

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
LOMITA PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021**

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

a. Chair Cammarata called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. via teleconference pursuant to Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20 issued on March 17, 2020.

b. Roll Call

Responding to the roll call by Deputy City Clerk Abbott were Commissioners Dever, Steinbach, Thompson, Vice-Chair Graf, and Chair Cammarata. Also present were Assistant City Attorney Lauren Langer, Assistant Planner Laura MacMorran, Planning Intern James Dotson, and Interim Community and Economic Development Director Sheri Repp Loadsman.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS: Dever, Steinbach, Thompson, Vice-Chair Graf, and Chair Cammarata

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: Santos

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

3. CONSENT AGENDA

a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** November 9, 2020

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve minutes.

Commissioner Steinbach made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Graf, to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2020, Planning Commission meeting.

MOTION CARRIED by the following vote:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS: Dever, Steinbach, Vice-Chair Graf, and Chair Cammarata

NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: Santos

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS: Thompson

PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. **AMENDMENT TO CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 299**, a request to modify a mixed-use project consisting of 20 residential condominiums and 5 office condominiums to reduce the required percentage of nonresidential uses by converting Unit 3 and Unit 4 from an office condominium to residential condominiums allowing for live/work space, and to confirm the categorical exemption, located at 2154 250th Street, in the C-G, Commercial General Zone, Mixed-Use Overlay District.

Chair Cammarata recused himself due to the proximity of his business to the project site. He left the Zoom meeting.

Interim Community and Economic Development Director Repp Loadsman presented the staff report as per the agenda material.

Vice-Chair Graf opened the public hearing at 6:38 p.m.

Cherine Medawar, the applicant, addressing the installation of kitchens without permits in two of the commercial spaces stated that City Code does not forbid placement of cabinets, and the gate was installed as a security measure, with permits pulled. As market conditions have changed due to the pandemic and offices are not leasing, he wanted a Planning Commission recommendation for the best use for the building, and stated that live-work is a use Lomita allows on Narbonne.

Gerald Compton, the project architect, stated that the building was designed so each unit would be sold separately but the market has changed due to the pandemic.

Commissioner Thompson expressed concerns that this project has become primarily residential in actual use, as indicated by the installation of kitchens and closets. He stated that the obvious disregard for prior approval is also a concern. He added that for commercial use, customers should be able to drive right onto the property and not use a gate with a callbox.

Mr. Medawar stated that there is nothing in the City Code prohibiting closets or cabinets, and that he pulled a permit for sink installation. He stated that he had been trying to get in front of the Planning Commission to request approval for the amendment for about a year.

Interim Director Repp Loadsman stated that there have been numerous discussions between staff and the applicant but that the application had not been submitted until recently. She clarified that cabinets do not require a building permit but cooking facilities such as stoves do and the applicant did not apply for such permits.

Mr. Compton stated that customers can easily be let into the parking lot via the callbox at the gate. He added that he and his client had worked with the former Community and Economic Development Director for six months without getting anywhere so they shifted to the live-work style for the project.

George Kivett, a Lomita resident, spoke in support of the project and stated that residential units with small workspaces are a good idea for the foreseeable future.

Steve Connelly, a resident at the project site, spoke in support of the project. He stated that the callbox at the gate presents no problems and is easy for both residents and customers. He added that it is a beautiful building, with people onsite 24-7 which creates a sense of community.

Inga Demetra, a dance studio owner at Unit 4, spoke in support of the requested amendment, and added that the gate presented no issues.

Alex Perez, a resident at the project site, spoke in support of the project amendment, and stated that it would allow for more businesses to survive due to owners not having to pay multiple rents.

Simon Mattox, Vice President of CBRE, emailed in support of the amended project. He stated that the outlook is uncertain for office space in the area for the foreseeable future due to the pandemic, so a wider range of uses should be allowed.

Jill Medawar, project co-owner, stated that more people are working from home due to the pandemic, and that the commercial elevator at the site provides access to the second floor for everyone.

Mr. Medawar stated his appreciation for the Planning Commission's support and thanked them for their consideration.

Mr. Compton stated that due to the proximity to commercial enterprises, residential soundproofing was required and Mr. Medawar did a very good job on that.

Vice-Chair Graf closed the public hearing at 7:23 p.m.

Commissioner Steinbach expressed his displeasure with the direction the project is going with an emphasis on residential. He added that the project would not have been approved in the first place without the commercial element, and that work without approval and permits is very concerning.

Commissioner Thompson stated that live-work is different from mixed use, and it is clear that these units will be used as residences, which was not as approved.

Commissioner Dever stated her concern regarding setting a precedent where mixed-use is essentially redefined.

Chair Graf stated that working from home is not the same as mixed-use.

Commissioner Thompson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Steinbach, without need for further discussion or a continuation of the public hearing, to direct staff to return at the next Planning Commission meeting with a resolution to deny the applicant's request for the amendment.

MOTION CARRIED by the following vote:

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS: Dever, Steinbach, Thompson, and Vice-Chair Graf
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS: None
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS: Santos
RECUSED:	COMMISSIONERS: Chair Cammarata

Chair Cammarata returned to the Zoom meeting.

- 5. AMENDMENT TO CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 309**, a request to modify a conditional use permit for a 3,500 square foot brewery with tasting room to add a 1,100 square foot pizza kitchen and to designate the associated use as a "Brew Pub," and to confirm the categorical exemption, located at 2308 Pacific Coast Highway, in the C-R, Commercial Retail Zone.

Interim Community and Economic Development Director Repp Loadsman presented the staff report as per the agenda material.

Chair Cammarata opened the public hearing at 8:00 p.m.

George Kivett, a Lomita resident, spoke in support of onsite food service at the brewpub. He added that parking is not a problem there.

Chris Cook, a Lomita resident, spoke in support of an onsite kitchen. He added that parking is not an issue there, and many customers use ride share services.

Brenton Reger, the applicant, stated that most nearby businesses have opposite hours from theirs which makes parking a non-issue. He added that U.S. Bank next door allows his customers to park there after hours. The brewery has been closed for nearly 10 months of the pandemic due to not having a kitchen.

Chair Cammarata closed the public hearing at 8:10 p.m.

Vice-Chair Graf made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, to adopt the resolution of approval subject to findings and conditions, and confirm that the project is exempt from CEQA requirements.

MOTION CARRIED by the following vote:

AYES:	COMMISSIONERS:	Dever, Steinbach, Thompson, Vice-Chair Graf, and Chair Cammarata
NOES:	COMMISSIONERS:	None
ABSENT:	COMMISSIONERS:	Santos

- 6. SITE PLAN REVIEW No. 1208**, a request to permit the construction of eight townhomes amongst four, three-story buildings, with 19 parking spaces, and a modification from Section 11-1.30.07 of the Lomita Municipal Code (LMC) to permit an eight foot wall along the northern property line to exceed the allowed six foot maximum, located at 26109 Narbonne Avenue in the RVD-1500 (Residential Variable Density) Zone and to confirm the categorical exemption.

Planning Intern Dotson and Assistant Planner MacMorran presented the staff report as per the agenda material.

Chair Cammarata opened the public hearing at 8:27 p.m.

George Kivett, a Lomita resident, spoke in support of the project and stated that it is a special situation in that it is adjacent to the Sheriff's station.

Peter Frederiksen, the applicant, stated that he had lost track of time but looks forward to moving ahead with the project. He thanked City staff for their assistance.

Chair Cammarata closed the public hearing at 8:31 p.m.

Commissioner Steinbach made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Graf, to adopt the resolution of approval subject to findings and conditions, and confirm that the project is exempt from CEQA requirements.

MOTION CARRIED by the following vote:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS: Dever, Steinbach, Thompson, Vice-Chair Graf, and Chair Cammarata
NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None
ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: Santos

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

7. COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

None

OTHER MATTERS

8. STAFF ITEMS – ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Invitation to the South Bay Cities Council of Governments’ 21st Annual General Assembly Virtual Conference, March 18, 2021, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please register online by Thursday, February 18, 2021, at <https://sbccog.swoogo.com/home>.**

At this free event, the South Bay Cities Council of Governments will “examine how understanding the interrelationships of the issues we mutually face is critical to our success. Panelists representing state/local government and private/public sectors will explore new ideas, solutions and perspectives, and discuss how other regions have responded to similar circumstances.”

- b. Other Announcements – None**

9. PLANNING COMMISSIONER ITEMS

Vice-Chair Graf asked the status of the RV storage project on Lomita Boulevard. Assistant Planner MacMorran stated that its Building and Safety approvals have expired, they are working on extensions, and that they have provided a letter of interest from a bank.

Chair Cammarata asked that the Planning Commission be updated on the project at its next meeting.

Commissioner Dever thanked staff for all their hard work, especially with Mr. Medawar’s requested amendment.

Commissioner Thompson thanked Commissioner Steinbach for sharing his insight gained from his career with the City of Los Angeles Building and Safety Department.

Chair Cammarata stated that Mr. Medawar’s project at Pacific Coast Highway and Cypress Street needs graffiti removal. He added that the Picerne development is doing a good job of cleaning up daily and minimizing dust and noise, but traffic in that area will be a nightmare.

In response to questions from Vice-Chair Graf, Interim Director Repp Loadsman stated that Picerne had requested to work from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. in an effort to alleviate some of the traffic issues, staff will evaluate to determine if night shift noise would be problematic to nearby residents. She added that Picerne has an agreement with the City to allow its employees to park at designated City-owned properties to prevent them from parking in neighborhoods near the project.

Chair Cammarata commended City parking enforcement officer Alejandro Ramirez for addressing red zone parking near his residence. He stated that he wanted to bring this ongoing problem to the City's attention.

10. COMMISSIONERS TO ATTEND CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Commissioner Steinbach will attend the City Council meeting on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. Commissioner Thompson will attend the Tuesday, March 16, 2021, City Council meeting.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Cammarata at 8:44 p.m.

Attest:



Linda E. Abbott
Deputy City Clerk/Planning Secretary