



ACTION MINUTES

Planning Commission

Planning Commissioners:

Steven Keller	Chair
Erika Mendez	Vice Chair
Zoë Chafe	Commissioner
Henry Symons	Commissioner
C. Tito Young	Commissioner
Erica Zepko	Commissioner
Vacant	Commissioner

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, July 22, 2021

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was convened via teleconference at 6:30 p.m. by Vice Chair C. Tito Young. The Vice Chair read aloud a statement announcing that the meeting was being conducted by teleconference pursuant to the Brown Act waivers provided for under the Governor's Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: (5) Vice Chair C. Tito Young
Planning Commissioner Zoë Chafe
Planning Commissioner Steven Keller
Planning Commissioner Erika Mendez
Planning Commissioner Henry Symons

Absent: (1) Planning Commissioner Erica Zepko

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Chafe nominated Commissioner Keller for Chair and Commissioner Mendez for Vice Chair of the Planning Commission. There were no other nominations.

Moved: Chafe
Seconded: Symons
Ayes: (5) Chafe, Keller, Mendez, Symons, Young,
Noes: (0)
Abstain: (0)
Absent: (1) Zepko

Chair Keller presided over the remainder of the meeting.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

5. APPROVAL OF ACTION MINUTES

5.1 Special Meeting Of June 17, 2021

A motion was made to approve the Action Minutes.

Moved: Mendez
Seconded: Chafe
Ayes: (5) Chafe, Symons, Young, Mendez, Keller
Noes: (0)
Abstain: (0)
Absent: (1) Zepko

5.2 Regular Meeting Of June 24, 2021

A motion was made to approve the Action Minutes.

Moved: Chafe
Seconded: Keller
Ayes: (5) Chafe, Symons, Young, Mendez, Keller
Noes: (0)
Abstain: (0)
Absent: (1) Zepko

6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Bryant reported on recent City Council actions, including that, on July 20, 2021, the Council appointed Al Dram and Jack Ghizzoni to the Planning Commission. They will be sworn in at the next Commission meeting on August 26. The Council did not choose to reappoint Commissioner Young, so tonight will be his last meeting. Director Bryant took the opportunity to express staff's appreciation to Commissioner Young for his years of service on the Planning Commission.

7. DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS AND IDENTIFICATION OF CONFLICTS INTEREST

Vice Chair Mendez, Chair Keller, and Commissioners Chafe, Symons and Young all said that they had received emails from the applicant for item 8.1, but did not respond. Vice Chair Mendez said that she would recuse herself from item 8.1, because Longfellow is a client of her employer and is therefore a source of income for her.

8. STUDY SESSION

Vice Chair Mendez recused herself from item 8.1 and left the meeting.

8.1 Atrium Longfellow Mixed Use Project (PUD21-001) – A study session on a proposed Planned Unit Development/Preliminary Development Plan (PUD/PDP) at 1650 65th Street, including a new 16-story, 185-foot tall, 144-unit high-rise residential tower over podium parking, and two laboratory and office buildings over podium parking totaling approximately 750,000 gross square feet. The two commercial buildings will be eight stories (203 feet) and nine stories (223 feet) tall. The proposal will also include 1.66 acres of public open space. The project assembles three parcels and creates a 7.28-acre site. The existing single story commercial building (“Atrium” building) and the SAE Expression College building would be demolished. General Plan Land Use Classification: Mixed Use with Residential and Other Park Opportunity; Zoning District: Mixed Use with Residential (MUR). (Applicant: Longfellow Real Estate Partners) (Owners: SFF 1650 65th Street LLC and Griffin Capital (Shellmound) Investors LLC, et al) (APNs: 49-1490-1; -3; and -4)

Miroo Desai, Senior Planner, gave the staff presentation and responded to Commissioner questions.

Evan Schwimmer and Peter Fritz of Longfellow Real Estate Partners, and Brian Jencek and Rob Williamson of HOK architects, applicants, presented and responded to Commissioner questions. Liz Bridges, SSL Law Firm, was also available to respond to Commissioner questions.

Public comment was opened.

Nikos Bountas, resident of Bridgewater condominiums across 64th Street, expressed concerns about the project's impacts on light and air to the existing residents, and the traffic impacts that would result from the employees of the proposed project.

Public comment was closed.

Staff noted that a comment email had been received earlier in the week from Peizhi Yang, a resident of the Bridgewater condominiums, which had also been copied to Ms. Bountas, and that staff had forwarded this comment email to the Commission.

The Commission was generally supportive of the proposal and asked a few clarifying questions regarding number of employees and trash management plans. It was noted that the mix of uses was appropriate, as were the three access points to the site. The Commissioners felt that the new park would be a good amenity for the residents of Emeryville, and encouraged the applicant to be creative in park design, including through the use of green walls and public art. Two Commissioners felt that switching the locations of the residential tower and the park was worth exploring, so that the tower could take advantage of Bay views while providing some protection from wind and noise for park users; another Commissioner stated that the proposed locations were appropriate. A comment was made that the "whale" feature at Christie Park has become iconic, and that this park should also include a unique design element. The Commission also asked the applicant to consider reducing parking and developing a robust Transportation Demand Management plan. The Commission noted that, as plans get further developed, attention should be paid to the City's Design Guidelines. Commissioners expressed concern regarding jobs and housing balance.

Vice Chair Mendez rejoined the meeting.

9. PLANNING COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Young addressed staff and the Commissioners, and thanked them for their unique contributions, encouraging the Commissioners to be brave with developers; he also congratulated Commissioner Keller on his election as Chair. The Commissioners expressed their gratitude for Vice Chair Young's contributions. Commissioner Symons shared that he and his fiancée were expecting the birth of their first child next week.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:20 p.m.

THE NEXT SCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 1333 PARK AVENUE, EMERYVILLE, CA 94608 OR VIA TELECONFERENCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER.