

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
LOMITA PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2020**

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

a. Chair Cammarata called the meeting to order at 6:04 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, Santos, Steinbach, Thompson, Waite, 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, Santos, Steinbach, Thompson, Waite, Vice-Chair Graf, and Chair Cammarata

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: None

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** August 10, 2020

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve minutes.

Commissioner Steinbach made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Santos, to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2020, Planning Commission meeting.

MOTION CARRIED by the following vote:

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

NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: None

b) **SITE PLAN REVIEW NO. 1188 – One Year Extension of Time**, a request for an additional one-year time extension to permit a new self-storage facility, which will include 48,052 square feet of self-storage space and 22 recreational vehicle spaces, and a block wall seven feet in height. The project is located at 1837 Lomita Blvd. in the C-G, Commercial General Zone.

Several Commissioners expressed displeasure with the lack of progress made on the project since the last extension was granted.

The applicants were experiencing difficulty securing a bank loan due to priority given to processing Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, not “PPG” loans as stated in their letter attached to the staff report.

Giovanni Funicello and Giuseppe Finazzo, the applicants, stated that the pandemic had created problems for the project, but they anticipate funding will be processed within 30-60 days. They plan to use part of the loan for required permits, and expressed frustration due to the delays. Los Angeles County Building and Safety requires them to pull all permits at once, which is why they had to request another extension, as it involved updating the plans and is costly. They responded to Commission questions.

Commissioner Thompson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Santos, to adopt a resolution of approval subject to findings, with the following changes under “Section 2. Findings”:

“The Planning Commission of the City of Lomita hereby approves a one-year extension of time for Site Plan No. 1188 establishing a new expiration date of October 11, 2021. This will be the final extension considered by the Planning Commission for this project, and the applicant shall report to the City the status of the loan and permits within 90 days.”

MOTION CARRIED by the following vote:

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 4. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 2020-02**, consideration of an ordinance amending Lomita Municipal Code Section 11-1.66.03(A), Residential Parking Requirements, to Reduce the Required Number of Parking Spaces for Residential Units with Five or More Bedrooms and/or Dens from Three (3) Spaces in a Garage to Two (2) Spaces in a Garage and a Determination that the Project is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Assistant Planner MacMorran presented the staff report as per the agenda material. She thanked Planning Intern Dotson for his assistance researching other jurisdiction’s residential parking requirements.

Discussion was held relative to the Census data used to determine the requirements, as well as cultural changes since then, such as households having more cars nowadays, and an increase in home-based businesses. The lack of on-street parking in the City was also discussed. Staff mentioned that the availability of on-site parking would not necessarily free up street parking.

Chair Cammarata opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.

Kevin McMinn, co-applicant, stated that a three-car garage was a deterrent because it would occupy space that would otherwise be used for living area.

Sajy George, co-applicant, stated that they would like to enlarge their three-bedroom house to accommodate guests and working from home due to COVID-19, and to expand their existing attached two-car garage would require substantial structural modification.

George Kivett, a Lomita resident, stated that when garage space is increased, curb area is reduced. In addition, from an architectural standpoint, an average sized lot would be dominated by a three-car garage.

Chair Cammarata closed the public hearing at 7:15 p.m.

Commissioner Steinbach asked if there was a way for residents to build a five-bedroom home and not provide for three enclosed parking spaces. Assistant Planner MacMorran said the alternative is to request a zone variance but the threshold is far more stringent, as it requires exceptional or extraordinary circumstances to vary from the three-car garage requirement. As a result, a more direct solution is necessary.

There was further discussion about the need for on-site parking but not wanting to hinder expansion, but requiring unenclosed parking.

Vice-Chair Graf made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Waite, to approve a resolution recommending to the City Council to amend Lomita Municipal Code Section 11-1.66.03(A), for the parking requirements for the category "one family" to read as follows:

- Two (2) parking spaces in a garage for units of up to three (3) bedrooms and/or dens;
- Two (2) parking spaces in a garage, plus one (1) additional unenclosed parking space for four (4) bedrooms and/or dens; and
- Two (2) parking spaces in a garage, plus two (2) additional unenclosed parking spaces for five (5) or more bedrooms and/or dens.

The provisions related to a duplex, apartment house and condominium were to remain unchanged.

MOTION CARRIED by the following vote:

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

NOES: COMMISSIONERS: None

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: None

SCHEDULED MATTERS

5. PRESENTATION ON VISUALIZING DENSITY

PRESENTED BY: Diego Velasco, AICP
Principal, Citythinkers

Assistant Planner MacMorran introduced Mr. Velasco, and shared his background and experience.

Mr. Velasco gave his presentation on visualizing density.

Interim Director Repp-Loadsman explained that this design and density presentation had been scheduled during this meeting to assist the Commission with planning for the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirements, as well as with the update to the Housing Element. She explained that Lomita was obligated to plan for an additional 827 housing units at different affordability levels. The process for identifying suitable land for these new units would require the Planning Commission and City Council to consider increased density and new locations that could be designated for residential and mixed use development. She noted that the process would be challenging and would lead to a new vision for the growth of the community.

George Kivett, a Lomita resident, stated that he wished to preserve the R-1 and A-1 zones at their present densities in Lomita, but remarked that commercial corridors in several areas are ready for a pick-me-up. He added that developers would have to be incentivized to create projects.

Art Ashai, developer, stated that due to electrical lines on the west side of Narbonne Avenue, the Los Angeles County Fire Department required a fire lane for his project on 248th Street and Narbonne Avenue. He added that this was possible due to the project being on a corner lot, but that the future development of single-family homes or duplexes built on mid-block lots would not be able design their development to meet the Fire Department's requirement.

The Commission expressed their appreciation for Mr. Velasco's insight and willingness to make the presentation.

6. DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (RHNA) AND HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

Interim Director Repp-Loadsman presented the staff report as per the agenda material. She stated that creativity will be necessary regarding both development standards and density, but that it will still be difficult to achieve what the state requires.

Discussion was held relative to how Lomita can fulfill the requirements and potential consequences if the goals are not met.

Interim Director Repp-Loadsman clarified that the City's task is to demonstrate that local control can produce enough housing.

George Kivett, a Lomita resident, stated that Lomita should consider adding an additional story in the height limit along the south side of Lomita Boulevard for any mixed-use projects. He added that density might also have to be increased slightly to allow enough buildable square footage. The advantage to building on the south side is that shadows would fall onto the street instead of in someone's backyard. He also suggested extending the mixed use overlay farther east along Lomita Boulevard, as there are some underutilized properties in that area heading east out of the downtown area. Such changes might incentivize some property owners with enough value in their properties to sell to a developer. He added that the easterly side of Lomita Boulevard was suitable for taller buildings because of how the shadows are cast onto the street. He suggested increasing densities along the City's other transportation corridors.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

7. COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

Interim Director Repp-Loadsman stated that the feasibility of appealing the RHNA for Lomita will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

OTHER MATTERS

8. STAFF ITEMS – ANNOUNCEMENTS

Interim Director Repp-Loadsman stated that work has begun on two General Plan amendments, the Housing Element and the Safety Element. Recommendation of approval of a consulting contract will soon be taken to Council for the Safety Element.

9. PLANNING COMMISSIONER ITEMS

Vice-Chair Graf asked if there was an update on the Picerne project. Interim Director Repp-Loadsman stated that they are moving forward on the project, have provided required bonds, and are working with County Building and Safety. It is expected that a building permit will be issued within the next month or two.

Commissioner Dever asked if there was any interest in a long-term lease of the vacant market space on Pacific Coast Highway. Interim Director Repp-Loadsman stated that she and City Manager Smoot had recently spoken with the property owners, but due to the pandemic, there is not much leasing taking place. She added that it was made clear that the Lomita community would like another grocery store at that location; however, the ownership situation is complicated as there are multiple owners.

Commissioner Thompson commended Interim Director Repp-Loadsman for the quality of her presentations and her knowledge.

10. COMMISSIONERS TO ATTEND CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Commissioner Waite will attend the Council meeting on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Commissioner Steinbach will attend the Tuesday, November 17, 2020, meeting.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Cammarata at 9:00 p.m.

Attest:



Linda E. Abbott, Deputy City Clerk