



**REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024 - MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER** – The Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Chair Adam Ereth at 6:05 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG** - Chair Adam Ereth led the Pledge of Allegiance

**ROLL CALL**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA:**

Caller One, expressed concerns about the City's non-compliance with Senate Bill 379, which requires instantaneous permitting for solar and battery systems in cities with populations over 50,000 by September 30, 2023. Caller One reported delays in their application for a solar and battery system, which was submitted on November 21, 2024 and is still in the preliminary review stage as of December 9, 2024. Caller One noted that the city only provides instantaneous permitting for solar systems, not batteries, which violates the law. Citing the statute's specific requirements, Caller One expressed frustration over the delays, potential loss of tax credits, and financial impacts, and urged the city to explain its non-compliance and take immediate action to remedy the situation.

**PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

Commissioner Martinez announced several community events and initiatives, including the Snoopy House display at City Hall from December 13-20, running from 5:30 p. m. to 8:30 p. m., with decorations already in place. He also highlighted the Costa Mesa Fire Department's toy drive accepting new, unwrapped toys at any of the six fire stations until December 23rd. Additionally, Commissioner Martinez shared that the Costa Mesa Historical Society, in collaboration with Councilmember Reynolds, will host a historic walking tour on December 14th at 2 p. m., with RSVP's available via email or on the Historic Society's social media sites.

Commissioner Klepack stated that she plans to attend the historic walking tour hosted by the Costa Mesa Historical Society on December 14, 2024.

Chair Ereth shared that he attended the senior center meeting last week, where he enjoyed listening to public comments and engaging with staff in a setting outside the City Council Chambers, finding the experience informative and valuable.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**1. MINUTES:**

- 1. NOVEMBER 12, 2024 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**
- 2. OCTOBER 28, 2024 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**
- 3. OCTOBER 14, 2024 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**
- 4. APRIL 11, 2022 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**
- 5. JULY 24, 2023 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Ereth pulled the minutes of November 12, 2024 and asked staff to add more detail to the discussion on CC-1 regarding the General Plan Conformity determination for property located at 778 Shalimar Drive.

Commissioner Martinez made a motion to approve the remainder of the consent calendar. Seconded by Commissioner Andrade.

Commissioner Martinez expressed appreciation for the detailed minutes.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Martinez/Andrade

**MOTION:** Approve the Consent Calendar except for Item Number 1, November 12, 2024 Unofficial Meeting Minutes.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Ereth, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas

Nays: None

Absent: Vice Chair Toler, Commissioner Zich

Abstained: None

Motion carried: 5-0-2

-----**END OF CONSENT CALENDAR**-----

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- 1. GENERAL PLAN CONFORMITY REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED LEASE OF A PORTION OF CITY PROPERTY, AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL ON A TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP (2023-160) TO SUBDIVIDE THE SUBJECT PROPERTY INTO TWO PARCELS, AND A MASTER PLAN (PMAP-24-0001) WITH DENSITY BONUS PURSUANT TO STATE LAW FOR THE**

**DEVELOPMENT OF A 70-UNIT MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT THAT INCLUDES 34 PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS, 35 INDEPENDENT LIVING UNITS AND ONE UNRESTRICTED MANAGER'S UNIT; LOCATED IN A PORTION OF THE PARKING LOT AT 695 WEST 19TH STREET (COSTA MESA SENIOR CENTER)**

**Description:** General Plan Conformity Report for the proposed lease of a portion of City property located at 695 West 19th Street (Costa Mesa Senior Center), and recommendation to the City Council on a Tentative Parcel Map to subdivide the subject property into two parcels, and a Master Plan with Density Bonus pursuant to State Law for the development of a 70-unit multi-family residential senior affordable project that includes 34 permanent supportive housing units, 35 independent living units and one manager's unit. The request includes concessions from specified development standards pursuant to State Density Bonus Law.

**Environmental Determination:** The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 (Class 32), In-Fill Development Projects.

Two ex-parte communications reported:

- Commissioner Martinez attended the senior center meeting and spoke with the applicant.
- Chair Ereth attended the senior center meeting.

Presentation by Mr. Victor Mendez, Senior Planner.

The Planning Commission asked staff a range of questions regarding the proposed affordable senior housing project. Topics included prioritization for Costa Mesa residents, outreach efforts in multiple languages, and the definition of "senior" for eligibility. Parking design, ADA compliance, and the allocation of reserved and electric vehicle parking were discussed, along with measures to maintain sidewalk access and manage construction impacts. Questions also addressed the project's mixed-use designation, parcel subdivision for tax credit financing, lease terms, and alignment with State Density Bonus Law. Planning Commissioners also inquired about the need for affordable senior housing in Costa Mesa, referencing data from the Affordable Housing Coalition, and raised concerns about ensuring that the project meets both community needs and legal requirements. Staff provided detailed responses, with certain issues deferred to the applicant for further clarification.

The Chair called for a break at 7:10 p. m.

The Chair called the meeting back to order at 7:22 p. m.

The Chair opened the public hearing.

Planning Commissioners asked the applicant about various aspects of the proposed affordable senior housing project. Key questions focused on the range of units (60-70) and how financing limitations influenced that number, the project's potential disturbance to the Senior Center during construction, and the applicant's plans to mitigate parking and access impacts through valet services and off-site parking. Planning Commissioners also inquired about the design of community amenity spaces, their alignment with tax credit program requirements, and how they complement existing Senior Center amenities. Additional questions addressed services for non-driving seniors, such as van transportation for errands and tailored support services. The applicant clarified their commitment to addressing community needs, collaborating with the city and Senior Center, and providing comprehensive on-site services for residents.

Public Comments:

Shirley McDaniels expressed opposition to the proposed Senior Center housing project, raising concerns about the lack of realistic accommodations for senior parking during construction. She criticized the proposed shuttle system as impractical for seniors, many of whom do not use texting technology, and argued that the Senior Center parking lot is an unsuitable location for the project.

Diane Russell, voiced strong support for the proposed affordable senior housing project, citing its convenient location near amenities like the Senior Center, grocery stores, and public transportation. While she acknowledged the need for housing for aging residents on fixed incomes, she suggested improvements such as providing printed, updated project information at the Senior Center to address misinformation and evaluating nearby intersections for enhanced pedestrian safety for seniors.

Betsy Densmore, expressed strong support for the proposed senior housing project, emphasizing the urgent need for affordable housing for seniors who are often isolated and struggling. Highlighting the benefits of the project's location within a "15-minute neighborhood" near essential amenities, she noted the long waitlists for existing senior housing and praised the project's potential to address the growing demand for downsizing and affordable living options in Costa Mesa.

Frances Woods, expressed concerns about the proposed senior housing project, particularly regarding traffic safety and accessibility issues. She highlighted the narrow entrance near the bus stop, potential traffic jams caused by emergency vehicles and cars turning quickly, and challenges for seniors crossing in front of the entrance. Ms. Woods also raised concerns about the adequacy of handicap

parking spaces, noting the high-demand among seniors and their caregivers, as well as the rising costs of construction and their impact on the project's feasibility.

Alan Maedo, raised concerns about the adequacy of information provided about the senior housing project, particularly regarding its costs and long-term impact. He questioned the lack of details on total lifecycle costs, financing comparisons with other affordable housing models, and the absence of consideration for ownership options versus renting. He also highlighted the strain on parking and the Senior Center's lunch program, urging the city to secure firm parking commitments before increasing the number of units to 70 and to clarify the application process and costs for future residents.

Speaker Six, expressed support for the development but raised concerns about parking and safety. Speaker Six noted existing parking challenges due to homeless individuals and halfway houses on Plumer Street, as well as potential competition for parking spaces during and after construction. Additionally, Speaker Six highlighted safety concerns for seniors walking at night, suggesting the need for security measures, and requested that any additional street lighting be mindful of nearby residential areas.

Speaker Seven, expressed opposition to the senior housing project, citing concerns about reduced parking at the Senior Center, unsafe driveway placement, and potential delays for emergency response vehicles due to traffic changes on 19th Street. They criticized the project for being overly dense, redundant in amenities already available nearby, and costly for taxpayers. While acknowledging the need for senior housing, they argued that this site is not suitable and suggested exploring less impactful locations with better planning and standards.

Linda Tang, expressed strong support for the proposed 70-unit senior housing development, emphasizing the critical need for affordable housing for seniors with fixed incomes in the city. She praised the partnership with Jamboree Housing for their proven track record and highlighted the city's efforts to address community needs. She urged the Planning Commission to approve the project as a vital step toward easing the housing burden for low-income seniors.

Kathy Esfahani, expressed strong support for the proposed senior housing project, highlighting the long-standing advocacy for affordable housing at the Senior Center site since its inclusion in the City's Housing Element in 2008. She emphasized the critical need for affordable housing, citing that 62% of Costa Mesa seniors over 65 are low or very low income and cannot afford market-rate rents, and praised the City and Jamboree Housing for addressing this urgent need to prevent senior homelessness. Ms. Esfahani acknowledged parking concerns but urged prioritization of creating homes for seniors in need.

The Chair closed the public comments.

The Planning Commission and applicant discussion included commitments for off-site parking with local businesses and churches, addressing concerns about senior transportation during construction. The applicant explained ongoing negotiations with Smart and Final and nearby churches and emphasized efforts to minimize transit times for seniors. They addressed concerns about seniors using text-based shuttle systems, noting plans for tech training and additional community meetings to refine solutions during construction. Questions also covered driveway reconfiguration, construction phasing for ADA stalls and the new driveway, rising construction costs, and site security, with the applicant ensuring that costs would not impact residents and committing to robust lighting and security systems. The applicant thanked City staff and the community for their collaboration, emphasizing their long-term commitment to the project and the Costa Mesa community.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Ereth / Andrade

**MOTION:** Approve staff's recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Ereth, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas

Nays: None

Absent: Vice Chair Toler, Commissioner Zich

Recused: None

Motion carried: 5-0-2

**ACTION:**

The Planning Commission:

1. Found that the lease and use of the City property for affordable senior housing purposes is in conformance with the General Plan in regard to location, purpose and extent pursuant to California Government Code Section 65402.

And the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council:

2. Find the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 (Class 32), In-Fill Development Projects; and
  3. Approve the Master Plan (PMAP-24-0001) with Density Bonus, and the updated Tentative Parcel Map 2023-160.
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2. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (PCUP-23-0001) AND TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP TO CONVERT FOUR EXISTING OFFICE BUILDINGS INTO A NON-RESIDENTIAL COMMON INTEREST DEVELOPMENT; LOCATED AT 660 BAKER STREET**

Presentation by Mr. Victor Mendez, Senior Planner.

Public Comments: None.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Martinez / Klepack

**MOTION:** Approve staff's recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Ereth, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Klepack,  
Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas

Nays: None

Absent: Vice Chair Toler, Commissioner Zich

Recused: None

Motion carried: 5-0-2

**ACTION:**

The Planning Commission:

1. Found that the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1), Existing Facilities and 15315 (Class 15), Minor Land Divisions; and
2. Approved Conditional Use Permit (PCUP-23-0001) and updated Tentative Parcel Map based on findings of fact and subject to conditions of approval.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**REPORT - PUBLIC WORKS -** None.

**REPORT - DEVELOPMENT SERVICES –** None.

**REPORT - ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY –** None.

**ADJOURNMENT AT 9:20 PM**

Submitted by:

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SCOTT DRAPKIN, SECRETARY  
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION