

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA HABRA
January 25, 2021

THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIA TELECONFERENCE. The public was able to participate by either calling in or sending an email.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Nigsarian called the Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of La Habra to order at 6:31 p.m. The Commissioners, the public and Staff conducted the meeting telephonically through Zoom.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: LED BY COMMISSIONER MUNOZ

PRESENT: (via phone) COMMISSIONERS: NIGSARIAN
MANLEY
POWELL
MUNOZ

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: BERNIER (EXCUSED)

OTHERS PRESENT:
DIR. OF COMM. DEV.: HO
PLANNING MANAGER: RAMSLAND
ASSOCIATE PLANNER: D. LOPEZ
COMM. DEV. SECRETARY: V. LOPEZ
PLANNING COMMISSION SECRETARY: GONZALEZ

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair asked if there was anyone on the phone conference or who had sent an email that wished to comment on any item not listed on the agenda. There were none.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Chair explained the Consent Calendar procedures. He asked if there were any members of the public on the phone conference, or who had sent an email, or any Commissioners that wished to have any item removed. There were none.

Moved by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Vice Chair Manley, to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion passed.

1. PROCEDURAL WAIVERS: Waive reading in full of resolutions and ordinances and approval and adoption of same by reading title only.
2. Approval of the Planning Commission Minutes of January 11, 2021.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Consideration of Design Review 20-03 for façade and onsite improvements at 1281 East La Habra Boulevard.

Associate Planner Lopez presented the staff report to the Commission. He noted that staff had received emails from Mr. Brian Fast and Dr. Jatin Shah stating concerns about the design, safety, and signage. Associate Planner Lopez provided additional information to address the concerns raised about the proposed project.

Commissioner Powell stated that there has been a problem for a number of years with the alleyway on the eastside of the building, noted that it has been graffitied many times. He asked if the narrow five-foot access will remain open. Associated Planner Lopez responded that it would remain. Commissioner Powell then asked if the parking lot was adequate for the site based on the calculations. Associate Planner Lopez responded there was an active variance which reduced the required parking from 57 spaces to 34 spaces for this site, but that the site was part of the overall center which has a shared parking agreement that provided sufficient parking for all the uses in the center. Additionally, Commissioner Powell asked staff to clarify the concern raised in the email with regards to the proposed parapet design and aesthetics. Mr. Lopez provided additional information.

Commissioner Manley referenced the landscaping requirements noted in the staff report and asked if the active variance was mainly due to the property's inability to allow for additional landscaping. Associate Planner Lopez provided a brief explanation for the Commission on this particular property's circumstance of limited space, and noted that the Specific Plan allowed for deviations for properties with no other alternatives.

The Chair asked if any of the Commissioners had any questions. There were none.

The Chair then opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone on the phone conference, or who had sent an email who wished to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Mike Lin, representing Troy Harbor Development, addressed the Commission. Mr. Lin thanked Associate Planner Lopez for all of his help and looked forward to bringing the dated center into a modern look and asked for the Commission's favorable consideration.

The Chair then asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in opposition to the request. There were no additional emails. But there were persons in the conference queue that wished to speak in opposition.

Mr. Brian Fast, owner of Arthur's Coffee Shop, which he stated has been located within the subject building for 38 years addressed the Commission. He added that he appreciates the opportunity to speak. Chair Nigsarian stated staff and the Commission had received his email and had had the opportunity to read it and was aware of his concerns. Mr. Fast then addressed the items he was concerned about, beginning with the proposed relocation of the monument sign on La Habra Boulevard to "improve sight distance of vehicles exiting onto La Habra Boulevard", he stated in his opinion there will be no improvement of sight distance by installing additional landscaping. He further discussed his concerns with safety, due to the design of the façade improvements proximity to the drive aisle and a potential loss of visibility, which he was concerned about due to the high volume of cut

through traffic in the center. He was also concerned about the height of the proposed parapet and whether it would screen the roof top equipment.

Lastly, he was concerned that the project plans had only become available to the public on Thursday and asked for a 30-day continuance of the project to have more time to review the plans and address his issues.

Chair Nigsarian thanked Mr. Fast for his comments and noted that his restaurant is a legendary eating establishment and appreciates his continued presence in La Habra. He then asked if there were any additional speakers.

Dr. Jatin Shah stated he has had his business at this property since 2007. He stated that he agrees with most of what is proposed. He referred to the sign and was concerned that it would not be seen by people if it is moved and echoed Mr. Fast's concerns about the potential for accidents due to decreased visibility. He asked if the Commission would consider as Mr. Fast suggested, postponing their decision to further allow time to study the issues.

There being no further speakers, in favor or in opposition, the Chair closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Powell asked staff what would be the advantage to their request for a 30-day extension. Director Ho stated that from staff's perspective, the City does not have any further work to put into the project plans. He suggested that they talk with the property owner to discuss their issues with the project design. He stated the sight line from drivers seeing the monument sign appears to be a concern. He added that the Commission's decision is not final on the location of the signs and that there will be opportunities for both to work on the final location for review and approval. He added there are sight line issue from the west closest to the Wing Stop but that all can work together to find a safe location and provide the visibility. Director Ho stated that he could direct staff to work with the parties involved to meet and come to an agreement.

Commissioner Powell asked for clarification on the issue of the visibility of the roof top mechanical equipment and expressed that he was not concerned if it meets the requirements and La Habra Boulevard Specific Plan requirements. Director Ho stated that was correct and that staff is not worried as the requirement will be enforced to require all the mechanical equipment to be screened and the architect will be held responsible for meeting those standards. What Mr. Fast had indicated in reviewing the plans is the current parapet height is about 20 feet high and the architectural plans for the façade improvements lowered the parapet to about 16 feet and the concern is the reduction will expose the roof top equipment. He stated that during the construction, they will work off the plans that were reviewed for code compliance to ensure that all conditions are met.

Commissioner Powell stated he believed it is a good design and was excited about the view for that side of the City.

Vice Chair Manley asked about the final sign plan to be submitted, he asked what was the next step. Director Ho deferred to the Associate Planner Lopez, stated that Master Sign Programs are an administrative action and would be final at staff level.

Planning Manager Ramsland added that staff could return it before the Commission for additional review if they wished. Vice Chair Manley stated that might not be a bad idea. He added that he likes the design but senses there is a division between the tenants and the owners and would like to see them come together for a viable solution and would appreciate the opportunity to review it. He suggested adding a condition to bring it back for review. Planning Manager Ramsland stated that would be fine and that it could be prior to staff's final administrative approval. He clarified that many times the signs are private business matters between the business owner and the property owners and staff could only look for compliance of City codes.

Director Ho added that it may place the Commission in a precarious position. Vice Chair Manley then stated he did not wish to add a condition. Chair Nigsarian concurred.

The Chair asked for a motion.

MOVED BY Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Munoz, APPROVING RESOLUTION NO. 21-06 ENTITLED: A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA HABRA APPROVING DESIGN REVIEW 20-03 FOR FAÇADE AND ONSITE IMPROVEMENTS AT 1281 EAST LA HABRA BOULEVARD, AS PER THE APPROVED PLANS, MAKING THE APPROPRIATE FINDINGS AND SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS.

The roll call vote was as follows:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS: POWELL, MUNOZ, MANLEY, NIGSARIAN
NOES: COMMISSIONERS: NONE
ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS: NONE
ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: BERNIER

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Director Ho asked the Commission adjourn in memory of Planning Commissioner Michelle Bernier's mother Irene Juarez whom had recently passed away as a result of complications from COVID-19.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:22 p.m. in memory of Planning Commissioner Michelle Bernier's mother Irene Juarez

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Gonzalez Avila,
Planning Commission Secretary