

**CITY OF SAN GABRIEL**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
AND THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION**

**March 9, 2015**

**A Special Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission and the Design Review Commission of the City of San Gabriel was held in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 425 S. Mission Drive, San Gabriel, California, on Monday, March 9, 2015.**

Chairman Garden called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

**Meeting Called to Order;  
Pledge of Allegiance**

**ROLL CALL**

**ROLL CALL**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**PRESENT:**

Chairman Norman Garden, Vice-Chair Thomas Klawiter, Commissioner Jingbo Lou, Commissioner Camelia Vera and Commissioner Vince Zawodny

**ABSENT:**

None

**DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION**

**PRESENT:**

Chairman Marla Nadolney, Vice-Chair Rhett Beavers, and Commissioner Raymond Cheng

**ABSENT:**

None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Deputy City Attorney Lisa Kranitz, Planning Manager Mark Gallatin, Associate Planner Larissa De La Cruz, Assistant Planner Fang-zhou Zhou, and Planning Commission Secretary Jackie Wong

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Minutes of the Regular Planning Commission Meeting on February 9, 2015 and the Minutes of the Special Planning Commission Meeting on February 23, 2015**

Commissioner Zawodny moved to approve both minutes. Commissioner Lou seconded the motion. There being no objections, the minutes were approved.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Minutes of the Regular Planning Commission Meeting on February 9, 2015 and the Minutes of the Special Planning Commission Meeting on February 23, 2015  
Approved.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Garden asked that speakers come forward who wish to address the Planning Commission on non-agenda items.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Debbie Saito, 707 Abbot Ave, San Gabriel, commented that she's not against development. She stated that she's in favor of it when done responsibly. She's concerned about the increase in the number of new residents that will fill the new mixed-use developments as well as increase in noise and pollution that they will bring to the City. She added that San Gabriel is unlike New York that has many public transportation options.

No one else spoke; therefore, Chairman Garden closed the public comments portion.

**EXPLANATION OF PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES**

Deputy City Attorney Lisa Kranitz explained the public hearing procedures for the items on this evening’s agenda. She stated that tonight’s agenda items will be taken up in the following order: Item 4 will go first, then items 1, 2 and 3 will follow. She also added that Commissioner Vera will be recusing herself for items 2 and 3 due to a potential conflict of interest on these projects and that the Design Review Commissioners will be taking part on the actions for items 2 and 3.

**STAFF ITEM**

**4. Annual Reports on General Plan and Housing Element Progress.**

Associate Planner Larissa De La Cruz presented this item. The Planning Commissioners reviewed the documents and recommended that the documents be presented to City Council and sent to the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Vice-Chair Klawiter moved to recommend the reports be presented to the City Council and be sent to OPR and HCD. Seconded by Commissioner Zawodny.

**PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

- 1. 227 W. Valley Blvd. #348-358  
Planning Case No. PL-14-135  
Applicant: Chang’An Restaurant

This report was presented by Assistant Planner Fang-zhou Zhou regarding a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Amendment to serve beer and wine on the patio of an existing restaurant in the C-CT (Commercial Center Development) zone.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** This project was reviewed and excepted from the California Environmental Quality Act requirements, per Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities).

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommended that the Planning Commission approve PL-14-135, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

Chairman Garden asked the applicant if she is in favor of the conditions of approval. She stated that she is fine with them.

No one spoke from the audience regarding this project; therefore, Chairman Garden closed the public comments portion for this item.

**Commissioners’ Discussion**

The Planning Commission conceptualized and discussed the project. All Commissioners were in favor of it. Chairman Garden suggested that he would like an additional buffer between the restaurant and the residential area on the north to block potential noise issues.

Chairman Garden made the motion to approve PL-14-135, subject to the recommended conditions of approval. Commissioner Lou seconded the motion.

Ayes: Garden, Klawiter, Lou, Vera and Zawodny  
Noes: None

5-0 motion carried

At this point, Commissioner Vera excused herself from the meeting as explained earlier by Deputy City Attorney Kranitz. Chairman Garden then called the Design Review Commissioners to join the Planning Commissioners to take action on items 2 and 3.

**EXPLANATION OF PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES**

**Explained by Deputy City Attorney Lisa Kranitz.**

**STAFF ITEM**

**4. Annual Reports on General Plan and Housing Element Progress.**

**Recommended to be presented to City Council and be sent to OPR and HCD.**

**PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

- 1. 227 W. Valley Blvd.  
#348-358  
Planning Case  
No. PL-14-135  
Applicant: Chang’An Restaurant  
Approved.

**Commissioners’ Discussion**

**2. 201-207 S. San Gabriel Blvd.  
Planning Case No. PL-14-041  
Applicant: KCN Investments/Killefer Flammang Architects**

This project was presented by Assistant Planner Zhou regarding a request for a Tentative Tract Map and a Precise Plan of Design to allow for the construction of a new mixed-use development. The project will have 16,549 square feet of commercial space and 159 residential condominium units, and is zoned C-1/PD (Retail Commercial/Planned Development Overlay). Currently, the project site has about 29,000 square feet of existing commercial buildings and one single-family home, which will all be demolished for this new proposed development.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** This project was reviewed for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance and staff determined that the project required an Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared in 2007 for a nearly identical project.

**RECOMMENDATION:  
Planning Commission**

Staff recommended that the Planning Commission (PC) approve PL-14-041 (Tentative Tract Map #73153 only), and adopt the Addendum to the EIR prepared in 2007.

**Design Review Commission**

Staff recommended that the Design Review Commission (DRC) approve PL-14-041 (Precise Plan Design), subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

The project team gave an overview presentation of the project.

Testimony

Debbie Saito, 707 Abbot Avenue, San Gabriel, stated that she would like to see quality, responsible developments in the City. She expressed concern about increased traffic, noise, pollution, and water consumption due to the current severe drought problem in the state.

No one else spoke from the audience regarding this project; therefore, Chairman Garden closed the public comments portion for this item.

Commissioners' Discussion

Both Planning and Design Review Commissioners bodies conceptualized and discussed the project. All of them were in support for the project. They agreed that the existing site is an eyesore in the area and its proposed development would be a benefit to the community. They also stated that it would add to the quality of life in San Gabriel.

PC Commissioners Lou and Zawodny suggested taking a look at the elevation on San Gabriel Blvd to get efficiencies with the FAR and balancing it with the design.

DRC Commissioner Cheng stated that he would like to see finished details for landscaping, railings, and choice of materials, and to see the master sign program.

DRC Vice-Chair Beavers commented that there is a disconnect with the landscape architect and the civil engineers and was curious where the water will go.

PC Chairman Garden made the motion to approve PL-14-135 (Tentative Tract Map #73153 only) and to adopt the Addendum to the EIR prepared in 2007, and the added two conditions, which are:  
**Rubio Wash:** The applicant shall obtain all necessary permits from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and the United States Army Corps of Engineers for the proposed improvements in the Rubio Wash easement, prior to the issuance of building and grading permits.

**2. 201-207 S. San Gabriel Blvd.  
Planning Case No. PL-14-041  
Applicant: KCN Investments/Killefer Flammang Architects  
Approved by the Planning Commission and the Design Review Commission**

Testimony

Commissioners' Discussion

**Architectural Details, Finishes & Roofing:** Architectural details of doors and windows, exterior architectural finishes, colors, and roofing materials shall be approved by the Community Development Department and City Architect. Commissioner Zawodny seconded the motion.

Ayes: Garden, Klawiter, Lou, and Zawodny  
Noes: None

4-0 motion carried

Chairman Nadolney made the motion to approve PL-14-041 (Precise Plan of Design), subject to the recommended conditions of approval, including the added two conditions, which are: **Rubio Wash:** The applicant shall obtain all necessary permits from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and the United States Army Corps of Engineers for the proposed improvements in the Rubio Wash easement, prior to the issuance of building and grading permits. **Architectural Details, Finishes & Roofing:** Architectural details of doors and windows, exterior architectural finishes, colors, and roofing materials shall be approved by the Community Development Department and City Architect. Commissioner Cheng seconded the motion.

Ayes: Nadolney, Beavers, and Cheng  
Noes: None

3-0 motion carried

**3. 400-420 W. Valley Blvd.  
Planning Case No. PL-14-063  
Applicant: Swish Development, Inc.**

This item was presented by Assistant Planner Zhou regarding a Tentative Tract Map and a Precise Plan of Design for a new mixed-use development which will have 51,620 square feet of commercial space and 127 residential condominium units. The project site has a General Plan land use designation of Commercial Specific Plan and is zoned MU-C (Mixed-Use Corridor) in the Valley Boulevard Neighborhood Sustainability Plan.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** This project was reviewed for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance and staff determined that the project required a Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact. On February 3, 2015, the Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact was prepared and posted with the Los Angeles County Clerk.

**RECOMMENDATION:  
Planning Commission**

Staff recommended that the Planning Commission (PC) approve PL-14-063 (Tentative Tract Map #75154), subject to the recommended conditions of approval, and adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact.

**Design Review Commission**

Staff recommended that the Design Review Commission (DRC) approve PL-14-063 (Precise Plan of Design), subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

The project team gave an overview presentation of the project.

The Planning and Design Review Commissioners asked several questions from the project team regarding the use of the alley on Bencamp St.; trash pickup and delivery truck access; possible erection of a sound wall on the north and south side of Bencamp St., and traffic mitigation measures.

**3. 400-420 W. Valley Blvd.  
Planning Case No.  
Applicant: Swish  
Development, Inc.  
Continued to a future  
Special Joint Planning  
Commission and Design  
Review Commission  
Meeting.**

Deputy City Attorney Kranitz stated that there were letters of support and handouts as well as letters of opposition received for the project for the Commissioners to review and file.

At this point, Chairman Garden opened the public comments portion of the meeting.

#### Testimonies

1. Charles Sances, 1808 S. California St, San Gabriel, stated that he is a member of San Gabriel United. He expressed his concerns about development projects in the City. He stated that he has gathered 121 signature petitions from residents on Bencamp St. who oppose using their street as access for this project. He also was concerned about increased noise, street parking problems, air pollution, street deterioration, and traffic in the area as well as safety concerns for the existing residents on Bencamp St. He suggested that the project's plan be modified to not use Bencamp as an access street.

Staff addressed the parking requirements and stated that the project meets the minimum parking requirement.

2. Terry Kerger, San Gabriel resident, expressed his frustration that no one cares how the residents feel about new developments and how it will impact their quality of life. He stated that the City only brings outsiders into town but does not put emphasis on what residents want in their City.

Planning Manager Mark Gallatin stated that the community has many opportunities to view plans and provide feedback at several community outreach meetings hosted by developers. He emphasized that many do not attend these meetings and, by the time plans come before the Commissioners, plans have already gone to a final process.

3. Mario Pace, 114 N. Franklin Ave, San Gabriel, expressed great anger on how residents are so tired of fighting with the City about these types of projects. He stated that San Gabriel is a small town and does not need these large projects. He also added that City Council have heard his frustrations in the past about how he opposes these developments.

At this point, Chairman Garden warned Mr. Pace to remain civil at the podium and contain his temper.

Mr. Pace continued stating that he is in the construction field and that no one is explaining why 127 residents will be residing in that new development. He also stated that architects should show the real rendering of the project for, in reality, the project is more compressed than what they show.

4. Anna Battaglia, San Gabriel resident and member of San Gabriel United, stated that public notices are not posted widely enough for residents to know about developments in the City. She stated that not very many people have access to the internet to check information on the City's website. She mentioned that Ralph's on Main St. in Alhambra is closing its doors and that she no longer knows where to shop. She stated that an average San Gabriel resident won't be able to afford to shop at the proposed high-end retail shops in this project site. She stated that she went door to door in her neighborhood to get residents' feedback about this project and said that most of them are opposed to it. They couldn't be at the meeting but all they want is a mainstream grocery store in the City and to maintain a community with single family homes. She stated that we need to think about our City more and look at plans that are right for the City.
5. Brad Cadle, San Gabriel resident and member of San Gabriel United, asked the Commissioners to look at how many signatures were collected in opposition of this project. He stated that the Commissioners can't ignore the residents' discontent for allowing access on Bencamp.

#### Testimonies

6. Debbie Saito, 707 Abbot Avenue, San Gabriel, stated that she understands development but pointed out increased traffic and driving safety concerns on Valley Blvd. She also stated that Valley Blvd. is a collection of strip malls. She asked if there is something to mitigate access on Bencamp St.
7. Don Ha, 331 W. Bencamp St, San Gabriel, suggested that the traffic engineer should study weekend and rush hour traffic patterns. Residents on Bencamp can't make a turn on New Avenue because of traffic gridlock on New Avenue. He added that the garbage dumpsters for the new project will be directly in front of a resident's driveway. He suggested putting a wall in the alley to divide the project from their driveway.
8. Chuck Sances, 1808 S. California St, San Gabriel, asked about employee parking and multiple cars for the new residents in these 127 condominiums. He voiced his concern to keep the project off of Bencamp.
9. Francis Perez, 1223 Euclid, San Gabriel, came forward and asked those in the audience who are against the project to raise their hands.
10. Joe Garcia, public relations officer for the Province project, thanked staff for working with him on the entitlement process. He stated that his project will provide desirable retailers on Valley and will add a fresh design in the area. It will attract retailers that would help increase sales tax for the City. He stated that he has been to all the community outreach meetings and that the project team has addressed various concerns related to noise, pollution, traffic, etc. at those meetings.
11. Silva Perez, San Gabriel resident, expressed her concern about existing traffic on Valley Blvd. and the increased traffic that the new project will bring. She stated that she can't remember the time she ate out in her own City for nothing here is for her. She wants to keep her sales tax within the City but can't find any store that's right for her. She stated that she can't go on the internet everyday for she doesn't have time for it. She stated that the Commissioners are here for the residents and leave the residents to decide what's good for the City.
12. Vice-Mayor Jason Pu, San Gabriel City Council and resident, stated that he was the original founder of San Gabriel United, not the now high-jacked version of it. He stated that the voices of the residents are heard and he understands the gravity of decisions. He stated that he's honored to serve in the City Council and help the City move forward. He pointed out that in order to attract desirable businesses in the City, new developments such as this are needed. The City has to get rid of blighted areas, especially ones that are littered with graffiti, and take action to make the City look better. He added that he talked to many people and they were in favor of this development. San Gabriel is a business-friendly city and it needs additional revenues to help pave its streets and repair decaying infrastructure. He stated that we need responsible, well-designed developments such as this project.
13. Anna Battaglia, San Gabriel resident, stated that she's been knocking on doors asking for petitions to oppose this project and sends newsletters for San Gabriel United. She stated that very few people didn't want to sign the petition. She stated that residents are paying taxes and that residents need open spaces, not adding population to the City. She stated that residents are paying a lot but do not get a lot from the City. She wants to see single family homes in the City with backyards and front yards. All she wants is a City that would listen to them. She also added that we want development.
14. Terry Kerger, San Gabriel resident, asked what type of businesses will go in this project.

Brian Husting, lead project architect, stated that the developer is seeking high-end retailers and restaurants, and possibly a dry cleaner as well. He stated that some condos may be

used as live-work units but was unsure.

At this point, Chairman Garden closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

Commissioners' Discussion

Commissioners' Discussion

Commissioner Lou stated that he looked at the Valley Boulevard Specific Plan and heard the issues raised by the residents. He stated that there is a great effort in place to mitigate impact on Bencamp. He stated that a buffer wall will mitigate noise and vehicular use on the alley way. He suggested to possibly divert residential traffic from the condos to Valley and doesn't anticipate any commercial traffic on Bencamp. He stated that the guest parking areas for the residential units will provide a buffer from Bencamp but also suggested placing another buffer, like a stop sign on Bencamp to give other residents in the area the right to pass. He concluded that he likes this project and supports it.

Chairman Garden stated that staff will address issues that have been raised by residents.

Planning Manager Gallatin addressed the following concerns:

1. Noticing Requirements

Under State Law, the City is only required to mail notices within a 300 foot radius but the City mailed notices for this project within a 500 foot radius because of the scale and significance of the project. Notices are regularly posted at three locations: fire department headquarters, the post office and City Hall. The City is also required by law to publish in a newspaper in the city that is adjudicated, which is the San Gabriel Sun, and copies are always available for free at City Hall. Lastly, social media, internet, and the City's website have all this information as well. The City has a Twitter feed, Facebook, etc. all delivering messages from the City.

2. Why 127 Units

The Valley Boulevard Specific Plan for this portion of Valley Blvd. allows 2.0 maximum FAR. The floor area of the building can't exceed twice the lot area. Of that FAR, only .7 can be applied towards commercial space. The remaining 1.3 can be applied towards residential space. In this case, as shown on plans, almost 2.0 total FAR is used and the developer can propose the residential units to be all one bedroom or more with each unit having a minimum size. It's all about how you take the square footage and how the developer decides how many units to build within his allowable space allotment.

3. Residents' Safety

Plans have been reviewed by the Police Department on how to address all safety concerns including traffic safety.

4. Noise Pollution

Referring to the mitigated negative declaration, there are no fewer than six different mitigation measures to deal with noise impact including during construction and also during ongoing operations.

5. Air Pollution

The staff report includes no fewer than 11 mitigations noted which include dust generation and operation of the complex.

6. Deterioration of Bencamp St.

The City's Engineering Division has added conditions of approval for the developer that include regrinding and resurfacing the street along the project frontage.

7. Employee Parking

Typically, plans do not show commercial parking broken out for customers and employees. It is all based on square footage of commercial space. There is one space for every 375 square feet for a store or an office, and one for every 100 square feet for a

restaurant. That accounts for both employees and customers.

8. Trash Enclosure

The architects will build a sound wall along the alley to mitigate noise and will plant fragrant plants on the buffer wall. The commercial trash area will be enclosed, cooled, and vented through the structure to the roof in order to dissipate smell from the area.

9. Traffic Study

Staff and the project team have put in much time and effort in analyzing the traffic study. Facts are on the report and the website for anyone to see. There are a number of mitigation measures listed on the report that address traffic impacts in the area.

Commissioner Zawodny stated that he understands the concerns but likes the project and is in favor of it. He stated that he wants San Gabriel to attract new businesses and make residents be proud to go to them. He emphasized that a development like this is hard to come by and hard to pass up. He said that seeing something new like this in the City would be great and you don't get a lot of opportunities like this. This project is good for the City.

Vice-Chair Klawiter stated that residents say you are for development but really you're not. The City has blighted areas and these are potential sites for development. We lack tenants, supermarkets, Starbucks even, but you have to look at why. We currently don't have quality development in the City and this developer is coming in with a good, quality design. And this project is not just all residential. It will bring a substantial amount of retail opportunity that would help the City generate sales tax revenues. This is not a strip mall. We are seeing something much better. If there is no development, where would national retailer tenants go to?

Chairman Garden asked the architect and developer if they could make the further changes to the plans such as having all service deliveries and trash pickups enter through Valley Blvd. and keep Bencamp from being used for these purposes. He also suggested incorporating small yards in the residential units fronting Bencamp and orienting higher density units towards Valley Blvd. He recommends that the project team should look into having Bencamp as purely a community-friendly street.

Mr. Brian Husting stated that they have shown six diagrams at their community outreach meetings and have achieved these options in one of them. However, they faced the challenge of losing a lot of parking spaces if vehicle entry would solely come from Valley Blvd, go below grade then go out to Bencamp or exit on Valley. They also explored using Prospect Ave. as an alternative but feedback from residents was not in favor of it. He stated that they have exceeded parking requirements.

Chairman Garden stated that he'd like to support this project. However, he still would like for the project team to explore the possibility of eliminating deliveries from Bencamp. He pointed out that San Francisco, New York and downtown Los Angeles have deliveries come from a major street without problems. Pedestrians have come to accept that in those cities and it is very doable for this project. He added that although some people oppose developments, what he's pushing for is quality of life for the residents on Bencamp St.

Deputy City Attorney Kranitz recommended that the Planning Commission take a vote to continue this item and, if so, then the Design Review Commission would not be able to take action on this item tonight.

Vice-Chair Klawiter stated that he agreed with Chairman Garden. It would be good to look at options. He added that he would not like for this project to go away but a little tweaking on the plans may be worth it.

Deputy City Attorney Kranitz advised that if plans will be revised, then a new traffic study is required as well as noticing.

Chairman Garden made the motion to continue this item to a future Special Joint Planning Commission and Design Review Commission meeting pending further revisions to the plan as suggested. Vice-Chair Klawiter seconded the motion.

Ayes: Garden, Klawiter, Lou, and Zawodny  
Noes: None

4-0 motion carried

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
ITEMS**  
None.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS**  
None.

**DESIGN REVIEW  
COMMISSION ITEMS**  
None.

**DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION ITEMS**  
None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Garden moved to adjourn to the Special Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission and the Design Review Commission on Monday, April 13 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 425 S. Mission Drive, San Gabriel, CA.

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The Planning Commission meetings are available on tape and may be reviewed within 90 days after the meeting in the Community Development Department office at City Hall during regular business hours.

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Norman Garden, Chairman  
City of San Gabriel  
Planning Commission

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Marla Nadolney, Chairman  
City of San Gabriel  
Design Review Commission

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jackie Wong, Secretary  
City of San Gabriel Planning Commission