

**MANHATTAN BEACH
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 14, 2020
(DRAFT)**

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

A Regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California was held virtually via Zoom on the 14th day of October, 2020, at the hour of 3:04 p.m. Chair Morton called the meeting to order and announced the protocol for participating in the meeting.

B. PLEDGE TO FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Burkhalter, Thompson, Ungoco, Vice Chair Fournier, Chairperson Morton
Absent: None
Others Present: Carrie Tai, AICP, Director of Community Development
Ted Fatuross, Assistant Planner
Erik Zandvliet, City Traffic Engineer
Brendan Kearns, Assistant City Attorney
Drew Teora, Agenda Host
Nhung Huynh, Participant Host
Rosemary Lackow, Recording Secretary (monitored via livestream)

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded (Burkhalter/Fournier) that the agenda be unchanged.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Burkhalter, Thompson, Vice Chair Fournier, Ungoco, Chairperson Morton.
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

E. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

10/14/20-1. Regular Meeting – September 9, 2020

It was moved and seconded (Thompson/Burkhalter) to approve as presented.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Burkhalter, Vice Chair Fournier, Thompson, Ungoco, Chairperson Morton.
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

F. PUBLIC HEARING

10/14/20-2. Proposed Master Use Permit for A New 162-room, 81,755 Square-Foot Hotel with Full Alcohol Service for Hotel Patrons and a New 16,348 Square-Foot Retail and Office Building; and Reduced Parking with 158 Parking Spaces at 600 South Sepulveda Boulevard; and Make an Environmental Determination in Accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (MB Hotel Partners, LLC)

Vice Chair Fournier announced, upon consulting with the City Attorney, he is recusing himself from participating but has some general concerns he will bring up under the Commission Business.

Chair Morton announced the item, opened the public hearing and invited a staff presentation.

Ted Faturos, Assistant Planner, summarized the staff report, covering several topics including: Application filing; vicinity and site map; architectural renderings and elevations; applicant's Master Use Permit request; environmental review; required findings; public notification/comments; and staff recommendation (approve). Mr. Faturos went over in detail: the process leading up to the adoption of the Sepulveda Boulevard Corridor Overlay, the project's appearance from all sides or elevations, the request for alcohol service and parking reduction, specific site features and conditions of approval, and the staff determination that the project qualifies as a "categorically exempt" project under CEQA. Mr. Faturos noted that many comments have been received (41 supporting, 46 opposing) including a 27-signature petition.

PUBLIC INPUT

The Chair invited the applicant to speak. The following persons addressed the Commission.

Jan Holtze, for applicant MB Hotel Partners, LLC, and **Gene Fong**, project architect, respectively, went over the project, introduced the development team, its background/expertise, and what physically and operationally is proposed. Mr. Holtze described his participation on the Sepulveda Boulevard Ad Hoc Working Group, a diverse group of city stakeholders, and, in designing the project the team tried to be sensitive to issues and concerns raised in that committee by both the city and residents. He believes the project will be high quality, address impacts and provide desirable and economically viable uses, meeting all intents of the Working Group as adopted by the City Council. He believes there will be many benefits and hopes for example that as an economic boost, a shuttle can be operated to take visitors downtown.

Architect Fong focused on the project design including the height, site layout, vehicular access, parking layout/locations, aesthetics and architectural elements. It was emphasized that the subterranean parking plan is designed to address visible bulk while providing safety through natural light and ventilation.

Chair Morton invited Commissioner questions.

In response to **Commissioner Thompson**, **Mr. Fong** stated 1) upper windows will be openable to about 4-inches, and he believes privacy issue can be mitigated; 2) trees will be planted in landscape areas along street borders including Chabela Drive, which once mature, will soften the building mass. He acknowledged the renderings, intended to emphasize building details, do not show proposed trees but can provide more landscaping info. **Mr. Fong** acknowledged that, to achieve softening with trees, perhaps the planter grade in the underground parking level may need to be raised up; 3) the setback along Chabela Drive from the face of the building to the sidewalk (on private property) is 15 feet, and; 4) regarding parking, there will be 28 spaces on the first level and they will look at converting up to all of the compact parking spaces to standard sized which will reduce the overall number of spaces, but could still be within the range of spaces that has been determined will be needed to supply the demand for the mix of uses, and it is expected that most of the parking demand will be on the lower spaces where an elevator will be available.

Mr. Holtze added that the surface lot will assumably be used most by retail, the office and hotel uses will park lower and use the elevator, and the hotel porte cochère will be used for brief check-in parking.

Erik Zandvliet, City Traffic Engineer and **Assistant Planner Faturos** answered questions about the parking structure ramp: it can be modified to comply with code requirements and ease circulation to be 26 feet wide: 24 feet plus 1-foot on both sides for clearance; the location is acceptable; it will operate similar to a t-intersection as drivers exiting will wait until drivers entering move.

Mr. Holtze commented that the proposed 463 sq. feet of open atrium area in the lower parking level may be able to be enlarged to tie that parking level more with the open natural street level above.

Commissioner Burkhalter commented 1) To achieve privacy mitigation from Day 1 of operation, some architectural element screening will be needed; 2) He attended some of the five Sepulveda Corridor Working Group meetings after which there were three Planning Commission, and three City Council meetings regarding the overlay code amendment which he felt were poorly attended by the public; 3) Based on the Sepulveda Initiative study, a hotel may be the best solution for this site, but recalled that there was a feeling that bigger projects needed more public notification.

Director Tai noted that notification was per the city's Municipal Code and retraced the "Sepulveda Initiatives" history, which occurred under the prior Director. Her understanding is that what came out of the Working Group recommendations had a focus for more physically-oriented zoning changes – to be implemented in a new design overlay, applicable to certain types of sites and therefore some of the initiatives such as expansion of notification did not get adopted by the City Council; staff applied only codified changes, which did not include expanded notification.

Jan Holtze, responding to **Commissioner Burkhalter**, recalled discussion with the prior Director that there would be difficulty in adding additional outreach to the Code and it was expected that notification would be covered under current regulations. **Commissioner Burkhalter** recognized that there will be impacts, but some are avoidable, and it is proper to try and avoid impacts that will require future enforcement by the City.

Chair Morton requested an explanation as to why this project is categorically exempt which is different from Gelson's; **Director Tai acknowledged** many comments received about the environmental review; staff strictly followed the State Statute and Guidelines for CEQA like a flow chart, e.g. After determining it is a "project", staff considered the criteria for the determined a Class 32 categorical exemption from CEQA. Utilizing studies/information provided by the City's environmental consultant, Michael Baker, staff determined that the project met all applicable Class 32 criteria, including that potential impacts with appropriate data modelling applied, would be "less than significant".

Commissioner Ungoco requested more information on LEED certification. **Jan Holtze** noted that the applicant while desirous of achieving silver certification, must deal with economics in that there are constraints in designing the hotel rooms in such a way that would accommodate a mechanical system leading to such a certification. **Architect Fong** noted that he is working with the owner and mechanical engineer to achieve silver.

Director Tai indicated that LEED certification may involve having an actual plaque and paying licensing fees; many developers aim to make the building equivalent to a LEED standard and certification. The California Green Building Code achieves many LEED standards, but the City is currently working towards adopting building standards that are closer to LEED.

Chair Morton opened the floor to public input, with a limit of three minutes per speaker.

The following speakers expressed opposition or raised concerns that cumulatively included: project is too big, has too much square footage; there was insufficient time to review the project (several requests received to delay the hearing 30 to 180 days); there are potential significant impacts such as: parking and traffic intrusion, construction related (vibration, noise, parking), operationally alcohol related nuisances, and noise including from live entertainment at upper terrace, loading dock problems, glare, privacy intrusion, vehicular and pedestrian safety including to general public and nearby schools, traffic line of sight on Sepulveda Boulevard especially between Keats Street and Tennyson Street, aesthetic impacts including looming 40-foot height and inconsistency with scale of nearby buildings; cumulative impacts from future development on similarly large and nearby Sepulveda Boulevard sites, lack of financial need or efficacy demonstrated for a hotel; impingement of nearby intersections due to increased traffic volumes; loss of ocean view and breeze by physical buildings; reduction of property value affecting nearby residential properties; stress from impending development and physical construction during Covid-19. Other issues raised include a concern that project site is within a radius of known sex offenders; an existing half-street barricade on Shelly Street will be insufficient in mitigating increased traffic; there may be a need to install crosswalks, or implement a parking permit program; and concern that the traffic report assumptions are invalid which in turn could affect the CEQA determination, and there was a lack of outreach of the applicant to inform neighbors about this specific proposal.

- **Boryana Zamanoff**, resident on Tennyson.
- **Cathy Clarke**, resident across the street from project site.
- **Dana Hess**, resident on Keats since 2002.
- **Dara Weintraub**, 1241 Shelly Street.
- **Darryl Franklin**, recent new resident on Tennyson Street.
- **Diane Wiseman**, 20-year resident 4-houses away on Tennyson.
- **Emily White**, 8-year resident on Shelly.
- **James Williams**, nearby resident.
- **Jim Mercer**, 1151 Tennyson Street;
- **Julie Lansing**, part time resident at the corner Chabela, Shelley.
- **Kelly Stroman**; resident and president, MB Chamber of Commerce, a nice addition, but shares some neighbor concerns; has notified other city hotels.
- **Karen Grenier**, Keats resident.
- **Lolly Doyle**; 11-year Shelley resident (half a block away).
- **Mark Kordonsky**, Shelly resident.
- **Nancy Best**, resident and nearby property owner.
- **Robert Clarke**; lives directly across from project.
- **Robin Charin**; Parking traffic plumbing impacts? Truck construction. Keats.
- **Suzanne Best**;
- **Tonya Barghash**; 24-yr resident on Shelley.
- **Devon Murray**; long term nearby resident.
- **Kimberly Melendez**; resident at “other end of city”.
- **Rick McQuilian**, resident at Tennyson and Meadows.
- **Vic Randolph**, Shelly resident.

In addition to the applicant, the following speaker expressed support:

- **Mike Grannis**, believes that the developer’s intent is for a project that is consistent with what was discussed and decided upon through the Sepulveda Initiatives process: in addition to the Sepulveda Working Group, there were three Planning Commission meetings and three Council meetings at which there were multiple public notices as well as information in local media about this and other Sepulveda Boulevard sites; there were robust discussions about the standards including building height; appreciates this is a new project and will be disruptive, but the potential for this development has been well broadcasted.

Seeing no more speakers, **Chair Morton** closed the floor to public input and invited **Commission Discussion**.

Commissioner Thompson acknowledged the residents’ concerns; thinks it appropriate to give more time to allow residents to get accurate information and better understand the project; overall supports and believes project with some modifications or information will be suitable for the site; would like to see changes considered such as: widening of the garage ramp;, conversion of compact to standard sized parking spaces, even if it reduces the number of parking spaces; addition of landscaping including mature trees and screening elements on the east elevation; and more info regarding north elevation plantings. Commissioner Thompson indicated nonsupport for office use.

Commissioner Burkhalter agreed more information and design work is needed – having more landscaping and “line-of-sight” analysis and info on parking spaces and access issues would be helpful; feels the applicant perhaps would be wise to conduct neighborhood outreach which can still be done.

Commissioner Ungoco expressed appreciation for resident input; also appreciated that the last speaker provided a background regarding the Sepulveda Working Group and overlay public hearings; interested in mixed use as a long term economically viable use; supports giving more time, perhaps two weeks.

Chairperson Morton questioned the ramp width; Commissioner Thompson supports looking at whether 26 feet in width is sufficient, and turning movements into, within and exiting the lower garage, and a 2-meeting continuation. Overall, he likes the project and recalls that a hotel was considered a prime opportunity for the Sepulveda Overlay, and a forty-foot height limit was recommended and agreed to by the Council. As to the proposed uses, feels that office and retail uses can work synergistically with the hotel, supports a parking reduction in concept due to the fact that peak demands do not line up at the same times and further efficiency can be had through ride-sharing. He feels the project meets the code requirements completely and issues can be addressed; supports no more than a two-meeting continuance.

Commissioner Thompson inquired whether the Commission has the discretion to require blanketing on perimeter construction; **Director Tai** believes the Commission can do so, and described the City's Construction Management program adopted in 2016, where building sites are held to a number of enforceable rules intended to address temporary impacts.

Director Tai, to clarify, polled the Commission on issues that need more work or information.

Commissioner Thompson: the usefulness of compact parking spaces is a concern mainly for the above ground lot, but as was suggested by the applicant, would like to see as many spaces as is workable to be enlarged and driveway line-of-sight safety needs to be demonstrated; he expressed objection to the office building second story as being visually over-dense for the corner.

Commissioner Burkhalter: the ramp width and configuration (location etc.) will be modified but he'd like to see on a plan what that will look like; as well as a more detailed plan showing landscaping and architectural privacy treatments, especially on both the east, north elevations, and a lighting plan that will help in understanding the potential for glare impacts (with "night sky cut-offs" applied). **Jan Holtze** stated that the applicant will be able to provide plans and more information regarding architectural screening and illustrate line-of-sight issues and building shadowing.

Chair Morton wants to see it demonstrated that there will be adequate turn-around space within the parking garage.

Director Tai discussed future meeting dates - it was agreed that after the next regular Commission meeting on October 28, the following meeting, due to Veteran's Day, would be moved from November 11 to November 18th.

COMMISSION ACTION

It was moved and seconded (Thompson/Burkhalter) that the public hearing on the proposed Master Use Permit for 600 S. Sepulveda Boulevard be continued to November 18 with direction as stated.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Burkhalter, Thompson, Ungoco, Chairperson Morton,
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: Vice Chair Fournier (recused)

Director Tai announced that the motion passed 4-0 (Fournier recused).

Vice Chair Fournier was seated at 6:42 p.m.

I. DIRECTOR'S ITEMS

Director Tai reported: 1) The Commission's prior Master Use Permit Amendment approval (1131 Manhattan Avenue - Nando Milano) has been appealed and will be heard by the City Council October 20; 2) a new Planning Manager has been hired and starts November 9; and, 3) Covid updates: staff continues to work remotely with services provided through City Hall; City Council has extended outdoor dining permits through the end of 2020 as it does not appear that current restrictions for indoor dining will be changing soon.

J. PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Vice Chair Fournier had two comments: 1) he personally experienced serious technical problems in following the meeting streaming on cable TV - both audio and video were garbled or blurred at times and inquired whether this can be corrected. Commissioner Burkhalter added that, for the first few months of remote meeting, he was unable to get cable television access; and 2) he feels the current public noticing requirements for large projects such as the hotel should be reconsidered and as a resident has concerns also about the Sepulveda Overlay height of 40-feet. Chair Morton added that he recalled that the City Council had, in adopting the Overlay standards considered a suggestion to enlarge the noticing requirement radius to 1,000 feet. Director Tai noted that she had a more abstract understanding of the Council decision in that she understood the Council was more focused on other physical site issues. She suggested that this topic about noticing could be discussed at the upcoming annual joint PC/CC meeting that will be held in early 2021. Vice Chair Fournier suggested one option would be to require a public noticing radius distance could be between the current code and what is required by CEQA.

K. TENTATIVE AGENDA – October 28, 2020

In discussing future meeting dates with Director Tai, the Commission agreed to schedule the follow up public hearing for the ADU code amendments on October 28 and the Nov 11 meeting will be moved to November 18; that agenda will include the continued public hearing for tonight’s hotel application.

L. ADJOURNMENT TO – Chair Morton, with no objection, adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m. to Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 3:00 P.M. via Zoom/virtual format.

ROSEMARY LACKOW
Recording Secretary

GERRY MORTON
Chairperson

ATTEST:

Carrie Tai, AICP
Community Development Director