

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
[DRAFT] PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2015**

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 28th day of January 28, 2014, at the hour of 6:31 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, at 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Bordokas, Conaway, Hersman, Chairperson Ortmann
Absent: Andreani
Staff Present: Marisa Lundstedt, Community Development Director
Mike Estrada, City Attorney
Jason Masters, Assistant Planner
Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary

2. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS (1)

Community Development Director Lundstedt commented on two items:

- a. Mike Estrada was introduced and will now be providing legal support to the Planning Commission at meetings and will be reviewing the packet including the staff report and Resolutions.
- b. Regarding a proposal to move City commission meeting start times to 6:00 uniformly, there will be an internal staff meeting to discuss this and then the matter will be scheduled for the Planning Commission's consideration at the next available meeting.

3. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - None

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 10, 2014

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Hersman/Bordokas) to **APPROVE** the minutes of December 10, 2014 with one change: that the name of the Commissioner seconding the motion to approve the minutes of November 12th be corrected to read "Bordokas".

AYES: Bordokas, Hersman, Chairperson Ortmann
NOES: None
ABSENT: Andreani
ABSTAIN: Conaway

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

- 01/28/15-2. Consideration of a Use Permit and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 72860 for Proposed Construction of Four Residential Condominium Units Located at 1154 North Rowell Avenue (Bowers & Murphy)

Assistant Planner Jason Masters gave the staff report with the aid of a power point presentation, providing an overview of the application as well as an analysis and discussion of issues and concluded with the recommendation to conduct the public hearing, accept public testimony and adopt the submitted Resolution approving the subject application subject to conditions.

There were no questions at this time from the Commission.

Jeff Bowers, Minaret Development Partners, applicant, introduced his business partner Bryan Murphy, briefly gave their background. He described their outreach to the neighbors who live in mostly duplexes or multi-family apartments, stating that he received little response. Mr. Bowers believes their product will be more along the “affordable” type of unit in the City.

Chair Ortmann invited the Commission to ask questions of the applicant. **Mr. Bowers** and architect **Robert Sweet** responded as follows:

1. The project lot coverage of 50% as stated in the application is attained due to the fact that setbacks, especially at the front, are generous and when all open space areas are added up, there is actually 50% of the land covered. The open space for units A/B (front) is in the form of private balconies and allocated portions of “yard” areas (not necessarily play yards) and the open space for units C/D (rear) consists of private patios plus allocated portions of rear landscaped areas. (Hersman and Bordokas).
2. There will be 12 on-site parking spaces (Bordokas).
3. The proposed project is an airspace subdivision as opposed to a parcel map where conventional “lots” with lot lines are drawn, and in this type of subdivision, the commonly owned areas are spelled out. A Home Owners Association (HOA) is created with a president who will work out maintenance responsibilities per a recorded agreement. Potential conflicts will be handled by the HOA that may arise within the project with individual unit owners. Until the project is implemented and purchased, it is assumed the developer will act as the HOA president (Conaway and Ortmann).
4. The applicants hope to break ground in spring, 2015. (Hersman)

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairperson Ortmann opened the public hearing and invited testimony.

Dennis Scovel, longtime resident at 1411 12th Street Unit 2, stated his concerns are mainly traffic safety. He cited traffic patterns as cars turn onto 12th Street to get to Manhattan Beach Boulevard via Peck Avenue and has witnessed drivers cutting corners while making left hand turns, and noted also there are many cars parked on the streets which can hinder visibility. He cited two incidents in which one car hit a tree and another in which a driver lost control and smashed into a parked car and noted that with the nearby school, there are numerous children in the area. He inquired as to whether installing a 4-way stop would improve safety.

Rosie Wegrich owns a duplex at 1400/1406 Rowell; overall agrees with Mr. Scovel and added that traffic on Rowell is especially bad and is concerned that adding more density will in turn add more cars and this will not be complimentary to the neighborhood. She accepts that development is a reality; her concerns are more related to aesthetics, such as loss of sunlight to her units and appreciates the opportunity to voice her concerns.

Gerry O'Connor, longtime resident in the City questions whether the project is “consistent” with the neighborhood as stated in the proposed resolution. He agrees in part that there is some consistency but believes the project is not consistent with the size of the adjoining duplex which, in terms of building size, is about 8 times smaller. **Mr. O'Connor** expressed concern also that the project is not accurately represented in that he believes that it is a fallacy to describe the project as not “maxed out”. He explained that this is because the project given all applicable codes and constraints, cannot in effect attain the permitted buildable floor area (BFA) and hopes that the Planning Commission realizes this. **Mr. O'Connor** stated that he hopes that the Planning Commission can look at the bigger picture and in a more global sense, work towards revisiting the zoning standards.

Chair Ortmann invited the applicant to respond.

Mr. Bowers stated that, regarding density standards, this site has land area to support 8 units so with respect to that development standard the project is well under the allowed units and square feet. He believes that he and his partner understand the issues raised by the neighbors and they want to work with them as their goal is to build very livable units and attract families with children who will attend the nearby school.

Assistant Planner Jason Masters explained how the density (lot area per dwelling unit) and parking standards are applied and stated 8 units maximum are permitted by the formula and the number of parking spaces is related only to the number of units. Director Lundstedt added that regarding parking, the full requirement (units plus guests) is met; regarding traffic safety, the project plans are typically routed through the City Traffic Engineer who confirms staff findings. Regarding project architectural style, scale and size, the City does not have design guidelines and review authority to address style of architecture for projects. She may however suggest at an appropriate time in the future, that the City Council consider adopting such guidelines.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Chairperson Ortmann closed the public hearing and invited the Commission to discuss the application.

Commissioner Hersman expressed concern for private storage, and architect **Sweet** explained that each unit has 150 cubic feet of enclosed storage space within the garage in addition to closets within the unit. Mr. **Sweet** responded to the Chair that he is not aware of anything that could prevent a unit resident from using the garage for personal storage instead of full use for parking two cars, and it was pointed out that this happens throughout the City. Chairperson Ortmann stated he believed that in this case he expects the garages to be much used for parking.

Commissioner Conaway stated that the neighbors have expressed very valid concerns. He believes the project is maxed out but not as egregious as it could be, noting the building height is less than allowed. He would like the City to look at open space regulations – that perhaps this is a failure of the mansionization code amendments and suggested that the Commission discuss this matter when they have an opportunity. Open space standards for multi-units is a pet peeve: people come to this area for the wonderful climate and then there is very little open outdoor space for individual units. The amount of open space required is not really a lot and perhaps this is a policy issue that can be raised to the next level. As to traffic control Commissioner Conaway asked if the staff could take this to the Traffic Engineer to investigate installation of a 4-way stop and he would support adding language supporting Mr. Scovel's concerns. Commissioner Conaway added that it seems that after 8 am, the volume of daily construction traffic is quite noticeable.

Director Lundstedt stated residential construction traffic is high on her list, the City's Residential Construction Officer is busy working on this issue and she noted condition 2 addresses construction traffic.

Commissioner Bordokas believes that the issue of traffic safety at the corners should be something that is discussed with the school board and she had never in her term on the board heard of this intersection being brought up for traffic safety improvements.

Commissioner Hersman pointed out the traffic, with people getting in and out of the subdivision in this area is very busy and wondered if the Traffic Engineer should be looking at this area.

Director Lundstedt informed that the Safe Routes to School program is going soon to the City Council.

Chairperson Ortmann stated that the presentation of the project was somewhat context-free and requested that staff consider ways to have projects presented that provide a better sense of context and setting – to give a more holistic perspective to the Commission.

Assistant Planner Masters responded to Commissioner Hersman's concern about the resolution lacking a condition regarding landscape maintenance responsibility, and stated that in this case, green waste containers are provided behind a wall, but with easy access in the lower level plan adjacent to the guest parking spaces. Mr. Masters further stated that the specific handling of the green waste will be the responsibility of the HOA.

Commissioner Conaway noted that on page 3 of the Resolution the findings regarding community resources addresses landscaping and it was determined that the word "protected" refers to a class of trees that is protected from being removed under the city's Tree Ordinance (some palms e.g. are not among those protected). It was determined that instead of "will provide" the finding for Community Resources on page 3 should read "is providing" (more than the required...).

ACTION

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Hersman/Conaway) to **ADOPT** draft Resolution PC 15-01, approving a CUP and Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 72860 for Proposed Construction of Four Residential Condominium Units Located at 1154 North Rowell with correction of a typo in the title (delete "M") and revision of finding for Community Resources as described on page 3.

AYES: Bordokas, Conaway, Hersman, Chairperson Ortmann
NOES: None
ABSENT: Andreani
ABSTAIN: None

Chairperson announced the application is approved and it was noted that, unless appealed within the 15-day period, this decision will be forwarded to the City Council with a recommendation to "receive and file" at the Council's regular meeting on February 17th.

6. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS (2) – Director Lundstedt stated she had no additional items to report.

7. PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Chairman Ortmann inquired as to the next step for the Urban Land Institute (ULI) visioning study for downtown. Director Lundstedt reported that a video is now posted on the city's website (link: <http://www.ci.manhattan-beach.ca.us/Home/Components/News/News/1844/43>). She highlighted that 127 people were interviewed, exceeding all prior ULI projects worldwide, and much information is available online now. There will be a report around mid-February which will be brought to the City Council in a session in March. Director Lundstedt recapped the consultant selection and noted that ULI was selected **instead of** a recommended local planning consultant but in her perspective because of the phenomenal amount of information considered, a national level planning group with its resources was necessary.

Chairperson Ortmann also asked for status of the Mobility Plan, expressing concern in particular regarding Highland Avenue, wondering whether Highland is to be completely ceded to the automobile. He encourages a public conversation about this in connection with the Mobility Plan, noting it is not mentioned in the plan currently. He wants to share photos of Highland Avenue with the Director or anyone else.

Director Lundstedt will look into this and advise.

8. TENTATIVE AGENDA – February 11, 2015

Director Lundstedt indicated that there are no items scheduled for this date at this time.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm to Wednesday, February 11, 2015 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue.

ROSEMARY LACKOW
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

MARISA LUNDSTEDT
Community Development Director