

December 15, 2021

THE WALNUT CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

A regular Meeting of the Walnut City Planning Commission (PC) was held on the above-referenced date. Chairperson Fernandez called the Meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE: Commissioner Perez

ROLL CALL: Commissioner(s): Fernandez, Perez, Sam, Wang

ABSENT: Commissioner: Dy

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/Fernandez 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/Fernandez informed all attendees of the necessary procedures to be taken when submitting comments.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

C/Fernandez opened Oral Communications for Public Comment(s).

C/Fernandez closed Oral Communications for Public Comment(s).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. November 3, 2021 (Regular Meeting Minutes).

MOTION ON ITEM 1

VC/Perez moved to approve the Minutes of the regularly scheduled PC Meeting of November 3, 2021. PC/Sam seconded.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Fernandez, Perez, Sam

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: Wang

ABSENT: Dy

Motion passed 3-0.

With Commission's approval, C/Fernandez reorganized the Agenda to hear the New Business Item before the Public Hearing Item.

NEW BUSINESS:

3. **Site Plan Case/Architectural Review (SPC/AR) 2021-106:** A request to install a ground mounted solar panel array on the rear slope of an existing property located at 721 Arabian lane within the R.P.D. – 28,500 – 1.3 DU; Residential Planned Development Zoning District (APN: 8709-063-001).

SP/Vasquez presented the Staff Report.

VC/Perez asked if there is any type of protection around the proposed solar panels on the slope and further shared concerns with having the solar panels on the hillside, accessible from the right-of-way.

SP/Vasquez confirmed that the plan does not show any type of security protection for the panels.

C/Fernandez asked if landscaping will be placed to screen the proposed solar panels.

SP/Vasquez referenced that the plans did not indicate any screening proposed, but referred to the Applicant/Owner to confirm.

C/Fernandez inquired about the Walnut Municipal Code (WMC) regarding ground mounted vs. roof-top solar panels.

SP/Vasquez noted that the WMC allows roof-top, residential solar systems but not ground mounted solar systems.

The Commission and Staff further discussed existing solar projects within the City and the current City Ordinance on solar panels.

PC/Wang asked if any modifications will be done on the natural hillside.

SP/Vasquez confirmed that the hillside is being preserved.

C/Fernandez opened the Item for Public Comment(s).

Applicant/Brad Johnson shared a presentation which touched upon the following:

- The challenge of having a roof system with multiple gables and slopes.
- Neighboring homes with an easier roof system and style.
- Visibility to the public street.
- Existing and new landscaping.
- Other properties in Walnut that have ground mounted solar systems.
- The neighboring support for the ground mounted solar system on the proposed property.

The Commission and Applicant/Robert Lopez discussed the details of the solar system, as well as safety measures.

C/Fernandez inquired about screening with vegetation or construction of a block wall for the solar system.

Mr. Johnson indicated that the owner is open to screening the solar system.

The Commission and Applicant(s) further discussed security measures for the solar system shut-off and screening.

C/Fernandez closed the Item for Public Comment(s).

C/Fernandez referenced the WMC Section for the R.P.D. Zone which does not specify that ground mounted solar is not allowed.

ACA/Mann noted that the Project is before the Commission for that reason.

C/Fernandez made mention of possibly requiring a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for all ground-mounted solar projects and shared reasoning for approval of the subject Project to the appropriate screening.

The Commission further discussed the proposed solar Project regarding the following:

- California Electrical Code (CEC).
- Fire Department review.
- Opposition due to the natural hillside and slope.
- Setting a precedence for future ground mounted solar on the hillside.
- Natural vegetation for screening.

Owner/Randall Quan illustrated the bareness of the natural slope and the need to go green for the environment; however, he was open to any type of screening with vegetation for the proposed solar system.

The Commission, Staff, and Owner/Applicant(s) discussed the process for future solar projects and the landscaping to be installed to help screen the proposed solar panels to be reviewed by the City's Third Party Landscape Consultant.

PC/Sam inquired about property lines and made a suggestion for a motion on screening the property with some type of perimeter outline.

C/Fernandez made a motion but further amended his motion due to the following discussion.

The Commission and Staff discussed natural screening to be used for a perimeter wall with specific indications.

ACM/Weiner explained the importance of feasibility for the type of screening to be placed on the slope area and requested a clear direction from the Commission.

The Commission discussed reviewing the plan once more after the Landscape Consultant checks the Plan with the proposed and recommended landscaping.

MOTION ON ITEM 3

C/Fernandez motioned to continue SPC/AR 2021-106, with the Condition(s) that the ground mounted solar panels be properly screened with vegetation and for a natural screening barrier be placed subject to the approval from Walnut's Landscape Consultant. VC/Perez seconded.

ROLL CALL:

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

Motion passed 4-0.

Staff and the Owner discussed how the Landscape Plan Check process works with the City's third party Landscape Plan Checker.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- 2. Housing Element Update (HEU):** The 2021-2029 update for the 6th Cycle of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

SMA/Guerra presented the Staff Report.

VC/Perez inquired if the City of Walnut would have to meet the RHNA housing requirement of 1,293 units over an eight (8) year period. VC/Perez further questioned if the proposed area(s) for additional housing will be allocated those numbers.

SMA/Guerra confirmed that the 1,293 units given by RHNA is over an eight (8) year span. SMA/Guerra further noted that the study area(s) will yield additional units in addition to the units required by RHNA.

VC/Perez asked what happens if the City of Walnut does not meet the RHNA numbers given.

SMA/Guerra noted the "No Net Loss" requirement, which means the units that were not met during a particular cycle will have to be absorbed into the next cycle.

The Commission and Staff discussed Projects that have counted towards the RHNA numbers and noted Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

The Commission and Staff discussed the annual report(s) required to keep track of the City's unit(s) provided.

PC/Sam inquired about an over-production of units.

Consultant/Veronica Tam mentioned that an over-production of units does not give credit to the next RHNA cycle and that the number provided is a minimum amount.

The Commission and Staff discussed the Carrey Property/Parcel that was not included in District Three (3) due to its historical significance.

C/Fernandez opened the Item for Public Comment(s).

C/Fernandez closed the Item for Public Comment(s).

MOTION ON ITEM 2

C/Fernandez motioned to adopt the following PC Resolution(s):

- **PC Resolution 21-08: Recommending that the City Council approve the Administrative Draft Addendum to Walnut's General Plan EIR (SCH #2017101010);**
- **PC Resolution 21-09: Recommending that the City Council approve Zone Change (ZC) 2021-01, Zoning Code Amendment (ZCA) 2021-01, and Zone Map Amendment (ZMA) 2021-01 in order to**

implement the Medium – High (MH) and High (H) Density Residential District “Overlay” Zone(s);

- **PC Resolution 21-10: Recommending that the City Council approve General Plan Amendment (GPA) 2021-01, adopting the 2021-2029 Housing Element and revising the Land Use Element and Land Use Element Map in order to establish the MH Density and H Density Land Use Designation. PC/Wang seconded.**

ROLL CALL:

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

Motion passed 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

None Scheduled.

DICUSSION/TRANSACTION:

None Scheduled.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS:

- ACM/Weiner wished the Commission Happy Holidays.
- VC/Perez confirmed the rescheduling of the January PC Meeting.
- The Commission thanked Staff for their continued work.
- C/Fernandez inquired about Senate Bill (SB) Nine (9) and Ten (10).
- ACM/Weiner noted that the process will follow the ADU procedure for amending the WMC but applications can be submitted under the State guidelines starting January 1, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT:

This Meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m. The next Planning Commission Meeting is set for a regular Meeting on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., via teleconference (*subsequently, the January 19, 2022 meeting was cancelled. Notice was given that the next regularly scheduled PC meeting would be February 2, 2022*). 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 2nd day of February, 2022.



Chairperson, Mark Fernandez



Tom Weiner, Assistant City Manager – Development Services