

CITY OF GARDENA
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2019, MEETING

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Dale Pierce, Deryl Henderson, Stephen Langley, Brenda Jackson
Absent: Steve Sherman
Also in Attendance: Lisa Kranitz, City Attorney
Raymond Barragan, Acting Community Development Director
Amanda Acuna, Planning Assistant

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Commissioner Henderson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Henderson and Commissioner Langley to approve the minutes of September 3, 2019. The minutes were approved 4-0-1.

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

PUBLIC HEARING

Agenda Item #5

General Plan Amendment #2-18, Zone Change #3-18, Tentative Tract Map #6-18, Site Plan Review #11-18, and Environmental Assessment #20-18

A 114-unit townhome project on a 5.6 gross acre property, which included the request for the following entitlements: General Plan Amendment, Zone Change, Tentative Tract Map and a Site Plan Review. A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP) were prepared to address the environmental impacts.

Project Location: 1515 West 178th Street

Applicant: Jeff Weber representing Melia Homes

Community Development Manager, Raymond Barragan, presented the Staff Report and recommended that the Planning and Environmental Quality Commission approve Resolution No. PC 16-19 and PC No. 17-19, adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program for purposes of the Tentative Tract Map and Site Plan Review and recommend that the City Council adopt the same for the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change; recommend that the City Council adopt the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change; and approve the Tentative Tract Map and Site Plan subject to the Legislative approvals.

City Attorney, Lisa Kranitz, asked that the environmental consultant for the project, Rita Garcia, to respond to the late communications staff received from the public.

Ms. Garcia stated staff received a late comment letter from Gardena resident Terri Hasse, 17902 La Salle Avenue, primarily regarding transportation related impacts, and stated that traffic impact is one of the resource areas that was analyzed in the Initial

Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project. Ms. Garcia then stated that the project would displace the existing trucking facility located on the site and that their analysis found the project would result in net reduction in peak hour trips. Ms. Garcia also stated that the existing conditions which included staging of trucks, employees and visitors of the truck facility parking on the street, affect traffic circulation and that the proposed project would remove these affects from the neighborhood.

Chair Jackson stated she thought 114 residential unit would increase traffic impact.

Ms. Garcia stated the traffic analysis showed the exiting trucking facility generated more traffic then the residential development was expected to.

Commissioner Henderson asked if the traffic analysis was conducted over one day.

Ms. Kranitz stated the survey of the traffic counts for the existing facility was conducted on one day, March 5, 2019, and added that the applicant worked with the business to choose a good representative day on when trucks were moving in and out.

Commissioner Henderson asked if the traffic count converted one truck trip would into two passenger trips.

Ms. Garcia stated they did not convert truck trips to passenger car equivalent to ensure their analysis was conservative.

Commissioner Langley asked where the nearest parks to the project site were.

Ms. Garcia stated the initial study did not identify the nearest parks in the recreation demand, however, that it did identify the proposed onsite recreation uses that would serve the onsite community.

Commissioner Langley stated that he did not think the project provided adequate amount of recreation area. Commissioner Langley then asked where the nearest schools were located.

Ms. Garcia stated that there were three schools that would be in the jurisdiction and serve the community: 186th Elementary School, Perry Middle School, Gardena High School, and a private school south of the project site.

Mr. Barragan stated the applicant would be required to pay an in-lieu park fee of \$97,984 which could be used to make improvements to existing parks or purchasing of property for new parks.

Chair Jackson stated that the staff report indicated the applicant would be required to pay school impact fee to Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

Mr. Barragan stated there would be a school fee paid to LAUSD in addition to an in-lieu park fee paid directly to the City of Gardena.

Ms. Kranitz stated that there was not a lot of available space in the City to develop a new park, and therefore the City has concentrated on improving existing parks.

Commissioner Langley inquired about the previous use on the site prior to the existing trucking facility.

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing.

The applicant Jeff Weber, 8951 Research Drive Irvine, CA, stated the previous uses were typical warehousing businesses.

Commissioner Langley asked if there were any soil testing done for the property.

Ms. Garcia stated there was soil testing done through an Environmental Site Assessment report which required that further remediation of the site in order to address the contamination. Ms. Garcia then stated that the applicants drafted a Remedial Action Plan that was approved by the Los Angeles County Fire Department which included a measure that would prohibit issuance of certain building permits for the project until the site was determined to be fully remediated.

Commissioner Henderson asked the applicants what their intended market would be.

Mr. Weber stated first time buyers.

Commissioner Henderson asked questions regarding the type of proposed recreational facilities within the project.

Mr. Weber stated there were numerous open space areas throughout the project and noted the largest area was located on the northside of the site and the pool area located in the middle of the proposed development.

Gail, Laidoner, 17815 Denker Avenue, Gardena, CA, stated that the housing project was incompatible with the City's General Plan and had concerns regarding traffic impact to the neighboring area.

Oscar Graham, 333 City Boulevard West, Suite 1700, Orange, CA, stated his support for the project.

Margie Hoyt, 17700 S. Western Avenue, Unit 188, Gardena, CA, stated she resides in the mobile home park adjacent to project site, and stated her support for the project and stressed the issues she has seen with the existing trucking facility including noise and smells.

Ms. Kranitz stated that in response to the comment that the project was incompatible with the City's General Plan, Ms. Kranitz pointed out that the City Council placed a mixed-use overlay land use designation on the subject property which specifically allows for residential development and therefore the project was consistent with the General Plan. Ms. Kranitz went on to say that the only problem with developing under the current zoning designation of mixed-use is that the project would be required to have some type of commercial use, however, the street where the project was located was not conducive to having any type of commercial use that would be viable.

Chair Jackson asked what the sale price of the homes would be.

Mr. Weber stated that they would be in somewhere between \$450,000 and \$550,000.

Commissioner Langley asked if the pool area of the project would be fenced in.

Mr. Weber answered yes.

Commissioner Henderson asked questions regarding the vehicular entrances to the project site.

Chad Brown, 8951 Research Drive Irvine, CA, the Vice President of Planning and Development with Melia Homes, stated the project met all of the requirements for the Los Angeles County Department regarding the emergency access and egress and added that too many driveway approaches would increase traffic to the street.

Commissioner Henderson asked what the distance was from the project site to Normandie Avenue and to Western Avenue.

Mr. Brown stated the distance was well over 1,500 feet in each direction.

Commissioner Henderson asked if this distance would allow the property to have additional emergency vehicle access.

Ms. Garcia stated that the project would be subject to compliance with the Los Angeles County Fire Department standards in order for the project to be approved.

Commissioner Pierce stated that there were alternative routes to and from the project that would mitigate the activity that would occur on West 178th Street.

Commissioner Langley stated that the project did not have adequate recreational space due to the fact that there was limited access to the pool area and that the open space area on the north side was mostly designed as a walkway.

Mr. Brown stated there was an open area on the northwest end of the project site where a tot-lot could be proposed.

Mr. Weber added that they were open to suggestions regarding the trail located on the north side.

Commissioner stated that he thought the trees along the trail should be kept as part of the project.

Mr. Barragan stated that the City was actively reprogramming the existing parks and expressed staff's support of residential development on this property due to the numerous concerns and impacts the existing industrial uses has had on the neighboring residential community.

Commissioner Langley expressed his support in the use change of the property to residential. Commissioner Langley then stated he would favor less density to provide for more open recreational space.

Ms. Kranitz stated that the State's Department of Housing and Community Development has mandated that the property yield a minimum 20 units per acre.

Commissioner Pierce stated that the pricing of the homes would be more attainable and bring back middle income households which were different from previous projects.

Ms. Kranitz stated that this was the intent of the State's Department.

Mr. Weber stated that the goal of the project was to develop attainable housing.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing.

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Henderson and seconded by Commissioner Pierce to adopt approve Resolution No. PC 16-19 and PC No. 17-19, adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program for purposes of the Tentative Tract Map and Site Plan Review and recommending that the City Council adopt the same for the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change; recommending that the City Council adopt the General Plan Amendment and Zone Change; and approving the Tentative Tract Map and Site Plan subject to the Legislative approvals. The Commission added a condition that the Applicant would work with staff to reprogram existing open space areas.

The motion passed by the following roll call vote:

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

The Commission called for a short recess in order to prepare for the next agenda item.

Agenda Item #6

Site Plan review #5-18

A request a Site Plan Review for construction of a new 22,402 square foot, 12-unit mixed-use housing development with 3,891 square feet of commercial use in the Commercial-Residential (C-R) zone per Gardena Municipal Code Section 18.20.025 and direction to staff to file a Notice of Exemption as an In-fill project.

Project Location: 15420 South Western Avenue, Suite B (APN: 6103-015-051)

Applicant: Grace Yang

Planning Assistant Amanda Acuna presented the Staff Report and recommended that the Planning and Environmental Quality Commission adopt Resolution No. PC 18-19, approving Site Plan Review #5-18, subject to the conditions of approval and directing staff to file a Notice of Exemption as an existing facilities project.

Commissioner Langley asked for clarification whether the alley abutting the property is private or public.

Mr. Barragan stated that the alley was private and there were concerns that people would cut through the adjacent properties to get to the subject site via the alley.

Commissioner Langley had concerns regarding potential impact the surrounding uses would have to the residents.

Mr. Barragan stated the existing surrounding uses were allowed by-right and they had no bearing on the project.

Commissioner Langley addressed his concerns on late working hours from those adjacent businesses in terms with noise.

Mr. Barragan stated that the businesses were subject to the City's noise ordinance.

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing.

Paul Giuliano, 1139 West Gardena Boulevard, Gardena, CA, owner of a nearby business to the project, stated he had concerns regarding traffic.

Commissioner Henderson asked where the entrance to the project would be.

Ms. Acuna stated the entrance would be from the public alley off of Berendo Avenue.

Commissioner Pierce stated the abutting alley was very narrow.

Ms. Acuna stated that the Gardena Public Works Department reviewed the proposed project and was asking for a two-foot dedication to widen the alley.

Commissioner Henderson asked questions regarding street parking directly in front of the project area.

Ms. Acuna stated that the applicants would be removing and replacing an abandoned driveway approach and replacing it with curb and gutter which would allow for more on-street parking.

Commissioner Langley asked about the parking lot located across the project site.

Ms. Acuna stated that the parking lot was public parking.

Commissioner Langley expresses his concerns on nearby residents parking in the public parking lot located on Gardena Boulevard.

Commissioner Henderson asked how many additional parking spaces there would be along Gardena Boulevard directly in front of the subject property.

The applicant's architect Patrick Chu stated approximately six parking spaces could be added.

Commissioner Langley asked if the uses of the commercial tenant spaces were decided.

The applicant, Sam Zhou, 320 N. Hollow Avenue, West Covina, CA, stated that there were no specific intended uses, however, two units would be equipped to allow for small restaurant use.

Langley stated the use before provided on street parking and while the proposed project would be attracting more people it would bring traffic.

Mr. Chu stated that the project met all the minimum development standards of the Gardena Municipal Code.

Commissioner Langley asked why the parking requirements for the subject property were different than that of the live-work units located along Artesia Boulevard.

Mr. Barragan stated that the area the Commissioner was referring to was part of a Specific Plan and had its very own development standards.

Commissioner Henderson asked if the on-street parking spaces would have reduced dimensions.

Mr. Barragan stated that the regulations for private parking spaces were different than that for street parking.

Commissioner Langley asked if there were any future plans for off-street parking lots along Gardena Boulevard.

Mr. Barragan stated no.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing.

MOTION: It was moved by Commissioner Henderson and seconded by Commissioner Pierce to adopt Resolution No. PC 18-19, approving Site Plan Review #5-18, subject to the conditions of approval and directing staff to file a Notice of Exemption.

The motion passed by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Henderson, Pierce, Langley, Jackson

Noes: None

Absent: Sherman

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no oral communications from the public.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Barragan stated that if any Commissioners would like to attend the City's annual Food, Wine, and Cigar Festival to please contact staff. Mr. Barragan then informed the Commission that the Regional Board of the Southern California Association of Governments was recently looking to change the methodology for the distribution of housing units of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Langley asked about the road work happening on Normandie Avenue during late hours.

Mr. Barragan stated that staff would speak with the Public Works Department and report back to the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:22 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


For RAYMOND BARRAGAN, SECRETARY
Planning and Environmental Quality Commission


BRENDA JACKSON, CHAIR
Planning and Environmental Quality Commission