

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE CITY OF
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION**

OCTOBER 28, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

The Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Adam Ereth, Vice Chair Russell Toler, Commissioner Angely Andrade, Commissioner Jonny Rojas, Commissioner David Martinez, Commissioner Jon Zich

Absent: Commissioner Karen Klepack

Officials Present: Director of Economic and Development Services Carrie Tai, Assistant Director of Development Services Scott Drapkin, Assistant City Attorney Tarquin Preziosi, Assistant Planner Christopher Aldana, City Engineer Seung Yang, and Recording Secretary Anna Partida

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA:

None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Commissioner Zich welcomed new Economic and Development Services Director Carrie Tai.

Commissioner Andrade thanked the Public Works Department for their recent housing and community priorities presentation at the Norma Hertzog Community Center.

Commissioner Martinez also welcomed Economic and Development Services Director Tai and thanked the Public Works for their recent housing and community priorities presentation, highlighting the consolidated plan for HOME and CDBG funds. He thanked

Public Works for implementing AB43 street changes. He also encouraged community attendance at an OC Parks meeting on the Talbert Regional Park Master Plan at the Norma Hertzog Community center on October 29, 2024. Martinez reminded everyone to vote on November 5. if eligible.

Vice Chair Tolar commended Public Works for implementing AB43, allowing Costa Mesa to lower speed limits on 76 street segments to improve safety for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. He noted that few cities have taken similar actions and also praised the addition of bike lane delineators on Placentia, highlighting Costa Mesa's commitment to street safety.

Chair Ereth expressed his appreciation for the new lowered speed limits, noting community support for the safety improvement. He then introduced Assistant Director Scott Drapkin to formally introduce Economic and Development Services Director Carrie Tai.

Assistant Director Scott Drapkin warmly welcomed new Director of Economic and Development Services Carrie Tai, praising her extensive experience in Orange County and describing her as a valuable addition from Hermosa Beach. He highlighted her positive energy, enthusiasm, and engaging personality, expressing the Department's excitement to have her on board.

Director Carrie Tai expressed her gratitude for joining the team, highlighting the support she's received from staff in her first eight days. She praised the department and city staff for their help in bringing her up to speed and spoke about the exciting projects ahead. These include addressing zoning issues, implementing the Housing Element through rezoning the Fairview Developmental Center, and preparing for several upcoming projects. She looks forward to collaborating with the team to achieve impactful results for the community.

Chair Ereth continued his comments by sharing both a personal loss and a joyful announcement. He expressed sadness over the recent passing of his academic mentor, Professor Dennis Kelly from Orange Coast College, who had a significant impact on his career and inspired many in the marine sciences. On a positive note, he congratulated Parks Commissioner Shayanne Wright on the birth of her first child.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- 1. DESIGN REVIEW 23-0001 AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 23-0002 FOR A RESIDENTIAL SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION TO CREATE TWO PARCELS EACH CONTAINING A NEW TWO-STORY DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE AND AN ATTACHED TWO-CAR GARAGE.**

Project Description: Design Review 23-0001 and Parcel Map 23-0002 proposes a residential small lot subdivision to create two parcels each containing one new two-story detached single-family house with an attached two-car garage.

Environmental Determination: The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15315 (Minor Division of Land) and Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).

One ex-parte communication reported.

Commissioner Zich visited the project site and spoke with a business owner located across the street.

Christopher Aldana, Assistant Planner, presented the staff report.

The Commission asked questions of staff including:

Commissioner Zich questioned discrepancies in the second floor-to-first floor ratios listed on pages two and seven of the staff report. Staff explained that the difference stemmed from whether the garage was included in the calculations. Staff clarified that the residential design guidelines intend for homes to have a layered design, with the first floor larger than the second. Ultimately, staff confirmed that the code includes the garage square footage in these calculations, and the figures on page two were deemed correct.

Commissioner Martinez asked why SB 9 did not apply to the project, to which staff responded that SB 9 only applies to single-family R1 zones, while this property is zoned R2-HD for multifamily development. Commissioner Martinez then inquired about parking requirements, which staff explained are based on bedroom count and requires two covered and two uncovered spaces per unit. Commissioner Martinez also discussed AB 2097 and inquired if staff informs applicants that they are within an AB2097 area or not. Staff responded by clarifying that the project proposed to comply with parking therefore an AB2097 discussion did not occur. Finally, Commissioner Martinez sought clarification on the second-floor setback over the driveway, and staff confirmed that offsets were not required due to the square footage but noted that the second floor is slightly smaller than the first, meeting code requirements.

The Chair opened the Public Hearing.

Mehrzad Rafeei, applicant, stated she had read and agrees to the conditions of approval.

The Commission asked questions of the applicant including:

Commissioner Martinez asked the applicant if the project's design would have been different since no parking is technically required for the project. The applicant responded that, while they might have removed one angled parking space, they preferred to maximize parking on the lot. Balancing requirements from both the Transportation and Planning Departments posed challenges, as Transportation preferred a larger driveway while Planning favored a smaller one. Ultimately, they aimed to include as much parking as possible to meet tenant needs.

Commissioner Andrade asked the applicant if the two properties being developed could offer affordable housing or opportunities for first-time homebuyers. The applicant replied that, while the project aimed to increase housing availability, it was not specifically designed as affordable housing and did not target a particular income bracket.

Commissioner Rojas asked for clarification on the fencing requirements, noting that the conditions of approval seemed to specify both block walls and wood fencing. Staff explained that exterior walls along the property lines are required to be block walls for stability and sound reasons, while interior lot dividers could be either block walls or wood fencing.

The Chair opened public comments.

No public comments.

The Chair closed public comments.

The Chair closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Zich made a motion to find the project Categorically Exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and to approve the applications as recommended by staff. Seconded by Commissioner Martinez.

The Commissioners commented the motion:

Commissioner Zich expressed strong support for the project in his motion, emphasizing that the property's condition warranted improvement and that replacing it with two modern single-family homes would complement the eclectic neighborhood. He praised the developer's decision to include parking, noting it aligns with market demand and adds value, especially given the limited street parking. Citing an example from an HGTV show, he highlighted the importance of parking in real estate decisions, thanking the applicant for making a "smart development" choice.

Commissioner Martinez highlighted the current housing crisis, noting that even one additional home helps address the shortage. He expressed hope for more housing-related items in future meetings. Addressing parking, Martinez explained that AB

2097 removed previous mandates from city councils requiring specific parking minimums, allowing developers to set their own standards. In this case, the developer chose to include more parking than required, which Martinez appreciated as a beneficial option for future residents, even if it's not his personal design preference.

Commissioner Andrade praised the project, noting that each additional housing unit is beneficial given the community's limited land resources. She emphasized the need for proactive efforts to address the housing crisis, advocating for creative solutions to increase affordable rental options and homeownership opportunities across income levels. Commissioner Andrade encouraged future developers and the Department to consider ways to contribute positively to the community's housing needs.

Vice Chair Toler expressed support for the project, acknowledging that while he often approves similar housing projects out of necessity, developers are following the rules and responding to market demands for parking. He observed that homes are getting smaller and taller to maximize land use, which reflects a city-wide trend. Vice Chair Toler suggested that the city should adopt policies that support alternatives to traditional single-family homes, such as flats or smaller units, to meet diverse housing needs. He emphasized the importance of enabling walkability and reducing car dependency, suggesting it's the city's responsibility to create an infrastructure that allows for car-light living.

Chair Ereth expressed enjoyment in hearing each commissioner's perspectives on the motion, appreciating their enthusiasm and diverse interpretations. He voiced strong support for the project, noting that it aligns with the city's General Plan to increase homeownership in a community with a high percentage of renters. He highlighted that the inclusion of garages meets market demand and mentioned potential flexibility, such as converting garages to ADUs, if conditions allow. He affirmed his support for the motion, viewing it as a positive step toward expanding ownership opportunities in Costa Mesa.

MOVED/SECOND: Zich/Martinez

MOTION: Approve staff's recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Ereth, Toler, Andrade, Rojas, Martinez, Zich

Nays: None

Absent: Klepack

Recused: None

Motion carried: 6-0-1

ACTION: The Planning Commission adopted a resolution to:

1. Find that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section

15315 (Class 15) Minor Divisions of Land, and Section 15303 (Class 3) New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; and

2. Approve Parcel Map PTPM-23-0002 (Parcel Map No. 2023-180) and Design Review PDES-23-0001 based on findings of fact and subject to conditions of approval.

RESOLUTION PC-2024-25 - A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA APPROVING DESIGN REVIEW PDES-23-0001 AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 23-0002 TO CREATE TWO PARCELS EACH CONTAINING A NEW TWO-STORY DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE WITH AN ATTACHED TWO-CAR GARAGE IN THE R2-HD ZONE FOR PROPERTY AT 146 ROCHESTER STREET

The Chair explained the appeal process.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

1. Public Works Report – Mr. Yang announced a Community Bike Skills Workshop scheduled for Saturday, November 2, at St. Joachim Church on Orange Avenue in conjunction with the Costa Mesa Police Department. Mr. Yang also acknowledged a Bike Skills Workshop this past weekend on October 26 at Balearic Park Center that had a great turnout and was very successful.
2. Development Services Report – None.

CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE REPORT:

1. City Attorney – None.

ADJOURNMENT AT 6:57 PM

Submitted by:



SCOTT DRAPKIN, SECRETARY
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION