



City of Santa Barbara
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
JUNE 4, 2020

1:00 P.M.

This Meeting was Conducted Electronically
SantaBarbaraCA.gov

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Deborah L. Schwartz, Chair
Lesley Wiscomb, Vice Chair
Roxana Bonderson
Gabriel Escobedo
Jay D. Higgins
Sheila Lodge
Barrett Reed

STAFF:

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Heidi Reidel, Commission Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schwartz called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Deborah L. Schwartz, Vice Chair Lesley Wiscomb, Commissioners Roxana Bonderson, Gabriel Escobedo, Jay D. Higgins, Sheila Lodge, and Barrett Reed

STAFF PRESENT

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Gregory Lusitana, Assistant City Attorney
Renee Brooke, City Planner
Daniel Gullett, Principal Planner
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Rob Dayton, Transportation Planning & Parking Manager
Jessica Metzger, Project Planner
Melissa Hetrick, Project Planner
Ellen Kokinda, Planning Analyst
Timmy Bolton, Associate Planner
Tony Ruggieri, City TV Production Supervisor
Heidi Reidel, Commission Secretary

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

A. Requests for continuances, withdrawals, postponements, or addition of ex-agenda items:

No requests.

B. Announcements and appeals:

Ms. Ostrenger announced that she will need to leave the meeting at 3:30 p.m. and Greg Lusitana, Assistant City Attorney, will take over for her.

C. Review, consideration, and action on the following draft Planning Commission minutes and resolutions:

1. Planning Commission May 14, 2020 Minutes
2. Planning Commission Resolution No. 003-20
1 Clyde Adams Road

MOTION: Wiscomb / Lodge

Approve the minutes and resolution as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 7 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

3. Planning Commission May 21, 2020 Minutes

MOTION: Wiscomb / Lodge

Approve the minutes as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 7 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

D. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda:

Public comment opened at 1:11 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

III. NEW ITEM

ACTUAL TIME: 1:12 P.M.

AVERAGE UNIT-SIZE DENSITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM AMENDMENTS FOCUSED ON THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider the following proposals and forward a recommendation to the City Council to:

- A. Amend the City of Santa Barbara General Plan Land Use Element to incorporate revisions to the Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program, amend the General Plan Map to reflect proposed designation changes within the Central Business District, and make environmental findings pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; and
- B. Amend Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 30.150 to facilitate construction of more housing units within the Central Business District.

*** THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 1:14 TO 1:21 P.M. ***

Jessica Metzger, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation. Renee Brooke, City Planner; Daniel Gullett, Principal Planner; Melissa Hetrick, Project Planner; Rob Dayton, Transportation Planning & Parking Manager; Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney, and Gregory Lusitana, Assistant City Attorney were available to answer questions.

*** THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 3:47 TO 4:00 P.M. ***

Public comment opened at 5:33 p.m., and the following individuals spoke:

1. Alex Pujó
2. Cassandra Ensberg
3. Ellen Bildsten
4. Gil Barry
5. John Campanella
6. Linda Honikman
7. Melissa Cunningham

Public comment closed at 6:00 p.m.

*** THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 6:00 TO 6:05 P.M. ***

SECTION ONE (DRAFT ORDINANCE)

Straw poll: How many Commissioners can support setting aside Section One (the Draft Ordinance) from the Planning Commission's current scope of review, as it includes language that references other AUD amendments outside of the scope of City Council's direction on the downtown focused amendments?

Ayes: 6 Noes: 1 (Lodge) Passed

Individual Comments: Commissioner Lodge opposed because she believes Section One is a placeholder for future action per City Council's prior direction.

Commissioner Wiscomb supported the removal of Section One, but felt that language regarding future amendments could have been changed from "shall" and "will" to "may" to support the inclusion of the Draft Ordinance.

SECTION TWO (SBMC 30.150)

Straw poll: How many Commissioners can support removing any reference in red from Section Two (SBMC 30.150) that is not relative to the downtown-focused amendments?

Ayes: 6 Noes: 1 (Lodge) Passed

Individual Comments: Commissioner Lodge opposed because she believes the sections should be kept together as a package of items.

DENSITY

All Commissioners supported CBD density changes as proposed.

BUILDING HEIGHT

Six of seven Commissioners favored the height increase from 45' to 48' as proposed.

Individual Comments: Commissioner Lodge opposed because people need space they can move into and not space overhead.

OPEN YARD

Straw poll: How many Commissioners can support extending the area within the Central Business District that would be exempt from the open yard requirement, to include the area generally bound by Santa Barbara and De la Vina Streets, including parcels that abut both sides of Santa Barbara Street and De La Vina Street?
Ayes: 3 Noes: 4 (Schwartz, Wiscomb, Bonderson, and Lodge) Failed

Straw poll: How many Commissioners can support extending the area within the Central Business District that would be exempt from the open yard requirement, to include parcels that abut both sides of Anacapa Street and Chapala Street?
Ayes: 6 Noes: 1 (Lodge) Passed

Individual Comments: Commissioner Lodge opposed because she believes that outdoor space is essential.

Commissioner Bonderson requests a parcel by parcel diagram be included that clearly illustrates the open yard exemption area.

PARKING***In lieu Parking Fee:***

Straw poll: How many Commissioners can support the concept of an in-lieu parking fee?
Ayes: 2 Noes: 5 (Schwartz, Escobedo, Higgins, Lodge, and Reed) Failed

Individual Comments: Commissioner Wiscomb supported in-lieu fee with condition put forth by Ms. Ostrenger allowing us to recommend a lower limit to the fee be formulated by City Council to promote development.

Unbundled Parking:

Six of seven Commissioners supported allowing unbundled parking.

Individual Comments: Commissioner Higgins supported requiring unbundled parking but stated that it will not affect his vote on the whole package.

Parking Maximum:

Chair Schwartz set aside straw poll on in-lieu parking fees after discussion on parking maximums as introduced by Commissioner Escobedo and explained by Mr. Gullett.

Straw poll: How many Commissioners can support a parking maximum of one space per unit, with zero spaces minimum required?
Ayes: 6 Noes: 1 (Lodge) Passed

TRIAL PERIOD

Straw poll: How many Commissioners can support eliminating both the 250-unit cap and the 8 year expiration date as triggers to expire the AUD Program? Ayes: 6 Noes: 1 (Lodge) Passed

Individual Comments: Commissioner Lodge opposed eliminating the 8-year expiration date but supports eliminating the 250 unit cap. Retaining the expiration date provides a sense of ending for getting all the AUD amendments completed.

ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Reed:

- Supports increasing the maximum building height from 45 feet to 48 feet and could support up to 50 feet for housing projects in the Central Business District. Would like to allow up to 60 feet without special findings but won't press the matter at this time.
- Recommends that the open yard exemption be extended to both sides of Santa Barbara and De la Vina Streets. Supports clarifying the boundaries, whatever they may be.
- Supports eliminating the in-lieu fee policy for parking in its entirety. Would like zero parking requirements.
- Supports allowing unbundled parking as an option.
- Supports eliminating the expiration provisions of the AUD Program. Agrees with Commissioner Escobedo that the expiration date results in developer apprehension, and urges fellow Commissioners to eliminate the expiration entirely.
- An aggressive effort needs to be taken to reform the Community Development Department.

Commissioner Escobedo:

- Supports increasing the maximum building height from 45 feet to 48 feet by right and encourages a conversation about the process to propose up to 60 feet in the CBD.
- Supports eliminating the in-lieu fee policy and replacing it with a parking maximum.
- Noted that the AUD Program expiration date creates anxiety in development.
- Recommends that the open yard exemption be extended to both sides of Santa Barbara and De la Vina Streets.

Commissioner Bonderson:

- Supports increasing the maximum building height from 45 feet to 48 feet and the discretionary limitation up to 60 feet. Would like staff to give attention to why and how the 48 feet would be used. Keep in mind that additional height may be used to make residences more luxurious which goes against the intended purpose of the program.
- Supports keeping the in-lieu fee policy and allowing unbundled parking. Does not feel comfortable speaking on the topic of in-lieu parking fees until provided with further information.
- Requests to include supporting figures wherever possible to graphically illustrate the material.
- ~~Recommends that the open yard exemption be extended to both sides of Santa Barbara and De la Vina Streets.~~

Commissioner Lodge:

- Does not support increasing the maximum building height from 45 feet to 48 feet or eliminating the open yard requirement. Flat roofs can be used for open space.
- Supports eliminating the 250 unit cap but does not support eliminating the program expiration date.

Commissioner Higgins:

- Supports increasing the maximum building height from 45 feet to 48 feet and eliminating the open yard requirement but recognizes that height may affect affordability.
- Supports eliminating the in-lieu fee policy in its entirety and would like unbundled parking as a requirement. Uncomfortable with changing “shall” to “may” in unbundled parking.
- Supports eliminating the 250-unit cap and the program expiration date.

Commissioner Wiscomb:

- Supports increasing the maximum building height from 45 feet to 48 feet but believes that increasing to 60 feet would need to be a thoroughly vetted process.

Chair Schwartz:

- Supports eliminating the open yard requirement with the expanded definition to include both sides of the street. Supports Commissioner Reed’s proposal to extend the exemption area further, to Santa Barbara and De la Vina Streets.

MOTION: Wiscomb / Escobedo

Recommend that City Council amend the General Plan Land Use Element’s Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program Map, Land Use Map, and text; and amend Municipal Code Chapter 30.150, Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program, as revised.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 Noes: 1 (Lodge) Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

Individual Comment: Commissioner Lodge opposed because she believes the incentives given to developers will not produce the kind of housing that the community needs and will change the character of downtown.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

No reports given.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Heidi Reidel, Commission Secretary