

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LA HABRA
September 22, 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 VICE CHAIR RAMSLAND

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: MAHECHA
RAMSLAND
MANLEY
CARDENAS

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: LOGAN-CANNON

OTHERS PRESENT: DIRECTOR: KIM
CITY ATTORNEY: ROBERTO
PLANNING MANAGER: LUI
SECRETARY: LOPEZ
ASSOCIATE PLANNER: WIELENGA

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

Secretary Lopez 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 Manley, to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion passed 3-1, with Commissioner Cardenas abstaining.

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 September 8, 2025.
3. Approving Resolution No. 25-18 Entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA HABRA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL NOT ADOPT THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE APPROVING ZONE CHANGE 25-0005 (ZCA 25-0005) AMENDING SECTION 18.04.030 (TERMS DEFINED) OF CHAPTER 18.04 (DEFINITIONS) AND SECTION 18.06.040 (LAND USES) OF CHAPTER 18.06 (ZONES ESTABLISHED – ZONING MAP BOUNDARIES AND LAND USES) OF TITLE 18 (ZONING) OF THE LA HABRA MUNICIPAL CODE TO DEFINE SMOKE SHOPS AND TO REFLECT THAT NEW SMOKE SHOPS ARE PROHIBITED IN ALL ZONES.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. CONSIDER AND PROVIDE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING AN ORDINANCE APPROVING ZONE CHANGE 25-0003 TO ADD CHAPTER 18.65 (SPECIAL EVENT PERMITS) TO TITLE 18 (ZONING) AND AMEND VARIOUS SECTIONS OF TITLE 18 (ZONING) FOR CONSISTENCY WITH CHAPTER 18.65 (SPECIAL EVENT PERMITS) OF THE LA HABRA MUNICIPAL CODE.

Chair Mahecha asked if any correspondence had been received with regard to the item.

Secretary Lopez said no.

Associate Planner, Jacob Wielenga, presented the report.

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

Vice Chair Ramsland said that an event on private properties currently subject to a special event permit, but if the event is taking place on public property, such as public streets or City parks, then those requests are reviewed by Community Services. Vice Chair Ramsland asked if these procedures would continue with this proposed zone change. Associate Planner Wielenga responded that the proposed special events ordinance would regulate events on private property and on the public right-of-way. City Attorney Roberto informed the Commission that the proposed definition of "special event," is an activity that occurs on private property or in the public right-of-way. Vice Chair Ramsland asked if this would affect events such as the Citrus Fair or the Tamale Festival which take place on public property. Director Kim said those events would continue to go through Community Services. Associate Planner Wielenga mentioned that there are proposed exemptions to the special events ordinance and explained that activities or events sponsored, held, or conducted by or on behalf, or in coordination with, the city would be exempt.

Commissioner Manley was curious about how staff arrived at proposing allowances for up to 12 events per year and asked if there are currently any businesses that have processed more than 12 special event permits for per year. Associate Planner Wielenga said no one has requested to have the 12 events per year, but the City has received requests from businesses to have more than four events per year. Associate Planner Wielenga explained that the intent behind allowing for more special events is to be more business friendly by giving businesses the flexibility to have an event once a month with the ability to have four of those be with outdoor sales. Commissioner Manley asked for an example. Associate Planner Wielenga said the City has received a lot of requests to conduct car shows.

Chair Mahecha wondered if the maximum allowance of 12 special events per year includes outdoor sales. Associate Planner Wielenga confirmed that outdoor sales would count towards the maximum. Commissioner Manley asked if a special event approval is tied to the land or to the applicant. Associate Planner Wielenga said special event approvals are granted to businesses. They discussed an example of a car show.

The Commission discussed how a non-profit applicant could apply for a special event permit. Director Kim said the property owner would be the applicant. Director Kim said that currently the code says that you need a permit only if you are having outdoor sales, which consequently

has made it very difficult for the City to do enforcement on events that impact the community, but do not involve outdoor sales.

Vice Chair Ramsland reviewed the proposed findings for a special event permit and questioned who would determine what is a sufficient number of off-street parking. The Commission also discussed how the City could ensure that special event activities do not block the right-of-way or restrict any property access that would be detrimental to public safety. The Commission then asked staff to explain how the special events permit application fees were determined and how staff will verify that the anticipated number of proposed attendees identified on a special event permit application is accurate.

Director Kim said it's very important that the public call the police or the city to report events that may be impacting them negatively.

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

Bettina Vos, manager at Magnolia Vintage, addressed the Commission. Ms. Vos said she was in favor of the zone change as it would allow their business to have more than four car shows at their location along with their outdoor boutique sales. Ms. Vos said those events help to increase their sales and more sales means more sales tax for the City.

Chair Mahecha asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in opposition of the zone change.

Marie Laveaga, President/CEO of the La Habra Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Commission. Ms. Laveaga said she wasn't necessarily in opposition of the zone change, but said she did have questions. She explained that the Chamber needs to hold various events at local businesses and questioned if the Chamber's multiple activities throughout the year would be considered exceeding the proposed maximum of four outdoor events or 12 special events. Ms. Laveaga asked if the special event permits applied only to private properties and how application fees to process special event permits were going to be utilized.

Chirag Patel, local business owner and Chamber board member, addressed the Commission. Mr. Patel said he was not sure if he was in favor or against the zone change, but stated that he had questions. Mr. Patel asked how long it would take for the City to process a special event permit application. He also asked if a blood drive would require a special event permit and how would he be able to determine if it is a large or small event if he is unable to confirm how many people will show up for the blood drive.

Michelle Bernier, addressed the Commission. Ms. Bernier said she wasn't for or against the proposed zone changes. She asked what happens if a special event permit is approved for one location, but has to relocate to another location. She also wondered what are the penalties for not obtaining a special event permit and whether garage sales would be subject to these types of permits. Ms. Bernier asked if a special event permit would be need for an event held at a residential house to celebrate the age of a home.

Vice Chair Ramsland explained that a special event which attracts more people than what is typically expected within a residential neighborhood would require a special event permit. The Commission then discussed the distinctions between a "Small Special Event" and "Large Special Event." Director Kim noted that residential gatherings are typically considered exempt

from the special events permit provisions because they are indoor only and/or do not involve amplified sound beyond the property line or is not visible from the public right-of-way.

There Commission discussed what would happen if a special event had to be relocated or changed the location at the last minute.

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

Commissioner Manley asked the Commission to further discuss the processing time for a special event application. Vice Chair Ramsland said applicants wishing to hold a large special event will usually submit their application well in advance to obtain proper approval. The Commission discussed concerns about an applicant potentially not being notified of issues in a timely manner which makes it difficult for the applicant to decide if they would like to cancel or move forward with their special event. Planning Manager Lui explained that the timing to review a special event permit is complicated because it requires the coordinated review by multiple City departments and sometimes outside agencies. Planning Manger Lui explained that other surrounding cities have similar time lines to what is proposed under this zone change in order to process special event applications. She also reaffirmed that indoor events and garage sales are not considered special events. Planning Manager Lui said that the proposed ordinance specifies that special events will typically involve activities on private property.

Commissioner Manley reiterated that the proposed application time line in this ordinance did not give the applicant enough time to plan their events. Commissioner Manley stated that he submitted an application to the City of Whittier, but was only notified a week and a half before their scheduled event of their approval. Chair Mahecha said that the draft ordinance included language stipulating that the director shall render a decision on an application for a small special event permit within ten business days of the city's receipt of the application. City Attorney Roberto noted that Section 18.65.120 and Section 18.65.140 (B) of the draft ordinance specified the time lines allowed by city code for the Commission to render their decision and the City's thought process behind the time frames in the ordinance. She explained that the draft ordinance was prepared after attempting to consider all possible application scenarios and the time it would take to get an application through.

Vice Chair Ramsland said he wanted to address questions raised during public comment. Ms. Laveaga asked if each event the Chamber had would count towards the 12 events allowed to the Chamber. Vice Chair Ramsland said the property owner at each location would have to apply for the permit and it would count towards that property owner's allotted number of special events. The Commission discussed events that will be exempt like lunch mobs and birthday parties. They clarified that the fees that are collected go to the City to cover staff's time and noticing fees required for processing special event permit applications.

Commissioner Manley asked the Commission to consider amending the review time lines for processing a special event permit. Director Kim said she has the ability to waive the minimum required time frame for submittals as long as the applicant provides enough information for staff to process the applications. Director Kim stated that staff has processed submittals within shorter time frames on many occasions. Commissioner Manley wondered if it would be beneficial to increase the minimum days required to submit an application so that there is ample time for applicants to plan for and/or work through potential issues resulting from a special event. Commissioner Manley said he would like to increase the minimums submittal times for large special events from 90 days to 120 days and for small special events from 45

to 60 days. Chair Mahecha and Commissioner Cardenas said they would be in support of that. Vice Chair Ramsland disagreed with that recommendation saying the time frames as written are fine and staff will work with the applicant to get their permit issued or let them know if it looks like they won't be approved for one, and said if that motion was made he would be voting no. They discussed the time frame to process a large special event permit. Commissioner Manley said that made him feel stronger on his stance to increase the application processing time frames.

Moved by Commissioner Manley and seconded by Commissioner Cardenas, approving Resolution No. 25-20 Entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA HABRA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AN ORDINANCE APPROVING ZONE CHANGE 25-0003 TO ADD CHAPTER 18.65 (SPECIAL EVENT PERMITS) TO TITLE 18 (ZONING) AND AMEND SECTION 18.04.030 (TERMS DEFINED) OF CHAPTER 18.04 (DEFINITIONS), SECTION 18.06.040 (LAND USES) OF CHAPTER 18.06 (ZONES ESTABLISHED – ZONING MAP BOUNDARIES AND LAND USES), AND SECTION 18.23.090 (SIGN REGULATIONS – TEMPORARY SIGNS) OF CHAPTER 18.23 (SIGN STANDARDS) OF TITLE 18 (ZONING) OF THE LA HABRA MUNICIPAL CODE FOR CONSISTENCY WITH CHAPTER 18.65 (SPECIAL EVENT PERMITS) AND MAKING A DETERMINATION THAT THE ORDINANCE IS EXEMPT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 15378(b)(5) AND 15061(b)(3) OF THE CEQA GUIDELINES. With two modifications: 1) The application for Large Special Event will be submitted 120 days prior to the desired event date and 2) The application for a Small Special Event permit will be submitted 60 days prior to the event date.

The roll call vote was as follows:

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

2. DULY NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 25-0013 (CUP25-0013) TO IMPLEMENT A SIGN PROGRAM FOR A VEHICLE SERVICE STATION AND CONVENIENCE STORE LOCATED AT 750 NORTH HARBOR BOULEVARD

Chair Mahecha asked if any correspondence had been received with regard to the item.

Secretary Lopez said no.

Associate Planner, Jacob Wielenga, presented the report.

Chair Mahecha asked if any of the Commissioners had questions for staff. There were none.

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

David Berri, the applicant addressed the Commission. Mr. Berri said he was available to answer any questions and explained that they are looking to upgrade their signs as the gas station construction is near completion.

Chair Mahecha then asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in opposition of the item. There were none.

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

Moved by Chair Mahecha and seconded by Vice Chair Ramsland, approving Resolution No. 25-21 Entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LA HABRA, CALIFORNIA, MAKING THE REQUIRED FINDINGS AND APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 25-0013 (CUP25-0013) TO IMPLEMENT A SIGN PROGRAM FOR AN AUTOMOBILE SERVICE STATION AND CONVENIENCE STORE LOCATED AT 750 NORTH HARBOR BOULEVARD, 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 15311, CLASS 11: "ACCESSORY STRUCTURES" OF THE CEQA GUIDELINES.

The roll call vote was as follows:

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

Secretary Lopez said the motion carried and this item will become final in 10 working days unless it's appealed to City Council.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF

There were no comments from staff.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Manley said he was excited to see that the Berri Brothers gas station is almost complete.

Chair Mahecha said she was excited about the Berri Brothers gas station too and complimented staff on the excellent staff reports with all the helpful graphics. She suggested that they include a calendar when time frames are discussed. Chair Mahecha thanked the public for their participation.

Commissioner Cardenas said she too was thankful for the public participation.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:00 p.m. to the Planning Commission meeting on October 13, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Veronica Lopez,
Secretary