Approved as submitted
November 18, 2013

PLANNING COMMISSION | MINUTES

Monday, October 14, 2013

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Elisaldez at 6:00 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers, 6615 Passons Boulevard, Pico Rivera, CA.

STAFF PRESENT:
Ben Martinez, Director
Guille Aguilar, Senior Planner

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioners Celiz, Elisaldez, Garcia, Martinez, Zermeno

ABSENT: None.

FLAG SALUTE: Led by Commissioner Garcia

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

September 3, 2013

Motion to approve with one amendment was made by Chairperson Elisaldez:

AYES:	Celiz, Elisaldez, Garcia, Martinez, Zermeno
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
ABSENT:	None

PUBLIC HEARING:

PROGRESS REPORT ON ZONING CODE AMENDMENT NO. 165 – TO AMEND CHAPTERS 18.42 (PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS) AND 18.44 (OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING OF THE CITY OF PICO RIVERA ZONING ORDINANCE AS THEY PERTAIN TO THE REGULATION OF RESIDENTIAL DRIVEWAY EXPANSIONS, PORTE-COCHERES AND WALKWAYS

Senior Planner Aguilar presented the progress report. The code amendment was initiated in 2012. After a number of progress reports, the City Council returned the code amendment for further research. The code amendment entails changes to the

existing driveway expansion regulations as well as walkway expansion regulations, and also allows porte-cocheres.

The draft ordinance was presented to the City Council on February 2013. They had no concerns with the driveway or walkway regulations. The City Council had several concerns with the porte-cochere regulations. The City Council requested that property owners of large lots be able to construct porte-cocheres that project more than the maximum of 10′ recommended by staff from the residential building line.

On March 26, 2013, staff presented a new ordinance to the City Council which allowed up to a 20′ projection for porte-cocheres on lots exceeding 15,000 sq. ft. in size and also reduced the minimum attachment of the porte-cochere to the residence to a 5′ long shared wall. The City Council was still concerned with the revised regulation, stating that it was not fully fleshed out because large lots which did not meet the 15,000 square foot lot size threshold could not qualify for the additional projection; the City Council recommended a tiered approach.

Senior Planner Aguilar stated that staff research of existing porte-cocheres within the City demonstrated that there is no need for any projection beyond the residential building line; twenty-eight porte-cocheres were surveyed of which only one was constructed beyond the residential building line. Staff also found that cities with specific design standards prohibit any projection of a porte-cochere from the residential building line.

Staff's recommendation to the Planning Commission was to either (1) Recommend an ordinance which did not allow any projection beyond the building line of the residence or (2) to recommend the ordinance which allowed up to a 10′ projection.

Commissioner Garcia asked if staff took into consideration the depth of the lot.

Director Martinez responded that staff took the square footage into consideration.

Commissioner Zermeno asked if the City Council had a unanimous vote in regards to the 20′ to 30′ projection changes of the porte-cocheres.

Senior Planner Aguilar answered that the request was in regards to one specific resident that wants to project 20′ to 30′ beyond the building line.

Director Martinez responded that he was not sure if there was a vote but that City Council directed staff to conduct further research.

Commissioner Garcia asked if it would be easier for one resident to come in and request a variance rather than changing the entire amendment.

Senior Planner Aguilar stated that the City Council requested a tiered projection greater than 20′ based on the size of the lot. One of the recommendations from the City Council was to allow a certain percentage based on the distance between the home to the front property line.

Commissioner Garcia asked if a resident could extend a porte-cochere towards the rear.

Senior Planner Aguilar responded that porte-cocheres would be limited to a maximum depth of 40′ in length.

Commissioner Celiz asked if a porte-cochere is used as a vehicle cover attached to the home. Commissioner Celiz stated that some of the examples provided were not being used as a porte-cochere.

Senior Planner Aguilar stated that staff contacted the American Planning Association, the League of California Cities, and also conducted a telephone survey of local cities. Most cities do not allow a porte-cochere to project beyond the residential building line. There are other cities that do not have anything in writing prohibiting the projection, but they do discourage these structures and they also do not get requests to project from the residential building line. Staff conducted a windshield survey of the porte-cocheres within the City, and only one out of twenty-eight were built projecting from the building line. She stated that it is not in the best interest of the City to adopt an ordinance that benefits one resident, when the general population of the City does not request this type of construction.

Staff's recommendation was that the Planning Commission direct staff to permit porte-cocheres with no projections beyond the building line. The porte-cochere would be flush with the setback of the residence, and would function in the true intent of a porte-cochere, or staff could go back to the original recommendation with a projection of up to 10′ from the front building line.

Director Martinez responded that if the second option was approved, staff would discourage the projection of 10′.

Commissioner Zermeno recommended staff to stay with the first option to avoid a nuisance within the City. Commissioner Zermeno also stated there is already a nuisance issue with the canopies throughout the City.

Commissioner Martinez asked if staff could allow different projections based on the square footage of lots.

Senior Planner Aguilar responded that this would not work for smaller lots.

Commissioner Martinez asked how staff would handle the pre-existing porte-cocheres.

Senior Planner Aguilar responded that if a homeowner wishes to keep a porte-cochere, they will need to comply with the current code regulations.

Director Martinez stated that all pre-existing construction/structures must comply with City codes.

It was motioned to open the public hearing by Chairperson Elisaldez. He asked that the record reflect there was no one in the audience to speak on the public hearing.

There being no one to speak on the public hearing, it was motioned to close the public hearing by Commissioner Celiz, seconded by Commissioner Garcia.

Motioned carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES:	Commissioners Celiz, Elisaldez, Garcia, Martinez, Zermeno
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None
ABSENT:	None

Commissioner Martinez recommended that staff draft an ordinance which does not allow a porte-cochere to project beyond the building line of the residence. This ordinance would contain strict design guidelines in line with those of more progressive cities.

Commissioner Garcia stated staff should make exceptions when the structure is used as a porte-cochere.

Chairperson Elisaldez stated that staff will continue this recommendation to the meeting of November 18, 2013.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Zermeno stated that there was a blackout throughout the City that started at 5:00 a.m. in the morning. During this outage, the traffic signals were out and the train arms did not go down when the train passed. He requested that the Sheriff's Station and the railroad company be made aware of these scheduled power outings.

Commissioner Martinez stated that during a power outage, emergency services are normally notified.

CONTINUED/OLD BUSINESS: None.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS:

a) CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF September 10, 2013 – Commissioner Celiz attended this meeting.

b) CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF September 24, 2013 – Commissioner Garcia attended this meeting.

c) CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF October 8, 2013 – Commissioner Martinez attended this meeting.

   Commissioner Martinez reported that the City was nominated as a Most Business Friendly City finalist.

   The Housing Element was approved by the City Council.

   There was an article of the Norm's ground breaking ceremony in the newspaper.

   Commissioner Martinez talked about the location of the former Mt. Baldy Inn that was located on Whittier Boulevard; an old business that was torn down in the 1980's.

   Jim's Burgers is now open.

   Director Martinez invited all Commissioners to the ground breaking at noon Tuesday, October 15, 2013.

   Commissioner Celiz asked what staff is doing about unkept residential lawns.

Director Martinez responded that staff was preparing a Foreclosure Reporting Ordinance which will address unkept lawns if it is a foreclosed property.

Commissioner Celiz stated there are three properties with an unkept lawn on Passons Boulevard and Bert Street.

Director Martinez responded that staff would address these code enforcement issues.

There being no further business the Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Tommy Elisaldez, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Benjamin A. Martinez, Secretary
Planning Commission
Director of Community and Economic Development