

January 20, 2021

THE WALNUT CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

A regular Meeting of the Walnut City Planning Commission (PC) was held on the above-referenced date. Chairperson Koo called the Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE: Commissioner Fernandez

ROLL CALL: Commissioner(s): Dy, Koo, Fernandez, Perez, Wang

ALSO PRESENT: Assistant City Manager – Development Services Tom Weiner; City Planner Justin Carlson; Assistant City Attorney David Mann; Senior Planner Chris Vasquez; Senior Management Analyst Joelle Guerra; Community Development Technician Gabriel Katigbak.

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) ADVISORY:

C/Koo presented information regarding the California State Department of Health Services’ guidance and the County of Los Angeles Public Health Officer’s order for the control of COVID-19. Additionally, C/Koo informed all Attendees of the necessary procedures to be taken when submitting public comments.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

C/Koo opened oral communications for Public Comment(s).

Councilmember/Freedman thanked the Commission for their continued hard work and introduced herself as the new Councilmember.

The Commission welcomed and thanked Councilmember Freedman.

C/Koo closed oral communications for Public Comment(s).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. December 2, 2020 (Regular Meeting Minutes).

MOTION ON ITEM 1

PC/Perez moved to approve the Minutes of the regularly scheduled PC Meeting of December 2, 2020. PC/Dy seconded.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Koo, Fernandez, Dy, Perez, Wang

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Site Plan Case/Architectural Review (SPC/AR) 2021-003 (Nicholls): A request to install decomposed granite (DG) within the front yard (parallel/adjacent to the public right-of-way) for off-street parking purposed at 20365 Fuerte Drive (APN: 8709-010-013).

SP/Vasquez presented the Staff Report.

VC/Fernandez asked for confirmation on the recommendation from Staff regarding the Project.

SP/Vasquez stated that the discretion is up to the Commission and noted the Code Enforcement activity on the property for the past couple of years related to on-street parking, landscaping, and storage of miscellaneous items. SP/Vasquez further mentioned that in order for the owner to pursue the current proposal, the request needed to go before the Commission.

PC/Wang confirmed that the subject Property will remain in compliance with Walnut Municipal Code (WMC) standards related to front-yard landscaping, as referenced in the Condition(s) of Approval (COA), and noted the current landscape condition on the property and if it will be improved.

SP/Vasquez confirmed that the front-yard would need to be in full compliance with WMC landscaping requirements, but noted some improvements that have already been made.

C/Koo noted a rolled-curb further down from the property on Fuerte Drive and inquired if it will be continued in front of the subject Property and/or if improvements will be made in the future.

CE/Gilbertson stated that currently there are no plans to improve the Fuerte Drive area with any type of curb and noted a previous decision made by the Commission to keep the Fuerte Drive/Gartel Drive area as-is, with no improvements to be made.

C/Koo discussed the separation between the street and the subject Property, with the possibility of DG run-off.

The Commission and Staff discussed the possible issues with not having curbs within this area and the future need for it.

PC/Perez noted the Rural Overlay Zone for the property and the inclination to approve the project as submitted; but asked if the proposed inclined driveway will serve as access to the main level of the home.

SP/Vasquez confirmed that the current driveway gives access to existing stairs that lead to the residence but the proposed driveway will serve as access to the main level of the home.

PC/Perez further noted the Condition to use DG material.

CE/Gilbertson recommended the current DG material used throughout the City (Stabilized DG) that limits erosion, to be used for the proposed Project.

PC/Dy shared concerns with the parking along the street jeopardizing the future installation of rolled-curbs, and inquired about the possibility of installing a circular driveway.

ACM/Weiner noted retaining walls would be needed in order to achieve the circular driveway and that the property currently had a septic tank.

VC/Fernandez asked if there is any rolled-curb on the property.

CE/Gilbertson mentioned that this property, along with others, did not have a rolled-curb installed when improvements were made to the street about 25 years ago.

C/Koo reiterated his concern for the separation between the property line and street.

ACM/Weiner stated that a Condition could be placed for a Licensed Surveyor to survey the property at the Owner's expense.

VC/Fernandez suggested the rolled-curb continue to the subject property line to help hold the DG in place and for a clear separation between public and private property.

C/Koo opened the item for Public Comment(s).

Applicant/Jennifer Nicholls noted the following:

- Parking has occurred as proposed for more 40 years with no accidents.
- The septic tank would prevent the circular driveway to be installed.
- The violations for landscaping have been addressed except for the areas located in the front where the parking is occurring.
- The asphalt is what dictates the end of her property.
- An additional property off Fuerte Drive that used asphalt for parking instead of DG.

PC/Dy noted that with the existing driveway and the proposed driveway, about two (2) cars would be able to park parallel from the street.

Ms. Nicholls noted the convenience of parking the cars as shown in the photos provided due to not having to move cars to pullout of the residence.

PC/Dy mentioned to widen both the existing and proposed driveway.

Ms. Nicholls noted that the Lot limits the ability to widen due to grading and retaining walls.

The Commission and Applicant discussed the location of the septic tank in the front yard.

PC/Dy asked if the neighboring property with asphalt located in the front, received proper approvals.

CE/Gilbertson indicated that the property did not go through the proper channels for approval.

The Commission and Applicant discussed:

- Safety concerns with the current parking.
- Number of parking Spaces needed for the subject property.
- Surveying the property and previous surveying that has been completed in the area.
- Widening the existing and proposed driveway.
- The water run-off with the current slope of the property.

VC/Fernandez shared concerns as to where the current property line is; stating clarification would help dictate exactly the number of parking spaces that can be allowed, and explaining two (2) options before the Commission and Applicant:

- Option 1: Prohibit parking vehicles on a dirt surface per the WMC.
- Option 2: Install an impervious material approved by the PC in order to park cars at the requested location.

Ms. Nicholls asked if the driveway portion of the Project could be approved at the minimum.

ACM/Weiner noted the amount of vehicles that would be able to park on the Property with the existing two (2)-car garage and driveway in addition to the proposed driveway and reiterated the Code Enforcement complaints regarding the amount of cars parked on the subject site.

The Commission, Staff, and Applicant further discussed the previous and current Condition of the subject Property and the need for a solution for the parking on site.

C/Koo shared and reiterated his concerns for defining where the front property line is located.

The Commission and Applicant discussed the importance of surveying the property and the process needed.

PC/Dy mentioned to widen the proposed driveway and possibly extending the access to the rear-yard.

PC/Perez echoed C/Koo concern with surveying the property to dictate where the front property line is located.

Ms. Nicholls stated she understood and agreed with surveying the property but requested, at least, for the proposed driveway to be approved, surveying the property at a later date.

CE/Gilbertson mentioned the possible cost of a Surveyor and that part of the dirt on the subject site may be part of the public right-of-way.

ACA/Mann noted that the public agency does not lose its right to the public right-of-way and City improvements can be done in the future.

The Commission, Staff, and Applicant further discussed surveying the Property and the use of an encroachment permit to be pulled only if a retaining wall were to be installed.

VC/Fernandez explained that the request for entitlements runs with the land and the decision made by the Commission will set a precedence with future developments.

Ms. Nicholls noted that an email was sent to her in the past by the Planning Staff allowing the cars to remain parked as shown and reiterated for the Commission to approve the driveway as proposed.

The Commission and Applicant further discussed the Project in its entirety.

C/Koo closed the item for Public Comment(s).

C/Koo shared his support for a ten (10') foot wide driveway on the right side of the subject Property and would like to see a rolled-curb with a clear indication of where the front property line is.

PC/Dy inquired if the ten (10') foot driveway would be wide enough and mentioned his support for a wider driveway.

C/Koo reopened the item for Public Comment(s).

Ms. Nicholls noted she would need to measure to determine the exact distance needed due to an existing gas line.

PC/Wang stated that she is ok with a second driveway, mentioned an option for the parking on the driveway to be at a 45-degree angle and shared concerns with the parking in the front yard without knowing where the front property line is located.

The Commission and Applicant discussed the width of the driveway.

C/Koo closed the item for Public Comment(s).

VC/Fernandez shared his support for an additional 20' by 20' driveway that abuts the east property line and two (2) parallel-parked cars along the frontage, but would oppose any more parking due to the front-yard being utilized as strictly a parking area. VC/Fernandez reiterated that with the garage and existing driveway, the Applicant will have a sufficient amount of parking.

PC/Perez reiterated that the reasoning of the driveway to be extended to the residence, is to access the second-story portion of the home and shared that the Project as proposed calls out a ten (10') by 44' foot driveway which seems reasonable. PC/Perez stated that the Commission needed to set a precedence for similar projects that may come through. PC/Perez further mentioned that if the proposed driveway extends to 20' then the parking located along the front yard area should be removed.

C/Koo noted that if the driveway were to be approved, then allowing the parking in the front yard area of the property would be revoked and further noted a five (5') foot clearance to the asphalt to prevent the bumper of a car encroaching into the public right-of-way. C/Koo echoed the idea of parking at a 45-degree angle.

PC/Dy encouraged a circular driveway, however since existing site conditions may prevent that, then a 25' driveway will work. PC/Dy indicated for the driveway to start at 20' from the approach and fan out to 25'.

The Commission further discussed the future of the property with the proposed driveway and the front-yard landscaping requirement per the WMC.

PC/Perez made a motion and later revised his motion.

MOTION ON ITEM 2

PC/Perez motioned to approve SPC/AR 2021-003, with the following modifications:

- 1) Parking of vehicles shall be limited to existing and approved driveway areas with no parking in the front-yard area.**
- 2) The front-yard area of 60' by 15' shall be landscaped with no parking.**
- 3) Work to be completed within 90 days allowing one (1) additional 90-day extension determined by Staff as long as progress has been made.**

VC/Fernandez seconded.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Koo, Fernandez, Dy, Perez, Wang
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Motion passed 5-0.

DICUSSION/TRANSACTION:

None

REPORTS AND COMMENTS:

- VC/Fernandez inquired about the Brookside Project.
- ACM/Weiner mentioned that a few details needed to be clarified in the Development Agreement (DA) and once finalized, the Project will go before the City Council in February or March.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Meeting adjourned at 9:53 p.m. The next Planning Commission Meeting is set for a regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 3, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., via teleconference. The Agenda will be posted on the City's website and at City related public facilities, including Walnut City Hall (21201 La Puente Road).

Passed and Approved on this 3rd day of February, 2021.

Chairperson, Tony Koo