

CITY OF GARDENA  
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION  
MINUTES

TUESDAY, February 16, 2021, MEETING  
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

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Called to order by Vice Chair Sherman at 7:04 P.M.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Steve Sherman, Deryl Henderson, Dale Pierce, Stephen Langley, Brenda Jackson (7:10 P.M.)  
Absent: None  
Also in Attendance: Gregg McClain, Interim Community Development Director  
Raymond Barragan, Community Development Manager  
Lisa Kranitz, Assistant City Attorney  
John F. Signo, AICP, Senior Planner  
Amanda Acuna, Senior Planner

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Commissioner Henderson and seconded by Commissioner Langley to approve the minutes of the meeting on December 8, 2020. The minutes were approved 2-0-1-2.

Ayes: Henderson, Langley  
Noes: None  
Abstain: Sherman  
Absent: Jackson, Pierce (temporary audio problem)

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

**Agenda Item #4**

Senior Planner Acuna addressed the Commission and public on procedures for conducting the online meeting since all participants were attending from remote locations. Instructions on how to comment and ask questions via the Zoom application were given.

There were no oral communications from the public.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Agenda Item #5(A)**

**Environmental Assessment #16-20, Modification to Site Plan Review #7-18**

A request for a modification to a site plan review approved by the Planning Commission, scaling the project down to include two-story unit homes in the Normandie Estates Specific Plan, and direction to staff to file a Notice of Exemption.

**Project Location: 1348 West 168th Street (APN # 6111-012-003)**

**Applicant: Maupin Development Inc.**

Senior Planner Acuna gave the staff presentation. She explained that the Commission originally approved this project on March 5, 2019, for nine three-story homes, each with a two-car garage. After consideration by the applicant, they decided that a two-story design would work best for greater affordability and better homeownership opportunities. The proposed modification is to change the elevations and design of the units from a three-story to a two-story configuration. The proposed modification included one more guest parking space than the original plan. The project was still of contemporary architectural style. There was no request to modify the tract map, just the site plan. She presented the development plans, showed photos of the property, and explained changes to the project. The modification provides slightly more open space per unit, and slightly more interior space at the entrance of the units.

Chair Jackson asked if any of the commissioners had questions of staff. None of the commissioners had questions.

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing and invited anyone from the public to speak.

Doug Maupin, applicant, addressed the Commission by explaining the anticipated price point. He stated the three-story project would be more expensive to build than the two-story project. A year ago, the costs were expensive and materials continue to increase. He stated he could offer this project for significantly lower in price compared to a three-story project. This modification was better for the developer to offer a much more affordable product. He thanked staff for their work and the Commission for their time and consideration.

Chair Jackson thanked the applicant and commended the project. She closed the public hearing and asked for a motion.

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Langley and seconded by Commissioner Pierce to adopt Resolution No. PC 1-21 approving Modification #1 to Site Plan Review #7-18 subject to the attached conditions of approval and directing staff to file a Notice of Exemption.

The motion passed by the following roll call vote:

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

**Agenda Item #5(B)**

**Environmental Assessment #1-21, Zone Code Amendment #1-21, General Plan Amendment #1-21**

To amend the Land Use Plan of the City's General Plan to allow higher floor area ratios in the Commercial and Industrial General Plan land use areas when allowed by the Gardena Zoning Code as well; primarily relating to amenity hotels.

**Project Location: Citywide**

**Applicant: City**

Senior Planner Signo gave the staff presentation. He provided background on the issue and indicated that the current requirements were adopted in 1990. He mentioned that the City recently adopted a hotel incentive program to lure hotel developers. However, the current requirements are restrictive for hotels making it difficult for development to occur. Mr. Signo described the requirements for being considered an Amenity Hotel. He went over the changes by sharing a table that compared the existing requirements to the proposed changes.

Assistant City Attorney Lisa Kranitz added that the approval mechanism is based on the comments of one hotel developer and staff was looking for the Commission's recommendation. The ordinance was drafted to allow amenity hotels by right. However, after speaking to the City Manager and Police Chief, it was recommended that the CUP requirement should remain.

Mr. Signo explained how floor area ratio (FAR) is calculated. He provided diagrams showing the difference between 0.5, 1.0, and 2.0 FAR. He mentioned the ordinance is proposing a 2.0 FAR for amenity hotels. Mr. Signo explained the parking analysis prepared by LLG, which is included in the staff report. He mentioned that parking studies from other cities had a range between 0.31 and 0.86 spaces per occupied room. The ordinance is proposing a ratio of 0.85, which is consistent with the parking studies from other cities. Mr. Signo explained the criteria for identifying an amenity hotel site and showed the roadways in the City where an amenity hotel may be possible. He provided photos of existing hotels in the City and discussed the FARs, lot sizes, and amenities. He mentioned a mitigated negative declaration was prepared and properly circulated for public review. Mitigation measures were included in the mitigation monitoring and reporting program. Staff then recommended that the Planning Commission discuss the changes and suggest modification if necessary, and adopt a resolution recommending approval of the item to the City Council.

Chair Jackson asked if there were any questions of staff from the Commission.

Commissioner Henderson mentioned he liked the middle FAR diagram from the presentation that showed a four-story building built on half of a lot.

Ms. Kranitz asked to clarify which diagram he was referring to. She mentioned that eight stories would not realistically be possible because of the height limit. She wanted to make clear that the Commission was not choosing between lots, but how a developer could

develop a project. She mentioned that staff was looking for the Commission to choose an acceptable FAR.

Mr. Signo added that the diagrams were used as examples of what FAR could look like.

Commissioner Langley asked about the other areas being considered for modification.

Ms. Kranitz asked Mr. Signo to go back to the Summary of Changes table in the presentation. She suggested that the Commission could go through the table one by one.

Commissioner Langley agreed.

Chair Jackson asked the Commission what they would like to do. The Commissioners responded that they would like to go one by one through the table.

The Commission voted to not change the recommendation to limit amenity hotels to arterials or major collector streets. There was a majority consensus.

In regards to the approval mechanism, the Commission unanimously agreed on requiring a CUP.

The Commission voted to allow amenity hotels to have an FAR of 2.0.

Commissioner Langley asked if it included a maximum height of 65 feet, and suggested that 65 feet would limit what developers could do more than FAR.

Ms. Kranitz responded "yes," and added that they may not actually get a 2.0 FAR once setbacks and height limits are considered.

Regarding minimum lot size, Commissioner Sherman asked why staff is recommending reducing the minimum lot size.

Ms. Kranitz indicated it would give the opportunity for more sites to be developed with an amenity hotel. According to the City's Economic Development Manager, there is an opportunity to develop four hotels and up to 450 rooms total. This is what the City can support, and that would be on the high side. There would not be enough sites for amenity hotels if one acre were required. Reducing the minimum lot size to a half-acre would allow for the desired potential to be achieved.

Commissioner Sherman asked if this is only for hotels and not for any other use.

Ms. Kranitz indicated she does not believe there is another use that has a minimum lot size requirement outside of the 5,000 square foot limit when creating a lot.

Mr. Barragan indicated we do have a minimum lot size for car dealerships.

Commissioner Sherman indicated if it is limited to hotels then he is ok with it.

Ms. Kranitz added that carwashes and car dealerships also have a minimum lot size requirement.

All other Commissioners had no objections to reducing the minimum lot size.

Mr. Signo stated staff was looking to increase the building height to 65 feet in the C-3 zone.

Ms. Kranitz indicated this would be a cleanup to bring the C-3 zone in line with the height requirement for the C-2 and C-4 zones.

Commissioners voted unanimously to allow the height increase to 65 feet in the C-3 zone.

Commissioners discussed the height requirement of 50 feet within 100 feet of an R-3 or R-4 zone.

Mr. Signo read the code requirement on page 7 of the draft ordinance.

Ms. Kranitz indicated it is a five-foot height increase.

Mr. Signo indicated the increase is the same for commercial zones as it is for industrial zones.

Commissioners voted and had no objections to making the change.

Ms. Kranitz indicated the two-and-a-half story requirement is an older requirement and staff cannot recall how the requirement was established. Ms. Kranitz read the height requirements in the proposed ordinance. The only way to get to 65 feet is if it is a C-3 zone next to a commercial or manufacturing zone.

Commissioners voted and had no objections to removing the two-and-a-half story limit.

Mr. Signo explained the proposed changes to setbacks.

Chair Jackson asked to elaborate on the setback requirement.

Ms. Kranitz explained the setback requirement for corner lots. She mentioned that the street side setback was currently 10 feet and staff was looking to reduce it to 5 feet and to eliminate the 20-foot front yard requirement for amenity hotels.

Commissioner Langley indicated he is concerned with this change. He discussed an example on Redondo Beach Boulevard and Vermont Avenue, and indicated that narrowing the setbacks would be inappropriate.

Commissioner Pierce indicated he had no objections and eliminating the 20-foot requirement seems reasonable. He stated that it seemed like a lot of wasted space on a project that could be used for useful space.

Vice Chair Sherman stated he agrees with Commissioner Langley. He was concerned with reducing the side yard setback to five feet and was ok with taking away the 20-foot requirement and eliminating it for amenity hotels but was against reducing the side yard setback on the street side to five feet.

Chair Jackson stated she was against it as well.

Ms. Kranitz indicated that was ok; staff was there for the Commission to tell staff what to include or not.

Chair Jackson recalled a couple of years ago there was discussion on the General Plan about providing more walking space; that developers would provide more sidewalks; this Ordinance was counter to that. She stated green space was a big thing, and asked whether the City was getting away from that only for hotels? She stated that this would create a slippery slope.

Ms. Kranitz responded that the five-foot street side yard would be for all properties in the C-3 zone. She indicated she heard a majority say no to that and agree to eliminate the 20-foot front yard requirement for amenity hotels. The street side yard would not be changed.

Chair Jackson agreed but asked the other Commissioners for their vote.

Commissioner Langley indicated he would not reduce the side yard and would like to eliminate the 20 feet. He agreed with Chair Jackson on providing more walking space.

Vice Chair Sherman was against the five-foot street side yard but ok with eliminating the 20-foot front yard requirement.

Chair Jackson stated she is fine with that as well.

Mr. Signo read the next item dealing with parking. The proposed requirement would be 0.85 spaces for each room plus spaces for additional uses. There could also be a parking study to reduce parking further.

Ms. Kranitz stated parking was not a CEQA issue. She stated it may be too low and the Commission may advise staff of what they think the parking ratio should be.

Commissioner Langley asked about employee parking. He felt it was too much of a reduction.

Ms. Kranitz reminded the Commission that LLG, the City's traffic consultant, was available for questions.

Commissioner Henderson stated he would like to hear from the consultant.

Clare Look-Jaeger, from LLG, introduced herself and spoke about the parking analysis they prepared. She stated that based on other empirical surveys of hotels in other cities, they felt very comfortable proposing a ratio of 0.85 spaces per room, plus additional uses.

She stated other uses such as conference rooms could have parking apart from hotel parking. Parking was extremely expensive to build; a single space could cost \$30K to \$40K to build, so planning for parking would be very important. She provided parking data from ITE and ULI as presented in the parking analysis. She stated they felt this is in range with what other cities require.

Commissioner Langley asked about employee parking.

Ms. Look-Jaeger stated hotels would be on major collectors or roadways close to transit. The hotel industry was known to have employees that use transit, which would result in lower parking demand. The time of day would affect parking as well. Hotel parking was maximized late in the evening so there was an off-set with uses that operate during the day.

Ms. Kranitz also stated that not every guest drives. The new SoFi stadium would draw guest from the airport who would use a taxi or Uber, so there would be no one-to-one ratio of rooms to guests. Even if guests would be driving to hotels they may have two or three people per car with multiple rooms.

Commissioner Langley inquired whether there would be a separate parking study for each hotel or if only when the parking would be reduced from 0.85?

Ms. Kranitz stated if an amenity hotel would want to go below what the Code says, then a parking study would be required.

Commissioner Pierce stated that staff was overlooking something that impacts the City considerably and that is multiple apartments and such that impact parking and the area around those places. He was not sure that parking for hotels and its employees was not talking about the same issue.

Chair Jackson stated with apartments or condos, people live there; with hotels people are visiting for a short amount of time.

Commissioner Pierce agreed, except for the fact that there was not an adequate amount of parking at any cost because that is established by the people building the hotel. If it impacts the surrounding area he thinks it should be considered.

Chair Jackson clarified that if there is not sufficient parking at the hotel then people would be parking in the surrounding area.

Commissioner Pierce agreed, it would be impacting that area. If you go around some of the areas, specifically where he lives, it is significantly impacted by apartment buildings and those people that do not have enough parking.

Commissioner Sherman mentioned the elimination of parking for granny houses and garages where people are living in.

Ms. Kranitz stated the Commission needed to make a recommendation to the Council on what should change or what should be left. Staff does not support the request suggested

by a hotel developer, which was 0.85, because if there was a conference room there would be an impact. She asked Mr. Signo if staff included the hotel comparison of other cities.

Mr. Signo stated it was not in the presentation but was included in the staff report.

Ms. Jackson polled the Commission.

Commissioner Henderson voted to stick with the existing requirements.

Commissioner Pierce concurred, the proposed is not adequate and he suggested sticking to the existing requirement.

Commissioner Langley is in favor of 0.85 for each room space, but leave one space for every six rooms for employee and spaces for additional uses.

Vice Chair Sherman voted to keep it the same.

Chair Jackson liked 0.85 for each room, plus one space for every six employees, plus spaces for additional uses.

Ms. Kranitz clarified that the Commission's recommendation to City Council is that the Commission is not in agreement with the proposed reduction.

Chair Jackson understood the vote to be three in favor of keeping the existing requirement and two voted for 0.85 plus additional spaces.

Ms. Kranitz clarified the majority wants to leave it as is.

Chair Jackson agreed.

Mr. Signo read the next item regarding a parking demand study, which was being proposed to be removed.

Chair Jackson asked what a parking demand study was.

Ms. Kranitz explained it would be required to justify parking and reduce parking. She stated it would not make sense if we had a standard that is met, and we would still require a parking demand study to show it would be enough.

Chair Jackson tallied the Commission. All Commissioners agreed to eliminate this requirement.

Mr. Signo indicated there are no changes to the parking dimensions. That there was a change to the drive aisle width from 26 to 25 feet that would apply to all uses, not just amenity hotels.

Commissioner Langley found it was hard to maneuver a vehicle if it is reduced, so he was against it.



Vice Chair Sherman asked if the Fire Department has a 26-foot minimum clear to sky.

Mr. Signo explained that they do for a fire lane, but not all aisles are a fire lane. That there are even requirements for 28 feet in certain circumstances.

Ms. Kranitz indicated we would never override the Fire Department's standards.

Vice Chair Sherman indicated he was ok with reducing it as long as the Fire Department has access.

Chair Jackson stated she would like to leave it at 26 feet, but the majority preferred to accept the recommendation to reduce it to 25 feet.

Mr. Signo stated there are no changes with kitchens, but there was a proposal to eliminate a market feasibility study.

Ms. Kranitz explained a market feasibility study is currently required to show the market can support a hotel. She stated, however, if someone would come in with an amenity hotel, they would already be doing market studies before they would make a hotel proposal to the City.

Mr. Signo concurred that developers would be doing market studies on their own before making a proposal to the City.

Chair Jackson polled the Commission.

Commissioner Pierce stated he was in favor of eliminating the market feasibility study.

All other Commissioners agreed.

Chair Jackson asked the Commission for any further questions. After hearing none, she opened the public hearing and welcomed the public to speak on that item. After providing some time, there were no speakers.

Ms. Kranitz read into the record the Planning Commission's recommended changes to the amendments proposed by staff:

- A CUP still be required
- A 10-foot setback on side streets still be required
- No change to the parking ratio

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing.

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Pierce and seconded by Commissioner Langley to adopt Resolution No. PC 2-21 with the amendment read into the record by the Assistant City Attorney.

The motion passed by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Pierce, Langley, Sherman, Jackson  
Noes: None  
Absent: Henderson (temporary technical problem)

**Agenda Item #6**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Acting Community Development Director Raymond Barragan thanked everyone including all of the Commissioners. He mentioned that in looking at the City, there had not been any part of the City that had not been improved and Gardena was in a better place than he had ever seen it. With that, he mentioned he had taken another position at another agency. He stated it had been a pleasure serving the Commission and the community. He thanked the Commissioners and staff for their support throughout the years, and especially this past year during COVID. He was able to drive around the City the other day and saw many sites that were problematic that are no longer there. He would like to see the continued progress and thanked everyone again. He introduced Interim Community Development Director Gregg McClain.

Chair Jackson stated she will miss Mr. Barragan and thanked him for his service.

Interim Community Development Director McClain introduced himself. He had been in Planning for 24 years. He got his start in Hawthorne and spent most of his time in planning in the South Bay. Recently he had been in El Segundo, and prior to that in Hawthorne for more than seven years. He found the meeting to be like a flashback and mentioned the issues are familiar to him. He expects to be the Interim Director for the next five or so months and wishes to get to meet everyone in person in the future. He stated it was an exciting opportunity to help the City and was looking forward to working with this team.

Ms. Kranitz mentioned she's known Gregg for many years and is excited he is joining us even though it would just be for the interim.

**Agenda Item #7**

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION REPORTS**

Commissioner Pierce wished Mr. Barragan the best in his endeavors and welcomed Mr. McClain to the City.

Commissioner Langley mentioned it had been a great experience and loved the work that Mr. Barragan had done. He will miss him. He was glad that Mr. McClain is on board and looks for the opportunity to meet face to face.

Commissioner Sherman had nothing to report.

Commissioner Henderson thanked Mr. Barragan for all his service to the City of Gardena. He welcomed Mr. McClain to the team. He mentioned his surgery was a success and he was on the road to recovery. He stated he was doing well and was glad he did not have to miss any Planning Commission meetings.

Chair Jackson mentioned she will miss Mr. Barragan and will be in touch. She welcomed Mr. McClain to the team and thanked everyone.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:06 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



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RAYMOND BARRAGAN, SECRETARY  
Planning and Environmental Quality Commission

/S/ STEVE SHERMAN FOR

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BRENDA JACKSON, CHAIR  
Planning and Environmental Quality Commission