

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA HABRA
May 27, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Mahecha called the Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of La Habra to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: LED BY COMMISSIONER MANLEY

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
MAHECHA
RAMSLAND
MANLEY
CARDENAS
LOGAN-CANNON

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: NONE

OTHERS PRESENT:
DIRECTOR: KIM
ACTING CITY ATTORNEY: TSAI
PLANNING MANAGER: LUI
SENIOR PLANNER: SYED
ACTING SECRETARY: IVEY

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Mahecha asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to address the Commission on the consent calendar or any item not listed on the agenda. There were none.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Acting Secretary Ivey explained the Consent Calendar procedures. Chair Mahecha asked if any of the Commissioners wished to remove an item. There were none. She then asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to remove an item. There were none.

Motion made by Vice Chair Ramsland, seconded by Commissioner Cardenas, to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion passed unanimously.

1. PROCEDURAL WAIVER: 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 May 12, 2025.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A DULY NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR DESIGN REVIEW 24-0009 (DR2PH 24-0009) TO COMPREHENSIVELY REMODEL AN EXISTING MULTI-TENANT COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND SITE, CONDITIONAL USE

PERMIT 25-0002 (CUP 25-0002) TO ALLOW THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF TWO RESTAURANTS, A COMMERCIAL SCHOOL FOR MARTIAL ARTS AND AN AUTOMOBILE SERVICE/REPAIR FACILITY, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 24-0016 (CUP 24-0016) TO PERMIT REDUCED ON-SITE PARKING FOR THE PROPOSED MIXED OCCUPANCIES SUPPORTED BY A PARKING ANALYSIS, AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 24-0011 (CUP 24-0011) TO IMPLEMENT A SIGN PROGRAM FOR THE SUBJECT COMMERCIAL SHOPPING CENTER AT 301-341 NORTH HARBOR BOULEVARD (ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 022-324-24)

Chair Mahecha asked if any correspondence had been received with regard to the item. Acting Secretary Ivey said no.

Senior Planner Ash Syed, presented the staff report.

Chair Mahecha asked if any of the Commissioners had any questions.

Commissioner Manley asked if the parking spaces located at the back of the shopping center were counted to meet the minimum number of required parking spaces. Senior Planner Syed confirmed the parking spaces in the rear were counted and then explained those parking spaces would be primarily used by employees.

Vice Chair Ramsland asked if the outdoor patio on the plans would be new for the proposed restaurant near Stearns Avenue. Senior Planner Syed clarified that it was a proposed outdoor patio as one does not currently exist.

Chair Mahecha questioned if the gym belonging to the proposed commercial school for martial arts would have a rear entrance. Senior Planner Syed responded that there is a rear door that would most likely be used by employees.

Chair Mahecha opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor of the project.

Kyle Miller, resident of La Habra Heights, addressed the Commission. Mr. Miller said he was in support of the proposed remodel of the shopping center and that he was excited to see the Harbor Boulevard corridor become modernized.

Marie Laveaga, President/CEO of the La Habra Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Commission. Ms. Laveaga is in support of the proposed remodel of the shopping center and said the new proposed businesses will create jobs and meet the daily needs of the City's residents.

Tina Jones, a future tenant of the subject shopping center, addressed the Commission. Ms. Jones said that she and her business partners are very excited to be part of the revitalized center. She asked the Commission to vote in favor of the project to make La Habra a more vibrant place to live and work.

Sherry Bahl, owner of the subject shopping center, addressed the Commission. Ms. Bahl said that 90% of the units in her center have been leased. Ms. Bahl asked the Commission to vote in favor of the project as they intend to provide convenient services to the community, create job opportunities and bring in tax revenues for the City.

Crissy (no last name provided), a resident that lives in close proximity to the subject shopping center, addressed the Commission. Crissy said the existing shopping center has been rundown for a very long time. The proposed remodel will be a vital asset to the community and asked the Commission to vote in favor of the project.

Stephen Lam, from the US General Chamber of Commerce for Entrepreneurs of Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong, addressed the Commission. Mr. Lam asked the Planning Commission to vote in favor of the project saying it will bring in more sales tax, jobs, and services to the neighborhood.

Stephen Lacarra, future tenant of the shopping center, addressed the Commission. Mr. Lacarra asked the Commission to vote in favor of the project saying they will be providing a service to the youth in the community with a martial arts studio.

Kevin Lee, real estate broker working on this project, addressed the Commission. Mr. Lee said that he has been meeting with many potential tenants and with Ms. Bahl's leadership, they have been careful in selecting future tenants that will bring more revenue to the City. He asked the Commission to vote in favor of the project.

Chair Mahecha asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in opposition of the project. There were none. She then asked the Commission if they had any questions of staff before closing the public hearing.

Chair Mahecha asked if the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for reduced on-site parking would be carried over with the property or with the tenant. Acting City Attorney Tsai answered that the CUPs run with the land. Director Kim clarified that future businesses would have to be the same type of uses with the same operational characteristics.

Vice Chair Ramsland asked if there was a condition on the auto repair shop prohibiting the storage of vehicles outside. Senior Planner Syed said there is a condition of approval stating that vehicles are to be stored inside. Vice Chair Ramsland asked if having a blanket CUP will make enforcement more difficult. Director Kim said that the tenants are not the subject of the CUP. The CUP runs with the land and the property owner is responsible for enforcing the conditions. She explained that the property owner would be cited, if the proposed automobile repair shop violated a condition prohibiting the storage of vehicles outside. Vice Chair Ramsland asked why the project site seems to already be under construction before receiving the Commission's approval. Director Kim said there were some tenants that did not require a CUP and have been granted permits for tenant improvements. In addition, there was a tenant who started operating without CUP approval and work was done without permits, but that Code Enforcement is aware and has an active case working with the owner to resolve the issues. Vice Chair Ramsland then asked about the proposed outdoor patio for the restaurant. He said that staff needs to verify that the proposed outdoor patio meets all code requirements and he feels it does not. Director Kim said staff will look into that and asked Vice Chair Ramsland if he wanted to add a condition of approval for the proposed patio area which requires staff to determine if it is permitted under code. Vice Chair Ramsland said he was confident that staff will make sure it complies with the City's Code and noted that he likes the idea of the proposed outdoor patio.

Commissioner Manley circled back to his question about the parking spaces behind the center. Chair Mahecha asked if the parking spaces at the rear of the lot would be marked as employee parking only. Mr. Lee addressed the Commission. He said that the shopping center will be managed by a professional management company that will enforce compliance. Mr. Lee stated that the property owner has been working with Code Enforcement on the active case and Building and Safety regarding the accessible ramps that are under construction with City approval. Mr. Lee also said they hope to complete restriping and re-slurrying the parking lot by the end of July. Director Kim confirmed that Mr. Lee had been working with staff to resolve these issues and obtain the required permits. Mr. Lee explained that the 14 parking spaces on the north, back side of the property may be used by both employees and customers.

Chair Mahecha closed the public hearing and asked for a discussion or a motion.

Commissioner Manley said he was in favor of the much-needed remodel of the shopping center, but did have concerns about the reduced parking requirements based on the parking study.

Vice Chair Ramsland said that, in his experience, when a parking study is done correctly, there are generally no parking issues. He said parking studies generally help older properties to redevelop and move forward.

Chair Mahecha said she is happy to see that this shopping center will be getting a face lift and hopes it will spark other redevelopment in that area. She did express concerns with the reduced parking spaces, but said she was also excited to see the new gym for the commercial school, the return of Chicken Box and other restaurants within the shopping center.

Commissioner Manley asked staff about who received notification regarding the proposed project. Senior Planner Syed said the property owners within a 300 foot radius were sent notices about the public hearing on the proposed project. Chair Mahecha asked if the notice is mailed to renters too. Senior Planner Syed said it only goes out to property owners. Director Kim said that per State law, the City only notices property owners within a 300 foot radius of the project. Commissioner Manley said that the fact that none of the neighbors came to speak in opposition of the project helped him to be in favor of the project and said he was prepared to make a motion.

Commissioner Logan-Cannon said she knew the former owner of the shopping center and that she was a customer of the former body shop. She said she is excited about the proposed changes and is in favor of the project.

Commissioner Cardenas said she is happy to see that the shopping center is being remodeled. She said although she is concerned about the reduced parking she is hopeful that with the help of the owner and their enforcement of the center's regulations, they will have no major issues.

The Commission discussed if there should be a change to the language to make sure the proposed outdoor patio will meet code requirements. Vice Chair Ramsland said that would

not be necessary as staff would ensure it complies with code before issuing a permit. Director Kim read standard condition 1.1 into the record and said staff will look at that outdoor patio to make sure it complies with code. Acting City Attorney Tsai said for clarity of the record that the motion could be to adopt the proposed resolution and to give direction to staff to review the code requirements regarding the patio.

Moved by Commissioner Manley and seconded by Commissioner Logan-Cannon, approving Resolution No. 25-11 Entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA HABRA, CALIFORNIA, MAKING THE REQUIRED FINDINGS AND APPROVING DESIGN REVIEW 24-0009 (DR2PH 24-0009) TO COMPREHENSIVELY REMODEL THE EXTERIOR OF AN EXISTING MULTI-TENANT COMMERCIAL BUILDING AND SITE, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 25-0002 (CUP 25-0002) TO ALLOW THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF TWO RESTAURANTS, A COMMERCIAL SCHOOL FOR MARTIAL ARTS AND AN AUTOMOBILE SERVICE/REPAIR FACILITY, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 24-0016 (CUP 24-0016) TO PERMIT REDUCED ON-SITE PARKING FOR THE PROPOSED MIXED OCCUPANCIES SUPPORTED BY A PARKING ANALYSIS, AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 24-0011 (CUP 24-0011) TO IMPLEMENT A SIGN PROGRAM FOR THE SUBJECT COMMERCIAL SHOPPING CENTER AT 301-341 NORTH HARBOR BOULEVARD (ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 022-324-24), AS PER THE APPROVED PLANS AND SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS, AND MAKING THE DETERMINATION THAT THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO SECTION 15301, CLASS 1: "EXISTING FACILITIES" OF THE CEQA GUIDELINES. The motion was made with the understanding that staff will review the proposed outdoor patio and make sure it meets the code requirements as part of the project.

The roll call vote was as follows:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS: MANLEY, LOGAN-CANNON, RAMSLAND, MAHECHA,
CARDENAS
NOES: COMMISSIONERS: NONE
ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS: NONE
ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS: NONE

Motion passed 5-0. Acting Secretary Ivey said that the item will be forwarded to City Council for their approval. Director Kim clarified that the action becomes final in 10 working days unless it is appealed to City Council.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF

There were none.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Manley said he would not be available for the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Chair Mahecha adjourned the meeting in the memory of all those who lost their lives serving this country.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:37 p.m. to the Planning Commission meeting on June 9, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Veronica Lopez,
Secretary