

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL
PLANNING COMMISSION**

June 10, 2014

7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Richárd called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Commission Secretary conducted roll call.

Present: Chair Rose Richárd
Vice-Chair Tom Benson
Commissioner Devon Austin
Commissioner Jane Fallon
Commissioner Shannon Murphy

Staff present:

- 1) Community Development Director Scott Charney
- 2) Associate Planner Colleen Doan
- 3) Assistant Planner Selena Alanis
- 4) Assistant City Attorney Jeff Malawy
- 5) Sr. Engineering Technician II Anthony Caraveo

In addition, there were 24 people in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Richárd led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There was no public business from the floor.

REORGANIZATION

The Commission Secretary stated that nominations for the Chair were now open. Commissioner Fallon nominated Commissioner Benson. Commissioner Benson accepted the nomination.

The following Roll Call vote resulted:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS AUSTIN, BENSON, FALLON, MURPHY AND RICHÁRD
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

Commission Secretary Scott Charney turned the meeting over to Chair Benson.

Chair Benson called for nomination for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Austin nominated Commissioner Fallon. Commissioner Fallon accepted the nomination.

The following Roll Call vote resulted:

AYES: COMMISSIONERS AUSTIN, BENSON, FALLON, MURPHY AND RICHÁRD

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

PRESENTATION

The Planning Commission presented the Quarterly Beautification Award to Signal Hill Petroleum for the landscape improvements to their property on Willow Street east of Walnut Avenue.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

1. Continued Workshop - Atlantic Alano Club, A Request to Operate a Club at 2696 Dawson Avenue

Community Development Director Scott Charney read the form of notice, and Assistant Planner Selena Alanis gave the staff report.

Chair Benson asked for any questions from the Commission.

Chair Benson opened the public workshop and asked if there were any members of the public who would like to speak.

There being no public testimony, Chair Benson closed the public workshop.

Commissioner Murphy recommended and Commissioner Richárd seconded a motion to continue the public workshop to the July 8, 2014 Planning Commission meeting.

The motion carried.

2. Crescent Square Residential Development of 25 Single-Family Dwellings

Community Development Director Scott Charney read the form of notice, gave a brief history of the previous entitlements for the site, and Assistant Planner

Selena Alanis gave the staff report.

Chair Benson asked for any questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Richárd asked about the process for leak testing. Staff advised that a survey of the location of oil wells has been completed and the wells will be leak tested prior to scheduling the public hearing.

Commissioner Austin asked about the easement areas depicted on the site plan. Staff advised that an active oil well and tanks are located in the area which will be surrounded with green slatted fence. Several guest parking spaces will be located at the access area and use may be restricted during maintenance.

Chair Benson opened the public hearing and asked if there were any members of the public who would like to speak.

The following members of the public spoke regarding the project.

- 1) Brett Rohring, Signal Hill property owner south of the project, thanked the City for notification of the workshop, and the developer and Signal Hill Petroleum for meeting with residents in the Historic District. They are excited by the quality of the facades and feel the project design is compatible with the Historic District. There is a concern about the walkways from the neighboring retail property but having controlled access would address their concern. Mr. Rohring asked if the tanks depicted had been lowered into the ground since they are not visible. He is very supportive of the high quality project.
- 2) Robert Dominguez, Signal Hill property owner south of the project. He is extraordinarily pleased to see the development taking place. They had been concerned about the slope and grade but have met with the developer and received answers to their questions. The sight perspectives have helped outline the view impact, which they had anticipated, however, they support the development and commend the developer.
- 3) Tom Shollin, Signal Hill Petroleum, spoke positively of the project and the improvement upon the plan as originally approved. The new site plan and houses are superior in quality. He expressed hope that the new oil code will allow building over oil wells and will be completed in the near future, and explained that leak testing will occur in the next 2 weeks.

There being no further comments from the public, Chair Benson asked for any further questions or comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Murphy expressed support for the project because of a reduction in the number of homes, the view corridor, the overall design which complements the Historic District. She is in favor of the locked gate access for the residents, and asked about procedures for capping wells.

Staff explained that in regards to the oil code, the City has a consultant water quality expert and a petroleum engineer. Studies have been conducted to ensure public health and safety are protected. The water quality report indicates that there is no evidence in Signal Hill or nearby to suggest that historic operations have negatively impacted water quality. The report by the petroleum engineer is still in process and will include standards for the quality of the casings to ensure there is no path of travel for any gas below. Mitigation measures will be implemented that we currently use including methane assessment, methane barriers under the foundation, and perforated piping for ventilation if needed.

Chair Benson asked staff to expand on methane barriers. Staff advised that the City follows the Los Angeles City Fire Department standard. Methane testing is required and the methane barrier utilizes a fluid application to create a surface for gas to migrate around the barrier and a perforated pipe from the gravel layer allows gas to escape to the surface.

Commissioner Murphy stated she appreciated the design including the 3-car garages and additional guest parking.

Commissioner Richárd also admired the design of the homes and attention to parking. She indicated locking gates to walkways in the evening might be desirable.

Commissioner Austin asked about the walkways and staff identified their routes. She also commended the project for its reduced density, and complimented Signal Hill Petroleum and the developer for outreach to residents.

Vice-Chair Fallon agreed the project has been improved by reducing density, quality of homes, and the complementary design for the Historic District.

Chair Benson commended the project, staff, the owner and developer. He expressed his support for completing the oil code expeditiously. He liked the 3-story floorplans, and the overall design complements the area. Regarding locking gates for walkways, he would to consider keeping them open and have them connect to walkways on the hill so residents have points of destination.

Commissioner Murphy asked about driveways and if there were only 4 types of floorplans. Staff clarified that the goal would be to have them built with a diversity of appearance. The applicant will be asked for an additional graphic for changes in topography in the final project and a matrix regarding the additional diversity. The standard 20' driveway allows for two additional driveway spaces; and third garage space include a 5' or 8' driveway that cannot be used for parking.

There being no further comments, Chair Benson closed the public workshop.

It was moved by Vice-Chair Fallon and seconded by Commissioner Austin to prepare for a public hearing.

The motion carried.

3. **2nd Unit over New Garage at 3360 Lemon Avenue**

Community Development Director Scott Charney read the form of notice, and Associate Planner Colleen Doan gave the staff report.

Chair Benson asked for any questions from the Commission.

Vice-Chair Fallon asked if the 4" wall between the units will be insulated to minimize sound. Staff advised that insulation is standard, but was not sure about sound mitigation for a 4" wall.

Chair Benson opened the public hearing and asked if there were any members of the public who would like to speak.

The following member of the public spoke regarding the project.

- 1) Jason Shorrow, property owner, noted that he and his wife Nicole purchased the home from original owners with a vision for this expansion. They believe it will complement the area and encourage neighbors to improve their properties.

Chair Benson asked about the timeline and if the applicant will be building himself or with a contractor. The applicant will utilize CSI Construction and will also assist the contractor. The home should be completed within one year, and he is aware of the construction time limits.

Commissioner Richárd asked their plans for the home. The applicant plans to move into the new unit and allow his mother-in-law to live in the existing home.

Vice-Chair Fallon expressed admiration for the project and their plans for their family, and improvements for the neighborhood

Commissioner Murphy stated the design appears to match the homes in the area. Improvements such as this often result in neighbors making improvements to their properties.

- 2) Mr. Shorrow's uncle from CSI Construction stated he has been a contractor for 33 years and plans to have the home completed as expeditiously as possible. He clarified that normally on garage floors there is a 6" curb poured for the foundation and a 4" wall on top of that, which meets the standard building code for second floors.

There being no further comments, Chair Benson closed the public workshop.

It was moved by Commissioner Richárd and seconded by Vice-Chair Fallon to prepare for a public hearing.

The motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

4. Duplex at 924 E. Vernon Street

Community Development Director Scott Charney read the form of notice, and Assistant Planner Selena Alanis gave the staff report.

Chair Benson asked for any questions from the Commission.

There being no questions, the Chair opened the public hearing.

The following members of the public spoke regarding the project.

- 1) Ron Schuster, homeowner on the north side of Vernon, has a zoning issue. The north side of the street is Commercial Industrial with most of the properties being 2-4 residential units while the south side of the street is Residential High Density. Current zoning only allows him to add up to 200 sf although his property is 75' x 130' while the proposed project permits for a 3500 sf structure on a 45' wide lot. He is not opposed to the construction of the homes at 924 E. Vernon. He asked for direction in requesting a zoning change without the large expense. His is the only single-family residence on the north side of the street and the burden of requesting a zoning change would fall entirely on him at a cost of between \$2,000 to \$6,000.
- 2) Eddie Torre, speaking for neighbors on Vernon, and they are residents of Long Beach. He and his wife are thrilled that the property will be improved. They asked if there would be a retaining wall, what is the timeline for construction to be completed, landscaping, and how the property is accessed.
- 3) Guillermo Palafox, designer for the project, stated there will not be any retaining walls. The landscaping will include trees and shrubs in the front, back and sidewalk areas as well as a lot of landscaped open space.
- 4) Lorenzo Cavazos, resident on Olive Avenue. His garage faces Vernon. Although his property is 18' from their property line, his garage has been hit by cars driving at a high rate of speed in the alley. He is concerned about the timeline for construction, additional traffic in the alley near his property, and asked about guest parking.
- 5) Eddie Torre, after review of the plans, is extremely pleased with how parking will work with 2 car garage. He still has concerns about having a retaining wall along the property line similar to apartments on California Avenue for reduction in sound transmission, privacy and durability. He also asked about hours that construction is permitted.

In response to questions, staff advised there will be landscaping in the open space areas as a condition of approval. A dedication of 5' is required which will increase the 10' alley to 15'. Another 5' dedication is required on the south alley. The front yard area will be landscaped and the on-street parking space will remain since access is from the alley. The 2-car garage is not required to have a 20' driveway but the area does allow for adequate back-up space. The construction time limit will be 540 days and construction hours are weekdays between 7AM and 6PM. A retaining wall is not currently proposed on this site, but will be reviewed with the grading plan. A wood fence on the property line will provide privacy. Staff would be happy to ask the applicant to contact the neighbors to review the plans.

Chair Benson closed the public hearing.

It was moved by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Richárd to waive further reading and adopt the following resolution:

Resolution No. 755-06-14 entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW 14-02, A REQUEST TO DEMOLISH EXISTING STRUCTURES AND CONSTRUCT A TWO-STORY DUPLEX ON A SINGLE LOT AT 924 E. VERNON STREET IN THE RH, RESIDENTIAL HIGH DENSITY, ZONING DISTRICT

The following vote resulted:

AYES: CHAIR BENSON; VICE-CHAIR FALLON; COMMISSIONERS AUSTIN, MURPHY AND RICHÁRD

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

5. Selection of Commission Representative and Alternate to the Sustainable City Committee

Community Development Director Scott Charney gave the staff report.

It was moved by Commissioner Austin and seconded by Commissioner Murphy to appoint Chair Benson to serve as the Planning Commission representative.

The motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Richárd to appoint Vice-Chair Fallon to serve as the Planning Commission alternate.

The motion carried.

6. Housing Element Programs Roadmap

Associate Planner Colleen Doan gave the staff report.

Chair Benson asked if there were any questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Austin suggested the required ordinance amendments could be presented to the Commission and Council all together versus in separate sections. Staff further described the required amendments which might be broken into sections: 1) the addition of definitions and permitted uses into the Code; 2) reasonable accommodation and single room occupancy (single bedroom unit with two occupants); and 3) density bonus update (complex due to stratification requirements and may warrant a separate review because there is flexibility and options to consider, while the other updates follow standard language).

The Commission discussed different options for consideration, noticing requirements and time frames. The reports may be covered over two Commission meetings. Chair Benson expressed concerns over the definition of family and potential restrictions on actions based on stereotypes.

It was moved by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Commissioner Richárd to receive and file the report.

The motion carried.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Chair stated the following items were on the Consent Calendar for approval:

7. Minutes

Recommendation: Approve.

8. City Council Follow-up

Recommendation: Receive and file.

9. Development Status Report

Recommendation: Receive and file.

10. Code Enforcement Report

Recommendation: Receive and file.

11. In the News

Recommendation: Receive and file.

Commission Received and Filed the Consent Calendar

It was moved by Commissioner Murphy and seconded by Vice-Chair Fallon to receive and file the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried.

COMMISSION NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Murphy inquired about the air conditioning unit in Council Chambers which is loud and may be inefficient due to age and asked if the Sustainable City Committee may study the unit.

Commissioner Murphy also expressed concerns about the construction taking place in the Costco parking lot. Staff advised that the parking lot improvements are being done in three phases and will send a copy of the phasing plan to her. Also, Costco will be posting signs with their timeline and contact information. Staff expressed disappointment with store management and will work with management and the contractor regarding employee parking.

Commissioner Richárd shared neighbors' wishes for a conventional supermarket. Chair Benson noted we have a very attractive Food 4 Less, Fresh & Easy and Target.

Commissioner Austin shared neighbors' concerns about impacted parking. Staff advised that permit parking is available for neighborhoods through the Public Works Department. Also, new developments have generally replaced higher density projects with more off-street parking. The Commission discussed options such as promotions for cleaning out garages and driveways, garage sales followed by pick up of unsold items by charitable organizations, car sharing programs, encouraging residents to replace infrequently used trucks with rentals, and a flyer for residents at the concerts series.

Vice-Chair Fallon stated she will be absent at the July meeting.

Chair Benson expressed dissatisfaction with Costco's outreach. He looks forward to posting of their schedule and information about their landscape plans.

Chair Benson noted the deterioration of the landscaping at the County Assessor's building on Willow (location of Don Knabe's office) might be an opportunity to partner with the County to install drought tolerant plants and ground cover. Staff also noted other commercial properties with deteriorated landscaping are being contacted by Code Enforcement staff, and expressed appreciation of ideas to address those conditions.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Vice-Chair Fallon and seconded by Commissioner Richárd to adjourn to the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on July 8, 2014.

The motion carried.

Chair Benson adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas Benson", written over a horizontal line.

TOM BENSON
CHAIR

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Charney", written over a horizontal line.

SCOTT CHARNEY
COMMISSION SECRETARY