, as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, September 21, 2023.

He stated the request is to allow the intensification of use from general retail to a nightclub. The new nightclub will be located within the entire level of an existing 3,053-square-foot commercial basement area. The project also includes interior tenant improvements to accommodate the nightclub. No exterior improvements or additional floor area to the building are proposed.

He spoke and detailed the location of the proposed nightclub, neighborhood compatibility, offsite parking (located at 547 West Knoll Drive), square-footage, main entrance, queuing, floorplan, seating, bar counter, dancing, and gender neutral restrooms.

He detailed the conditional use permitting process and clarified the offsite parking conditions. He stated the proposed operating hours; Monday to Friday, 5:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., and Saturdays and Sundays, 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

As conditioned, the proposed intensification of use to nightclub use will allow for a wide variety of uses in this area consistent with the General Plan and will not cause new or exacerbate any existing public nuisance in the vicinity.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the application with the adoption of draft resolution No. PC 23-1533.

The commission questioned and requested clarification regarding the off-site parking lot; public noticing of the off-site parking lot, valet parking, hours of parking operation, and parking use permit. Additional clarification was requested regarding special event permits, accessibility of the rooftop area, amplified music, noise mitigation, nuisance to the neighborhood, violations of the conditional use permit and enforcement, on-site security and security plan, and sales, service, and consumption of alcohol service hours.

Commissioner Matos disclosed for the record he met with members of the community. They discussed matters contained in the staff report.

Commissioner Copeland disclosed for the record she made a site visit.

Chair Carvalheiro disclosed for the record he made a site visit.

Commissioners Edwards, Gregoire, Jones and Vice-Chair Lombardi had no official disclosures.

Chair Carvalheiro opened public comments for Item 10.A.

MICHAEL STARSON, WEST HOLLYWOOD applicant, presented the applicants report. He provided a history of his restaurant business and spoke regarding his vision for the neighborhood. He commented on the parking concerns, and stated he would like to see patrons utilize ride share applications.

The commission questioned the applicant regarding use of valet parking, off-site parking lot, ride-share options, traffic flow, security plan, basement schematics and plumbing configurations, queuing plan, sidewalk width, garbage disposal, future tenants and noise mitigation, soundproofing, and ingress and egress from the business.

The commission requested clarification from staff regarding the parking use permit, and valet parking services.

There were no public speakers.

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

The commission spoke and requested further clarification regarding the security plan, neighborhood nuisances and the emergency fire evacuation plan. They had concerns regarding parking, ride-share options, rooftop activities, loitering, and impacts to the community.

It was suggested a possible addition to the conditions, which would require the applicant to outline a parking operations plan, valet or ride share options to the Community Development Director for review.

It was advocated conditions be added emphasizing there shall be no rooftop activities, the residential parking lot should not be used for the nightclub, a possible three, six, and twelve month review for noise and parking issues, and avoidance of exterior and prolonged loitering of patrons.

Discussion was held regarding the differentiation of queuing and loitering.

Based on the discussion of various concerns, staff read into the record the following amended and added conditions:

Condition 8.16, add subsection g. “avoidance of exterior prolonged loitering of patrons.”

Amend Condition 8.22: “At three, six and twelve months following commencement of use, the Planning Commission shall receive written updates regarding operations including noise and sound of the business including any law enforcement calls for service or code compliance activity. Additional reviews may be required based on the information provided. Planning Commission may place the item on a future agenda for further action at that time to modify any conditions of approval pursuant to Section §19.80.060.D. of the West Hollywood Municipal Code.”

Amend Condition 9.11: “The management shall organize and maintain the patron queue so that there are no more than two abreast in a line located parallel to and against the structure, and so that entrances to nearby businesses are maintained clear and passable so that an adequate pedestrian passage on the sidewalk is maintained.”

Add Condition 9.17, “Prior to commencement of use the applicant shall submit an access operations plan identifying ride share, parking and other access opportunities to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director and the Director of Public Safety.”

Add Condition 9.18), “The use of the rooftop of the building at 8465 Melrose Avenue for this nightclub is expressly prohibited.”

Add Condition 9.19), “The use of the off-site parking for this building approved in PUP 16-0005, is prohibited for patrons of the nightclub.”

MICHAEL STARSON, WEST HOLLYWOOD applicant, stated for the record he agreed to all the amended and added conditions as presented by staff.

**Commissioner Matos moved to: 1) approve staff’s recommendation of approval, with amended and added conditions as read into the record.**

**Seconded by Commissioner Jones.**

**ACTION:** 1) Approve staff's recommendation of approval; 2) **Adopt Resolution No. PC 23-1533 as amended:** a) **Condition 8.16**, add subsection *g. "avoidance of exterior prolonged loitering of patrons";* b) **amend Condition 8.22)** *"At three, six and twelve months following commencement of use, the Planning Commission shall receive written updates regarding noise and sound operations of the business including any law enforcement calls for service or code compliance activity. Additional reviews may be required based on the information provided. Planning Commission may place the item on a future agenda for further action at that time to modify any conditions of approval pursuant to Section §19.80.060.D. of the West Hollywood Municipal Code.";* c) **amend Condition 9.11)** *"The management shall organize and maintain the patron queue so that there are no more than two abreast in a line located parallel to and against the structure, and so that entrances to nearby businesses are maintained clear and passable so that an adequate pedestrian passage on the sidewalk is maintained.";* d) **add Condition 9.17)** *"Prior to commencement of use the applicant shall submit an access operations plan identifying ride share, parking and other access opportunities to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director and the Director of Public Safety.";* e) **add Condition 9.18)** *"The use of the rooftop of the building at 8465 Melrose Avenue for this nightclub is expressly prohibited."* f) **add Condition 9.19)** *"The use of the off-site parking for this building approved in PUP 16-0005, is prohibited for patrons of the nightclub.";* "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, ADOPTING A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION §15301 (NEW CONSTRUCTION OR CONVERSION OF SMALL STRUCTURES) AND APPROVING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FOR AN INTENSIFICATION OF USE FROM GENERAL RETAIL TO A NIGHTCLUB IN AN EXISTING BASEMENT LOCATED AT 8465 MELROSE AVENUE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA" and 3) Close the Public Hearing for Item 10.A. **Moved by Commissioner Matos, seconded by Commissioner Jones and unanimously passes.**

Resolution No. PC 23-1533 the Planning Commission just approved for the property located at **8465 Melrose Avenue** memorializes the Commission's final action on this matter. This action is subject to appeal to the City Council. Appeals must be submitted within ten calendar days from this date to the City Clerk's office. Appeals must be in writing and accompanied by the required fees. The City Clerk's office can provide appeal forms and information about waiver of fees. Deadline to file an Appeal on this decision is **Monday, October 2, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.**

**B. 8325 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD.**

Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner provided a verbal presentation and background information, as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, September 21, 2023.

Although the project is exempt from the normal permit review process, staff is bringing details of the project forward to the Planning Commission for public review. The Commission is being asked to make the findings regarding the general plan consistency and any other comments the Commission would like to be forwarded to the City Council during their approval of the design.

The current Coast Playhouse building is vacant, and the parking lot to the east of it is utilized as a parking lot for the neighboring business. He detailed the vehicular ingress and egress to the property.

Ric Abramson, Urban Design and Architecture Studio Manager, continued staff's presentation and detailed the proposed projects design elements.

He stated the project proposes to demolish the existing Coast Playhouse and construct a new, three-story, approximately 7,000 square feet community performing arts and cultural center.

He provided a history of the proposed project, and detailed the design, massing, and height. He spoke regarding the public right-of-way, parking, transit and ride-share options, accessibility, pedestrian engagement, main performance space and seating, exterior pre-function space, landscaping and gardens, floor plans, lobby, rehearsal, exhibit and outdoor spaces, and gender neutral restrooms.

Chair Carvalheiro, presented the Steering Committee report. He detailed the items of concern the committee conversed over. They investigated the transparency on the lower level, building integration to the street, exterior staircase location, sidewalk engagement, exterior plantings and maintenance, exterior courtyard engagement, monument sign, potential digital signage, multifunctional spaces, rehearsal space, pedestrian circulation, restroom facilities, theatre orientation and practicability, and technological functionality on the mezzanine level.

Adrian Gallo, Associate Planner stated the proposed project is consistent with the vision for this portion of Santa Monica Boulevard, and all applicable goals and policies in the General Plan in that the new City Playhouse is to be used in support of arts and cultural programming.

He confirmed the City Playhouse provides a center for artistic expression and performing arts. As a venue for diverse arts and culture events, it will be an anchor and catalyst for economic development in the center of the city. The Playhouse will become a community engagement resource and symbol of community pride, through the programming of diverse world-class performing arts and cultural productions, and educational events.

As a public facility, it will implement best practices with respect to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy demand and will promote environmentally responsive building and site design strategies. In total, the project will meet multiple Land Use, Economic Development, and Infrastructure, Resources, and Conservation goals.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA guidelines and make a determination that the West Hollywood City Playhouse Project is consistent with the General Plan.

The commission questioned and requested clarification regarding the adequacy of the number and location of restrooms, handicapped accessibility, material finishes to the facade, operating hours, sound and acoustic mitigation, facility management and operational responsibilities, location of reserved parking spaces for the disabled, and queried if there is a budget for a digital sign.

There were no official disclosures.

Chair Carvalheiro opened public comments for Item 10.B.

There were no public speakers.

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

The commission stated their support and confirmed this request is consistent with the general plan. They discussed the design and spoke about the benefits this will offer to the community.

They thanked staff and the Steering Committee members who worked on bringing this project forward.

**Commissioner Jones moved to: 1) confirm the City Playhouse is consistent with the general plan.**

**Seconded by Commissioner Matos.**

Chair Carvalheiro requested an amendment to the motion: a) a recommendation to City Council to strongly consider additional funds for the digital sign.



**Commissioner Jones agreed to this amendment.**

**Commissioner Matos agreed to this amendment.**

Isaac Rosen, Legal Counsel confirmed the motion is to make the general plan consistency findings and staff's recommendation to find the project exempt from CEQA, with a recommendation to the City Council regarding additional funds for the digital sign.

**ACTION: 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 23-1532 as presented: 1) "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, ADOPTING CATEGORICAL EXEMPTIONS PURSUANT TO CEQA GUIDELINES SECTIONS §15332 (IN-FILL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS) AND §15303 (NEW CONSTRUCTION OR CONVERSION OF SMALL STRUCTURES), AND DETERMINING THAT THE CITY PLAYHOUSE PROJECT PROPOSED FOR 8325 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA, IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL PLAN;" 2) forward a recommendation to the City Council to consider additional funding for the digital sign; and 3) Close the Public Hearing for Item 10.B. Moved by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Matos and unanimously passes.**

**C. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT  
TREE CANOPY STANDARDS.**

The Planning Commission will consider a recommendation to the City Council to amend the Zoning Ordinance to revise existing landscape standards and establish new tree canopy requirements for privately-owned property.

Staff recommends this item be continued to a date uncertain. This will allow staff to coordinate the new and existing standards more fully with existing language in the zoning ordinance and other City programs, and to complete a more comprehensive legal review of the proposed terms and definitions related to tree canopy and landscaping.

**Commissioner Jones moved to: 1) continued to a date uncertain.**

**Seconded by Commissioner Edwards.**

**ACTION: 1) Continue to a date uncertain. Moved by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Edwards 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.**

Jennifer Alkire, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager provided an update of tentative items scheduled for upcoming Planning Commission meetings.

She confirmed there is a project that needs to be legally noticed for the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, December 21, 2023.

**B. Subcommittee Management.**

Jennifer Alkire, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager provided an update of tentative items scheduled for Design Review Subcommittee, Sunset Arts and Advertising Subcommittee and Long Range Planning Projects Subcommittee meetings.

She confirmed the Design Review Subcommittee meeting for Thursday, October 12, 2023 will be cancelled.

There will be a specially scheduled meeting of the Design Review Subcommittee meeting, which will be relocated to Plummer Park Community Center, Rooms 5 and 6 on Thursday, October 26, 2023.

**15. PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.

**16. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.**

**A. Commissioner Comments.**

Commissioner Jones welcomed Nicholas Maricich, Community Development Director.

Commissioner Matos welcomed Nicholas Maricich, Community Development Director. He thanked the Mayor, city councilmembers and staff for bringing the City Playhouse forward.

Vice-Chair Lombardi welcomed Nicholas Maricich, Community Development Director.

Chair Carvalheiro was thankful he was able to participate via teleconference and spoke regarding the audio issues.

**ADJOURMENT.** The Planning Commission adjourned at 9:00 p.m. to a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, October 5, 2023 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.**

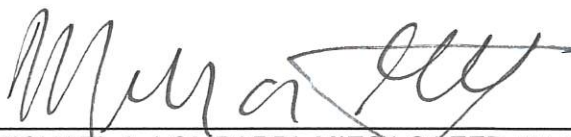
**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** by the Planning Commission of the City of West Hollywood at a regular meeting held this 5<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2023 by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner: Copeland, Edwards, Gregoire, Jones, Matos, Acting Chair Lombardi.

NOES: Commissioner: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner: Carvalheiro.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner: None.



MICHAEL A. LOMBARDI, MIES LG LEED AP BD+C  
ACTING CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:



DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY