

**CITY OF GARDENA
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2020, MEETING
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

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Called to order by Chair Jackson at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Steve Sherman, Deryl Henderson, Stephen Langley, Dale
Pierce, Brenda Jackson
Absent: None
Also in Attendance: Lisa Kranitz, Assistant City Attorney
Raymond Barragan, Acting Community Development Director
John F. Signo, AICP, Senior Planner
Amanda Acuna, Planning Assistant

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Henderson and seconded by Vice Chair Sherman to approve the minutes of the meeting on July 7, 2020. The minutes were approved 4-0-1.

Ayes: Henderson, Sherman, Pierce, Jackson
Noes: None
Absent: Langley

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Agenda Item #4

Planning Assistant Amanda Acuna addressed the Commission and public on procedures for conducting the online meeting since all participants were attending from a remote location. Instructions on how to comment and ask questions via the Zoom application was given.

A member of the public asked how the construction of townhomes would benefit the City and its citizens.

Ms. Acuna stated that the members of the public would be able to speak on any agenda item at the time of the public hearing for that item and asked if the member of the public would like to speak on any non-agenda item during oral communications.

Assistant City Attorney Lisa Kranitz stated that Agenda Item #5 was not proceeding at this time and the public hearing would be opened and continued to the next Planning Commission meeting.

Acting Community Development Director Raymond Barragan asked Ms. Kranitz to clarify whether any member of the public in attendance at this meeting would be able to speak on Agenda Item #5 if they would not be able to attend the next Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Kranitz stated yes and added that staff would be giving a full presentation on the item and the applicant would be in attendance at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Another member asked how the issues of debris and maintenance of the vacant lot on West 147th Street are being addressed and if someone would be responsible for cleaning that up.

Mr. Barragan stated staff would work with the Code Enforcement Division to handle that issue.

Ms. Acuna added that the Code Enforcement Division was already made aware of this issue and was working with the property owner to resolve it.

PUBLIC HEARING

Agenda Item #5

Site Plan Review #4-19; Tentative Tract Map #2-19

A request for site plan review and tentative tract map approval for the construction of six new townhome units in the Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential (R-3) zone per Section 18.44.010.E and Chapter 17.08 of the Gardena Municipal Code, and direction to staff to file a Notice of Exemption.

Project Location: 1621 W. 147th Street (APN: 6103-031-075)

Applicant: Julio Vargas

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing and continued the item to the August 18, 2020, Planning Commission meeting.

Agenda Item #6

Site Plan Review #1-19, Variance #1-20, and Tentative Tract Map #1-19

A request for a Site Plan Review to allow the development of 113 townhomes, including 57 attached townhomes, 41 detached single-family units, and 15 attached live-work units; a Variance to construct a front yard fence abutting a public sidewalk; and a Tentative Tract Map to subdivide 5.46 acres consisting of two properties for 113 condominium units (VTTM #82667). The property is zoned C-3/MUO (General Commercial/Mixed Use Overlay). A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) were prepared to address environmental impacts.

Project Location: 2101 and 2129 Rosecrans Avenue (APNs: 4061-028-049 and 4061-028-018)

Applicant: G3 Urban Inc.

Senior Planner John F. Signo presented the staff report and recommended that the Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC 7-20 adopting the Mitigated Negative

Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and approving Site Plan Review #1-19, Variance #1-20, and Tentative Tract Map #1-19, subject to the conditions of approval.

Rita Garcia with Kimley-Horn and Associates, the environmental consultant for the project, provided a brief overview regarding the project and the mitigation measure that were being imposed and concluded by stating the implementation of those mitigation measures as well as the project's compliance with all regulatory frameworks would result in the project having a less than significant impact on the environment.

Commissioner Langley stated that in the environmental document there was a mistake stating that Junipero Serra High School was not part of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Ms. Garcia stated staff would correct that in the record.

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing.

The applicant, Mitch Gardner from G3 Urban, provided a presentation on the proposed project and showed a simulation video of what the project would look like.

Commissioner Henderson asked the applicant to provided clarification on the original plans that included a commercial building and questioned whether the dwelling units proposed could be reduced in size.

Mr. Gardner answered by stating their company had the commercial building advertised on the retail market for over six months and did not receive one offer. At that time, the pandemic started and he and his team had to reassess the project's feasibility of selling residential homes with a vacant commercial building in the front. Mr. Gardner then stated the project was designed to be market driven and the proposed square footages of the homes fit the market expectations of potential buyers.

Ms. Kranitz stated because the project is in the MUO it is required to have a minimum of 20 units per acre and reminded the Commission that when residential projects are not seeking any legislative approval and meet the development standards of the code the City may not reduce the density of the project.

Commissioner Henderson then asked how the project would be addressed if the office spaces of the live/work units were not occupied and proposed as additional living space.

Mr. Gardner stated the residences of the live/work units would be allowed to operate their personal business on the ground floor and were not allowed to lease the space out to a third party. He then went on to say that with the ordinance that recently passed this project would be allowed to be 100% residential, however they felt keeping the live/work units provided a better frontage to the project.

Commissioner Langley stated his similar concern with Commissioner Henderson on the massing of the project and that the units were too big. Commissioner Langley then questioned the occupancy rates of the homes being at 2.5 persons per household with the project including five-bedroom units and added that he did not see the development being family friendly. Commissioner Langley then questioned the parking space locations with 20 of the 69 parking spaces in front of the live/work units and the rest located in the gated area. He added there was no street parking along Rosecrans Avenue in front of the property. Commissioner Langley stated the project seemed to be really pushed and that the units were too big.

Mr. Gardner stated their team did a density study of the project site with meeting all the minimum development standards, and that it showed they could build 145 townhome units and that his team did not think that type of project would be livable. He went on to say the project was providing detached units and that the City Council stated before that it seemed the development of detached units in the City may be going away and that is why he and his team were a proponent of the recent Zone Code Amendment which allowed for more opportunities to provide detached units. Mr. Gardner then stated that the project met the minimum parking requirements and development standards and he hoped the Commission would take that into consideration.

Mr. Barragan asked the applicant to provide more information about the private amenities as part of the project.

Mr. Gardner stated the code allows for a residential development to provide for private or common open space and they found that their buyers would rather use larger private areas than the common open space and that is how the project was designed.

Ms. Garcia addressed some of the concerns Commission Langley had in regards to the density of the project and stated her team did calculate the development capacity as permitted by the existing code and found that 119,0137 square feet of nonresidential uses and up to 164 dwelling units would be permitted in that zone, which was more than the proposed project. In regard to the occupancy of the homes Ms. Garcia stated the industry's standard is to rely on the most recent California Department of Finance reports, which stated the average persons per household was at 2.83. Ms. Garcia then stated trip generations were not based on the number of bedrooms and that the approach was to assume the average number of daily trips per dwelling unit and based on what type of dwelling unit.

Ms. Kranitz then asked Ms. Garcia whether this project also used the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) approach in determining traffic impacts.

Ms. Garcia stated yes, that as of January 1, 2020, the threshold in evaluating traffic impacts was changed from the Level of Service standard which is based on a project's trip generation that is distributed to the nearby circulation systems to Vehicle Miles Traveled as the determining factor. She went on to say that the State's Office of Planning and Research put out guidance documents for what is considered significant VMT impact and that the project did qualify for the screening criteria and that the project would result in a less than significant impact concerning transportation.

Chair Jackson stated her liking of the project and how it would be an asset to the City. Chair Jackson then asked if there were any members of the public wishing to speak on this item.

Ms. Acuna read into the record a letter from Cheral Sherman regarding the projects landscape plans and the applicant's consideration on providing more florals and plants that would bring fauna.

A member of the public spoke and asked what the purpose of building the townhomes that size was and how this development would benefit the residents of the City.

Ms. Kranitz indicated for the members of the public that the State has a Regional Housing Needs Assessment number that cities are required to provide opportunities for housing in their cities to meet those numbers and that housing has been a big push in the legislature. She went on to say that the next set of regional housing numbers, that is

currently in draft form, would require the City to accommodate 5,997 units in the next eight years. Ms. Kranitz answered the member of the public's question on how the City would benefit from this project by stating it would be getting a toxic property cleaned up and getting rid of a blighted site while also helping the City meet those regional housing numbers.

Mr. Barragan added the applicant of this project would be required to pay park fees and development impact fees that will benefit the new and existing residential in the area.

Mr. Gardner added this project would be taking a contaminated site and being able to provide a more vibrant and enhanced streetscape on Rosecrans Avenue.

Cheral Sherman, Vice President of Friends of Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve, Inc., stated she was very happy to see a lot of landscape on the project plans which had been lacking in previous developments, she added, then stated she would like to see the landscape areas include plants that would attract nature.

Mr. Gardner stated he would be happy to meet with Mrs. Sherman and discuss opportunities to integrate some of that flora as part of the project and adjust the landscape plans.

Commissioner Henderson added that the project would bring more people to the City who would then contribute to the City's revenue.

Ms. Kranitz stated the applicant was requesting to not provide an eight-foot wall along the east property line due to the wall of the existing building located on the adjacent property.

Chair Jackson asked if the property owner of the adjacent property was okay with this.

Mr. Barragan stated yes, and that they provided a letter stating this.

Commissioner Langley asked if the building of the adjacent property were to be demolished in the future who would be responsible to then construct an eight-foot block wall between these properties?

Mr. Barragan stated that if the building to the east of the project site were to be demolished, the Zoning Code states commercial properties are required to provide an eight-foot wall when adjacent to residential zone.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing.

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Langley and seconded by Commissioner Henderson to adopt Resolution No. PC 7-20 approving Site Plan Review #1-19, Variance #1-20, Tentative Parcel Map #1-19, and adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program, with the revised condition to not require the construction of an eight-foot-high block along the eastern property line where the project wall would be adjacent to a building wall.

The motion passed by the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Langley, Henderson, Pierce, Sherman, Jackson
Noes:	None
Absent:	None

Agenda Item #7

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Acting Community Development Director Raymond Barragan addressed a lot of the changes that were happening during the pandemic then added that the Community Development Department was still issuing a high volume of permits while having limited inspections for safety reasons. He then stated that all the "easy" land to develop in Gardena was gone and that there would be no project site without certain issues, whether it be levels of contamination or other constraints and that he looks forward to providing more projects to the Commission in the coming months and years.

Agenda Item #8

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Henderson asked if staff could provide paper copies of the documents for larger projects and due to the size of some of the documents, if the Commission could receive them at an earlier time.

Mr. Barragan stated that staff could accommodate this request. Mr. Barragan then asked if the Commission would consider receiving iPads with the documents downloaded onto in order to save paper.

Chair Jackson, Commissioner Langley, and Commissioner Henderson stated their support for this process going forward.

Commissioner Langley thanked Mr. Barragan for his assistance in getting an inspection from the Building and Safety Division. Commissioner Langley then asked whether there were any noise regulations for industrial areas that are adjacent to residential homes, such as the project that was just approved.

Mr. Barragan stated that the Municipal Code does include a Noise Ordinance that all businesses shall abide by and that they do have different allowable level of noise for those that are near residential properties.

Commissioner Pierce wished everyone wellness during this time.

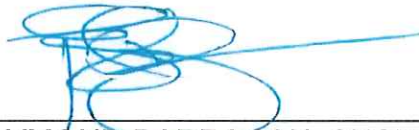
Vice-Chair Sherman stated there may have been some discrepancies on the plan numbers of the project plans.

Chair Jackson wished everyone to stay safe and healthy.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 8:39 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



RAYMOND BARRAGAN, SECRETARY
Planning and Environmental Quality Commission



BRENDA JACKSON, CHAIR
Planning and Environmental Quality Commission